



Direct Routing: the most complete communication platform for education



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Introduction

In this eBook, we'll be introducing the concept of Direct Routing. This holistic comms solution from Microsoft Teams bridges your educational telecoms with the commonly adopted Microsoft Teams solutions, providing holistic communications within a single solution – one that also includes the many benefits of your wider Microsoft 365 applications.

Challenging Times for Educational Comms?

If education relies on any one consistency, it's communication; the ability to feedback, share ideas and ask pertinent questions. Yet, as technology has demonstrated, modern comms aren't limited to conversation alone. With advances in communication technology, students and staff in schools, colleges, universities and trusts can collaborate seamlessly on projects, contribute to ever-expanding libraries of resources and share crucial updates on an institutional scale. Yet in an education sector still struggling with technical adoption, plus state schools suffering under a severe funding decline, such results can feel more idyllic than realistic. Between 2019 and 2021, educational comms underwent sweeping technological changes and ultimately created a challenging environment for educators.

According to the Education Policy Institute, a minimum £78bn in lifetime earnings will be lost by children and students who missed out on education over the past three years.

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Last year, it was reported that 44% of teachers did not have the technology or resources to capture or distribute student work and assessments.

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As of October 2021, a scant 39% of teachers and institute leaders had the ability to share student data with parents.

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Yet such statistics needn't be ominous; this early on, they signify a sector quite naturally reeling from years of technical disruption. With the right communicative strategy, all forms of educational institutes can emerge from the uncertainty more equipped than ever to tackle their communicative complications.



What is Direct Routing?

The majority of businesses and institutions rely on Microsoft's 365 solution, of which Microsoft Teams is a key component. Designed as a communicative and collaborative hub for the wider Microsoft 365 environment, Teams has perhaps become the World's most widely used voice and video calling solution. With Teams Direct Routing, organisations incorporate their Microsoft Teams solution with their ISDN, PSTN or Private Branch Exchange (PBX) phonelines. In doing so, their two disparate forms of communication – Teams and telephony – become one holistic communicative solution. For professionals managing several contacts and comms solutions, this makes calling simpler across the board; their Teams solution handles all their calling for them – and not just internally.



Didn't Teams already offer a PBX solution via Teams Calling Plans?

To an extent, yes. Microsoft's optional Calling Plans offered an efficient approach to local and global calling costs and were managed as part of the subscriber's wider Microsoft365 package. Admittedly, the ease of adoption made this an attractive (if rudimentary) method for adopting a Teams-based PBX. However, its value has degraded over time, owing to its waning support for international customers and the inflexibility of Microsoft's own calling plans. As far as PBX solutions go, Teams Calling Plans feel more transitional than terminal. Direct Routing overcomes the limitations of availability, pricing, flexibility and contracts. Furthermore, it doesn't forfeit any of the benefits of your wider Microsoft Teams solution.

	Microsoft Teams	Microsoft 365 Voice	Microsoft Call Packages	Microsoft Direct Routing
Calls to any landline, mobile or device	X	✓	✓	✓
Simple Number Porting	X	X	X	✓
PBX Support	X	X	✓	✓
Flexible Calling Plans	X	X	X	✓
Expansive International Coverage	X	X	X	✓

What are the benefits of Direct Routing?

While Direct Routing is particularly suited to the demands of the education sector, there are nonetheless several immediate benefits to the cost, customisation and availability of your existing comms – especially when delivered by Avoira.

Dedicated SIP Trunking

Our SIP trunking virtualises your existing PBX phone lines for internet-enabled telephony. You're no longer limited to your branch exchange network and can connect to phone numbers across the world; all with no hardware needed and easy, efficient number porting.

Customisable costs

You have much more cost control with a Direct Routing solution. You're no longer tied to Microsoft's basic Calling Plans catalogue, and instead migrate your existing provider's calling plans with a simplified recurring payments per-user, per-month.

Interoperability

Direct Routing essentially transforms both your existing PBX and your Microsoft Teams environment, without having to abandon or replace either of them. Teams combines the benefits of both into one management environment and expands the scope of your PBX as a result.

Manageable migration

Among businesses and institutions, pressure is mounting to modernise solutions in the wake of a tenuous 2020. With Direct Routing, you already have the components you need to modernise your telephony – and with a provider like Avoira handling the migration, the stress of transforming your telephony is eradicated with a swift and simple migration.

Simplicity

Users already familiar with Teams are well-versed in its internal voice and video calling functions. Combining these with the option for direct dialling, all within the same platform, eliminates the need for separate solutions or hardware. Everyone is reachable from one number and one point of contact.



“We’re looking at operational costs savings of around 65%.... I’ve been delighted at how stable the service has been. That’s testament to the work Avoira and my team did in planning and getting the design and roll-out right. It’s been great, a really good project that’s been very well received by everyone”

Justin Williams, Director of Information Services, Wrexham Glyndwr University

Direct Routing – the educational benefits

Schools, colleges, universities and trusts within the education sector have long borne the brunt of long-distance working, learning and communicating; now it's time to reap the benefits. How does Direct Routing make an educator's role easier, no matter the institution they work in?



You've everything you need already

If you already use Teams and any sort of PBX, ISDN or PSTN phone line, then you already have a Direct Routing solution – all you need is the means to piece it together. Most educational institutions, be they a school, college, university or trust, are likely to have an A5 license for their Microsoft 365 service. Therefore, you already have an incorporated phone system license that enables you to connect Teams to Direct Routing for free. If you don't, Direct Routing is still available as bolt on, for as little as £2 per user, per month.



Everything is Accessible

Direct Routing might consolidate calling, but that doesn't mean it limits it. On the contrary; combining your telephony with your Teams brings expansive capabilities to both systems and lets you leverage your telephony and technology in tandem. Calls can be made externally via your PBX devices, to any internet or traditional calling line, while Teams' functionality with your wider Microsoft 365 environment – not to mention third-party apps – means your calls are now compatible with all supported CRM, educational and call centre software solutions.



Cleaning up Clearing

University clearing is a chaotic and disruptive process, one worsened by a tenuous 2020 that stands to continue long into the future. Currently, university call centre solutions are ill-equipped to manage the volume of calls and struggle to get callers to reach their destination during clearing season. Direct Routing allows callers to speak directly with the person or department they need straight away, rather than waiting on hold with reception. Additionally, it has a missed call notification feature for any calls that go unanswered, helping to streamline and organise the clearing process.



Exceptional strategy

The benefits of both services can't be understated; there's potential for some genuinely transformative benefits to the everyday teaching environment with Direct Routing. Teams' translator option allows students and teachers to converse bilingually via Teams, no matter the connection type. Calls can be secured and recorded thanks to the security and flexibility of the Microsoft Cloud, while the ROI on both solutions, coupled with a consolidated calling plan keeps your communication costs lower and easier to manage.



You're Available from Anywhere

Thanks to Teams, your PBX or ISDN line can make and receive calls to any connection; yet it also means you're able to mobilise numbers that were once totally static. Thanks to number porting, your on-prem contact numbers are Cloud-managed and tied not to your devices, but your Teams users. That means, so long as they're connected to Teams via your telephony, desktop or mobile applications, your users are available from the same number, always. As distance learning has become more common place in all forms of educational institutions, including schools, universities and colleges, this is a significant benefit. For long distance teaching, this can help tutors mobilise quickly and with no need for extra hardware or individual setup.



Call quality

When you choose Direct Routing through Avoira, we take on the role of your 'Session Border Controller'. Or, in less technical terms – your calls are routed directly to our solution, which manages calling traffic entering and leaving your business. That means your bandwidth is handled appropriately for better calling quality, whatever the volume. We also enable SIP Trunking for legacy lines, such as ISDN – allowing you to leverage crystal clear comms via internet connections.



"The benefits have been massive. It's changed the college, which wouldn't have been able to operate without Teams. There's a confidence about teaching online out of the office. In terms of teaching and learning, Teams is being used a lot more and the engagement with students has been pretty good. (Avoira) have been quick to assist and have always got some sort of resolution for an issue. They even gave us a buy-back deal on our old phone system which was very nice!"

Ben Travers , Computer Services Manager, Farnborough College

The Avoira approach

Uniting People Through Technology

At Avoira, we're committed to connectivity – uniting users, their clients and their technologies for more meaningful conversations, faster business growth and confidence in their comms. For us, that means providing the most complete and cohesive telecoms solutions, with none of the technical complexity.

With over 40 years' experience, our teams are experienced in multiple sectors and industries, including education, finance, retail and construction. That way, our clients' solutions are always bespoke, relevant and tailored to their connectivity needs.

For all of your business' unified comms requirements, talk to Avoira – your service provider enabling unity through technology.



40 Years
Experience



IT Services



Unified
Communications



Managed Services

avoiraTM





Arrange your free proof of concept

See how our comms solutions provide proven business benefits by booking your free proof of concept trial today.

Benefit from:

- A free 30-day trial, for up to 25 users
- A complete evaluation, with no disruption to existing business process
- Run in parallel or as a replacement of your existing telephone system to experience the full potential of the solution
- The productivity benefits of an all-new way of collaborating
- We even program all the necessary features required, such as allocating DDI numbers, pick-up groups and more

To arrange your free proof of concept visit the Avoira website today.

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