

NO MORE MEDIOCRE MEETINGS: THE FIVE TECHNOLOGIES ENABLING NEXT-GEN COLLABORATION

 Microsoft
Surface
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Hybrid work is becoming a reality for most organisations as employees demand flexibility to move between locations. Here Ashley Richardson, Chief Technologist at Computacenter, shares how embracing the right meeting technology will make workplace collaboration seamless.

When colleagues couldn't work together in the office, they adapted and made do. Remote work has had its benefits, but there have been downsides as well. Now, as the world returns to the office, many organisations will combine the best of both worlds in a hybrid work strategy. Employees want the flexibility

to be able to choose when and where they do their best work, whether that's at home, in the field, or at the office. Business leaders understand that will require a further, more permanent evolution in the way distributed teams work together most effectively.

Read on to discover the five technologies enabling better teamwork, and how Computacenter and Microsoft can support your organisation to unlock more productive collaboration.

LET'S GO



1

COLLABORATION
PLATFORMS

The use of collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams exploded last year. The number of active daily users grew from 75 million in April 2020 to 250 million in July 2021.¹ But effective collaboration in the hybrid world needs more than just a good video conferencing tool.

Microsoft has further evolved its collaborative offer with Microsoft Teams Rooms, that enhance co-creation through a mix of user-centric hardware and intuitive features. High definition audio and video empowers all participants, wherever they are, and Surface Hub 2S digital whiteboards encourage the cross-pollination of ideas across other users' devices, with pen and other touch surfaces enabling collaboration in real time. Computacenter can conduct a workplace assessment and help advise organisations on the right technology for their existing physical space and employee collaboration needs.



2

BEACONS

Video conferencing tools have made it easier to connect virtually but that's led to an increase in the number of meetings for today's employees. Researchers from Harvard Business School found people are attending 13% more on average, although the average length has reduced by 20%.² Microsoft similarly found 62% of Teams calls are unscheduled or conducted ad hoc.³

Minimising friction around virtual meetings will make hopping onto a call as easy as walking over to speak to a colleague at their desk, and ensure attendees can get productive straight away. Microsoft Teams Rooms incorporates proximity beaconing whereby your laptop or mobile Teams app can detect and add you to the relevant meeting, with sharing tools ready. It's also possible to share content from your mobile or laptop to all meeting attendees via Teams Cast.



1. <https://alta-ict.nl/blog/microsoft-teams-reaches-milestone-of-250-million-monthly-active-users/?lang=en> | 2. https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w27612/w27612.pdf | 3. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/worklab/work-trend-index/hybrid-work>

3

VOICE-ASSISTED
TECHNOLOGY

We've all been in meetings where technical hitches have interrupted proceedings, key speakers have dropped out, or the audio has become distorted. Some colleagues may find it difficult to speak up in virtual spaces – one in five women for example say they have felt ignored or overlooked by others during video calls.⁴

With Microsoft Teams Rooms, intelligent speakers recognise participants and track what they've said via the auto transcription tool. Strategically placed microphones and speakers – in the ceiling and under screens – means all participants can contribute meaningfully, whether they're physically in the room or not. And meeting organisers can use spoken commands to start and end meetings through the Cortana voice assistant. This level of advanced technology isn't plug and play, but a trusted technology partner like Computacenter can help businesses hit the ground running.

4. <https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/03/45percent-of-women-business-leaders-say-its-difficult-for-women-to-speak-up-in-virtual-meetings.html>

5. <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-365/business-insights-ideas/resources/10-reasons-to-use-video-conferencing>

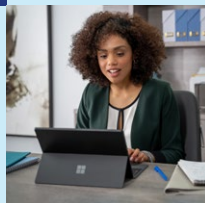


4

CAMERAS

The quality of video is also key. Humans process visual information far faster and more aptly than text or audio. A report by Forbes found 62% of executives agreed video significantly improved the quality of communication and 50% believe it improved the degree of understanding.⁵

The right camera for the right sized space can transform the hybrid meeting experience, and being able to evaluate the options with workplace experts like Computacenter is invaluable. In-built cameras in laptop and tablet devices will often be satisfactory in smaller rooms. But external cameras can also help make larger meeting rooms feel more natural and inclusive for remote participants. Many include features that capture attendees at varying distances, or track only the active speaker at one time. Teams can display up to 49 participants in a tile view, automatically resizing as people join and leave. And content cameras bring Surface Hub whiteboards into the meeting in an intelligent way.

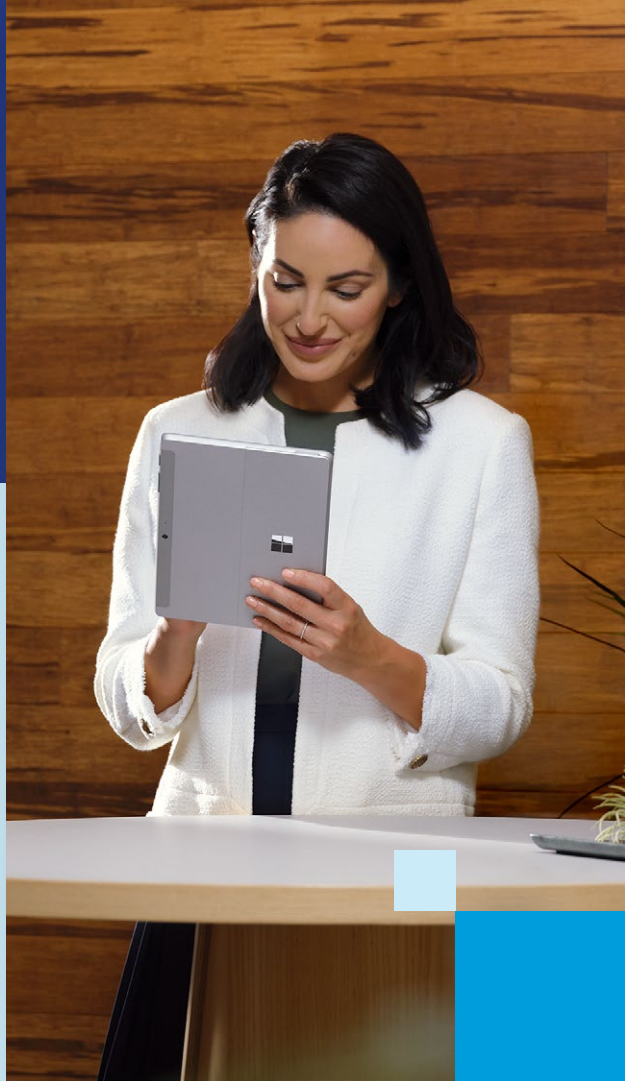


5

AUGMENTED AND VIRTUAL REALITY

The future of virtual collaboration will undoubtedly incorporate augmented and virtual reality into the experience. The software is evolving to enable presenters to create a blended physical and digital meeting experience. Microsoft Mesh, for example, uses mixed reality and 3D capture technology to beam a person's image into a virtual scene (known as holoportation). Users can also collaborate on 3D content in real time, leading to more common understanding and faster, more insightful decisions being made. Computacenter can help integrate your organisation's future goals into a technology stack that will stand the test of time.

The way colleagues meet and interact is continuing to evolve. Business leaders have some decisions to make about the technology that will place their organisation in good stead for the future. Computacenter can help to source, transform and manage the right technology to support your people and company vision.



GET IN TOUCH

To find out more about how Computacenter and Microsoft can guide you through the next generation of collaborative technology, please contact your Computacenter Account Manager, call **01707 631000** or email **enquiries@computacenter.com**.

About Computacenter

Computacenter is a leading independent technology partner, trusted by large corporate and public sector organisations. We help our customers to source, transform and manage their IT infrastructure to deliver digital transformation, enabling users and their business. Computacenter is a public company quoted on the London FTSE 250 (CCC.L) and employs over 16,000 people worldwide.

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