IBM and Cisco partner to support remote teaching and charity work across the UK

Free Cisco Webex tool offered with free training from IBM so that schools and charities can continue their essential work during the global pandemic

London 9th April 2020 - IBM and Cisco have joined forces to offer teachers in over 24,000 schools and staff in over 185,000 charities across the UK free access to video conferencing through use of the Cisco Webex web conferencing tool. The technology offers simple and intuitive features for online collaboration in response to the challenges of the COVID-19 outbreak. To support new users get started IBM and Cisco employees are volunteering their time to help install the video-conferencing technology and provide ongoing guidance to maximise the tools.

The pandemic and resulting lockdown pose huge challenges for schools and universities as they strive to provide education to almost nine million pupils across the UK. Cisco Webex allows students to continue attending classes in today's exceptional circumstances by holding lessons in a virtual classroom and embark on distance learning. Students can easily participate in lessons in guest mode, without the need for a user account. Everything is managed by the teacher, who "invites" the students to the classroom. Features such as host audio control and document, image and screen sharing capabilities will replicate the structured classroom environment. Lessons can also be recorded and sent to students who were unable to attend.

The need to collaborate and communicate is not confined to teachers and their pupils. As the charity sector calls for assistance to ensure it can rebuild after the pandemic it is vital we provide support as charities work tirelessly to help the vulnerable during this time. The sector urgently need similar tools, to work with their teams, co-ordinate the efforts of volunteers, plan events and many of the activities they might have conducted in person. Cisco Webex will enable them to work in a more efficient and effective manner just as the importance of their contribution to addressing the impacts of the pandemics on their beneficiaries becomes ever more critical.

"On behalf of the voluntary sector and our partners it's fantastic that IBM and Cisco want to support charities at this critical time. By Cisco providing video-conferencing software for free and IBM employees volunteering their skills and expertise to help charities put this in place, there will be huge benefit to charities. We know charities urgently need support like this to help people and communities respond to COVID-19, but they may not have the resources to do so. So thank you to IBM and Cisco for stepping up to support charities and help them provide essential services to those who need it at this vital time." Paul Reddish, Chief Executive, Volunteering Matters

The Cisco and IBM collaboration is open to all schools and charities in the UK. The initiative began in Italy in response to the government's call for companies to support schools as they closed and has now expanded to over 14 countries, including the UK where it has expanded to support charities as well as schools. There are already 3,000 IBMers volunteering to make this a reality across Europe, supporting over 200,000 students in 2,000 schools.

David Meads, Cisco's UK&I CEO, said: "These weeks have been challenging for all of us, and the need for us all to stay connected has never been more important. We're firm believers that we need to create a digital society

for everyone, and that remains true in critical times like these, when the spirit of collaboration really comes to the fore. We're proud to be able to offer a tool that will hopefully help ensure students can continue learning, and charities continue their vital work."

"The need for us all to stay connected has never been more important. Our goal is to develop innovations that help society progress and improve – this has never been more relevant today as we face an unprecedented global crisis. It is a privilege to contribute the skills and expertise of IBMers across the UK as we seek to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on our society" said Bill Kelleher, Chief Executive, IBM UK & Ireland.

The Cisco Webex platform has more than 130 million monthly users worldwide, and processes more than 6 billion minutes of meetings every month. Always accessible through an internet connection, it guarantees the privacy and security of the data and content exchanged in the sessions using advanced security and encryption tools.

Registering for this opportunity is quick and simple

Notes to editors:

About Volunteering Matters
Everyone in the UK should have the opportunity to thrive. Volunteering Matters connects people through volunteering to tackle some of society's most complex issues.

At this crucial time we're turning local knowledge and energy into action and progress, supporting communities to respond to COVID-19.

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https://uk.newsroom.ibm.com/2020-04-09-IBM-and-Cisco-partner-to-support-remote-teaching-and-charity-work-across-the-UK