

U.S. Stocks Calm Down

Apple is biggest loser, briefly losing its top spot in market capitalization to Google parent, Alphabet

By

Leslie Josephs and

Riva Gold

Updated May 12, 2016 7:42 p.m. ET

U.S. stocks steadied Thursday after two days of sharp moves.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose less than 10 points after it surged 222 on Tuesday and fell by a similar amount a day later.

[Apple](#) closed at its lowest level since June 2014, and was the biggest laggard in the Dow. Shares of the iPhone maker fell \$2.17, or 2.4%, to \$90.34, shaving 15 points off the index.

The move briefly knocked Apple down to the second-largest U.S. company based on market capitalization. By the close, however, Apple, with a market cap of \$494.83 billion, edged out Google parent [Alphabet](#) Inc., which closed Thursday with a market capitalization of \$494.79 billion.

Investors have been wrestling with volatile oil prices, weak global economic growth and gloomy updates from some of the U.S.'s largest retailers. A reading of monthly retail sales is due Friday.

"Investors don't have a reason to buy," said Randy Warren, chief investment officer at Warren Financial.

"What's the reason to jump in?"

The Dow industrials rose 9.38 points, or 0.1%, to 17720.50, leaving the index nearly flat for the week.

The S&P 500 lost 0.35 point, or less than 0.1%, to 2064.11. The Nasdaq Composite Index fell 23.35 points, or 0.5%, to 4737.33.



ENLARGE

The International Energy Agency said global oil stocks will experience a “dramatic reduction” in the second half of the year, helping lift prices. Photo: Citizens of the Planet/Education Images/UIG/Getty Images

U.S. crude prices whipsawed for most of the session after the International Energy Agency said global oil supplies will experience a “dramatic reduction” in the second half of the year.

U.S. crude futures rose 1% to settle at a [new six-month high of \\$46.70 a barrel](#).

Energy shares in the S&P 500 rose 0.4%, outperforming the broader market.

[Chevron](#) increased 98 cents, or 1%, to 102.12, while [Exxon Mobil](#) added 86 cents, or 1%, to 89.67.

[Nike](#) led the Dow industrials higher, gaining 98 cents, or 1.7%, to 57.99.

Retailer [Kohl's](#) fell 3.55, or 9.2%, to 35.15, its lowest close since March 2009. The retailer reported an [87% drop in profit](#) in the latest quarter as sales unexpectedly fell.

[Macy's](#) earnings on Wednesday [fueled concerns about consumer spending](#) and [sparked a sharp selloff](#) in several store operators and clothing companies.

“Maybe we’re reviving manufacturing and energy a little bit, but if the consumer fails, there would be

greater concern on the overall economy again in a hurry,” said [Jim Paulsen](#), chief investment strategist at Wells Capital Management.

While he doesn't expect a big downturn, “any information suggesting the consumer is fading would increase anxieties quite a bit,” he said.

Advertisement

The S&P 500 is up 1% this year, a challenge to investors searching for returns.

“We're in this low-yield environment and the ability to achieve good competitive rates of income are getting scarcer,” said Leo Marzen, co-founder of Bridgewater Advisors, which manages about \$1 billion.

The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 1.758%, from 1.737% on Wednesday, as prices fell.

Gold for May delivery fell 0.3% to \$1,270.30 an ounce.

The Stoxx Europe 600 slipped 0.5%.

In currencies, the euro fell 0.4% against the dollar to \$1.1378 after eurozone industrial output fell sharply for a second consecutive month.

The British pound rose slightly against the dollar to \$1.4451 after the Bank of England [left interest rates unchanged](#) and said a vote to leave the European Union “could materially alter the outlook for output and inflation” in the U.K.

The June 23 referendum has also made many investors cautious about European equities.

In Asia on Thursday, Japan's Nikkei Stock Average rose 0.4% and the dollar rose 0.6% against the yen to ¥109.03.

Stocks in Hong Kong and Australia ended with [modest losses](#), following the weaker close on Wall Street on Wednesday.

Corrections & Amplifications:

Apple Inc., with a market cap of \$494.83 billion, remained the largest U.S. company based on market capitalization at the close of trading on Thursday, despite having fallen behind Google's parent, Alphabet Inc., during the trading day. Alphabet, which closed Thursday with a market capitalization of \$494.79 billion, remained No. 2. An earlier version of this article and a chart accompanying it incorrectly said that Alphabet took the No. 1 spot as of Thursday's close with a market cap of \$494.86 billion because of erroneous information from FactSet, the data provider. (May 13)

Write to Leslie Josephs at leslie.josephs@wsj.com and Riva Gold at riva.gold@wsj.com