Using Zoom Software for Personal and U3A Communication

What is Zoom?

Zoom is a video-conferencing tool that allows you to see and speak to other people via your computer. You can use it to talk to friends and family just like a video phone call. In the present situation, you might want to set up Zoom for your own multiple-site friends and family conversations, especially if you are in isolation mode. For a small number of participants, it is simple to use.

Tip: Because so many people across the world are choosing to use Zoom in the current pandemic, the response may depend upon time of day. Mornings are likely to be best as it is an American product and UK mid-morning is during the night USA time.

However, you can also use it for groups, like U3A. Its use is generally when there are more than two parties in the exchange; for a one-to-one video conversation there are other tools for smartphones like WhatsApp. When using it for larger groups, there are more things that need to be controlled. Multi-way discussions are not complicated but some protocol is needed as to who speaks when is required. Delivery of presentations is more complicated but is routinely used by more experienced users.

Zoom works for computers, tablets and smartphones. The Zoom app is available on Windows, Mac, iOS & Android. However, if you decide to use it on a phone or tablet, I suggest that you fix the device rather than holding it in your hand. Trying to converse with someone using a handheld device is likely to induce sea-sickness! Holding a multi-way session with more than three people is not likely to be practicable on a smartphone.

The **easiest way to use it is with a computer with built-in webcam and microphone** so that other people can see and hear you. If your computer does not have a built-in webcam, you can still take part in Zoom sessions; you can still see and hear other people and you can still type in messages by using the "Chat" command, but it is not likely to be satisfactory. Use of separate microphones is possible too but you need to set this up before the session begins. You should also check the sound levels of microphones and speakers beforehand.

How to Join a Zoom Meeting (unless you are organising Zoom meetings, this is the only paragraph you need!)

I strongly recommend that you look at their video. This gives good advice on what to do before the meeting starts, such as checking your video screen and your speaker and microphone levels. For instructions see this link.

When you receive a Zoom invitation link in an e-mail, just click on it. The screen will then invite you either to download Zoom (if you have not already done so; you want the FREE version not the professional one) or to launch Zoom. You may then see a message saying that the meeting has not yet been started by the host. Once they start the meeting, images of all the participants should appear. Note that the host can start the meeting at any time up to the set time.

How to Install Zoom

You do not need to have Zoom installed **in advance** in order to join a Zoom meeting that someone else has set up. As described above, you can download it when you click on the invitation link. However if you wish to initiate a Zoom meeting, it needs to be installed on your device. There are free and paid-for

professional versions of Zoom. The professional version of Zoom is widely used for business video conferencing. **We do not need to install the professional version; the free version is fine!!**

The only serious limitation of the free version is that **sessions are limited to 40 minutes**. However, it is possible to set up successive meetings with a break in between so that participants can get refreshments. Each meeting needs a **separate invitation and you need to respond to each (see below)**. Keith Bailey is giving a Science Group presentation in this way (thanks also to Keith who has managed to find some simpler instructions for installation!!)

Before you can use Zoom you will need to create an account using your email address. Go to https://zoom.us/signup.

To download Zoom for Windows or Mac, go to https://zoom.us/download#client_4meeting

& choose the 1st option, "Zoom Client for Meetings"**.**

If you have problems installing on Windows 10 go to https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/115004123963-Installing-Zoom-on-Windows-10-Creators-Update

For Mac installation help, go to https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/203020795-How-To-Install-on-Mac

For iOS download from the Apple Store, for Android go to the Google Play Store.

Help on Using Zoom

For help on using Zoom go to https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/categories/200101697

There is a "getting started" section on the Zoom website. Have a look at their video which gives simple step-by-step instructions.

How to Schedule a Zoom Meeting

In order to organise a Zoom meeting, you first need to schedule it. Full instructions are here. However you can also get plugins that allow you to do so directly using Google or Microsoft Outlook Calendars (video on Chrome extension to allow you to schedule a meeting directly from Gmail).

Video on how to schedule a Zoom meeting.

Some tips on the options available for a meeting:-

- Duration – don't forget that we can only have 40 minutes in one session. If you need longer, make it two meetings with a short break in between
- Recurring meeting – unless you want to make it a regular commitment, I suggest that you don't check this box
- Meeting password – suggest that you use a meeting password. This will be part of the message sent to participants. It should not be shared with others (e.g. via Facebook)
- Host & Participant Video should both be set to on
- Audio should be set to Telephone & Computer Audio

- Meeting Options box – suggest that you check the "Enable join before host" and "Enable waiting room" boxes

See also an excellent video on Scheduling and Control Settings for meetings – although designed for school teachers and covering many advanced features that we don't need, it has some useful advice. This is worth viewing if you are intending to make a group presentation on Zoom.

Inviting Participants

Once you have scheduled your meeting (don't forget that like any normal meeting, participants need some days of notice), you can **copy the invitation generated on screen (see end of above video) and include it in an e-mail to your intended participants**. There are other ways in which people can join Zoom meetings but the e-mail invitation should be the simplest.

If the person organising the meeting is not the Group Co-ordinator, then they will need to **get the Group e-mail addresses from the Co-ordinator** before they can send out the invitation. Alternatively, they can **send an invitation giving the link to the Co-ordinator, who can then include it in a Beacon e-mail** to Group Members.

Some useful tips for running Zoom meetings can be found at this link.

Hosting a Meeting

When participants click on the invitation link, they will be asked to wait until you "let them in". However, note that you are free to **start the meeting at any time prior to the set time** in the invitation. If you are making a presentation you may wish to "mute" participants once you have started the presentation until it is finished, to avoid distractions. If they need to interrupt, they can use the "chat" control or simply raise a hand to indicate that they wish to speak (you would need to "un-mute" participants before they could be heard)

The host controls will appear at the bottom of your screen if you are not currently screen sharing.

- **Mute/Unmute**: This allows you to mute or unmute your microphone.
  - Audio controls (click ^ next to **Mute/Unmute**): The audio controls allow you to change the microphone and speaker that Zoom is currently using on your computer, leave computer audio, and access the full audio options in the Zoom settings.
- **Start/Stop Video**: This allows you to start or stop your own video.
  - Video controls (click ^ next to **Start/Stop Video**): If you have multiple cameras on your computer, you can select which Zoom is using, access the full video controls, and even select a Virtual Background.
- **Manage Participants**: Opens the window to manage participants and invite others to join the meeting.
- **Share Screen**: Start sharing your screen. You will be able to select the desktop or application you want to share. When you are screen sharing, the controls will appear at the top of your screen, but you can drag it to another location. Share screen may be best for starting a meeting. However, if it involves a presentation, you will need to turn this option off when the presentation starts.

- **Screen Share** controls (click ^ next to **Share Screen**): Select who can share in your meeting and if you want only the host or any other participant to be able to start a new share.

How many participants can share at the same time?

◉ One participant can share at a time

◯ Multiple participants can share simultaneously (dual monitors recommended)

Who can share?

◯ Only Host   ◉ All Participants

Who can start sharing when someone else is sharing?

◉ Only Host   ◯ All Participants

- **Chat**: Access the chat window to chat with the participants (note that this is on-screen typed text not voice)
- **Record**: Start or stop a cloud or local recording. (This may be an easier way to give a presentation in that it creates an MP4 file that may be viewed at any time and not just a particular meeting time)
- **End Meeting** (only available to the host): This will end the meeting for all participants. If you want to have the meeting continue, you should give another participant host control before leaving the meeting.

Giving a Presentation on Zoom

If presenting, only allow host to share screen as if you are in a slide show, you need it to fill screen. Also it may be sensible to mute other participants for the duration of the presentation.

More details to follow

Summary

Zoom is a powerful piece of software with many features and capabilities that we will probably never use. However, with no date in prospect for when we may be able to meet again face-to-face, it is worth some effort to learn the basics. If nothing more, you will find it good for talking to friends and family. I am a beginner and cannot guarantee that all the above is right but we will learn more as we use it and will try to keep these notes corrected and updated.

Good Luck and Happy Zooming

Dave Puxley