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The Dangers of Using Multiple Collaboration Apps (And How to Avoid Them)

Juggling multiple collaboration apps at the office? You're not alone!

According to research, 91% of companies use at least two messaging apps for internal communications. This goes against the advice of IT managers, who typically want to consolidate platforms for security and UX purposes. So why the disconnect?

In this post, we're going to explore the challenges of using multiple collaboration tools and suggest solutions that will keep both employees AND IT pro's happy. (Spoiler alert: it's not about ditching all your platforms, it's about making them work together).

Let's get started:

The Rise of User-Centric Collaboration

> user centered

You might be wondering how your organization ended up using five chat platforms when you only formally endorse one (and pay the subscription fee!).

The rise in user-centric collaboration means it’s now easier than ever for employees and teams to choose the platform that lets them work most effectively. In theory, this is a positive move. We’re all different and we all have our own communications style. As each platform has a distinct UX, it’s natural to gravitate towards a particular look and feel or towards the platform you perceive will make you most productive.

Until fairly recently, this wouldn’t have been possible. A “business-centric” model meant that access to communications tools required a corporate subscription (shout out to the good old days of Microsoft Lync!). Nowadays, platforms target users and teams directly, with free versions and cheap entry-level solutions.

Multiple Collaboration Apps = Multiple Challenges

> too many apps can be challenging

Using multiple collaboration apps, particularly free ones, create multiple challenges. (Check out this article for more on the risks of free communications.) Here are the four issues most commonly raised by 3CX partners:

1. Supporting Multiple Apps is Costly

If teams within your organization prefer using different channels you could wind up paying multiple subscriptions and wasting money that could be invested elsewhere. Whilst communication tools

are becoming more affordable generally, no one wants to be paying more than they need to be.

So if your marketing team wants a different channel to your developers, it’s time to dig in and understand which features matter most, so that you can identify the platforms that perform well across the board.

2. Consumer Apps Pose a Security Risk

As the saying goes, if the product is free, then the product is you. The same goes for software. If your employees use consumer platforms to discuss business matters, you’re at risk of exposing sensitive information, particularly as employee accounts cannot be monitored centrally.

Keep personal and business matters separate: use a dedicated business collaboration platform for all corporate matters.

3. Information Gets Lost

Whilst the risk of accidentally exposing information is very real so is the risk of losing it altogether. When employees use multiple applications, information has a tendency to get lost. After all, it’s hard enough trying to find information stored in your own docs, let alone scour three different platforms.

Losing information disrupts meetings, hinders project progress and makes employees less productive. The fewer platforms they use, the less information is scattered, so they won’t waste time re-tracing their virtual footsteps.

4. Lack of Internal Alignment

When teams use separate collaboration apps, silos start to appear. Working in silos means working independently of other teams/ individuals within the organization, typically as a result of poor cross-functional communication.

This lack of internal alignment can be dangerous. If teams are not communicating, or are just plain difficult to contact, it can be easy to end up heading in different directions. This isn't good news for project work and it can inhibit growth,

What's the Solution?

communication solution

Despite the challenges of using multiple collaboration apps, it's unrealistic to expect total centralization. It's important to recognize that the various teams within your organization have different requirements and this needs to be taken into consideration.

The solution is two-fold. First, endorse a collaboration platform that combines multiple communication methods into one, easy to use interface. This will ensure that the vast majority of employees can communicate using their preferred method, be that video, chat, telephony or mobile, without needing to look to consumer solutions.

Secondly, look for a communications suite that offers interoperability. Open standards technology makes it possible to integrate applications so that they can communicate with each other, reducing the risk of losing information, and forming silos.

Conclusion

The more apps you use, the more challenging it becomes to achieve unified communication across your organization. IT partners must be prepared for mixed environments but try to consolidate where possible to minimize security risks, productivity lulls, and unnecessary costs.

By choosing a multi-channel communications tool such as 3CX, you can avoid the trappings of multiple collaboration apps. Instead, you'll enjoy integrated conferencing, calling, chat, and external communication. 3CX's open standards approach also makes integrating 3rd party applications simple. Have one communications hub for all staff.

By Ellen Wilkinson|October 20th, 2020 | https://www.3cx.com/blog/unified-communications/multiple-collaboration-apps/

3CX awarded 2023 "Best Technology Partner"

This year’s VoipVoice 2023 convention, **"Nati per Comunicare"** welcomed partners from all over Italy in the Teatro della Pergola in Florence - a fitting choice due to its historical significance. This is in fact where Antonio Meucci installed the first acoustic "telephone" ever invented - right here in this theater! No better place for talking about the future of digital telecommunications!

VoipVoice Convention 2023

3CX awards

It used to be Pink Floyd singing **"Another brick in the wall"**, today it's us. 3CX had the honor of being awarded **"Best Technology Partner"** by VoipVoice. This marks another addition to our impressive string of awards received in the past years, as well as the awards 3CX will undoubtedly receive in the future - it really is the case to sing **"Another PRIZE in the wall”**.

3cx award

We would like to take this opportunity to thank VoipVoice for this important award. This will further incentivize us to continue ensuring that 3CX remains a top market leader in the industry.

Is your Phone System FCC e911 Compliant?

Here is what you need to know about Kari's Law and RAY BAUM'S Act 911 Direct Dialing, Notification, and Dispatchable Location Requirements!

If you are not familiar with Kari's Law and RAY BAUM'S Act, you should be! Since the passing of the new laws for MLTS (Multi-Line Telephone System), Vox Tandem has been preparing our 3CX Communication business phone systems to be in compliance with the changes. 3CX is a software-based phone system that works with various IP phones and SIP trunks that can be installed on-premise or in a cloud. Voice over internet protocol (IP or VoIP) is a technology that allows you to use the internet to make phone calls, whether in the office or remotely from home. Regardless of where you choose to work, all of our business phone systems have been updated to support a direct-dial 911 right out-of-the-box. Not only is Vox Tandem compliant, but you can also rest easy knowing that our systems help keep your company and employees safe.

In August 2019, the Commission adopted rules implementing two federal laws that strengthen emergency calling: Kari's Law and Section 506 of RAY BAUM'S Act.

Kari's Law – Direct Dialing and Notification for MLTS

Kari's Law is named in honor of Kari Hunt, who was killed by her estranged husband in a motel room in Marshall, Texas in 2013. Ms. Hunt's 9-year-old daughter tried to call 911 for help four times from the motel room phone, but the call never went through because she did not know that the motel's phone system required dialing "9" for an outbound line before dialing 911.

Congress responded by enacting Kari's Law in 2018. Kari's Law requires direct 911 dialing and notification capabilities in multi-line telephone systems (MLTS), which are typically found in enterprises such as office buildings, campuses, and hotels. The statute provides that these requirements take effect on February 16, 2020, two years after the enactment date of Kari's Law. In addition, Kari's Law and the federal rules are forward-looking and apply only with respect to MLTS that are manufactured, imported, offered for first sale or lease, first sold or leased, or installed after February 16, 2020.

Under the statute and the Commission's rules, MLTS manufacturers and vendors must pre-configure these systems to support direct dialing of 911—that is, to enable the user to dial 911 without having to dial any prefix or access code, such as the number 9. In addition, MLTS installers, managers, and operators must ensure that the systems support 911 direct dialing.

The Commission's rules also implement the notification requirement of Kari's Law, which is intended to facilitate building entry by first responders. When a 911 call is placed on a MLTS system, the system must be configured to notify a central location on-site or off-site where someone is likely to see or hear the notification. Examples of notification include conspicuous on-screen messages with audible alarms for security desk computers using a client application, text messages for smartphones, and email for administrators. Notification shall include, at a minimum, the following information:

1. The fact that a 911 call has been made;
2. A valid callback number; and
3. The information about the caller's location that the MLTS conveys to the public safety answering point (PSAP) with the call to 911; provided, however, that the notification does not have to include a callback number or location information if it is technically infeasible to provide this information. (47 CFR § 9.3.)

Compliance date (MLTS direct dialing and notification) and Exemption for Legacy MLTS: Kari's Law and the Commission's rules are forward-looking and do not apply with respect to any MLTS that is manufactured, imported, offered for first sale or lease, first sold or leased, or installed on or before February 16, 2020. (See 47 CFR § 9.17(b).)

All other MLTS (i.e., systems manufactured, imported, offered for first sale or lease, first sold or leased, or installed after February 16, 2020) must meet the following compliance date:

Feb. 17, 2020:*

MLTS manufacturers, importers, sellers, and lessors:

- May not manufacture or import for use in the United States, or sell or lease or offer to sell or lease in the United States, an MLTS, unless the system is pre-configured so that when it is properly installed in accordance with the MLTS rules, a user may directly initiate a call to 911 from any station equipped with dialing facilities, without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, including any trunk-access code such as the digit 9, regardless of whether the user is required to dial such a digit, code, prefix, or post-fix for the other calls. (47 CFR § 9.16(a)(1).)

MLTS installers, managers, and operators:

- May not install, manage, or operate for use in the United States an MLTS, unless the system is configured so that a user may directly initiate a call to 911 from any station equipped with dialing facilities, without dialing any additional digit, code, prefix, or post-fix, including any trunk-access code such as the digit 9, regardless of whether the user is required to dial such a digit, code, prefix, or post-fix for other calls. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(1).)
- Shall, in installing, managing, or operating an MLTS for use in the United States, configure the system to provide MLTS notification to a central location at the facility where the system is installed or to another person or organization regardless of location, if the system is able to be configured to provide the notification without an improvement to the hardware or software of the system. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(2).) MLTS notification must meet

the following requirements:
    - It must be initiated contemporaneously with the 911 call, provided that it is technically feasible to do so; and
    - It must not delay the call to 911; and
    - It must be sent to a location where someone is likely to see or hear it. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(2).)

RAY BAUM'S Act – Dispatchable Location for MLTS

Under Section 506 of RAY BAUM'S Act, the Commission has adopted rules to ensure that "dispatchable location" is conveyed with 911 calls to dispatch centers, regardless of the technological platform used, including 911 calls from MLTS. Dispatchable location means a location delivered to the PSAP with a 911 call that consists of the validated street address of the calling party, plus additional information such as suite, apartment, or similar information necessary to adequately identify the location of the calling party. (47 CFR § 9.3.) For further information on dispatchable location requirements applicable to non-MLTS, including compliance timelines, see the **Dispatchable Location web page**.

Compliance Dates (MLTS Dispatchable Location): The Commission's dispatchable location rules for MLTS apply to all MLTS that are manufactured, imported, offered for first sale or lease, first sold or leased, or installed *after* February 16, 2020. While the dispatchable location rules apply to the same entities subject to Kari's Law, the Commission established separate deadlines for MLTS to come into compliance with the dispatchable location rules. As outlined below, MLTS are subject to compliance deadlines of January 6, 2021 and January 6, 2022, depending on the nature of the device from which the MLTS 911 call originates.*

2021

Jan. 6, 2021

Provision of dispatchable location from MLTS on-premises, fixed devices:

- On-premises, fixed devices associated with an MLTS must provide automated dispatchable location with 911 calls. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(3)(i).)

Dispatchable location obligations for MLTS manufacturers, importers, sellers, lessors, installers, managers, and operators:

- MLTS manufacturers, importers, sellers, and lessors may not manufacture, import, sell, lease, or offer to sell or lease an MLTS unless the system has the capability, after proper installation in accordance with the rules, of providing the automated dispatchable location of the caller to the PSAP with 911 calls from on-premises, fixed devices. (47 CFR §§ 9.16(a)(2) and 9.16(b)(3)(i).)
- MLTS installers may not install a system unless it is configured so that it is capable of being programmed with and conveying the automated dispatchable location of the caller to the PSAP with 911 calls from on-premises, fixed devices. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(3)(i).)

- MLTS managers and operators may not manage or operate a system unless it is configured so that the automated dispatchable location of the caller is conveyed to the PSAP with 911 calls from on-premises, fixed devices. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(3)(i).)

2022

Jan. 6, 2022

Provision of dispatchable location or alternative location information from MLTS on-premises, non-fixed devices and off-premises devices:

- On-premises, non-fixed devices associated with an MLTS must provide automated dispatchable location to the appropriate PSAP when technically feasible; otherwise they must provide either dispatchable location based on end-user manual update, or alternative location information that meets the requirements below.

Alternative location option for MLTS on-premises, non-fixed devices:

- Alternative location information may be coordinate-based, and it must be sufficient to identify the caller's civic address and approximate in-building location, including floor level, in large buildings. (47 CFR §§ 9.16(b)(3)(ii) and 9.3.)
- Off-premises devices associated with an MLTS must provide to the appropriate PSAP automated dispatchable location if technically feasible; otherwise, they must provide either dispatchable location based on end user manual update, or enhanced location information that meets the requirements below.

Enhanced location option for MLTS off-premises devices:

- Enhanced location information may be coordinate-based, and it must consist of the best available location that can be obtained from any available technology or combination of technologies at reasonable cost. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(3)(iii).)

Dispatchable location obligations for MLTS manufacturers, importers, sellers, lessors, installers, managers, and operators:

- MLTS manufacturers, importers, sellers, and lessors may not manufacture, import, sell, lease, or offer to sell or lease an MLTS unless the system has the capability, after proper installation in accordance with the rules, of providing the dispatchable location of the caller as specified in section 9.16(b)(3)(ii) and (iii) to the PSAP with 911 calls from on-premises, non-fixed devices and from off-premises devices. (47 CFR §§ 9.16(a)(2) and 9.16(b)(3)(ii), (iii).)
- MLTS installers may not install an MLTS unless it is configured so that it is capable of being programmed with and conveying the dispatchable location of the caller as specified in section 9.16(b)(3)(ii) and (iii) to the PSAP with 911 calls from on-premises, non-fixed

devices and from off-premises devices. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(3)(ii), (iii).)
- MLTS managers and operators may not manage or operate an MLTS unless it is configured so that the dispatchable location of the caller as specified in section 9.16(b)(3)(ii) and (iii) is conveyed to the PSAP with 911 calls from on-premises, non-fixed devices and from off-premises devices. (47 CFR § 9.16(b)(3)(ii), (iii).)

*The Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau is providing the above timeline to help regulated entities comply with the rules. This timeline does not reference all of the relevant rules, does not include the full text of the rules, and does not modify or supersede the specific text of any rule that is referenced. The Commission retains the discretion to adopt case-by-case approaches, where appropriate, that may differ from the approach in this timeline. Any decision regarding a particular regulated entity will be based on the statutes and any relevant rules. The full text of the 911 rules can be found here.

**The new rules became effective on January 6, 2020, although the compliance deadlines for the rules vary. In addition, Sections 9.16(b)(3)(i), (ii), and (iii) of the rules contain information collections under the Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA). Compliance with these sections will not be required until after the relevant information collections are approved by the Office of Management and Budget. Following such approval, the Commission will publish a document in the Federal Register announcing the compliance dates for these requirements and will update this timeline as necessary to reflect these dates.

Resources

911 Requirements for MLTS – 47 C.F.R. Part 9, Subpart F

Frequently Asked Questions – MLTS FAQs

Small Entity Compliance Guide: https://www.fcc.gov/document/implementing-karis-law-and-section-506-ray-baums-act-0

The FCC will closely monitor any complaints about alleged violations of these 911 rules.

- Consumers may file a complaint via the Consumer Complaint Center.
- Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs), also known as 911 call centers, and other public safety entities may request support from the Public Safety and Homeland Security Bureau and notify it of problems or issues affecting the provision of emergency services through the Public Safety Support Center.

Archive

Report and Order – Implementing Kari's Law and Section 506 of RAY BAUM'S Act (Aug. 1, 2019)

Erratum – Implementing Kari's Law and Section 506 of RAY BAUM'S Act (PSHSB Dec. 2, 2019)

Public Notice – Announcing Jan. 6, 2020 Effective Date for Rules Implementing Kari's Law and Section 506 of RAY BAUM'S Act (PSHSB Dec. 5, 2019)

Notice of Proposed Rulemaking – Implementing Kari's Law and Section 506 of RAY BAUM'S Act (Oct. 26, 2018)

Notice of Inquiry – FCC to Examine 911 Capabilities of Enterprise Communications Systems (Sept. 26, 2017)

Unregistered 10DLC is ending: What you need to know

The landscape for 10-digit long code (10DLC) messaging has undergone significant regulatory shifts. US carriers will officially cut off all unregistered 10DLC traffic on **December 1, 2024**. This deadline marks the end of unregistered traffic on US 10DLC routes. Businesses that rely on unregistered numbers for messaging need to take immediate action to remain compliant and avoid service interruptions.

Here’s everything Vox Tandem customers should know about the upcoming changes and how to prepare.

What is 10DLC, and why is registration important?

10DLC messaging enables businesses to send text messages using local phone numbers, making communication more personal and trusted. However, 10DLC routes are regulated by US mobile carriers to reduce spam and maintain quality standards. For years, companies could send messages over unregistered 10DLC numbers, but this has become less viable as carriers ramp up filtering and introduce higher pass-through fees for unregistered traffic.

Registering your messaging traffic via **The Campaign Registry (TCR)** ensures that your messages are classified as compliant, reducing the risk of being filtered or blocked by carriers. Registration also provides a verified layer of legitimacy to your messaging use cases, boosting delivery rates and enhancing customer trust.

Why December 1, 2024, is a crucial deadline for messaging

On December 1, 2024, US carriers will cease to allow any unregistered 10DLC messaging on their routes. This means:

- **No more unregistered traffic.** Unregistered 10DLC numbers will no longer function across any carriers in the U.S.
- **Compliance requirements.** Any business or software provider sending SMS via 10DLC must be fully registered with TCR by this date to avoid message blocks or interruptions.
- **Higher costs and filtering.** Carriers have continued to increase pass-through fees and filter unregistered traffic more aggressively.

How to register your 10DLC campaign

Registration involves a few steps, all of which can be handled through Vox Tandem:

- **Brand registration:** Each business sending messages (i.e., your company) needs to register as a unique "Brand". This step validates your business as legitimate and ensures that your use cases are compliant.
- **Campaign registration:** For each brand, the specific use cases for messaging (e.g., customer notifications, marketing campaigns) must be registered. This step ensures that each type of messaging use case is approved and recognized by mobile carriers.

Each campaign must comply with specific guidelines, and it’s important to register correctly to avoid rejection. Vox Tandem can guide you through this process to ensure compliance.

Why it’s important to act now

Waiting until the December 1, 2024, deadline could result in delays, disruptions, and potentially blocked messages. The registration process can take several weeks, so starting early is crucial. Additionally, Vox Tandem customers who rely on unregistered 10DLC numbers will face increased messaging costs due to rising pass-through fees as the cut-off date approaches.

Next steps for Vox Tandem customers

To prepare for this industry-wide change:

1. **Audit your current 10DLC traffic.** Identify any unregistered traffic you’re currently sending.
2. **Register your brand and campaigns.** Work with Vox Tandem to ensure all your 10DLC messaging is fully registered and compliant.
3. **Stay informed.** Vox Tandem will continue to update customers as more information becomes available about the end of unregistered 10DLC traffic.

Vox Tandem is committed to helping businesses stay ahead of industry changes. If you need assistance with the registration process or want to learn more about how these changes impact your messaging strategy, reach out to our team via email or call today.

By acting now, you can avoid disruptions, reduce costs, and ensure your messaging traffic continues to flow smoothly on compliant, registered 10DLC routes. Stay compliant and connected with Vox Tandem as we navigate the future of A2P messaging.

Here’s everything Vox Tandem customers should know about the upcoming changes and how to prepare:

- What is 10DLC? Everything you need to know
- Unregistered 10DLC is ending: What you need to know
- Your step-by-step guide to 10DLC brand registration
- SMS compliance guide and checklist
- What is A2P messaging?
- Compliance, user experience, and 10DLC campaigns
- Frequently asked questions about 10DLC

Contact our team of experts to start the 10DLC approval process and start reaching more customers.