COMPUTER SOLUTIONS INCORPORATED

Email Continuity During the Microsoft 365 Outage

Incident case study November 12 2026 Savannah Georgia

Computer Solutions, Inc. kept email communications moving for participating clients during the November 12 Microsoft 365 disruption by using an independent email continuity service. While affected primary inboxes were unavailable or delayed, protected users could continue sending and receiving messages through an alternate inbox using their existing business email addresses.

Our message-flow checks and operational use showed no observed message loss in the protected email traffic reviewed during the incident. Staff continued responding to customers and managing requests while the hosting providers worked to restore normal access. These premium services are offered in addition to a Microsoft 365 subscription.

The incident and its business impact

Public reporting on November 12 documented a widespread disruption affecting Outlook and other Microsoft 365 services. Microsoft acknowledged problems accessing Exchange Online mailboxes through multiple connection methods. The full cause and final scope were still developing during the response. [1]

For an organization waiting on a customer request, a colleague's response, or a verification code, an inbox that stops updating can interrupt work immediately. Computer Solutions identified the issue when expected messages were not appearing, then used its email security tools to examine the message path.

Local time	Computer Solutions observation
12:40–12:50 p.m.	Approximate window in which affected Microsoft 365 email access problems were observed.
About 12:50 p.m.	Computer Solutions also observed delayed inbox visibility in its own Gmail environment.
About 2:45 p.m.	Normal inbox delivery appeared to resume in our Gmail tests.
About 7:00 p.m.	One Microsoft 365 customer reported primary email service restored.

All times are approximate Eastern Standard Time in Savannah. They describe local observations, not a universal outage window or a Microsoft-wide all-clear. The Gmail behavior was observed in our environment; its cause and any connection to Microsoft's incident were not established.

Confirming where email was being delayed

Computer Solutions reviewed inbound and outbound message activity rather than treating an empty inbox as proof that messages had disappeared. Our tools showed messages reaching the email protection layer, being screened, and moving through the delivery path. Expected messages were still not appearing promptly in the affected primary inboxes.

A requested verification code and messages exchanged between colleagues gave us practical examples to trace. The checks established that email was flowing through the protection system even while access or presentation in the primary email platform was disrupted. That finding allowed us to move quickly to the continuity workflow.

The solution and immediate workaround

We executed our email contingency plan and used the independent continuity inbox already available within the premium service. Protected users could access recent messages and continue business conversations while their normal email platform was experiencing problems. Computer Solutions used the same capability to continue serving and communicating with clients.

The continuity layer automatically maintains a rolling copy of protected messages as they pass through the service. During an outage, users access the alternate inbox to send and receive email with their normal business address. This preserves a working communication channel while the primary provider resolves its service issue.

How the response worked

1. Reviewed message activity to confirm that expected email reached the protection service and to distinguish delivery activity from primary inbox visibility.
2. Used the established continuity inbox so protected users could read and respond to email independently of the affected primary mailbox.
3. Continued customer communication through the alternate service while monitoring the primary email platforms for recovery.
4. Tested normal inbox access as service returned and checked the transition back to the primary platform.

Automatic message capture kept the continuity inbox supplied; users worked through that alternate inbox during the interruption. This maintained email communication without requiring Microsoft's normal mailbox interface to be available. It did not restore unrelated Microsoft 365 applications.

Protection for recent email

The continuity service provides a rolling 30-day view of messages captured after it has been enabled. It can also help users retrieve or forward a recent message accidentally deleted from their primary inbox. Continuity access is not a complete mailbox backup or a synchronization of folders, contacts, and calendars; sent items and the return to normal delivery require attention during recovery.

Secure archiving beyond the outage

Long-term email preservation is a separate capability available within our premium email offerings. When configured, archiving captures covered messages, indexes them, and makes them searchable. Configurable retention supports an organization's recordkeeping requirements, with authorized access to locate messages for business review, HR matters, or compliance inquiries.

Continuity and archiving serve different purposes. Continuity provides a working email channel during a service interruption and access to recent captured messages. Archiving preserves covered communications for the configured retention period. The archive's scope depends on the capture configuration, including the handling of internal messages.

Supporting healthcare and HR requirements

For medical and healthcare organizations, dependable access to communications is one part of protecting electronic health information. Computer Solutions offers premium email capabilities that can support HIPAA obligations through appropriately configured security, availability, and retention measures.

HIPAA compliance also depends on the organization's policies, risk assessment, access controls, workforce practices, and applicable business associate agreements. A subscription to email filtering, continuity, or archiving alone does not establish compliance. HHS identifies access control, integrity, and transmission security as requirements relevant to email containing electronic protected health information. [2]

HR departments can benefit from searchable records and controlled access to communications about employees, onboarding, and other sensitive matters. Retention should follow the organization's applicable policies and obligations, with access limited to authorized personnel.

The result for participating clients

Clients equipped with the premium continuity service retained a way to send and receive business email during the interruption. Customer requests could still be addressed, colleagues could continue corresponding, and Computer Solutions could keep managing client needs. No message loss was observed in the protected traffic reviewed during our response.

The event demonstrated the value of preparing an independent communication path before an outage occurs. Microsoft 365 remained the customer's primary platform, while the additional service supplied a usable email channel during the disruption. Organizations without this capability had to rely on their primary provider's restoration or other communication methods.

Computer Solutions, Inc. can help organizations assess their email security, continuity, and archiving needs and select the premium services appropriate to their operations. These capabilities are additional services above the standard Microsoft 365 subscription and must be enabled and configured for the users and message flows being protected.

Public references

[1] Associated Press. Is Outlook down? Widespread outage hits Microsoft email and other apps. November 12, 2026. https://apnews.com/article/6376045281feb430c0b923e3a4b251c2

[2] U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Does the Security Rule allow for sending electronic PHI in an email or over the Internet? https://www.hhs.gov/hipaa/for-professionals/faq/does-the-security-rule-allow-for-sending-electronic-phi-in-an-email/index.html