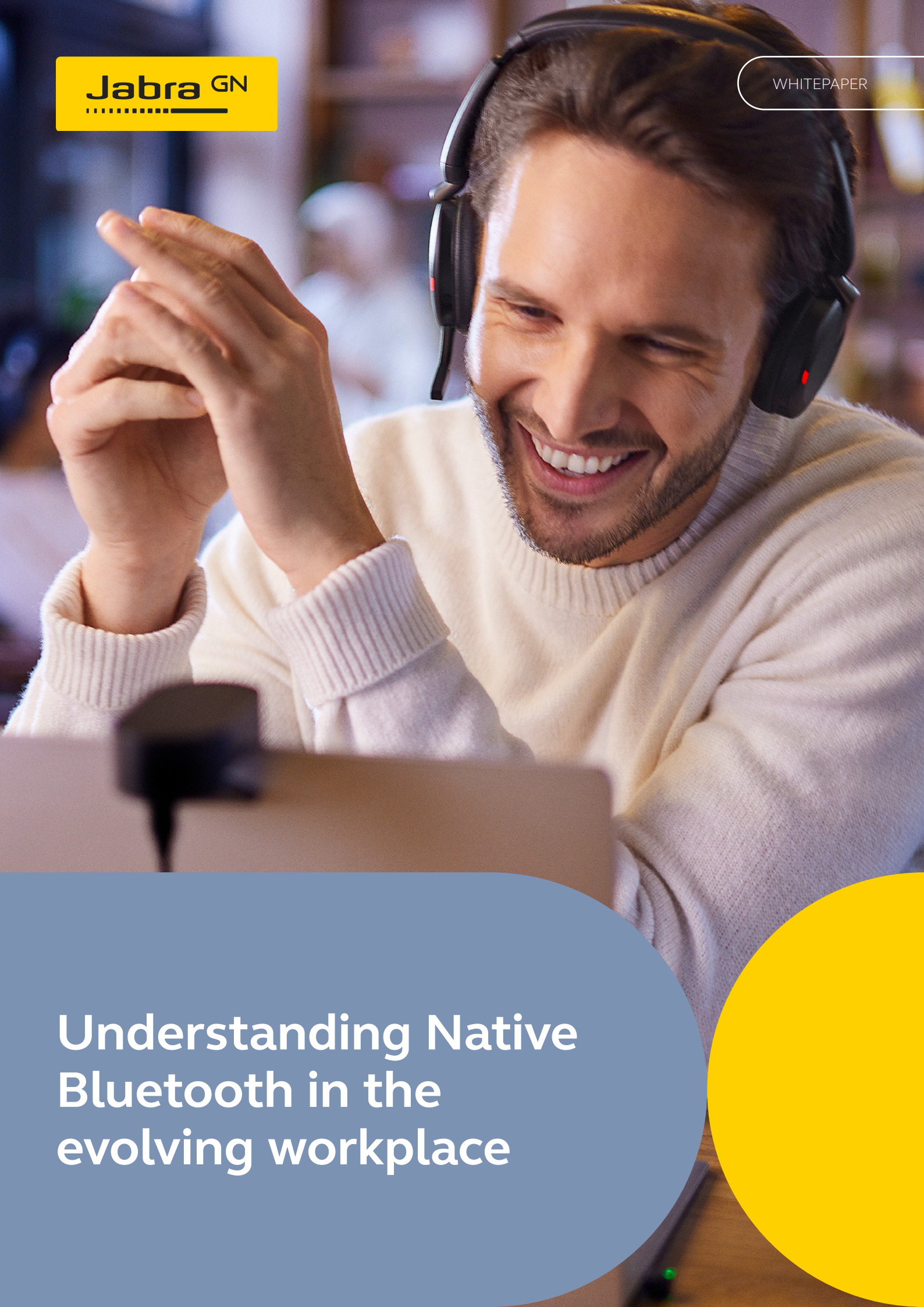


WHITEPAPER

Understanding Native Bluetooth in the evolving workplace

Why professional audio matters more than ever

When companies mandated a return to offices post-pandemic, many redesigned workspaces to support hybrid work - downsizing desk space and shifting to open-plan layouts[1]. As employees now frequent the office only a few days a week, the purpose of physical space has changed[2]. But amid this transformation, one essential element is often overlooked: sound.

Online meetings have surged, but offices are now louder. Employees take calls at hot desks, across open-plan floors, and in informal spaces, surrounded by colleagues doing the same. The result: simultaneous conversations, background noise, and constant disruptions.

Noise is now the third most stressful factor at work[3], after organizational change and lack of support. It contributes to fatigue and impacts focus. Combined with poor audio - unclear speech, background noise, or low sound quality - stress increases. Over half of knowledge workers say subpar audio hampers performance.

"Noise not allowing me to focus stresses me"

47%

74% "Working in a loud environment makes me mentally tired"

63% "Working in a loud environment makes me physically tired"

63% "It is difficult for me to feel passionate about my work when working in a loud environment"

Meanwhile, budgets are tightening. With 24% of organizations reallocating funds from IT equipment to AI initiatives[4], every investment must show clear value.

Professional-grade headsets offer that value. They deliver crystal-clear voice pickup, effective background noise reduction, and all-day comfort, helping teams focus, reduce stress, and collaborate better. In today's environment, professional audio isn't optional - it's essential.

Investing in reliable, future-proof headsets is a critical step toward safeguarding productivity, supporting wellbeing, and ensuring capital efficiency and long-term ROI.

But professional-grade experiences rely on strong connectivity between a headset and a device. Today, there are two options: via USB Bluetooth (BT) adapter (also known as a dongle), or via Native Bluetooth. In the following pages, we explain what Native BT is, compare it with USB BT adapters, and elaborate further on the benefits and challenges of these alternatives.

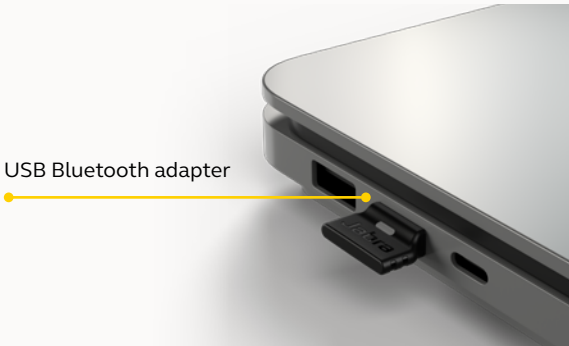
The value of a professional-grade headset

43% Improves focus and concentration

36% Minimizes distractions

33% Increases work productivity

31% Helps to ease stress



[1] Time, Companies are finally designing offices for the new work reality, May 22, 2023
[2] Jabra Mind the Gap Global Report 2024
[3] Jabra Making the workplace sound better Global Report 2024
[4] Jabra Great Expectations Global Report 2024

What Is Native Bluetooth?

Native Bluetooth connects a wireless headset directly to a PC using the PC's built-in BT stack[5] - no USB adapter required. This is already common for some keyboards and mice, but audio devices are more complex.

Traditionally, enterprise headsets have used USB BT adapters that are pre-paired and come with their own BT stack. This enables plug-and-play connectivity, seamless call control, and secure connections - avoiding the need for pairing mode.

Recently, the ecosystem has started evolving. PC and chipset manufacturers have improved BT support, while operating systems like Microsoft Windows 11 and collaboration platforms such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom now certify Native BT headsets.

Headsets are inherently more technically demanding than other BT-enabled peripherals. They manage both input and output audio streams, voice pickup, call controls, muting, and seamless compatibility with UC platforms. To support these, the following certification programs have extended their device certification to include Native BT support alongside USB BT adapter connectivity:

Certified for Microsoft Teams

Extends its device certification to include Native BT support alongside USB BT adapter connection.

zoom Certified

Extends its certification program to accommodate Native BT headsets.

intel evo POWERED BY CORE intel vPRO

Certifies both PCs and accessories for performance and Native BT compatibility.

Even before formal certification, the use of Native BT was already growing. As the ecosystem matured, users began connecting headsets natively to their PCs to avoid USB BT adapters and free up valuable USB ports. In a Jabra study, 20-25%[6] of respondents reported connecting their headsets via Native BT to free up USB ports and simplify use.

However, Native BT performance depends heavily on factors like the PC's hardware, BT and audio drivers, and software versions - often outside user control. That's why IT support and proactive compatibility management are essential.

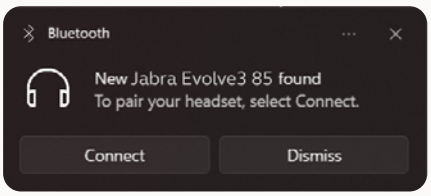
In the following sections, we explore how Jabra helps IT leaders navigate this complexity – ensuring a smooth transition for organizations embracing Native BT.

[5] A BT stack is a collection of software components that handle BT communication. With Native BT, this stack runs on the PC. With USB BT adapters, the stack runs on the adapter itself - meaning Jabra controls both ends of the connection, providing greater consistency and reliability.
[6] Jabra Project Dongle 2022

Technical comparison – USB BT adapter vs. Native BT





	USB BT ADAPTER (DONGLE)	NATIVE BT
Pairing	Headsets arrive pre-paired with a USB BT adapter. Just plug in and power on.	Requires pairing with the PC. With Swift Pair, pairing is simplified - Windows detects the headset and prompts the user to connect with one click.  *Swift Pair notification for Evolve3 85 on Windows 11
Connect/ disconnect/ reconnect	Automatically connects to the headset when powered on and reconnects reliably.	Reconnection depends on Windows and the PC's BT stack[5]. Users may need to manually reconnect if multiple devices are competing for BT priority.
	Jabra headsets can connect to multiple devices via the pre-paired USB BT adapter or multiple Native BT connections but can only maintain active connections with two devices at a time (Multipoint). When both USB BT adapter and Native BT connections are present, the USB BT adapter connection is prioritized for stability and audio quality.	
Call control in softphones	Full call control is supported via USB protocols - ringing, answer/end, mute/ unmute - across most softphones (Microsoft Teams, Zoom, and many more).	Limited as of 2026. Full functionality currently available only on Windows 11 with Microsoft Teams and Zoom.
Headset settings management	Supported for both USB BT adapter and Native BT connections via Jabra Direct, Jabra Xpress, and Jabra Plus.	
Firmware updates	Fully supported.	May require cable or USB BT adapter connection for firmware updates.

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Benefits and limitations at a glance:





	USB BT ADAPTER	NATIVE BT
Key benefits	• Limits repeated pairing to reduce risk of unauthorized access • Devices are pre-paired and ready to use	• Seamless user experience across multiple devices • Frees up USB ports • Simplifies logistics and support (no lost USB BT adapters)
Key limitations	• Needs a USB port – replacing the USB BT adapter requires pairing via vendor soft-ware like Jabra Direct	• Driver and OS dependency – common PC driver issues can disrupt pairing, connection, and call quality • No tools for wireless density management



Challenges of Native BT

1 Inconsistent experience across PCs

- Mute sync issues
- Audio dropouts
- Duplicate device listings
- Robotic/distorted sound
- Pairing/reconnection problems

These issues can lead to frustrating meeting experiences. For example, you may mute your microphone from the softphone but be unable to unmute via your headset, or you might hear distorted, robotic audio due to driver miscommunication. In some cases, users report only speaker or microphone functioning, or difficulty identifying the correct speaker in a softphone due to multiple listings.

2 **Fragmented responsibility -** The PC's BT stack spans multiple stakeholders

- **Microsoft (OS provider)** - responsible for the BT stack and APIs in Windows 11
- **PC OEM (e.g., Dell, Lenovo)** - distributes drivers and firmware (UEFI/BIOS), manages integration
- **Chipset vendors (Intel, AMD)** - provide the BT audio stack, driver integration
- **BT module vendors (e.g. Intel, Qualcomm)** - develop BT radio and drivers
- **Audio subsystem vendors (e.g., Realtek)** - manage audio stack and driver layers

Any bug in the user experience could trace back to one - or more - of these vendors, making troubleshooting complex.

3 Firmware update restrictions

- Devices in the Evolve and Evolve2 range require USB BT adapter or cable for updates
- Evolve3 headset devices support wireless firmware updates via Native BT

4 Missing admin functionalities

- Tools to monitor BT link quality between headset and PC

These features require control within the PC BT stack, which is outside Jabra's remit.

Mitigation tip

If you're adopting Native BT, make sure you're running the latest PC drivers from both your original equipment manufacturer (OEM) and chipset vendor - this step can resolve most issues and deliver a solid experience. However, in many cases PC OEMs do not provide updated drivers, even on new laptops, and chipset vendors may not release them directly. Where updates aren't available, performance problems may persist until the OEM issues a fix.

Future outlook

As with keyboards and mice, it is likely that Native BT will increasingly become the standard connection for headset connectivity to PCs over time. Enterprise adoption will follow as:

- New PCs bring updated chipsets and drivers
- As operating systems, softphones and PC's mature this will provide a more reliable and stable experience

Most PC hardware refreshes every 3-4 years, meaning widespread compatibility can be expected within 2-3 years. However, software update cycles and IT management can affect rollout speed.

Jabra's position on Native BT

We recognize Native BT as a growing trend and actively respond to evolving needs. However, to guarantee a consistent, enterprise-grade experience, we continue to include USB BT adapters in all enterprise SKUs.

Our position

- USB BT adapters remain included to ensure a reliable user experience, while Native BT offers a viable option for compatible environments

- Jabra Evolve 3 85 and Evolve 3 75 are among the first Native Bluetooth Low Energy (LE) Audio headsets, Certified for Microsoft Teams. Additionally, the Evolve 3 85, Evovle3 75 and and Evolve2 75 are already certified by Zoom and Intel Evo

- USB BT adapter-free models may become available for environments ready to support them



Our commitment

We aim to empower IT teams and end users with flexible, future-proof options.

Native BT offers simplicity, portability, and user-centric design but it is not yet a full replacement for USB BT adapters in all contexts.

While we anticipate long-term advancements in ecosystem maturity - including certification, driver and operating system updates, and expanded features - some enterprise-grade capabilities (like wireless density control or call control in browser-based softphones) will take time to match.

Jabra remains committed to staying at the forefront of Native BT developments, ensuring our customers benefit from the most future-proof products and experiences – today and as the ecosystem evolves.

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