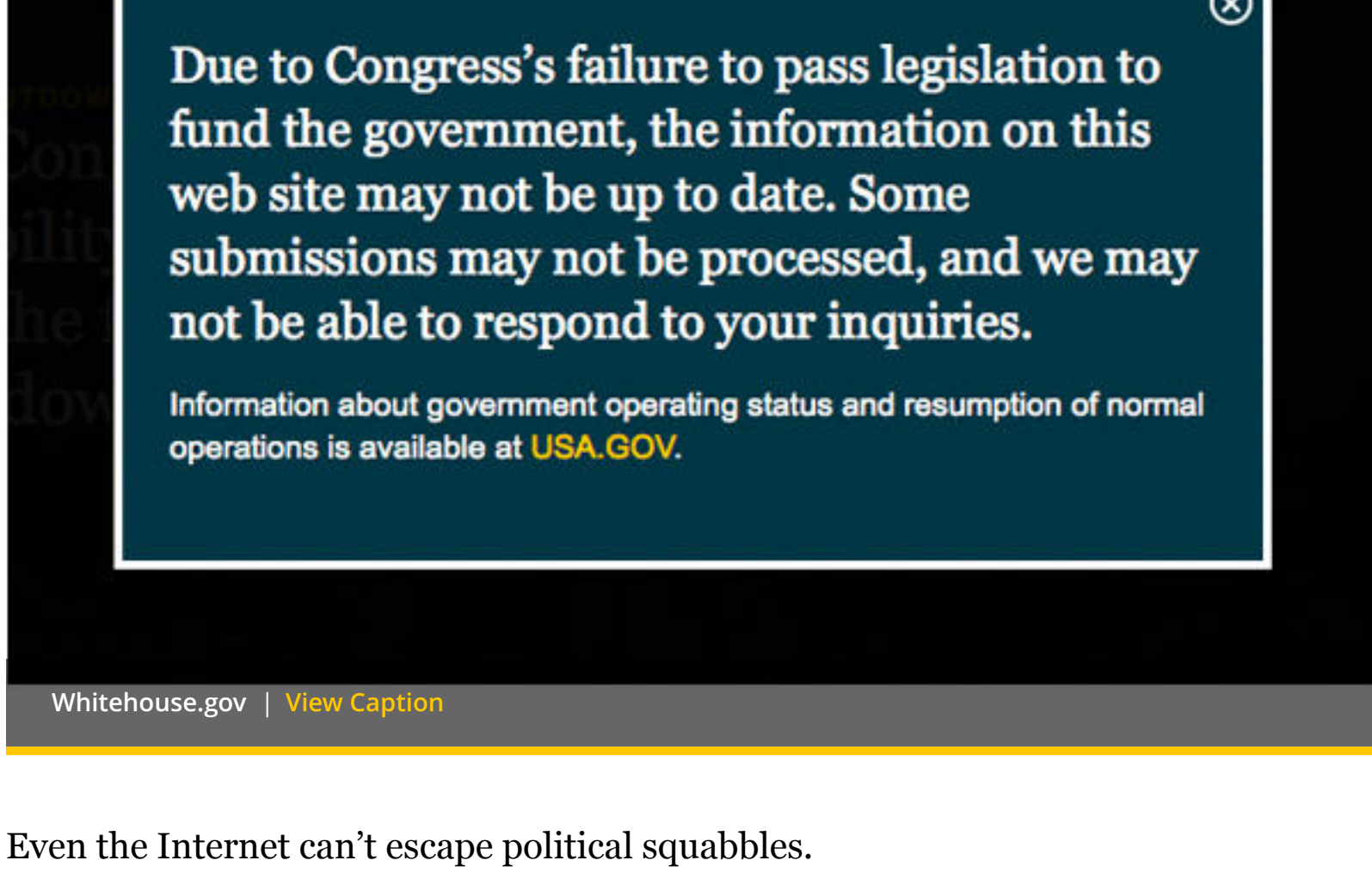


INNOVATION

Government shutdown sends National Park Service, NASA, other websites offline

The government shutdown has affected the online and social media presence of many major government agencies, meaning citizens may have problems finding ordinarily easy-to-access information.

By **Karis Mustad**, Contributor | OCTOBER 1, 2013



Even the Internet can't escape political squabbles.

After the government shutdown at midnight EST on Oct. 1, the World Wide Web became a little less accessible. Many major government agencies either went entirely offline or only offered static homepages, with disclaimers that information would not be updated. Social media use was suspended with final tweets and posts telling followers services would be suspended. Furloughed government workers won't even be able to check their email to find out when they need to come back to work.

Reasons for web shutdowns vary from agency to agency, depending on how much funding was cut off and how much each department relies on their web presence to disseminate vital information. A memo sent out to agencies from the White House last week advised, "Given that websites represent the front-end of numerous back-end processing systems, agencies must determine whether the entire website can be shut down or components of the website will be shut down."

Recommended: Government shutdown 101: 12 ways it could affect you

So what's the scope of this Internet shutdown? If you're trying to file a complaint with the Federal Trade Commission, fill out the FAFSA, or get updates from the NASA Asteroid Watch, you're out of luck.

Here is a round up of some major dot-gov website interruptions.

Library of Congress (LOC.gov)

The Library of Congress website will be totally offline during the government shutdown. Ordinarily, you would be able to use it to browse digital collections, look into copyright services, and access its law library. As of now, LOC.gov is totally offline, but [beta.congress.gov](#) and [THOMAS.gov](#) (the online databases for Congress' activities), are online and available for use, so you can keep up with how Congress is attempting to sort out this massive shutdown.



Government shutdown 101: 12 ways it could affect you



PHOTOS OF THE DAY | Photos of the weekend

National Park Service (NPS.gov)

Millions groaned with irony when Google changed its logo Oct. 1 to honor Yosemite National Park's 123rd birthday, the same day Yosemite had to close its doors due to the government shutdown. Online, the National Park Service website is also shut down. Late morning on Oct. 1, NPS.gov showed an error message letting visitors know all National Park websites would not be functioning, though information would be available via the Department of the Interior ([DOI.gov](#)). @NatParkService also tweeted: "Because of the federal gov't shutdown this National Park Service Twitter feed is inactive. We'll start tweeting again when we get back".

NASA (NASA.gov)

NASA may have more of a presence in space than it does on Earth during the shutdown. NASA.gov is offline, most of NASA's 18,000 employees are furloughed, with the exception of operations and personnel needed for the "safety and protection of life and property," according to NASA's [shutdown plan](#). This has impacted the social media life of NASA as well, as all Twitter accounts have ceased activity. NASA Asteroid Watch (@AsteroidWatch) which warns the public of any hazardous space objects, stopped tweeting early Oct. 1, and @NASAVoyager2 tweeted late last night "Due to government shutdown, we will not be posting or responding from this account. Farewell, humans. Sort it out yourselves."

Department of Education (Ed.gov)

The Dept. of Education website will remain online but inactive according to a disclaimer on its website. This includes their blog, press office, and information about financial aid. This ed.gov shutdown includes [studentaid.ed.gov](#) which runs the websites for FAFSA, Pell Grants and other federal aid. Its [website](#) reads, "We anticipate that there will be limited impact to the federal student aid application (FAFSA) process, to the delivery of federal student aid, or to the federal student loan repayment functions." In addition @usedgov tweeted their last early Oct. 1: "We're sorry, but we will not be tweeting or responding to @ replies during the government shutdown. We'll be back as soon as possible!"

Veteran Affairs (VA.gov)

Veteran Affairs is one of the few government websites that isn't offline or not functioning. But it isn't at full force. VA.gov says the websites' updates will be "intermittent", the "Contact Us" function will not work, and social media websites will be updated occasionally. However, many of the main services of the VA, such as medical services, loan processing, and crisis hotline will still function.

Federal Trade Commission (FTC.gov)

The Federal Trade Commission website is a tease today: for half a second, the website in its full form comes up online then quickly re-routes to an error page that explains what the FTC can and can't do during the shutdown. The FTC Premerger Notification Office is open to accept HSR filings (part of the Antitrust Improvements Act) and people can file Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests, though they will not be processed. However, consumers cannot file complaints or register for Do Not Call.

White House (WhiteHouse.gov)

Not hard to guess the White House's opinion on the shutdown. A visit to WhiteHouse.gov brings up the message: "Due to Congress's failure to pass legislation to fund the government, the information on this web site may not be up to date." The site also says that some submissions may not be processed and they may not be able to respond to inquiries.

This is just a handful of the websites and Twitter accounts affected, as the Department of Agriculture ([USDA.gov](#)), Department of Health and Human Services ([HHS.gov](#)), Department of Transportation ([DOT.gov](#)), Department of Treasury among many others have limited or offline services today. For a full list of government agencies and websites, check out [USA.gov](#).

Curious as to what isn't shut down today? The [IRS](#) is still up and processing taxes and the [Department of Defense](#) (including the NSA) is still active, though both website have limited updates. [Healthcare.gov](#), the new Affordable Care Act insurance exchange website, is also running, but some worry the shutdown of other websites may limit its capability.

One last casualty of the shutdown: for those of you following along with the National Zoo's adorable [panda cam](#), unfortunately it has been turned off until funding is restored. ■

Related Stories

Government shutdown 101: 12 ways it could affect you

- Federal shutdown won't save taxpayers money. It will cost them. (+video)
- How government shutdown affects benefits for seniors, poor, jobless, veterans

Share this story: [Facebook] [Twitter] [Google+] [MORE] [EMAIL] [PRINT]

Offers and Articles from the Web!

Ads by AdBlast

Don't buy an SUV before reading this. Expert opinions on the best 7 safest & most reliable SUVs

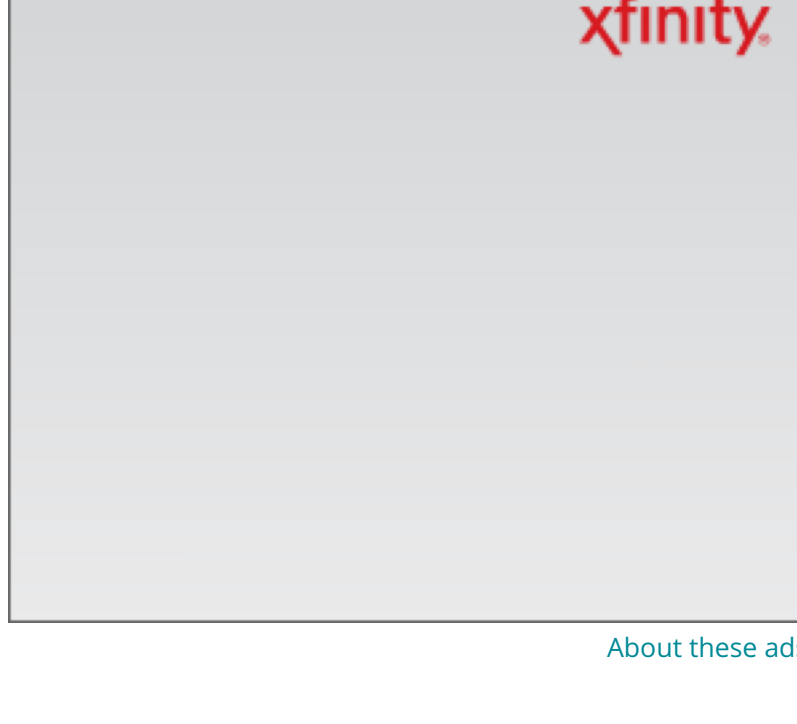
New Rule in Maryland: Do Not Pay Your Next Car Insurance Bill Until You Read This...

1 Weird Trick for 20+ Yards. 12 Time PGA Winner's Shocking Claim: Ditch the Conventional

Warren Buffett Collapses in Stock Market

One small company makes the gadget possible, and its stock price has nearly unlimited room

Maryland: Here's a little known way to pay down your mortgage.....



About these ads

Popular Now

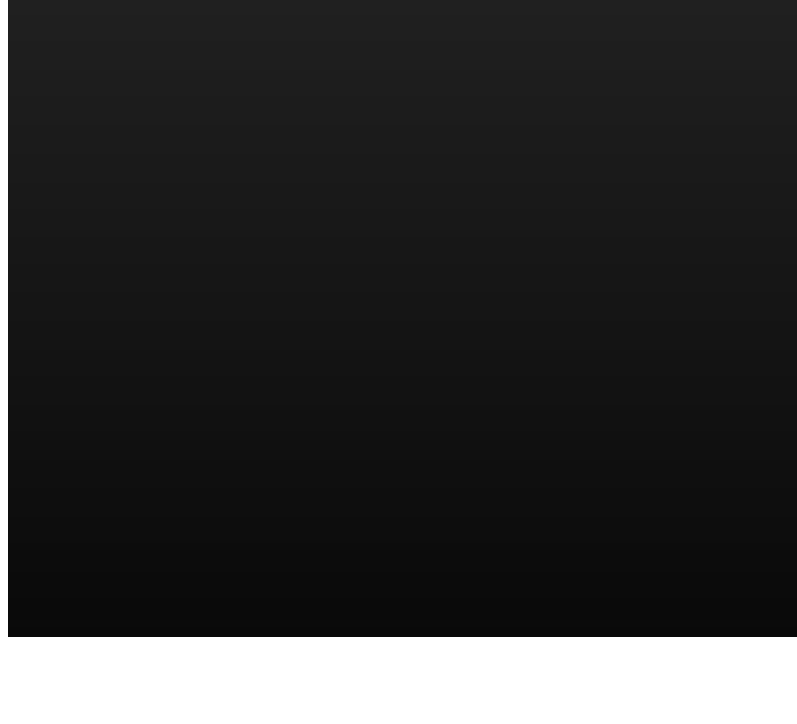
- Woman uses hidden camera to expose life under Islamic State (+video)
- S.C. cop in trouble for shooting unarmed man: 'Sir, why was I shot?' (+video)
- Apple iOS 8 update cripples phones. How to fix it. (+video)
- FBI: New Apple, Google phones too secure, could put users 'beyond the law'
- How much do you know about the Islamic State?



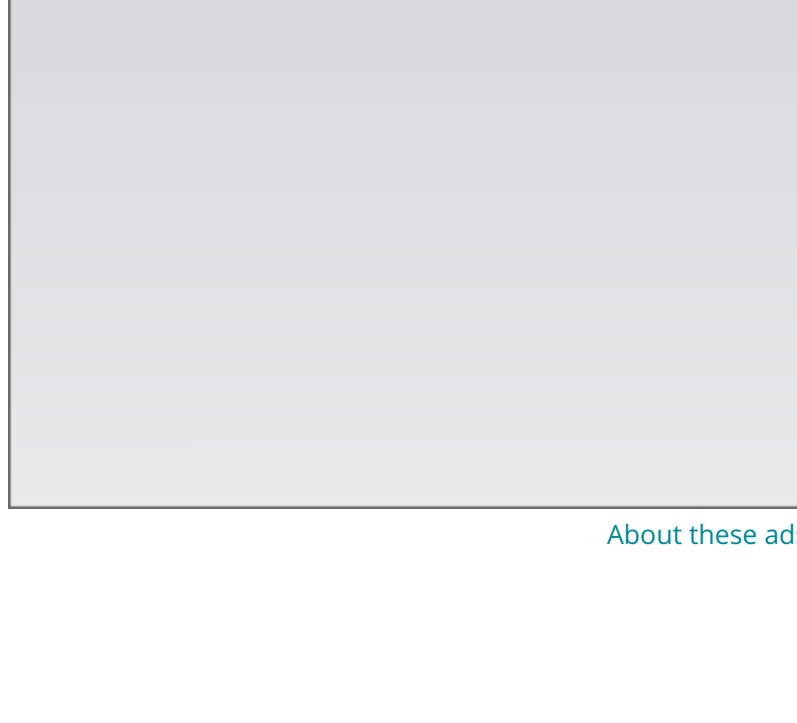
40 iPhone tips and tricks everyone should know



4 Free issues SUBSCRIBE



About these ads



About these ads

Follow Stories Like This
Get the Monitor stories you care about delivered to your inbox.

Our Award-Winning Publication

Subscribe to the Monitor's trustworthy weekly review of global news and ideas.

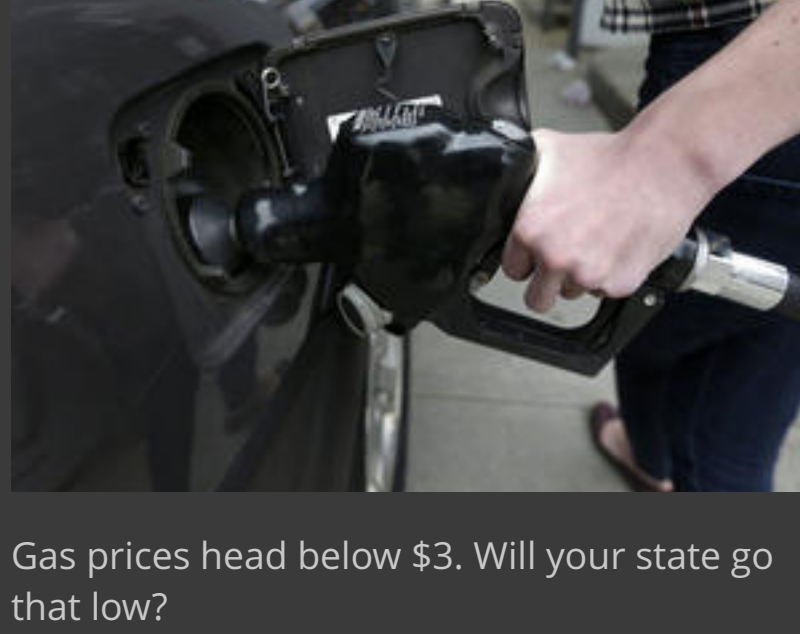
4 Free Issues SUBSCRIBE

Global Galleries



Photos of the Day 09/25

Editors' picks



Gas prices head below \$3. Will your state go that low?

Doing Good



How one woman turned two acres into a profitable business

B Back 2 School with the Best Antivirus 2014

PC EDITORS' CHOICE