



# TECHNICAL BULLETIN

## Caption Disruptions Due to CenturyLink Outage

*Issued 9/1/2020*

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Service    | VITAC Captioning                            |
| Bulletin # | IPCC.03                                     |
| Severity   | <b>5 – Severe: Caption Outages Reported</b> |
| Start Time | 6:14 am EDT, 8/30/2020                      |
| End Time   | 10:35 am EDT, 8/30/2020                     |

### Description:

At 6:14 am on Sunday, August 30, VITAC lost IP connectivity due to a widespread network outage across the United States that impacted our primary circuits and made some secondary routes unstable. We immediately initiated backup procedures, and captions resumed quickly for clients using a cloud-based or POTS-fed encoder. Service was significantly disrupted to clients that rely solely on an IP connection to our facility to receive captions.

### Root Cause:

CenturyLink/Level 3 Communications, an ISP and internet bandwidth provider, suffered a major technical outage on Sunday after a misconfiguration in its data center in Ontario, Canada. The outage involved both firewall and BGP routing, and the error spread from the CenturyLink/Level 3 Communications network and impacted other internet service providers, causing connectivity problems for a number of other companies, including Amazon, Twitter, Microsoft, EA, and Hulu. The outage, which varied by region with some areas impacted more than others, is reported to have resulted in a 3.5% drop in global internet traffic, making it one of the biggest internet outages ever recorded.

### Resolution:

VITAC moved captioners to secure backup connections as soon as possible and continued monitoring our systems throughout the day as CenturyLink/Level 3 Communications worked to solve their issue. CenturyLink/Level 3 Communication reported its services were restored as of 11:12 am.

### Actions and Recommendation:

VITAC is committed to independent and separate vendor networks to ensure maximum redundancy. In July, CenturyLink and Level 3 Communications began merging network facilities at which point VITAC took steps to add Comcast to perform the network engineering and installations needed to ensure that our providers are independent of each other and do not share network facilities. We anticipate the addition of Comcast circuits and improved diversity of service in our operating offices no later than October 5.

### Contact:

For more information, contact VITAC Realtime Technical Services at 724-514-4053 or [production@vitac.com](mailto:production@vitac.com).