

DAILY NEWS

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Web of sighs: Frustrated local internet users in an uproar over days-long service disruptions caused by tropical storm



Downed trees block a road in a Brooklyn neighborhood in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Isaias. Fallen trees and wires are being blamed for cable, phone and internet outages across the region. (Spencer Platt/Getty Images)

By Larry McShane

Customers of both Verizon Fios and Optimum vented angrily Saturday on Twitter about phone calls left on hold, disconnected or ignored in the days since Tropical Storm Isaias knocked them off the internet. Others were simply waiting for their televisions to turn back on.

“My internet has been out for 5 days!” began one frustrated Optimum user in a typical tweet. “What are you doing? It took until today to get a live person to schedule someone to help.”

Others complained they were unable to work from home without internet access, while small businesses dependent on internet payments found themselves in a cash crunch complicated by the coronavirus crisis.

“It’s critical for our region to have a reliable & resilient telecommunication system as LI is especially susceptible to severe storms,” said the Association for a Better Long Island, a real estate lobbying group. “Isaias compounded the difficulties for small businesses trying to recover from the pandemic shutdown.”

The same bitter complaints came from local Fios customers threatening to cancel service and griping about a lack of customer service. Many detailed long waits to speak with a human being — and still getting no relief.

“Verizon support, are u guys ever going to come to the rest of Brookhaven Town on Long Island?” asked another disengaged web user. “Would really appreciate it.”

A Saturday email to Fios for comment was not returned. But Optimum spokesperson Lisa Anselmo noted the “vast majority” of cases were linked to commercial power outages outside the provider’s control.