

Internet blackout: FREELANCERS IN TROUBLE

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With the nationwide complete shutdown of internet services for the last four days, life on the digital frontier across the country has come to a halt. Mobile internet blackout was ordered on July 16 amidst country-wide protests against quota reinstatement in government jobs. After violence on the streets escalated, a complete internet blackout without any prior notice was suddenly in effect from July 18. Now, the freelancers of the country are facing significant troubles as their source of income is dependent on access to the internet.

Timely communication is one of the most important factors when it comes to freelancing in online marketplaces like Fiverr, Upwork etc. As freelancers

communicate on the embedded messaging option of the platforms, no communication was possible due to internet shutdown.

Shaikh Abdullah, a Dhaka-based motion designer and video editor working for international clients said, “I was communicating with a client for an order worth \$500. During negotiation, the internet was suddenly cut off without any prior announcement. After four days of complete inactivity, if the client reports my profile, I would lose profile impression which will significantly reduce click rates and overall impression of my profile. I would lose potential future clients which will reduce my income rate.”

The freelancing marketplace across the globe moves at a fast pace, as clients and workers usually maintain strict timetables for work orders and deliveries.

Failure to deliver the orders on time, in most cases, generate negative impressions from the clients, which in turn, affects the earnings of a freelancer if enough negative impressions rack up.

Sudipta Apu, a Khulna-based freelancer and graphic designer said, “I had 8 ongoing orders which were valued over \$1,000. Due to the internet blackout, those orders are now on hold. It is highly likely that the clients will move on to other service

providers as most of them require their orders urgently on a day-to-day basis.”

Mentioning about regular clients out of the freelance marketplaces, Sudipta added, “Due to the internet shutdown, I tried communicating with out of the marketplace clients through ISD calls based out of India and the USA. However, they could not properly hear me due to network issues and it is highly likely that I would lose most of my regular clients as well.”

Due to internet shutdown, many freelancers failed to deliver their orders which were already completed. Sohag Islam, a Dhaka-based UI-UX designer, and the founder of Designera, an IT firm, said, “I had two deliveries scheduled, one worth \$1200

and another worth \$660. Some one hour before the final delivery to the client, I lost internet connectivity. Communication with all my regular clients is completely cut off. I suffered a minimum loss of \$3,000 due to internet shutdown.”

Sohag Islam also mentioned that he works remotely for a USA-based firm but he could not properly communicate with them due to internet shutdown.

In the face of ongoing blackout, agencies and firms that handle online payments for digital advertisements also faced issues in handling their regular operations. Munaf Mojib Chowdhury, Partner Director, Aleph Holding (formerly, HTTPPOOL) said, “We will understand the global reaction to this situation once we can properly communicate with our clients and partners after the restoration of internet.”



PHOTO:
ORCHID CHAKMA

What is emotional intelligence and why do we need it?

In modern day and age, Emotional Intelligence is more valued than any other form of intelligence. For the development of interpersonal relationships between peers, colleagues and even friends and family, this can be a game changer in establishing a clear and meaningful communication. Emotional Intelligence is also very much celebrated for its significant contribution in self-development and professional growth.

NOMIROTA SARKER

Emotional Intelligence refers to the ability to recognise, understand and regulate our own emotions as well as do the same with others'. In practical terms, this means being aware of the fact that emotions have a significant impact in human behaviour and decisions both positively and negatively. Coined by Peter Salavoy and John Mayer, this term gained popularity in 1996.

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THE FOUR QUADRANTS

Emotional Intelligence is all about channeling one's energy and feelings into exciting and positive pathways through building an awareness of emotional logic. Emotional Intelligence revolves around four quadrants with which a person's emotional excellence is determined. The quadrants are self-awareness, social recognition, self-management, and social relationship management.

SELF-AWARENESS

Self-awareness typically reflects interpersonal communication. This quadrant is concerned with how well you understand yourself and your

personal psychology. Self-awareness is the first step towards a better perspective of the vision that you might have for yourself. This includes closely inspecting your own personality and learning styles, mental attitudes and states, strengths and weaknesses, stress levels, and spirituality.

In simpler terms, it is the attempt you need to take to address your feelings for exactly what they are, instead of

trying to relate it to a similar yet non-applicable scenario for yourself.

SOCIAL RECOGNITION

The social recognition quadrant reflects your consideration of the feelings and responses of others. This is where empathy plays a crucial role. It is important to maintain sensitivity to the moods and emotions of others because it allows for superior

intuition and connection. Oftentimes, communication with a colleague can seem to be hard if their emotions are opaque to you.

Social recognition is that step you take to be attentive and listen to them with an intention to build an effective communication with them. It is how you show your control over the external factors and scenarios. The key element for social recognition is

your 'reaction' to your surroundings and how you tackle consequences to external decisions.

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Self-management quadrant reflects indicates self-evaluation coupled with self-regulation. 'Indulgent' behaviour is what we are trying to avoid here. This quadrant is only concerned with your internal discipline and your ability to achieve personal objectives. In the case of developing inner resolutions, self-management is the key quadrant that can build an achievement-oriented outlook for you. It can give you a direction, as to how to start working on yourself and bring back discipline in your life.

SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Social relationship management includes interpersonal skills and focuses intelligence on generating results. This quadrant of emotional intelligence fosters collaboration and connection to tap the power of synergy. This quadrant pulls together the other three quadrants and creates the final product; relationship management. Often if we have the other three dimensions figured out, this will flow more naturally.

Relationship management can be used to influence those around us to make a good decision. We can sense the reactions of others to the situation and fine-tune our response to move the interaction to a positive direction. This comes in handy in the case of collaboration, team management, and good leadership.

