

Zoom alternatives: More suggestions for videoconferencing apps

30 August 2020, by Jefferson Graham, Usa Today



Credit: Unsplash/CC0 Public Domain

This was the week when millions of people all screamed in horror: "I can't connect to Zoom."

It was the [first day of school](#) for many who had to suffer through the 3 1/2-hour outage—and just another remote workday for many others.

I penned a piece about great free Zoom alternatives, mentioning apps like Webex, Google Meet, Skype, Microsoft Teams and Facebook Messenger Rooms.

And in came the flood of e-mails, tweets and Facebook comments. "What about GoToMeeting?" And Jitsi! And Whereby!

So in the interest of equal time, and knowing this is a subject that will not die down, (our new normal is that of living with [video conferencing](#), after all), I submit, for your weekend pleasure, eight other Zoom alternatives worth checking out.

GoToMeeting: In all the communication, GotoMeeting was the app mentioned most. "We've been using them for years, and the UI (user

interface) is much more intuitive than Zoom," noted Jason Bingham on Twitter. The free version of GoToMeeting is limited to three participants and a 40-minute time limit. From there, rates start at \$12 monthly, and highlights include the ability to screen share, record the [meeting](#) and have a transcription generated.

Whereby: The app, which says it was "built in Norway by privacy-friendly Europeans," has two big notable features. "There's no app required or time limit on meetings." Those of us with Zoom fatigue are pretty tired of being asked to download the app all the time. You can get your own personal Whereby URL, where all your meetings can be held. You can spruce it up with fun emoji, and there's a really clear share screen function. Just be ready to spend money. The [free version](#) only lets you meet with one person, compared to 12 on the \$9.99 monthly Pro account.

Discord: The free platform has been used by video game fans for long-form chat, but Discord says its also good for yoga classes, school clubs and any other groups wanting to interact. The app has gotten bad raps for heated, unsupervised chat among gamers, or, as The Wall Street Journal called it, "a lot of bad and ugly," But "managing large groups of people is arguably where Discord shines the most," says Tom's Guide. In a private meeting, you may not have to worry about policing bullies, and you have more voice controls to keep the audio in check.

FreeConferenceCall: The bare-bones service will do the trick, but it's not really free. Prefer to send folks a toll-free phone number to dial in for the meeting? That will run you two cents per minute. Or how about having one dedicated phone number to use for all your meetings? That's \$3.95 monthly. The service actually offers a "Pay what you can" offering for the service, starting at a suggested \$4 monthly, and climbing to \$15 monthly.

Jitsi. A site for nerds, Jitsi is an open source platform that says it's "more secure, more flexible, and completely free." When I say it's for nerds, consider this. Sure, you can record your meeting—but Jitsi recommends you do this by livestreaming it to YouTube first, instead of to your computer, as is done on Zoom and other apps. (Schools and businesses might not be so open to having their meeting in public.) That said, it has a feature to let the host mute all the participants at the flick of a button, which is pretty cool. And it's free, right?

And now that I've spent the week on Zoom, Teams, Messenger Rooms, Webex, Skype, Jitsi, FreeConferenceCall, Discord, Whereby and GoToMeeting, what's my favorite?

It's still Zoom, hands down, for ease of use, followed by Webex. The important thing to remember is that if you have a big, important meeting, or class project coming up, have the other app ready for you as a backup, in case Zoom fails again.

(c)2020 U.S. Today

Distributed by Tribune Content Agency, LLC.

APA citation: Zoom alternatives: More suggestions for videoconferencing apps (2020, August 30) retrieved 20 October 2021 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2020-08-alternatives-videoconferencing-apps.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.