

Optimizing the Zoom Experience

Some Tips for Instructors

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Recipe for a good experience presenting with Zoom-Hardware

- PC/Mac
 - Faster processor
 - More RAM
- Internet
 - Faster the better
 - Wired ethernet cable is better than wi-fi
 - Upgrade your router
- Dual Monitors
- Quality of camera
 - Laptop cameras tend to be worse than webcam
- Quality of microphone
- Use a secondary computer, phone, tablet, to monitor session

Upgrading Your Hardware

- For many of us who have been offering classes at multiple adult learning centers we have been blessed with fast internet and reliable equipment at our host institutions. Now that we are all working from home we are responsible for optimizing the experience as best we can. My prediction is that we will be presenting from home for at least another year (I hope I'm wrong) so investing in upgraded hardware will provide immediate benefits.

Preparing for Zoom

- Test Your Setup The No. 1 culprit of a painful videoconference is the quality of the call itself.
- So before your class, the least you can do is a test run to ensure the call looks and sounds good, with minimal tech snafus. A few steps:
 - Preview your webcam. Here, you can check your picture. Adjust your indoor lighting and camera angle to make your face look properly lit. And most important, be mindful of what's in the background: Anything you wouldn't want your colleagues to normally see, like your liquor collection or dirty laundry, should be out of the frame.
 - Test the microphone. Make sure you wear a headset with a built-in microphone or use an external microphone — the microphone included on laptops can sound very poor. The easiest way to make sure you sound good is to do a video call with a friend and ask how you sound, then adjust accordingly.
- Check your internet speeds. Because so many people are staying home and using the internet at the same time, our bandwidth and service are slowing down in many neighborhoods. Visit [speedtest.net](https://www.speedtest.net) to gauge your internet speeds. If your speeds are below 20 megabits per second, there's a high likelihood your video is going to look pixelated and have audio delays.
- Be prepared for hiccups

Position your webcam smartly

- Since we are all on video chat now, just remember: Keep a light source on your face, and try to avoid sitting with a window behind you. Frame your head and shoulders in the shot, and keep the camera lens at or above eye level—use a cardboard box to prop up the laptop if necessary. And lift your head up. Your chin will thank you. Lastly, grab a microfiber cloth and wipe off the lens from time to time.

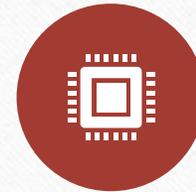
Fix your Wi-Fi



Having Wi-Fi issues? Plug directly into your router with an Ethernet cable.



Don't like being tethered? Move your router to the center of the house to spread the signal.



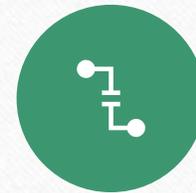
Choose the faster 5GHz network if possible.



If your router is more than five years old, get a new one.



Get a wi-fi extender to boost signal



Consider a mesh network—it uses multiple nodes to kill dead zones.

Cramped screens.

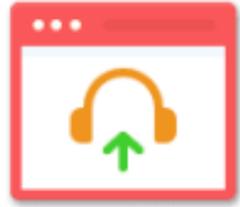
- Many of us use laptops and the smaller screens can feel constraining. You could consider adding a second monitor to your desk
- Monitor 1 could contain your shared content such as Powerpoint slides, videos etc
- Monitor 2 used for the Zoom admin functions such as toolbar, chat box, participant gallery and participant list



Zoom Software

Zoom's help files and tutorials are great

- Security Controls
- Chat Box
- Participant List
- Toolbar
- Speaker View vs Participant View
- Virtual Backgrounds
- Screen sharing
- Co-host
- Breakout Rooms
- Waiting Room
- Muting participant sound



Join Audio

Computer Audio Connected



Share



Invite Others



Unmute



Start Video



Invite



Participants ²



Share

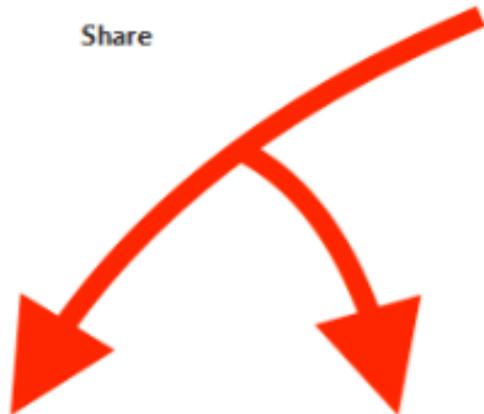


Chat



Record

Leave Meeting



Zoom Instructor View vs Gallery View

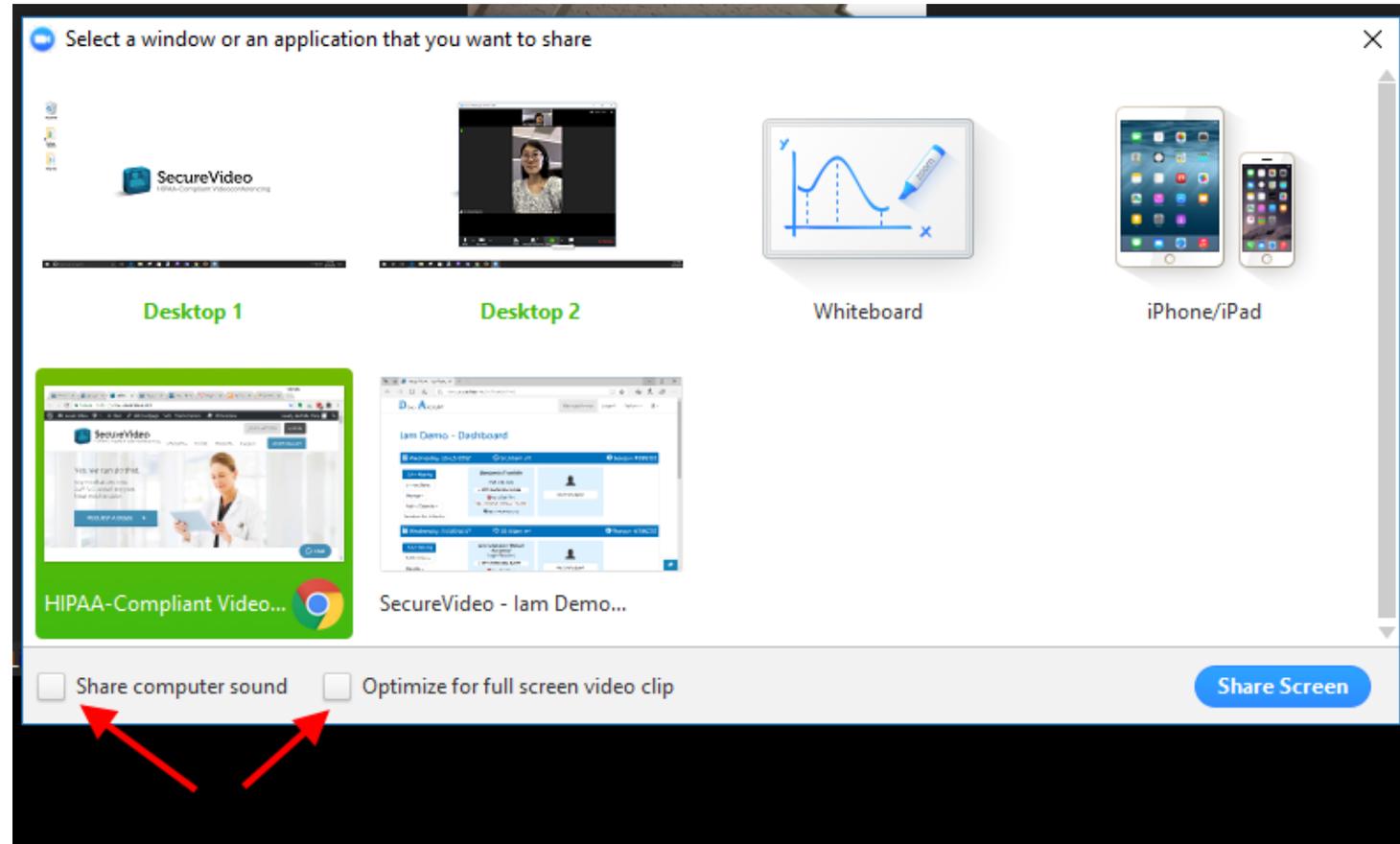


Virtual Backgrounds (Unsplash.com)



Screen Sharing Video

If you are screen sharing a video clip make you sure you check both these boxes to optimize the quality of the clip



<https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-prevent-zoom-bombing>

How to Prevent Zoom-Bombing

Zoom is becoming the videoconferencing method of choice during the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, your Zoom meetings are wide open to hijacking if you don't know how to set the host controls properly. Learn how to stop bad actors and keep your video calls on track.

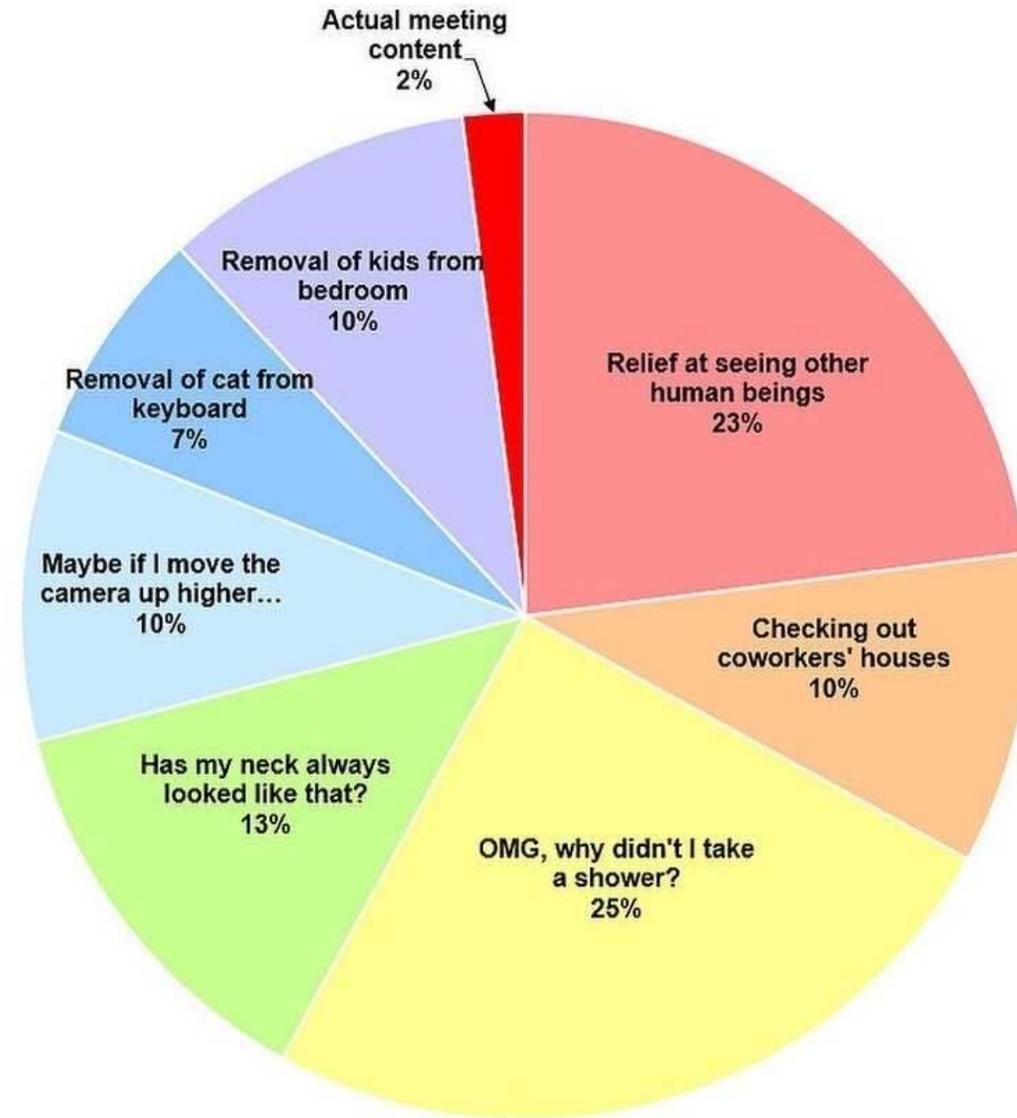


By Jill Duffy March 31, 2020



calling and Zoom has seen a flood of activity recently, as people across the world shifted

Diagram of Zoom Meeting Attention Span



Living the Coronavirus Work-From-Home Life?



Mute Your Mic

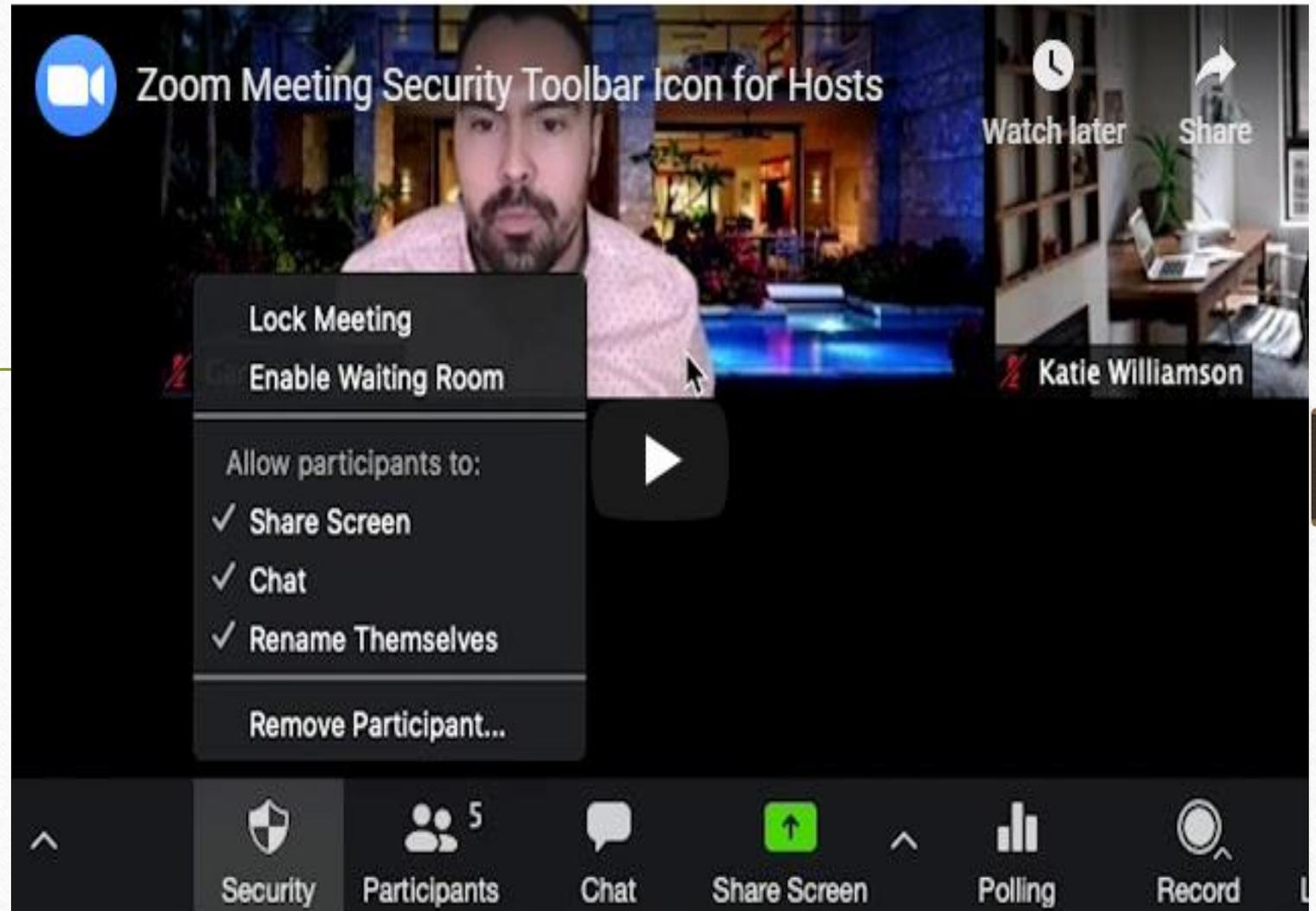
- The Work From Home (WFH) Golden Rule—thou shalt mute your microphone—is easier said than done, especially when you can't find the calling app among your 100 million open windows.
- Need to be careful if you are Zooming on a portable device and you move around your house. Nobody wants to hear a flushing toilet
- When you are in a Zoom meeting and you are muted, hold the spacebar when you want to talk and the Zoom window is in focus. Your screen will show a message indicating that you are temporarily unmuted and the microphone will appear green when you talk.

Co-Host Feature

- Host controls allow you as the host to control various aspects of a Zoom meeting, such as managing the participants.
- The co-host feature allows the host to share hosting privileges with another user, allowing the co-host to manage the administrative side of the meeting, such as managing participants and managing your chat box. The host must assign a co-host. There is no limitation on the number of co-hosts you can have in a meeting or webinar.
- <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362603-Host-and-co-host-controls-in-a-meeting>

Security Icon in Host Toolbar

This was added
in a recent
software update



In-Meeting Settings

Zoom has controls at your fingertips to ensure your meetings are secure and disruption-free.

- **Security options in toolbar:** Meeting hosts have a Security icon in the toolbar for quick access to essential in-meeting security controls.
- **Lock the meeting:** When a host locks a Zoom Meeting that's already started, no new participants can join, even if they have the meeting ID and password (if you have required one).
- **Remove participants:** From that Participants menu, you can mouse over a participant's name, and several options will appear, including "Remove".
- **Put participant on hold:** You can put an attendee on hold and their video and audio connections will be disabled momentarily.
- **Disable video:** Hosts can turn someone's video off. This will allow hosts to block unwanted, distracting, or inappropriate gestures on video.
- **Mute participants:** Hosts can mute/unmute individual participants or all of them at once. Hosts can block unwanted, distracting, or inappropriate noise from other participants. You can also enable "Mute Upon Entry" in your settings, which is a good option for large meetings.
- **Turn off file transfer:** In-meeting file transfer allows people to share files through the in-meeting chat.
- **Turn off annotation:** You can disable the annotation feature in your Zoom settings to prevent people from writing all over the screens.
- **Disable private chat:** Zoom has in-meeting chat for everyone or participants can message each other privately. Restrict participants' ability to chat amongst one another while your event is going on and cut back on distractions.
- **Control screen sharing:** The meeting host can turn off screen sharing for participants.
- **Control recording:** The ability to record to the cloud or locally is something an account admin can control. If they have recording access, the host can decide to enable/disable a participant or all participants to record.
- **Do not allow participants to rename their ID:** The host can disable the ability for participants to rename their onscreen identity.
- **Turn on waiting rooms:** The meeting host can turn on waiting rooms from within the meeting.

Secondary Computer

- I present from my desktop computer (Host) but also connect a laptop to the meeting and make that a co-host. I can test my audio and video through the laptop. If you know a participant in your class you can also ask them to alert you if there are any technical problems via chat box or by calling you
- Tablets also work well as secondary devices

It's wise to have a backup option.

- When connectivity problems arise, you can resort to using your smartphone's hot spot feature, which turns the device's cellular connection into a miniature Wi-Fi network. Cellular networks are designed to handle larger amounts of users, so chances are that your smartphone's data connection will be faster when your broadband is overwhelmed.
- You may want to connect your cell phone to the meeting and make your phone a co-host in case your presentation machine disconnects from the Internet. If you lose the primary connection you can warn students via the cell phone that you are having technical problems.

Unstable Audio

If your Internet connection is slow and your audio is unpredictable you have the option of connecting your computer to provide the video input but connect your voice (audio) via a cell phone. The following link provides details:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362663-Joining-a-meeting-by-phone>

**EXTERNAL
MICROPHONES**
Research by Lisa
Friedman

Here are some inexpensive USB headsets with boom mics that have gotten good customer reviews. (Note that some of these have a single earphone.)

- **Logitech H390** (\$25-\$40) – <https://tinyurl.com/ycozfxv3> (Best Buy), <https://tinyurl.com/tvhvpru> (B&H Photo), <https://tinyurl.com/vt7sfxg> (Office Depot)
- **Logitech H540** (\$35) – <https://tinyurl.com/ufumpdn> (Best Buy)
- **Microsoft LifeChat LX-3000** (\$19-\$31) – <https://tinyurl.com/tvtsz3k> (Amazon), <https://tinyurl.com/qvjpeet> (B&H Photo)
- **Mpow 071** (\$27) – <https://tinyurl.com/te784am> (Amazon)
- **Mpow Single-Sided USB Headset** (\$33) – <https://tinyurl.com/yxy94b9r> (Amazon)
- **Callez USB Headset** (\$25-\$27) – <https://tinyurl.com/rum9ycp> and <https://tinyurl.com/vqjef9c> (Amazon)

EXTERNAL Webcams
Research by Lisa
Friedman

Logitech is generally considered the best manufacturer of web cams. It's often difficult to find Logitech web cams in stock at online or brick-and-mortar stores.

- **Logitech C270** (\$70) – <https://tinyurl.com/y7fu57d2> (Best Buy)
- **Logitech C922** (\$100) – <https://tinyurl.com/y7njhcbe> (Best Buy),
<https://tinyurl.com/ybvgxhhn> (Logitech)
- **Logitech C920** (\$80) – <https://tinyurl.com/y7lnn3fj> (Logitech)
- **Logitech C920S** (\$70) – <https://tinyurl.com/sfjaq6m> (Best Buy),
<https://tinyurl.com/yxpmkxex> (Logitech)
- **Logitech C270** (\$25-\$40) – <https://tinyurl.com/y86gvztb> (Best Buy),
<https://tinyurl.com/y99qup5f> (Logitech)