

Zoom finally conferences in Alexa, Google and Facebook on Echo Show, Portal and Nest Hub Max

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After frustrating stay-at-home workers and parents looking for an easy way to connect their kids to Zoom because it wasn't available, the world's most popular video meeting application is finally coming to

Amazon, Google and Facebook video display units.

The Echo Show, Google Nest Hub Max and Facebook Portal were originally released as a way for folks to engage in video chatting and [home entertainment](#) without the bother of turning on the computer, phone or TV.

That there would be a coronavirus that sent Zoom usage up 10x in less than a year wasn't foreseen, nor the need to have a dedicated video display that could handle one-touch setup for the meetings and classes, without the bother of phones and computers.

But now, Zoom is finally coming to the devices, first to Portal, in September, the latest version of the Amazon Echo Show (version 8) and Google's Nest Hub Max, but not until later this year. The Echo Show 8 is the most economical of the units, at \$99, followed by a starting price of \$129 for the Portal Mini and \$229 for the Nest Hub Max.

Jeff Smith, the head of Zoom Rooms, says users have found it a "challenge" to make laptops and phones work for them during Zoom meetings, so the company wanted to find a way to make the experience more "natural," for them. "We want to meet users where they are."

For Zoom, it's part of a new Zoom for Home initiative to bring the networking service to home devices. Zoom itself will be selling a dedicated unit, with a 27-inch screen, from DTEN for \$599, later this month. The Zoom for Home program also includes access to calendar on the devices.

Fine print galore: Zoom for Home will work only with the Amazon Echo Show 8, not the other versions of the Echo. For Facebook, you can use the Portal devices but not Portal TV, which brings video chatting to the television. Facebook says it hopes to have TV available by the end of the

year and Amazon says Zoom will be coming to other editions of the Echo Show as well.

For Google, it's going to Hub Max, and other smart displays that use the Google Assistant from LG, Lenovo and JBL, the company says. The Hub Max is the Google device with a built-in camera.

To use the service, users will need to download a new Zoom app designed for smart display units and sign in. They'll see their calendar on the video screen, and to start or join a meeting, they'll touch the screen.

Eventually, Smith says, Zoom will add voice tools as well.

Echo Show units, the version of Amazon's connected speakers with screens, currently works with just Skype or Alexa-to-Alexa video calls. Google's Hub Max currently works with Google's [video](#) chat service Duo and Meet, which Google has positioned as the anti-Zoom for classrooms and enterprise.

The Facebook Portal allows group calls from Facebook Messenger and Whatsapp, in addition to the coming Zoom tools.

Bret Kinsella, who runs the Voicebot.ai blog devoted to voice computing, says there are 87 million smart speakers in use in the United States, and that 16.5% of the owners also have smart displays. His numbers: 7 million for Echo Show, 3 million for Google Hub and under a million for Portal.

He thinks the companies would have sold a lot of units when the pandemic started if they had Zoom available then, but now users have gotten used to using Zoom on their computers and phones.

For now, having Zoom "is a good evolutionary step," he says. "But I'd be

surprised if it drove sales. It will add utility to the people who already have it."

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