**Overview**

On October 19, 2021, the Microsoft Tech Community hosted an Azure Communication Services AMA. The live hour of Q&A provided members the opportunity to ask questions and voice feedback with the product team. We hope you join us live next time!

**Resources**

[Azure.com](http://azure.microsoft.com/)

[Azure Blog](https://azure.microsoft.com/blog/)

[Azure Updates](https://azure.microsoft.com/updates/) -  
Get the latest updates on Azure products and features

[Azure Communication Services blog on Tech Community](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-communication-services/bg-p/AzureCommunicationServicesBlog)

[Microsoft Customer Co-creation](https://customercocreation.microsoft.com/home/azure) -  
Share your thoughts and influence the outcome before a single line of code is written. Play an early role in product and service development by helping Microsoft build and test the features that you need in Cloud and AI services.

[Azure Documentation](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/?product=featured)

[Azure on Microsoft Q&A](https://docs.microsoft.com/answers/products/azure?product=all) -  
Find answers to your technical questions about selected Azure products.

[Azure on Microsoft Learn](https://docs.microsoft.com/learn/azure/)

[Azure Code Samples](https://docs.microsoft.com/samples/browse/?products=azure)

[Microsoft Mechanics](https://blogs.office.com/featured_topics/garage/?ms.officeurl=mechanics)

**Introduction**

Welcome to the Azure Communication Services AMA! View the list of introductions in this [thread](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2861676/highlight/true#M109).

**General Discussion**

*Q: Looking for the Microsoft Account Executive for either eHealth or the SHA (Saskatchewan Health Authority). (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2861840/highlight/true#M132)*)*

A: Feel free to reach out to an Azure sales representative here, to help with finding the right contact - [Contact Azure Sales | Microsoft Azure](https://azure.microsoft.com/en-us/overview/contact-azure-sales/#contact-sales)

*Q: What about the chat first approach in ACS? Who is also missing it by heart? (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2861780/highlight/true#M126)*)*

A: Azure Communication Services does support Chat! There's an overview of our Chat SDK here: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/communication-services/concepts/chat/sdk-features> ... and I highly recommend checking out our Chat Hero Sample here: <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/communication-services/samples/chat-hero-sample>

*Q1: Let me give some more details - we do need a chat solution, where we have the option to escalate to voice and or video in the same session and communication frame we have set up. Perhaps even further to screen sharing. I did not find that in the heroes, I think.*

A1: Totally doable! We have demoed this type of escalation at a couple of [Ignite conferences](https://myignite.microsoft.com/archives/IG20-DB121) and have some [samples here](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/communication-services/samples/overview) you can take a look at.   
  
I would specifically look at:  
- [Contoso Medical App](https://github.com/Azure-Samples/communication-services-contoso-med-app)

- [Contoso Retail App](https://github.com/Azure-Samples/communication-services-contoso-retail-app)

*Q2: Will this scenario work with a solution where the professional support uses Teams? Chat established first by customer in the web frontend and towards professional using Teams client on the desktop and if needed video escalation?*

A2: The Contoso Retail app shows the team interop feature. Right now, to start with just chat you will have to create a Teams meeting dynamically (via Graph APIs + Logic Apps), have the support agent join the meeting, then have the customer join the meeting without camera/audio initially. Then they can escalate to an audio/video call. More interop scenarios are being worked on currently - if you are interested in joining our Technology Adoption Program to access preview APIs let me know!

*Q: What is the best way to secure APIs in Azure? Should I consider something like a FortiGate for Azure gateway? Or is there enough native Azure features to secure them? (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2861738/highlight/true#M118)*)*

A: This is very good timing since we just announced support for [Azure Advisor](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/communication-services/concepts/advisor-overview) for Azure Communication Services!  
  
Azure Advisor will send you recommendations for different categories on how to optimize your Azure experience (via cost reduction, performance improvements, etc.). It will now send you recommendations when there are newer SDKs available. You can access this feature through the [Azure Portal](https://portal.azure.com/#blade/Microsoft_Azure_Expert/AdvisorMenuBlade/overview). To learn more about Azure Advisor in general, you can find the public [docs here](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/advisor/advisor-overview).   
  
In addition, the Azure Communication Services team publishes [release notes](https://github.com/Azure/Communication/tree/master/releasenotes) every two weeks with all the latest updates.

Also, I realize I didn't quite answer your question :) Azure Communication Services is built on the most secure and compliant cloud. Standard security best practices should be followed. Also, if you are using a firewall, you can take a look at this doc on how to best [prepare your network](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/communication-services/concepts/voice-video-calling/network-requirements) for video calling.

*Q1: We would like to authenticate from an existing Active Directory. Please advise on the best way to approach the client for endpoint.*

A1: Right now our SMS and Identity SDKs are the only ones that enable authenticating with Azure Active Directory - [you can learn more here](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/azure/communication-services/quickstarts/identity/service-principal?pivots=programming-language-csharp). More support is in the roadmap, but I don't have any timelines to share at the moment.

*Q: My question is whether I actually have a secure connection with WIP with Azure Power Apps and Azure Communications or do I need to set it up separately? (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2861687/highlight/true#M112)*)*

A: Azure Communication Services typically works without direct integration with identity providers. As an application developer for Azure Communication Services, you can build/integrate your own identity provider. In the web browser, Azure Communication Services operates above the connection layer in the web browser and doesn't integrate directly Identity Protection.

*Q: Skype why does telephony not work, although it was financially supported by Microsoft years ago, according to the media? My problem with skype to get a telephone connection, because the numeric keypad does not respond from the automatic selection menu of the announcement text for proper forwarding to the interlocutor. (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2856338/highlight/true#M105)*)*

A: Skype is still supported by Microsoft, and you can provide feedback to the Skype team through their UserVoice feedback page here: <https://skype.uservoice.com/forums/914527-welcome-to-skype-ideas>

*Q: How is Azure Communication Services different than using Microsoft Teams? Azure Communication Services also uses direct routing and SBCs like Teams. so when and why does a customer choose Azure Communication Services over Teams? (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2855379/highlight/true#M104)*)*

A: Microsoft Teams is a software offering (SaaS) through Microsoft 365 and Azure Communication Services is a communication platform as a service (PaaS), offered through Azure. The primary differences between the two are:

Microsoft Teams is used through an end-user license whereas Azure Communications is billed on a consumption basis through an Azure account

Microsoft Teams is closely tied to a Microsoft 365 identity and the M365 ecosystem. With Azure Communication Service developers bring their own their own identity system (like MSA, Facebook, or even nothing!)

Microsoft Teams is focused primarily on end-users (although there’s extensive developer extensibility) whereas Azure Communication Service is a platform for software developers.

*Q1: Looking for some feedback on this as well. In re-creating the calling and messaging aspects of Teams, we wanted to add some cognitive services like transcription, and a calendar component. With auto-transcription coming to Teams, and the Shifts component being only available through Teams, how do we approach this properly so that Teams isn't the solution our partner lands on?*

A1: Azure Communication Services is a platform offering - so if it better suited your needs to build out Shifts functionality on top of your custom application you could do that. Because we are a platform you can also plug into other services like Azure Cognitive Services. You can see an example of how someone was using sentiment analysis with [SMS messages here](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-communication-services/prototyping-sentiment-analysis-of-sms-with-logic-apps/ba-p/2629999).

It's hard to give guidance without knowing your entire scenario, but it sounds like [Teams Interop](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/communication-services/concepts/teams-interop) scenarios might be helpful for your situation.

Teams Interop let's custom applications using the Azure Communication Services calling SDK, [join a Teams meeting](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/communication-services/concepts/join-teams-meeting). This is useful when you want to keep some people (perhaps within your organization) within the Teams context to take advantage of different Teams features, but still have a need for a custom application and might have guests/other customers joining from the Azure Communication Services [calling client](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/communication-services/concepts/voice-video-calling/calling-sdk-features).

As for other features, we are still a relatively new service and are still building out more functionality on top of our calling service :) Hope this helps!

*Q2: How do we build out Shifts functionality on top of our custom app, when Shifts is now built into Teams? It’s no longer available as a third-party service.*

A2: You would need to build it all from scratch if you went this route, I was more offering the perspective that Azure Communication Services is a platform so if you wanted to build something similar on top you could.   
  
It sounds like you have a fairly deep integration with Teams and leveraging Teams or [Teams interop](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/communication-services/concepts/teams-interop) might be a better fit.

*Q: From the list of 10 or more countries/locations - the United States is the only option that works. Why would you populate this list if the other regions don't work? And when might we expect the rest of the world to be able to get a phone number. Feels weird it’s not available to anyone outside of the US, to be honest. (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2834311/highlight/true#M102)*)*

A: All but our telephony solutions work in every region listed when creating a resource. You can still take advantage of calling, chat, and network traversal without the Data Location being set to US.

Azure Communication Services is a global service. When you create an Azure Communication Services resource you select a Data Location, that indicates where your data will be stored at rest. In order to keeps communications low latency, calls might be mixed and routed in a region that is different than the Data Location you selected. You can learn more about [data handling here](https://docs.microsoft.com/azure/communication-services/concepts/privacy).

*Q: Do you have a timescale for adding the ability to buy phone numbers in the UK and also to route calls to/from PSTN? (*[*link*](https://techcommunity.microsoft.com/t5/azure-ama/hybrid-work-for-healthcare/ec-p/2822266/highlight/true#M96)*)*

A: UK phone numbers and calling capability in Azure Communication Services is being targeted for launch by Early 2022.

That’s a wrap!

Thank you for joining for this fun hour! We hope you'll continue to ask questions and share your feedback.

**See you next time!**