

<http://www.pocket-lint.com/news/25106/websites-down-due-to-michael-jackson-death>

Web collapses under Michael Jackson death reports

King of Pop's passing strains net

by Duncan Geere published on 26 June 2009

The death of Michael Jackson on 25 June caused immense pressure on numerous websites across the Internet, and caused many to go down for extended periods of time.

The original source for the news, TMZ.com, was offline much of the night after breaking the news. Celebrity blogger Perez Hilton's website went down too, as people attempted to verify the news. The death of Michael Jackson on 25 June caused immense pressure on numerous websites across the Internet, and caused many to go down for extended periods of time.

The original source for the news, TMZ.com, was offline much of the night after breaking the news. Celebrity blogger Perez Hilton's website went down too, as people attempted to verify the news there.

According to Akamai's Net Usage Index, traffic to North American news sites shot up 20%, with a peak of 3.56 million visitors per minute when the LA Times reported that the King of Pop was just in a coma, rather than dead. That site quickly went down.

Twitter bore the brunt of the response, with founder Biz Stone saying "We saw an instant doubling of tweets per second the moment the story broke". The "fail whale" error page appeared for many people, but the site was mostly able to weather the storm.

At the peak of the night, Jackson-related tweets were flooding in at 5,000 per minute. However, the majority spelt Jackson's name wrong, with "Micheal Jackson" appearing at the top of the trending topics list, rather than "Michael".

Facebook, too, saw a massive increase in status



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updates. A spokeswoman for the company said the number of status updates during the hour after the Jackson news emerged was "triple the average", however the site stayed online and didn't suffer any performance issues.†

Even AIM suffered performance hits, with a statement from AOL reporting: "At AOL our AIM instant messaging service was undergoing a previously scheduled software update which should normally prove routine. It proved not to be. There was a significant increase in traffic due to today's news and AIM was down for approximately 40 minutes this afternoon".

Spotify has reported that 1.6 million Jackson tracks have been played since midnight - 30 times more than normal, and Last.fm's track count went crazy too - up to over 40,000 tracks played per hour.

Sophos is reporting, too, that spammers have taken advantage - sending out messages referencing the deaths of Michael Jackson and Farrah Fawcett in an attempt to harvest email addresses. Our advice is to be careful of links in emails you're not expecting.

Lastly, T-Mobile has stated that 2 million more texts were sent across its network last night compared to normal. More similar statistics will surely emerge in the next few days, so we'll keep this post updated with anything noteworthy.

UPDATE: Yahoo has now published its stats on how people searched for the news:†

"Yahoo! News set an all-time record in unique visitors with 16.4 million people, surpassing our previous record of 15.1 million visitors on election day. Four million people visited the site between 3-4pm Pacific time, setting an hourly record. We also recorded 175 million page views yesterday, our fourth highest after Inauguration Day, the day after the Inauguration, and Hurricane Ike.

In Yahoo! Music, a staggering 21,000 people left comments on a blog post about the music legend. And over on Flickr, more than 4,000 Michael Jackson-related images have been posted in the last day, including art images labeled as "in tribute" and photos of spontaneous memorials all over the world, such as this Thriller "flashdance" in San Francisco."

Update 2: Google has now posted information out the traffic it experienced as the news broke. According to the company the increase in traffic happened so fast the search engine thought it was an attack.

"The spike in searches related to Michael Jackson was so big that†Google News†initially mistook it for an automated attack," said google in a statement on the company's blog. "As a result, for about 25 minutes yesterday, when some people searched Google News they saw a "We're sorry" page before finding the articles they were looking for."†tempted to verify the news there.

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