VIDEO CALLS WITH ZOOM

Videocalls are an easy way to stay in touch and to hold meetings during the lockdown. There are many videoconferencing platforms available but 'Zoom' seems to be popular at the moment. Although not an expert, these notes have been put together by someone who uses Zoom a lot for work and it is hoped that they can help other people get started and use the facilities.

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Zoom is a commercial service with a free option for videocalls lasting up to 40 minutes. It is very user-friendly. Each call needs a host and at least one other participant. The host creates a link and sends it by email to the other participants, who click on the link to join the call at the appointed time. The participants and host all need to be registered first on Zoom and to have downloaded the Zoom 'app' (a small piece of software). The download only needs to be done once.

There are some short 'how-to' videos here: https://zoom.us/resources and it may be helpful to watch "Join a Meeting"; "Joining & Configuring Audio/Video"; and "Meeting Controls" if this your first time on Zoom. Further links on security and videocall etiquette are at the bottom of this note.

WHAT EQUIPMENT DO I NEED?

You will need a computer, laptop, tablet (such as an iPad), or a smart phone. New devices usually come with all the components needed for videoconferencing built-in, i.e. a speaker and microphone for the audio, and a screen and camera for the video. If your device is missing some of these, you might be able to plug in headphones or a speaker or webcam if you have one.

HOW DO I DOWNLOAD THE SOFTWARE?

The first time you use Zoom, you will need to download the Zoom 'app'. The download is automatic. You will probably come to it in one of these ways:

- Someone (a 'host') invites you to a Zoom call by sending you a Zoom link: click the link and follow the download prompts. *Security tip: Only click the link if you are expecting the invitation and it is from someone you trust!*
- If you have not received a Zoom link, you can go to https://zoom.us/ and click the orange button "Sign up for free", or to https://zoom.us/download and click the blue download button "Zoom Client for Meetings", then follow the download prompts. *Security tip: Only download from "zoom.us". Do not download the zoom app from other sites!*

When you first register and download the app, Zoom will ask you for some details including your name. You will also have to create a Zoom password. It is best to register with a name that people will recognise so they will let you into their calls. If Zoom asks you for permission to download the app, select 'yes', or 'confirm', or 'download' or whichever option is offered. Apple users may also be asked to input their 'Apple ID' before they can download the app.

When you have completed the download, the app may ask you to test your speaker and microphone and confirm the settings. In most cases, you can just click 'yes' or 'confirm'. If you cannot get the speaker or microphone to work, there may be some tips in the 'how-to' videos above.

USING ZOOM AS A PARTICIPANT

Only click on Zoom links that you are expecting and that are from someone you trust!

If a host has sent you a link, click on it just before the appointed time. A window will pop up saying "Waiting Room", this means you are on hold until the host admits you into their call (this is a security feature to prevent interlopers). You may be asked to input a password and meeting ID,

which the host will have sent with the invitation. If the host is not using the "Waiting Room" or password functions, you will go straight into the call.

Once the videocall has started, you will see yourself and other participants on your screen. There are some simple controls to know about. For normal computers and laptops, move your mouse around the edge of the screen to make the controls appear. For Apple products, you may have to tap and "pull" the screen down with your finger to make them appear.

- One important control is a little image of a microphone labelled "mute" or "unmute". When there are lots of people on a call, it is best if all the participants are on "mute" – unless you are the one speaking, in which case you can "unmute" yourself by clicking the microphone. The host can mute and unmute other people.
- The same applies with the image of a video camera. You can switch your camera on or off at any stage in the call by clicking this image, it will not affect the sound.
- Another control button is labelled "gallery view" or "speaker view". One view shows all the participants in equal size boxes, the other shows whoever is speaking in a big box and everyone else in small. Click it a few times and see which one you prefer.
- To leave the call, click the red message "leave meeting". If you do this by mistake and want to come back in, just click the original link again.

USING ZOOM AS A HOST

To set up a Zoom call as the host, log in to zoom.us and click "Schedule a meeting". Fill in the desired time and date and click the blue Save button at the bottom. The next screen will show details of your scheduled call including a "Join URL" link. You can copy this link and send it by email to people you want to invite to the call. When it is time for the call, just click on the link. If you cannot find it, log on to your Zoom account, go to the "Personal" menu on the left of the screen, click "Meetings", find your meeting and click "Start".

To start a call straight away, do the same as above but click "Host a meeting" at the beginning instead of "Schedule a Meeting". This will skip the scheduling part and begin the videocall straight away. You can invite people from inside the meeting: click "Manage participants", then "Invite" and a window will pop up with a Link that you can copy and send to participants. If people are not expecting your invitation, you might want to call or text them to say it is OK to open the link.

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Further reading:

Zoom's security guide: "Best Practices for Securing Your Zoom Meetings Everything you need to keep your video meetings safe and secure" https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Securing%20Your%20Zoom%20Meetings.pdf

Zoom's tips on videocalling: "Video Meeting Etiquette: 7 Tips to Ensure a Great Attendee Experience" https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2019/11/27/video-meeting-etiquette-tips/