

How to bring Zoom to your TV (coming soon) with Alexa

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Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

If you're also tired of taking daily Zoom calls on your laptop, maybe you'd prefer to just turn on the TV, lay back, and learn or conduct business from the couch.

With its own unit.

Earlier this week, we wrote about a new video device for Microsoft Teams, but it's really large, at 85 inches, and really costly, at \$21,199.

Amazon is introducing a less pricey option later this year. At a cost from over \$100 to \$300.

"I just believe that your big, beautiful TV is a great place for communications and we're going to continue to lean in to make that a better experience well," said Marc Whitten, vice president of Amazon Entertainment Devices and Services.

To drive the new device, you'll need the Fire TV Cube, a \$119 accessory that's different from the Fire TV streaming stick units. While the sticks rely on a [remote control](#) for navigation, the Cube works solely by voice and also has a built-in speaker.

Later this year, Amazon will begin supporting Zoom video calls via Fire TV Cube. You'll also need to connect a webcam (\$50-\$200) to the USB port on the back of the Cube, connect the Cube to the TV and position the webcam in the [living room](#) (or wherever you have the TV) to do your calls from there.

One snag is the great webcam shortage of 2020, another pandemic-caused shortage. Amazon touted working with Logitech webcams in its announcement, but it later confirmed to U.S. TODAY that any brand of [webcam](#) would work.

Working around webcams

Logitech, the top manufacturer of webcams, continues to have extremely limited inventory. The company apologizes on its website, saying, "We

are experiencing an unprecedented demand ... and are working tirelessly to fill orders as quickly as possible."

However, many used webcams are readily available on sites like eBay, Facebook Marketplace and Amazon.

But the issue with webcams is that they produce low-resolution images, and there's been a recent movement to connect better cameras to programs like Zoom, Webex, Team—with some opting for GoPros and iPhones, or higher-end cameras like DSLRs and mirrorless models from Canon, Sony and Nikon.

Amazon said the only cameras it's announcing right now are webcams, although there are several do-it-yourself methods to connect these cameras to Zoom via USB.

The iPhone works with apps like NeuralCam Live and Reincubate Camo, going from Lightning on the phone to USB on the computer, while higher end cameras connect to a capture card, like the Elgato Camlink, which connects to HDMI and then USB on the computer.

We're looking forward to testing out these DIY methods when the Cube is available to see if they'll (hopefully) work.

Echo Show 10

Beyond Zoom, the Fire TV Cube will also connect to Skype for video chats, and calls between Echo speakers.

Amazon is also bringing the video chat capabilities to the new \$249 Echo Show 10, an update it announced this week of its video display unit, with a new screen that rotates on its chassis. This is to let people walk around the room and be picked up by the camera, without having to

crowd around the unit.

The new Show will be released "in the fall," Amazon said. Zoom will also come to the smaller Echo Show 8, also later this year, to a unit that's currently available, along with Facebook's Portal video chat device and Google Nest Home Hub Max.

This week saw a lot of new product announcements, but the holiday reveals aren't over yet.

On Wednesday, Google will unveil its fall lineup, where it's expected to include an updated Home Hub, Pixel 5 smartphone and a new edition of the Chromecast streaming device. And in early October, Apple is expected to stage another event to launch the next four editions of the iPhones.

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