Voice for Teams: The Solution for Zoom Woes?

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Zoom may be popular, but it's security and reliability issues are forcing schools and businesses to consider alternatives, such as BCM One Voice Enabled Teams.

Zoom Plagued by Security Issues

Zoom has become synonymous with COVID-19. From Kindergarteners to seniors, schools and churches to businesses and virtual happy hours, we've all become accustomed to using the Zoom video conferencing app to connect with each other. Zoom has been around since 2013 and steadily grew a fan base nearly 10 million strong, but the pandemic skyrocketed it from relative obscurity into a household name. Today, hundreds of millions of people use Zoom, but that could be changing.

While Zoom has filled a niche exposed by COVID, it hasn't been without its faults and critics. In June 2019, Medium reported on a vulnerability Zoom knew about as early as March that allowed malicious websites to take over Mac users' cameras without permission, even if they deleted the Zoom app. According to the source, "The flaw potentially exposes up to 75,000 companies around the world that use Zoom to conduct day-to-day business." To make things worse, Zoom failed to entirely fix the flaw for some time.

In January 2020, Check Point Research revealed a technique they used to identify and join active meetings due to a glaring omission of meeting passwords or an enabled Waiting Room to allow meeting hosts to manually admit legitimate participants. According to Vox, this security flaw resulting in embarrassing and risky "'Zoombombing,' where public Zoom meetings are joined by a troll who broadcasts things like porn and Nazi imagery to the rest of the room."

Vox goes on to say "There are ways to mitigate this, such as passwords protecting meetings or limiting the screen sharing setting to the meeting host. But the fact that it is so easy for anyone to join and then disrupt a public Zoom meeting at all indicates that Zoom's developers didn't anticipate the ways those meetings could be disrupted in the first place - something that anyone who has used the Internet before really should have foreseen."

Other security issues deal with users saving recorded files to the open web, some of which were considered intellectual property, as well as calls being routed through data centers in China, lax encryption protocols, and lawsuits for its data sharing habits. While no company is completely immune to security issues, it appears Zoom has a long way to go before it can convince users it has done enough to at least minimize risk and establish rapid mitigation processes.

Zoom Is Down..and Out?

Beyond major security challenges, the Zoom platform recently had a global platform stability issue that impacted millions of users at the worst possible time. On August 25, 2020, Zoom users experienced a complete system breakdown, just as millions of students returned to Zoom-enabled virtual school. Zoom released a statement saying, "We have received reports of users being unable to visit the Zoom website (zoom.us) and unable to start and join Zoom Meetings and Webinars. We are currently investigating and will provide updates as we have them." The outage lasted more than three hours and there was little users could do in the meantime. CNN reported users in the United Kingdom experienced the same issue.

The outage wasn't just an inconvenience. It was disastrous for school systems and universities that rely on Zoom as its primary form of engagement with students. Schools weren't the only victims of the downed platform. The New York Times said businesses, courthouses, and city and county governments were scrambling to reschedule meetings, impacting productivity, causing chaos and frustration, and delaying important conversations.

Zoom may not be going anywhere anytime soon, but the company is feeling the growing pains of its rapid rise in usage. As Zoom learns from its highly-publicized mistakes and builds in safeguards, users are caught in the middle, making do with what they have or looking for alternatives that give them more peace of mind.

Businesses, in particular, may have more flexibility to change course than school districts, but that isn't stopping some from shifting away from Zoom as soon as possible. In April 2020, Fortune reported that Zoom stock was down 14.5% due primarily to school districts and businesses banning the app over security flaw fears. It cited the country's largest school system, the New York City Department of Education, was switching its schools from the Zoom platform to the more stable and secure Teams platform that is backed by Microsoft. Other school districts and businesses have followed suit, unwilling to expose themselves and their reputations to unnecessary risk from a company that has yet to iron out all of its product's kinks.

The Migration to Microsoft Teams

For small- to mid-sized businesses, in particular, the transition from Zoom to Microsoft Teams could result in a much higher ROI as they can build out Teams to do a whole lot more than video conferencing and chat. Teams is highly integratable, meaning hundreds of apps can be easily integrated to make Teams a powerful platform to enable all kinds of business tasks and functionality. Microsoft also allows third-party app developers to integrate into Teams, creating a "hub" that enables a virtually limitless range of workflow possibilities.

One such integration is BCM One Voice Enabled Teams. BCM One is a leading managed technology solutions provider and a Microsoft Gold Partner with a dedicated Microsoft team on staff. With their own SIP and UCaaS solutions as well, businesses can leverage BCM One's expertise to augment Teams functionality with robust enterprise voice capabilities, such as advanced call routing, queuing, telephony extensions and business intelligence. BCM One Voice Enabled Teams also boasts near 100% uptime and enhanced security features.

Having a completely unified communications and collaboration platform is more cost effective and easier to manage than using separate, siloed solutions. For businesses concerned with licenses, calling plans and integration, BCM One offers end-to-end Teams deployment across any type of existing network so companies can get up and running quickly. Organizations can protect their existing investments and achieve greater flexibility without complicating their network.

As we all continue to navigate this new world of working and living, we need tools we can depend on to keep us connected. Video conferencing and chat are essential, but integrating internal and external calling features are still required to keep operations running smoothly. Zoom filled a gap for the short-term as

organizations clambered to put some type of collaboration system in place. With more experience behind us, time to think through how the future may (and should) look, and where to invest resources, Voice for Teams provides a long-term solution that will help organizations grow and produce no matter what comes their way.