VI UPDATE · BRIEF · v1.0 · NOVEMBER 2026

The month the spending site stood still

For 31 days the U.S. Virgin Islands government's spending website showed no new payments and no new payroll. This brief sets out what our copies show, and archives them.

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AI coding agents (Anthropic's Claude), working on Brian Louden's computer under his direction, built and ran the research tools for this report. See "How this report was made."

From 17 October to 17 November 2026, transparency.vi.gov stayed online but stopped changing. Every read of its checkbook returned the same 191 entries, none dated after 16 October, and its payroll held only the pay dates of 1 to 16 October. No notice on the site, or on the Office of Management and Budget or Department of Finance websites, said the data had stopped. The government's copy now looks complete. VI Update's copies, taken twice a day, are the record of the month it stood still, and this brief archives them.

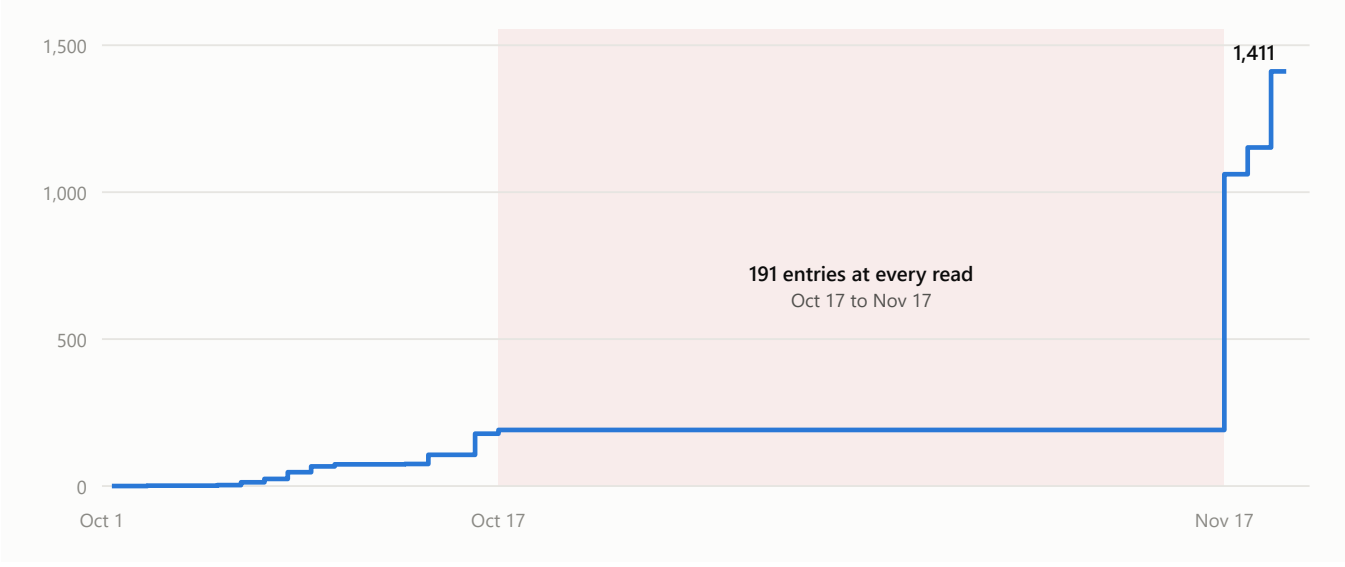
SECTION 1

What stopped

VI Update has copied the checkbook since 27 March 2026, and twice a day since 10 September. Through the first half of October the fiscal 2027 checkbook grew on every business day. After our read of 17 October it did not change: 54 reads from 18 October to 17 November returned 191 entries. Copies taken 13 November and 16 November were identical byte for byte. Before the freeze, in our twice-daily record, the checkbook never went more than three days without a new entry.

The payroll stopped the same day. Its 82,103 lines carried pay dates of 1 to 16 October only. The regular payrolls of 29 October and 12 November were not on the site during the freeze.

Figure 1 — The checkbook, read by read



Source: VI Update's twice-daily reads of usvi.spending.socrata.com, fiscal 2027 file (our-reads/every-check-of-the-feeds.csv in the data package).

SECTION 2

What came back

The checkbook changed again on 17 November, 31 days after its last change, with the missing weeks filled in. For checks dated 1 to 16 October, the frozen file listed $2.9 million; as of our read of 20 November the file lists $15.6 million for the same dates, of which $15.0 million is in rows marked Paid. The same update added 2,025 entries to fiscal 2026, which had closed 30 September (1,891 of them dated September), listed at $37.8 million, of which $29.4 million is marked Paid. None of them was on the site during the freeze.

The payroll came back between our reads of 18 November and 19 November: 32 or 33 days after it stopped. By then the 29 October payroll was three weeks old.

SECTION 3

The law

> All data required to be published in this chapter must be updated on a monthly basis, at a minimum.

3 V.I.C. § 881a(f)

The section assigns the site to the Bureau of Information Technology, working with the Office of Management and Budget and the Department of Finance. It has no exception for maintenance, a rebuild or the close of a fiscal year, and it does not define monthly. It does not require notice when the updates stop.

SECTION 4

What we asked

On 13 November VI Update emailed Finance Commissioner Kevin McCurdy and OMB Director Julio Rhymer to ask whether the site was still being updated. On 16 November it sent four questions to Bureau of Information Technology Director Rupert Ross and filed a public records request with Finance for the missing data and any records explaining the stop. As of the evening of 19 November none had replied, and the request had not been acknowledged. Why the data stopped, and why it came back, is not known.

LIMITS

What this report leaves out, and why

One thing is left out of the archived data, by choice.

LEFT OUT	WHY	WHAT WOULD BRING IT IN
The names of people: employees on the payroll, and people paid through the checkbook	The law that requires the site lists, among what it must publish, "All positions and respective salaries without any personal identifiers, to include, but not limited to, the employee's name" (3 V.I.C. § 881a(c)(5)). The government publishes these files with names. Publishing every employee's name beside their pay, and every private person's name beside a payment, may not fit the standards usually applied to that kind of information. A permanent archive should not reproduce it as it appears publicly. Each name of a person is replaced with a bracketed note; every row, amount, date, department and record number stays as served, so the gap this archive documents, and the data behind it, remain the original.	Nothing: the names remain on the government's own site.

LIMITS

What the record does not show

- The moment of any change: a change is dated to the first of our reads that saw it.
- Why the data stopped or came back. No office has said.
- The government's original files during the freeze: we kept the rows and the files' fingerprints, not the files. Since 20 November we keep the files too.

METHOD

Sources, method and reconciliation

- The government's checkbook files, fiscal 2026 and 2027, usvi.spending.socrata.com, read twice a day.
- The government's payroll file, fiscal 2027, usvi.payroll.socrata.com.
- 3 V.I.C. § 881a, 2026 Virgin Islands Code.

- VI Update's emails of 13 November and 16, 2026, and its records request of 16 November, from its Sent Items.

Money totals count every row the file lists unless they say Paid; Paid means rows the government marks Paid, as of the date given. Approved rows are bills approved, not money out.

DATA PACKAGE

The data behind this report

The package `gvi-spending-site-freeze-data` holds the public records this report uses, the tables its figures come from, the written rule behind every match, and a script that checks a selected set of the figures against those files with nothing but Python's standard library.

FILE OR FOLDER	WHAT IT HOLDS
`as-served/`	The government's files as our copies hold them: the frozen fiscal 2027 checkbook, both checkbooks as of our latest read, the rows taken out of the file, and the payroll during the freeze. Names of people are masked.
`our-reads/`	Every check of the feeds since 10 September, when each checkbook row first reached us, payroll lines by pay date, and the files' fingerprints.
`README.md`	What each file is, every column, what was masked and how many.
`reproduce.py`	Checks this brief's figures against the files.

To check the figures: `python reproduce.py`, which writes `figures.csv` (each figure checked, the value printed here, the value from the package, the kind of file it reads, PASS or FAIL); the package README lists what it cannot check.

Its page: https://viupdate.com/reports/data/gvi-spending-site-freeze-data/; the download: `https://files.viupdate.com/reports/data/gvi-spending-site-freeze-data-v1.0.zip`. It is a fixed snapshot with its own Zenodo record and DOI, separate from the report's.

License: the data is dedicated to the public domain under CC0 1.0, apart from limits set by its sources, which the package lists.

RECORD OF CHANGES

Corrections

None. Corrections to this report after publication will be recorded here: what changed, the corrected value, and the date, rather than absorbed silently.

CITATION

How to cite this report

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THE ARCHIVE

Built on USVI Public Records

USVI Public Records is the public archive of U.S. Virgin Islands government records where VI Update's research begins. Brian Louden built it and runs it. Every document it holds is kept with its original source and its SHA-256, so a reader can open the record a report rests on.

This report cites no archive document by number; its sources are listed under Sources, method and reconciliation.

Search the archive: usvipublicrecords.com.

METHOD AND TOOLS

How this report was made

AI coding agents (Anthropic's Claude), working on Brian Louden's own computer, built and ran the research tools behind this report: programs that collect the public records, apply the written matching rules and recompute the figures. They worked under Brian's direction and to rules he wrote. He chose the questions and the sources, made every editorial decision and approved the report. The data package holds the records and tables behind the figures, and a script that checks a selected set of them. The tools set no rules and made no editorial or publication decision.

The month the spending site stood still · A VI Update report by Brian Louden · v1.0 · 20 November 2026.

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Published by Brian Louden from St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands.

This report organizes public records; it does not include interviews or comment.

This report carries no home addresses, household P.O. boxes, personal phone numbers or e-mail addresses, or dates of birth.

All times Atlantic Standard Time (UTC-4) unless marked.

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Corrections: tips@viupdate.com. A correction made after publication is listed in the Corrections section of the next version, with what changed, the corrected value and the date; nothing is changed silently.

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