

# **Coronavirus shortage: Looking for a Logitech? Webcams hard to find as we all work from home**

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Credit: CC0 Public Domain

It's not just toilet paper that's hard to find.

For tech-savvy consumers, webcams, those little plug-in cameras for letting you broadcast to the internet, are now missing in action, too.

Logitech, the company that dominates webcam sales, is sold out of every one it makes. Amazon and Best Buy are out of stock. And price gougers on eBay are selling used models for as high as \$420, or more than twice as much as the most expensive Logitech model, the \$199 Brio.

"Global demand for webcams is needed from all remote workers, students and in the health care space," notes analyst Jeremiah Owyang, who himself was able to snag a unit in early March, before they sold out.

Sure, there are built-in webcams on most laptops that do the trick, but they have substantially lower resolution. For instance, on the new Apple MacBook model just released, the internal webcam has a 1.2-megapixel sensor and 720p 1280x720 resolution.

Most webcams sold by Logitech shoot in 1920x1080 resolution, while the 13-megapixel top-of-the-line Brio goes all the way up to 4K, 4096x2160.

As many of us are attending or leading online seminars on Zoom, Hangouts, Skype or other programs, attending classes this way or just connecting with friends, Owyang wanted the dedicated webcam for vanity sake.

Call it improved [picture quality](#).

"It smoothes out the skin, rather than the highly pixelated onboard cameras on laptops," he says. "And the higher resolution and larger lens picks up better picture in low light."

He does three public live streams or business webinars a week, more

than before. "It's key to present yourself the best you can, during these odd times."

Logitech, for its part, says it's doing what it can to get webcams back in stock.

"With a shift in remote work, distance learning and telemedicine over the past few weeks, many Logitech products are in high demand across the globe. We are working to meet this need as quickly as possible with increased production and distribution of our products."

While the company wouldn't offer specifics about when to expect webcams back in stock, the retailer B&H Photo notes on its website that they'll be available again in June.

Craig Nosse, a marine technician for the University of Hawaii, picked up a new webcam in early March. He was surprised Best Buy still had inventory, he says, and "rushed" to buy one.

His daughter's internal MacBook webcam wouldn't always sync up with Zoom conferences. "Sometimes I'd Zoom with no video and despite several efforts to troubleshoot couldn't get consistent." So he switched to a PC, which didn't have a built-in camera, and installed the Logitech C615 external webcam. Now, "no issues with Zoom, and video/audio quality have been amazing."

Kim Doty, a book editor based near Tampa, Florida, wasn't so lucky. She ordered two webcams in early March, but they have yet to arrive.

Her son is in fifth grade and will need it for Zoom classes. Since the webcam hasn't been delivered yet, "I'll have to set him up on his phone."

## **Use the phone instead**

Since the resolution on your phone is so much better than the laptop webcam, a better solution for looking better on conferences and not having audio/video issues is to reach for your phone as a better alternative.

Consider for a moment that the MacBook 720p webcam has resolution specs of 1280x720 versus the selfie cam on the latest iPhone, which can shoot in 4K resolution of 4096x2160.

What do those numbers mean? You'll look better in low light. The screen won't be as dark. You'll have better color on your face.

You can easily attend Zoom classes, Hangout sessions, Skype calls and the like with your phone.

But if you're going to appear on camera, we recommend two vital accessories:

## **Raise that phone up high**

Remember that you probably can't hold your phone in your hand for longer than a few seconds during a video conference, and the ensuing shakiness will be bothersome to the other attendees. You need to keep the device steady. If you're like most people, you'll be looking down at the webcam, instead of up, because that's where the [webcam](#) is, and that will accentuate your double chin. Eye-level is best, or reaching up just a little higher even better. So if you're going to use your phone as your video device, pick up a phone stand and place your device in there. B&H has a stand for \$29.99 from Kanto with a 15-inch moveable arm. Another possibility: a tabletop tripod, with an attachment to fit the iPhone. The Magnus FT-P10 tripod sells for just around \$15 and if it doesn't meet your eye, a simple solution—put it on top of a bunch of

books until it does. (You can also do that with a laptop, if necessary.)

## Power

If you're planning on spending a lot of time on video calls, your phone will be sucking away at the battery. Be sure to have a power cord nearby to plug in the [phone](#). You can always power up by plugging it directly into the computer or find some wall space nearby.

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