

February 2023

# Quick Take

## Cisco Rolls Native Support for Microsoft Teams on Cisco Devices



Created by:

**RECON**  
RESEARCH

Sponsored by:

  
**CISCO**

# Video is a Multi-Platform Discussion

When offices shut down and forced everyone to work from home, video conferencing became the lifeblood of millions of workers and organizations worldwide.

Fast forward a few short years, and the business world has gone hybrid. And video conferencing is even more critical than before. But now, as people return to the office (at least part-time), they're once again having video meetings from their company's meeting rooms.

In the past, most video conferencing users and systems spoke a common language called "standards." By adhering to the standards, users and systems from different vendors could interoperate.

Today, video systems running conferencing apps from different platforms (Webex by Cisco, Microsoft Teams, Zoom Meetings, Google Meet, etc.) often cannot communicate with each other directly.

Desktop, laptop, and mobile users circumvent this compatibility issue by installing and using multiple video conferencing apps. For example, a user might use the Webex App for their 9 AM meeting and the Microsoft Teams App for their 10 AM meeting.

Unfortunately, meeting rooms don't work that way. Most video-enabled meeting rooms support only one video conferencing app or platform. Some rooms use Webex, while others use Microsoft Teams, Zoom Meetings, or Google Meet.

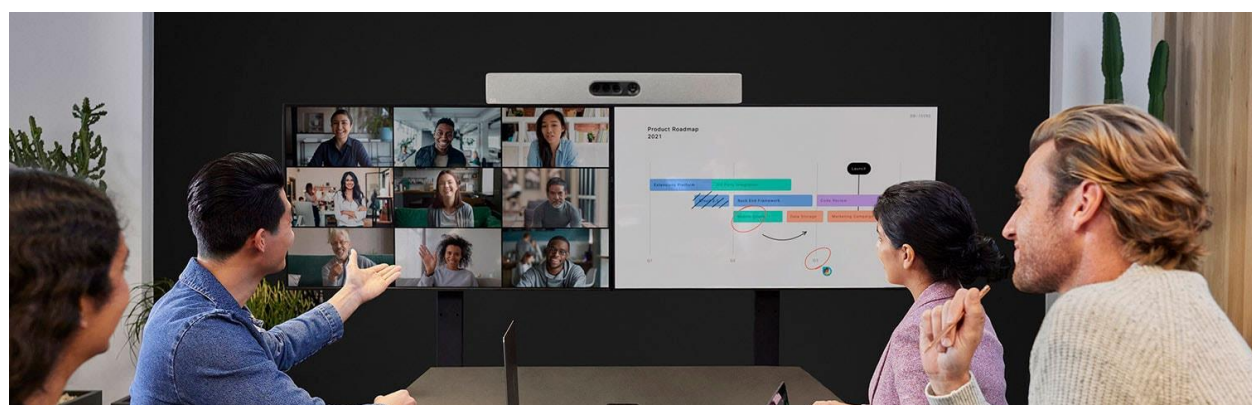
---

***Most video-enabled meeting rooms support only one video conferencing app or platform.***

---

These single-app meeting rooms cannot join meetings hosted on incompatible collaboration platforms.

That's where video conferencing interoperability (a.k.a. video interop) comes in.



**Figure 1 - Cisco Room Kit Pro Video System in a Webex Video Meeting**

# The Power & Limitations of Video Interop

Video interop is the ability to participate in video conferencing sessions hosted on other meeting platforms or services. There are many different approaches to video interop, including:

- **Bring Your Own Device (a.k.a. BYOD or USB Passthrough)** – using a participant’s laptop connected to USB peripherals (e.g., camera, speaker, mic) to host a video meeting in a meeting room
- **Meeting Room PC** – using a standard PC running multiple video conferencing apps to join video calls in the meeting room
- **AV Integration** – using additional AV equipment to add either BYOD support or multiple video apps/platforms in the same meeting room
- **Video Conferencing Standards** – using standard communication protocols (e.g., SIP and H.323) to communicate between platforms
- **WebRTC (a.k.a. Direct Guest Join)** – using web browser technology to join meetings on other platforms
- **Gateway Services** – using a service as a bridge between different meeting platforms or services
- **App Switching** – switching between collaboration apps to join meetings on other platforms.

However, each interop approach brings pros and cons. Some approaches work with only specific video systems or meeting platforms, while others add cost or complexity. Also, interop calls frequently offer fewer features or lower-quality video and audio.

For example, the Bring Your Own Device approach works with BYOD-capable video devices only, requires the user’s laptop for the duration of the session, and depends on the laptop’s mic, speaker, and camera settings.

Similarly, the WebRTC approach only works with WebRTC-capable video devices and platforms and offers fewer features than the meeting platform or service’s native video conferencing app.

Because of these limitations, many organizations use several video interop approaches, which adds additional cost and complexity.

The takeaway is that video interop allows calls between some systems and platforms to proceed.

However, even the best video interop experience is not as good or feature-rich as a native calling experience using the host platform’s own app.



Figure 2 - Cisco Room Bar Running the Microsoft Teams Rooms App

# A New Level of Flexibility

Cisco will soon be the first vendor offering video conferencing systems that can jump between different video conferencing apps on-the-fly without admin support and/or a system reboot. Recon Research has named this capability “app switching.”

Cisco’s latest generation of video systems (see the list below) can then be configured as a native Webex video device or a native Microsoft Teams Rooms (MTR) video device.

- When configured as a Webex device, the video system will register to Webex Control Hub, provide a native Webex meeting experience, and offer many coveted Webex features, including:
  - o SIP / H.323 support
  - o On-premises and cloud deployment options
  - o Hot desking (on Desk Series models)
  - o Digital signage
  - o Customized branding
- When configured as an MTR device (will require a Microsoft Teams Rooms license), the video system will be able to register to both Microsoft Admin Center and Webex Control Hub for device management and advanced workspace analytics (will require a Webex license).

In this operating mode, the device will use the familiar Microsoft Teams Rooms user interface and will provide a full-featured native Microsoft Teams meeting experience.

Here’s where the magic begins.

When hosting or joining a Teams meeting, these systems will operate in default mode and use the native Microsoft Teams Room app.

In the past, to join a Webex meeting, these systems would have used WebRTC. But with app switching, these systems will temporarily switch into Webex mode and provide a native, full-featured Webex experience. When the call ends, the systems will revert to Microsoft Teams Rooms mode.



*Figure 3 - Cisco Desk Pro (left) and Cisco Board Pro (right) Running Microsoft Teams*

Cisco's support for on-the-fly, automatic app switching will mean Cisco device customers can enjoy native meeting experiences during both Webex and Teams meetings from the same room and device, without admin support or waiting for a reboot.

In addition, meeting room users will enjoy the AI capabilities of Cisco Webex devices (e.g., background blur/replacement, noise removal, room and people framing, etc.) in both Webex and Teams meetings.

The following Cisco devices will be Microsoft Teams certified in the near future:

- Cisco Board Pro (expected in Q1 2023)
- Cisco Room Bar (expected in Q1 2023)
- Cisco Room Kit Pro (expected in Q1 2023)
- Cisco Room Kit EQ (expected in Q2 2023)
- Cisco Desk Pro (expected in Q2 2023)
- Cisco Room Navigator (expected in Q2 2023)

## Summary

The typical hybrid worker participates in video meetings on more than one platform. Even if a company standardizes on a single platform (e.g., Webex, Microsoft Teams, Zoom Meetings, Google Meet, etc.), users still need to communicate with partners, clients, and prospects on other platforms.

However, most video conferencing rooms today support only a single video platform.

Video interoperability allows video systems on one platform to participate in meetings hosted on some other platforms. But video interop can add cost, impact usability, or introduce other compromises.

Cisco will soon be the first vendor to provide Microsoft Teams customers with full-featured native experiences during both Teams and Webex meetings - from the same room and video device.

Best of all, these video systems will temporarily switch from Teams to Webex (and then back to Teams again) automatically – without admin support or a reboot.

Organizations that have deployed Microsoft Teams will soon be able to enjoy high-quality, full-featured, native Microsoft Teams and Webex meetings from the same video device. It's just that easy.

# About Cisco



(Information below provided by Cisco)

**Cisco** is the worldwide leader in technology that powers the Internet. Cisco inspires new possibilities by reimagining your applications, securing your data, transforming your infrastructure, and empowering your teams for a global and inclusive future.

Discover more on [The Newsroom](#) and follow us on Twitter at [@Cisco](#).

# About Recon Research



**Recon Research (RR)** is an analyst/market research firm focused on enterprise communications. Our coverage areas include unified communications (UCaaS), video conferencing (VCaaS), collaboration and ideation platforms, audiovisual (AV) solutions, wireless presentation systems, and more.

RR provides enterprise customers, vendors, channel partners, and investment professionals with the information and insight needed to make fact-based decisions.

What makes RR different is the depth of knowledge and experience we bring from our 20 years of company briefings, market analysis, and hands-on testing of products and services in these markets.

For more information, visit us at [www.reconres.com](http://www.reconres.com).

## Contact Information

Recon Research, Inc.  
11910 Lake House Lane  
Parkland, FL 33076 USA

## Copyright Notice

The information within this document is owned by Recon Research, Inc. (RR) and protected by U.S. and International copyright laws.

## Trademark Notice

All company, product, or service names that may be mentioned in this publication are tradenames, trademarks, or registered trademarks of their respective owners.

## Images and Graphics

All images or graphics used in this publication are created by, owned, or licensed by RR or provided courtesy of their respective owners.