

Zoom: Using and Sharing

Steve Wells

Getting Started

Zoom is a software tool for holding meetings and conferences on-line. To use it you will need:

- A computer
- A webcam
- A microphone

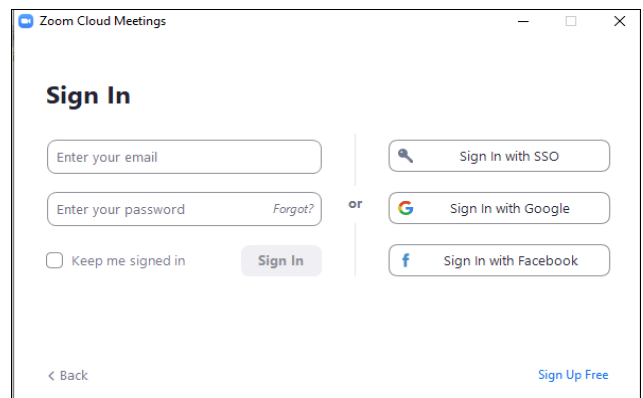
A laptop usually has these built in. A desktop computer may need a camera and microphone plugged into a USB port.

To start you need to download the Zoom application from:

<https://zoom.us/download>

Having downloaded and installed the application you need to set up an account. This will involve setting up a username and password which you will enter whenever you want to use the conferencing service.

When you run Zoom for the first time, click on the “Sign In” button followed by the “Sign Up Free” button at bottom-right of the “Sign In” screen.

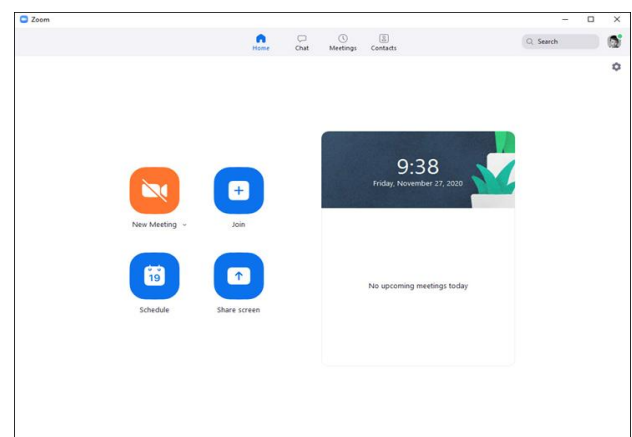


Sign-in Screen

Administration

Having signed in, you will be presented with the Zoom home screen. First, take a look at the menus at the top right of this screen. There are two menus here. One is linked to the icon which is based on your profile picture (more of profile pictures in a moment). The other is based on the “cog wheel” icon which is used for “Settings” in many applications.

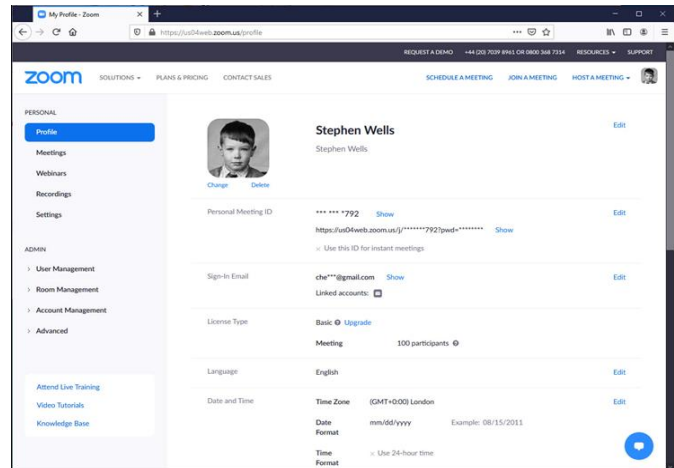
These two menus provide access to the Zoom administration pages. In fact they overlap: you can access your Zoom profile from both!



Zoom Home Screen

If you go into your profile, you will be asked to log-in again for security reasons. You will then be presented with a screen on which you can change your profile picture, your display name and so on. Zoom is one of those tools which seems to have grown rapidly and slightly out of control. So, there are many ways to do simple tasks such as changing your display name.

It is a good idea to set your display name to be something recognisable. This is the name which will be displayed on the Zoom conferencing screen. If it is not set up, other conference participants may not know who you are. iPad users will find that Apple kindly sets their display name to “iPad”. Having ten people in a conference all called iPad is not useful.



Zoom Profile Screen

Your profile picture is displayed when your camera is switched off. You can load any picture here:

- It must be square
- The maximum size is 2 MB
- 500px x 500px is big enough
- File formats can be PNG, JPG or GIF

Now, go back to the Zoom Home Screen. Click on the orange button at top-left labelled “New Meeting”. This creates a meeting with just you in it. You could invite other people to join you, but it is more useful for training. You have access to all the controls and commands (including special host-only commands) and can explore them at your leisure.

Joining a Meeting

The meeting host will have set up the meeting in advance (this is not covered here). The host will then have sent you an invitation email. The format varies but will look something like this:

Stephen Wells is inviting you to a scheduled Zoom meeting.

Topic: Steve's Christmas Dinner

Time: Dec 25, 2021 04:00 PM London

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/76979308235?pwd=NzdTVUVlVU5EOXZ6MHP0UitIOVhyQT09>

Meeting ID: 769 8930 8235

Passcode: eX07w8

Having set up your camera and microphone, all you need to do is to run the Zoom application, log in and click on the link in the email.

Actually, you don't even need to run the Zoom application. If you just click on the link the application will be loaded automatically. In this case, since you have not logged in, the functions available to you are limited. For example, you can't get to the administration menus.

If you don't run the Zoom application, Zoom will assume the identity of the last person to use Zoom on this computer. This may be an issue if several people in a household are sharing a computer.

Whichever way you use to connect, the meeting host will see that you are ready to join the meeting. At this stage all the host knows about you is your display name: they can't see your profile photograph. So, if you haven't set up your display name, the host has no idea who is trying to join the meeting. If you are not recognised (or one of ten people called "iPad") you may be ignored.

This is my opening screen as a single user.

Photographers will recognize the image on the wall behind me as being by Frank Meadow Sutcliffe. If you have recognized it, you may also notice that it is reversed right-left. In fact this whole image has been reversed by zoom: just as a phone does when you take a selfie. It looks as you would look in a mirror – most people are more comfortable with this. You are seeing the mirror version, but other people in the conference will see the image the correct way round. So, if you have a background with lettering in it, you will see the letters backwards. Everyone else will see them the right way round.



Single User Display

At this point, if you right click on your picture you will discover another way to change your display name.

Basic Controls

Now look at the controls on the bottom row. These are the main meeting controls. At bottom left are two symbols which represent microphone and video camera. Click on them to switch your microphone or camera on or off.



Microphone and Video Controls

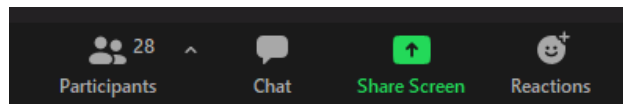
When a device is switched off, a red line appears "crossing out" the icon. Click again and the red line disappears to indicate that the device is now switched on.

If you receive a phone call in a meeting, mute your microphone. Otherwise everyone will hear your private conversation.

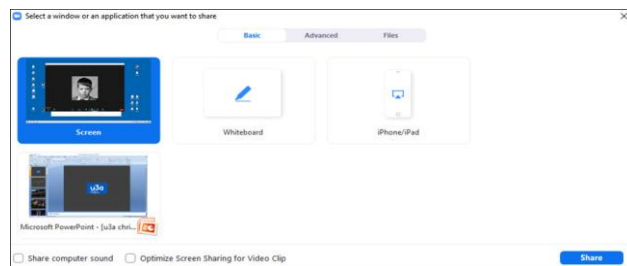
Screen Sharing

One of the most powerful features of Zoom is the ability to share images from your computer so that everyone else in the meeting can see them. Most commonly this is PowerPoint but could be any application of your choice. I have seen someone sharing an image of Photoshop in order to give a live demonstration of editing a photograph.

Click on the Share Screen icon which is in green in the middle of the row of icons at the bottom of your screen. You will then get a screen inviting to choose what to share. There are options for Whiteboard and iPhone/iPad which we are probably not going to use. More interesting is an option for the whole screen and an option for any other programs which you have running.

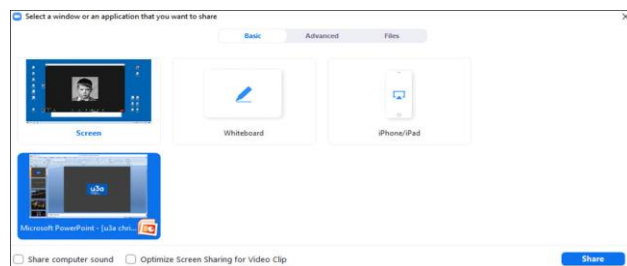


Share Screen Icon



Sharing the whole screen

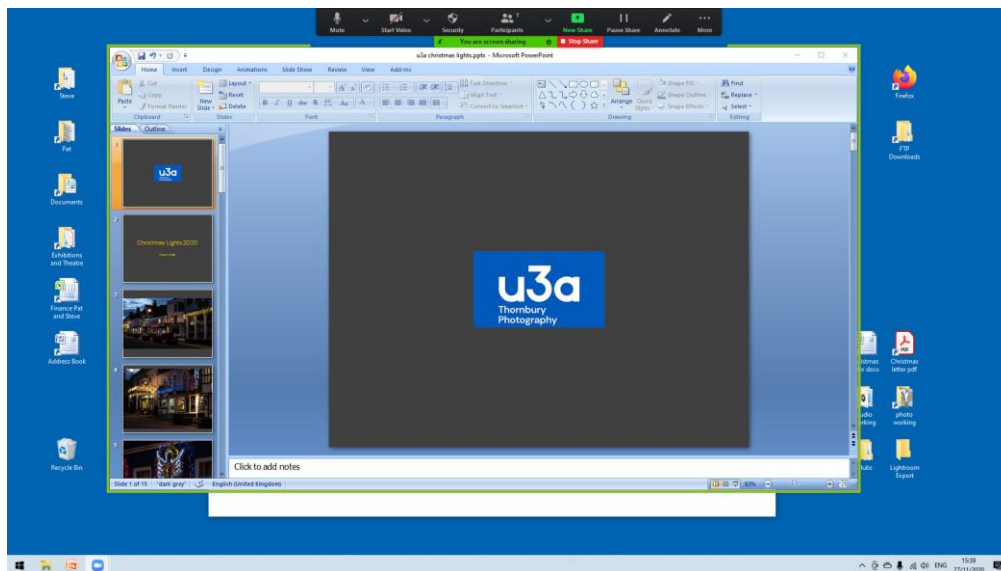
The blue background indicates what is selected. This might be the whole screen. In this example, I also have PowerPoint running. If I select this, only that program will be shared. The rest of my desktop remains private.



Sharing an Application (eg PowerPoint)

So, suppose I select the PowerPoint option and click on "Share" at the bottom right of the window. All the other users will see my PowerPoint application. You will see that on my screen there is a green line round the PowerPoint application. This indicates the extent of what is shared.

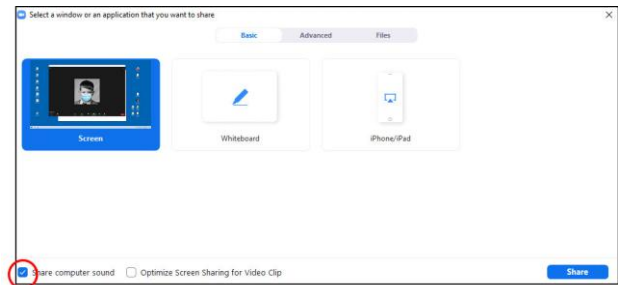
You can now continue with your demonstration with everyone seeing your presentation.



Sharing PowerPoint

You can still use your computer with complete freedom. Other users can only see what you have chosen to share.

If your application includes sound (a video clip perhaps, or an audio-visual sequence) then on the sharing screen you will need to check the “Share computer sound” box.



Share Computer Sound

Finally, when you have finished your show, go to the top of the screen and click on the red “Stop Share” button.

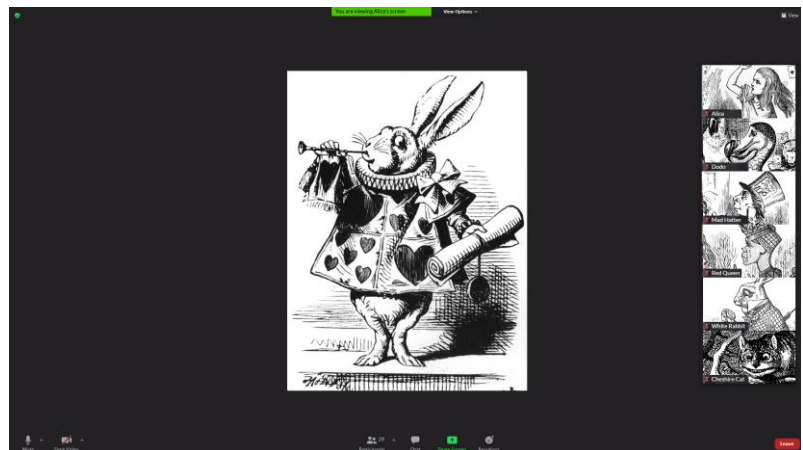


Stop Sharing

Watching Someone Else Screen Sharing

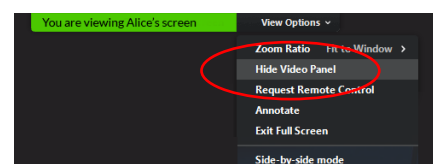
If someone else is sharing a screen, in this case Alice telling of her adventures, it is good practice to switch off your microphone and camera. This will reduce the data being carried on your broadband link and to prevent anything you say from interfering with the speaker’s presentation.

To see clearly what is going on, it helps to tidy your screen by removing images of other participant and by removing the meeting controls.

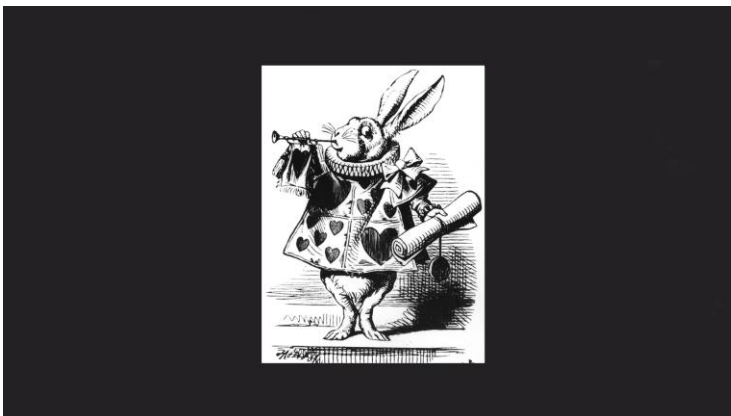


Other participants and Meeting Controls are Cluttering the Screen

To remove the other participants, go to the top of the screen to the “View Options” Menu, choose “Hide Video Panel”. This will remove the participant images displayed at the right of the screen. If you want them back, go to the same menu. You will find that the option to “Hide Video Panel” has been replaced with “Show Video Panel”.



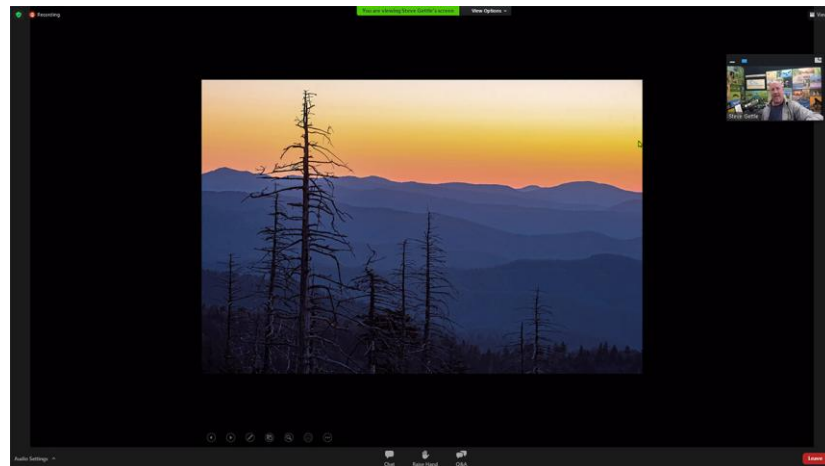
Hide Video Panel



Decluttered Screen

To hide the meeting controls, simply press the <ALT> key. Press it again, or move the mouse, to get them back.

Some of the controls you may get used to, such as the microphone and video icons, can be removed by the host. If you are watching a professional presentation this may well be the case. It is not something you have done wrong: it is the choice of the Zoom host.

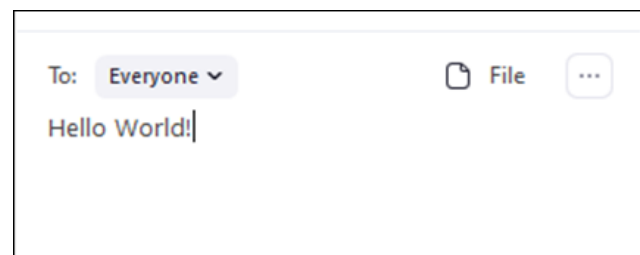


Presentation by Landscape Photographer Steve Gettle with some of the Zoom controls removed,

Chat

Another useful option in the row of controls at the bottom of the screen is “Chat”. This allows you to send messages to other participants without anyone else being interrupted.

Click on the “Chat” icon. A list of participants will appear on the right of the screen. At the bottom is the “Chat” window. Select your participants (or “Everyone”) and type your message. The message is sent when you press <RETURN>.



Hello World!

If you receive a message you will see a number next to the “Chat” icon. This is the number of unread Chat messages. Click on “Chat” to see them

Leaving the Meeting

Finally, to leave the meeting, look to the right of the meeting controls at the bottom of the screen. Press “End”.