

EVOLUTION AUTOMATIC CALL DISTRIBUTOR (ACD)

Evolution has an intelligent Automatic Call Distributor (ACD) function that is responsible for routing calls to their appropriate destination, either to the correct agent for incoming calls or to an outside line for outbound calls. The ACD can handle inbound and outbound calls simultaneously, thereby providing a powerful call blending capability.

Evolution's ACD is distinguished from traditional ACD's by its ability to route calls based on complex routing rules that can include lookups of 3rd party databases. For example, an incoming call that would normally be routed to 'Orders' could be diverted to 'Accounts' if the caller's credit limit was exceeded.

When customers call in, they will be routed to the first available agent. In the event that more than one agent is available, the ACD logic will route the call to the agent that has been available for the longest time. Routing is handled by the concept of Services and Groups; Services generally correspond to campaigns and Groups correspond to blocks of agents. Any agent can be a member of as many ACD Groups as is appropriate. The number of Groups and Services that can be set up is 200, which provides a great deal of flexibility in allocating contact center personnel to balance call loads.

The ACD can operate in day-mode or in night-mode. When switched to night-mode, incoming calls are no longer passed to agents. Thus the customer hears a message, after which they should hang up (for example, "the Alston Tascom office is currently closed. Office hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. Please call back during office hours"). Alternatively, night-mode can also be handled by a programmable IVR dialog, in which case you can program whatever you want, such as auto attendant, scheduled callback, or voice mail.

- The ACD accepts a base call priority from the IVR in a "get agent" function. This allows the IVR to give certain callers a higher position in a queue, based upon a database lookup.
- The ACD has a facility to allow a call to have its priority in a queue increased – i.e. move it up in the queue.
- Refined ACD call prioritization so that lower priority calls eventually rise in priority over time.
- On Distributed ACD systems (see next page), if all agents for a shared service are not logged on or go on break, then the ACD will automatically start distributing all new calls to that service.

Stand-alone ACD

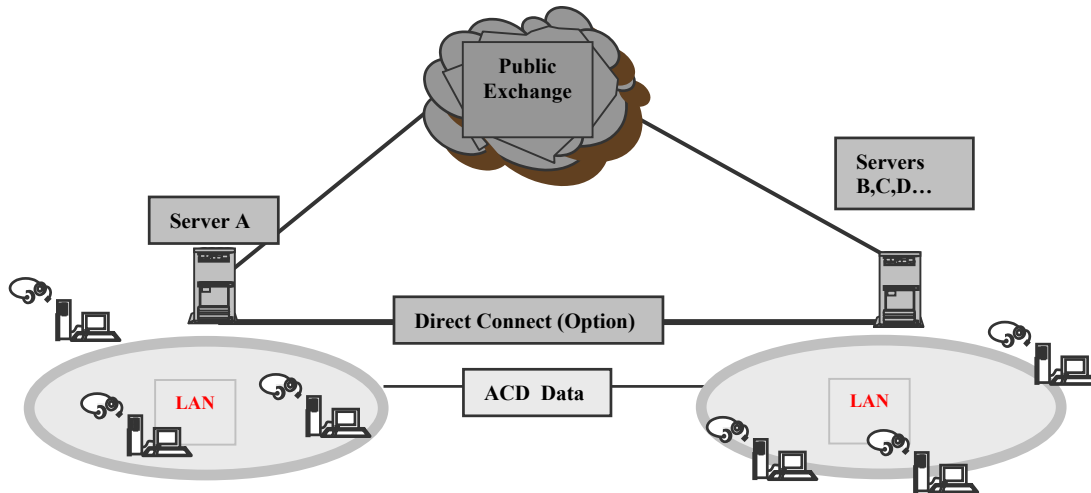
The Evolution ACD is a powerful 'soft' ACD that uses the underlying Oracle database to perform call routing. The ACD has the following features:

- It is rule-based: Call routing rules may be entered or changed by the user. These rules are based on the dialed number, line number, digits entered, time of day, day of the week, or type of day (such as holiday or weekday).
- It is fully integrated with the IVR: Since the IVR is fully programmable it can be used to direct the ACD routing. For example, a database lookup based on the caller ID can determine the agent or agent group to connect to.
- The priority of each group may be set so that agents will be passed calls from the highest priority group to which they have been assigned, unless a lower priority queue-length has exceeded a pre-set threshold.
- Direct dial-in is available with queuing, which can be used to make a priority call to an agent or to allow specific customers direct access to the same agent.

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Distributed ACD

The distributed ACD is made up of two or more Evolution systems, each of which has its own ACD. All of the standalone features of the Evolution ACD are therefore available in a distributed configuration.



When a call is received at any of the servers (for example, Server A) the ACD in this server will decide whether or not to transfer to another ACD. This decision is based on the current number of calls currently holding for that service against the services distribution threshold and if there are any agents currently processing calls for that service. If no agents are processing the service then all new calls are offered immediately. This is done by the ACD broadcasting a transfer request on the network. Every ACD capable of taking the call (settable by service) will place it on its appropriate queues. When an agent becomes available on a server (say Server C) it will reserve the agent and send a message to the requesting server (Server A in this example). Server A can either accept the response and transfer it to the responding server, or it can deny the response if it can process the call itself within a pre-set time. If the transfer fails, the call is removed from the responding server (Server C) but it remains in all the queues in the other servers as before.

The Evolution distributed ACD can maintain a call in multiple queues on multiple servers simultaneously and it will pass the call to the first available agent on any of the servers (unless the requesting server is able to obtain an agent itself within a short time). With this approach a call is only re-routed when an agent is available to take it at the remote server, thereby minimizing the transfer cost and minimizing the number of trunks in use.

Great flexibility is provided by the service-based approach, which makes it possible for different servers to have different transfer conditions (for example, disabling transfers for this service in one or more servers while enabling it on others). Full integration with the IVR also means that different actions can be taken for different dialogs and furthermore, each dialog can enable or block transfers.

DDI

In addition to handling ACD calls, the Evolution system also supports DDI calls (Direct Dial-in – i.e., where the number dialed by the caller terminates at a single designated phone). Upon receipt of a DDI call, Evolution will pop a call-announcement onto the screen of the agent if the agent is logged on.

Evolution also provides, through the IVR, the following additional features for handling DDI calls:

- Busy – announce “hold” options
- Queue multiple DDI calls for the same agent
- Transfer the call into a designated ACD queue (e.g., “your agent is on another call, press 1 to speak to someone in another group...”)
- Leave a voicemail message.