

Zoom vs. Microsoft Teams vs. Google Meet: Which Top Videoconferencing App Is Best?

Video calls have become the norm for consumers and businesses alike during the pandemic. We've tested all the services, and here's how three of the top contenders stack up.



By [Gadjo Sevilla](#)
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The coronavirus has made video conferencing software a vital technology for both businesses and consumers. It's a key component of how many businesses continue to function, schools are able to keep teaching, as well as how families and friends can stay connected during isolation. Products like Zoom Meetings and Cisco Webex are experiencing a huge surge in adoption with new customers looking to leverage both video conferencing's visual communication as well as its commonly included collaboration features. That's all good news for video conferencing sellers, but all

the new user traffic, as well as several new and often complex use cases, are changing how well these tools compete with one another, which makes things a little more difficult for buyers. Additionally, several video conferencing vendors have adopted special offers or freemium deployment models to help entice new customers.

To make sure you pick the best for your particular situation we decided to take a look at how three of the most popular video conferencing apps on the market match up right now. That list includes Zoom Meetings, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet (formerly Hangouts) video conferencing tools and how they could work best for your needs.

Zoom Meetings



Zoom Meetings continues to be the go-to video conferencing application for the masses with over 200 million daily users. That's despite a massive uptick in usage load and adoption exposing various security exploits like "Zoom-bombing." The company has responded by adding layers of verification, including a waiting-room for video participants to be screened. Like many video conferencing solutions, Zoom Meetings was created for businesses and not initially designed for casual or consumer use; however, it is and always was a dedicated conferencing

product, unlike several other large players, such as RingCentral Office, which started by treating video conferencing as just one piece of a larger business-grade voice over IP (VoIP) platform. This focus has kept the product relatively simple to use compared to much of the competition.

What makes Zoom Meetings so attractive is that while it's certainly easy to use, it's also a highly competitive conferencing platform. Zoom recently announced robust security enhancements with the upcoming general availability of Zoom 5.0, a key milestone in the company's 90-day plan to proactively identify, address, and enhance the security and privacy capabilities of its service. By adding support for AES 256-bit GCM encryption, Zoom will provide increased protection for meeting data and resistance against tampering. Zoom is one of our Editors' Choice picks for video conferencing solutions because it gives users solid collaboration tools and a wide range of control over their video experience. From enabling various backgrounds to tweaking audio controls so that they can better pick up musical instruments or ambient sounds.

Microsoft Teams



(Image credit: Microsoft)

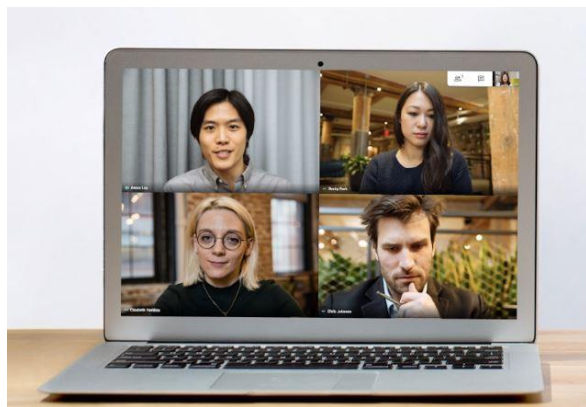
integrates video calling functionality into its solutions' stack, it's definitely worth considering for new video conferencing solutions, especially businesses. Microsoft Teams usage has increased exponentially, the product recently hit 44 million daily users coming from 93 of Fortune 100 companies and over 650 organizations with more than 10,000 users.

Microsoft has recently made it easier for people to try out Teams and its various features during the pandemic. IT professionals can also access Microsoft Teams even if their business isn't licensed for Teams. They can contact their Microsoft partner or sales representatives to access the Office 365 E1 plan free for six months. For educators, teachers, and students, a free version of Office 365 is available for free to all educational institutions.

While video conferencing is certainly a key component of Microsoft Teams, specially considering its pedigree and the fact that it's effectively absorbed Microsoft's video conferencing pioneer platform, Skype. Still, much of Teams' feature set leans more towards integrated tools like instant messaging, file sharing, and group collaboration on Microsoft Office documents.

Microsoft Teams video conferencing has the ability to host calls with up to 250 members (including screen sharing and call recording). Microsoft Teams seems optimized for smaller team conversations. You can currently only see four participants on a call simultaneously. An update coming in late April 2020 will extend this to a nine participant view which might still be lacking for some use cases like e-learning. Teams does have its advantages, such as the ability to provide transcripts of meeting through the Streams feature that makes text transcriptions available shortly after the meeting.

Google Meet



(Image credit: Google)

schools and businesses through September 30, 2020, which applies to all G Suite customers globally.

Microsoft Teams may not be the first name that comes to mind when folks consider a video conferencing solutions. But it should be because it's become the pointed tip of Microsoft's communications spear, combining business VoIP, collaboration, and video conferencing features in a single app that's integrated with the rest of Microsoft's business messaging suite and easily accessible to Microsoft Office 365 Business subscribers.

Still, when viewed feature for feature, Microsoft Teams looks like more of a rival to Slack than it does the likes of Zoom Meetings or Cisco Webex Meetings. But since it seamlessly

integrates video calling functionality into its solutions' stack, it's definitely worth considering for new video conferencing solutions, especially businesses. Microsoft Teams usage has increased exponentially, the product recently hit 44 million daily users coming from 93 of Fortune 100 companies and over 650 organizations with more than 10,000 users.

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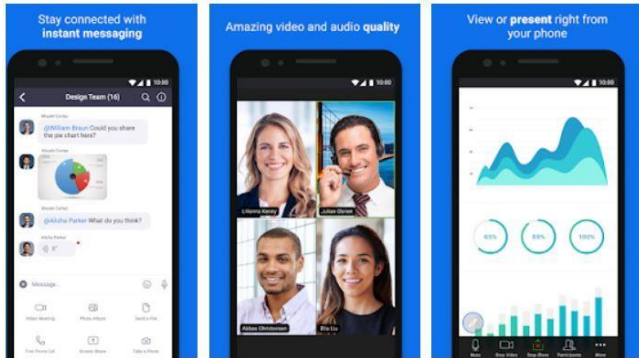
Google Hangouts Meet was recently rebranded and is now known as Google Meet. According to the company, the cloud-based video-conferencing service now caters to two million new users every day. It's a staple for various enterprise and corporate clients as well as Google G Suite customers. The service can handle larger meetings with up to 250 participants per call, live streaming for up to 100,000 viewers within a domain, and can record meetings on Google Drive for later broadcast.

Google recently announced that it is enabling free access to various video conferencing and communications tools for

Unlike Microsoft Teams, Google Meet is a pure video conferencing solution. It makes it easy to set-up and join meetings on PCs as well as on mobile devices. Organizers can set up calls using Google Calendar, meeting link URLs

or codes, dial-in by phone numbers, and through proprietary Google Meet hardware like Chromebox and Chromebase for meetings devices. Because of wide adoption in enterprise as well as education, it features robust security and encryption.

1. Price



Zoom Meetings starts at \$14.99 per month per host for the Pro plan, which is good for small teams, and which can host 100 participants with meeting duration limits of 24 hours. A \$19.99 per host per month Business tier is available for a minimum of 10 hosts. Also available for \$19.99 per host per month is an Enterprise plan (minimum of 50 hosts) which can accommodate up to 500 participants.

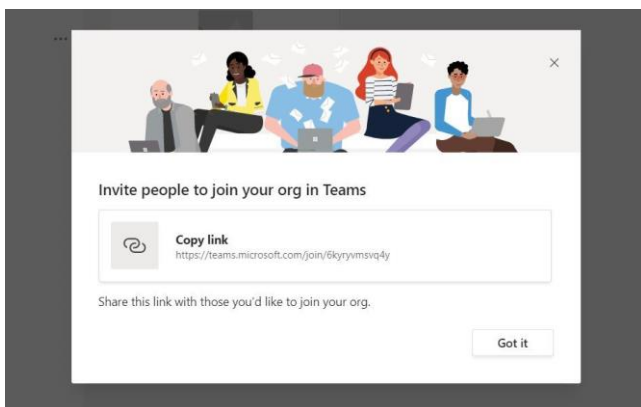
The version of Microsoft Teams that comes with Office 365 adds all the tight integrations with other Office apps, plus 24/7 support, and business-grade tools for administration, security, and compliance. As with the free version, this version lets you have up to 300 team members, unless you have the enterprise edition, which is good for as many people as you need. The three versions of Office that include Teams are Office 365 Business Essentials: \$5 per person per month with annual commitment; Office 365 Business Premium: \$12.50 per person per month with annual commitment; and, Office 365 E3 (enterprise): \$20 per person per month with annual commitment.

Google Meet is bundled with various tiers of G Suite. Starting at \$6 per user per month for the Basic tier including various G Suite apps and 30 GB of cloud storage. A \$12 per user per month Business tier adds unlimited cloud storage (or 1 TB per user if fewer than five users), and a \$25 per user per month Enterprise tier with unlimited cloud storage and enhanced security and management options. All G Suite tiers can accommodate up to 250 Google Meet participants.

Comparing the pricing of these products is challenging since Zoom Meetings, a standalone video-conferencing solution, effectively costs quite a bit more than G Suite and Office 365, since these are integrated cloud office, storage, and collaboration suites. At \$5 or \$6 per user per month respectively, Microsoft Office 365 and Google G Suite offer a lot more functionality and a wider set of collaboration tools than Zoom Meetings. They each also offer higher participant counts (300 for Teams video calling and 250 for Google Meet) than Zoom Meetings' 100. When it comes down to the video conferencing component, Google Meet is a far stronger and more intuitive product than the video calling feature on Microsoft Teams.

Edge: Google Meet.

2. Setup and Ease of Use



Many of these solutions may require software to be installed on a PC or mobile device, and some users may run into system requirement limitations. Often these kinds of tools also require the use of microphones and webcams, so setting these up can take some time as well. Both Google Meet and Zoom Meetings have various quick and straightforward ways to initiate video calls using calendar links, meeting URLs, and phone dial-in numbers.

If you're invited to a meeting in Zoom Meetings, you don't need to create an account. However, you will see a prompt

to download the Zoom Meetings application. Downloading the app is optional as you can connect via a web app if you prefer, but the installed app does give you the optimized experience and a wider range of control. Zoom Meetings has apps for Android, Apple iOS, Linux, Microsoft Windows, and Apple's MacOS.

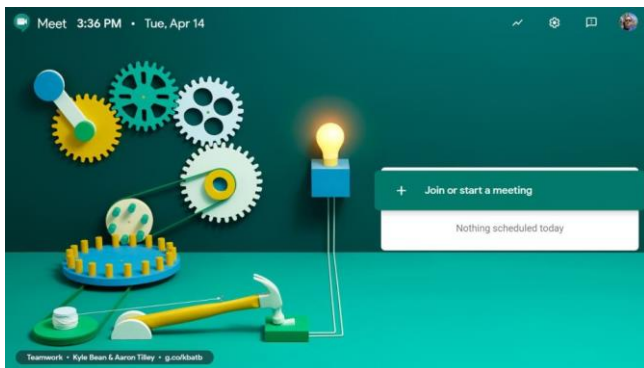
If you want to use Zoom Meetings to invite other people to meetings, then you need to create an account. You can authenticate with Facebook or Google, or sign up the old-fashioned way using an email address and password. When you create an account, you get a Personal Meeting ID as well as a unique meeting URL, which you can use at any time to start a meeting. It's handy because you can send your link or Personal Meeting ID to participants without advance notice and get on the call quickly.

Google Meet works in a similar way. Go to <https://meet.google.com/> on a browser and you can join or start a meeting right from that interface. G Suite users will also see their calendar and upcoming meetings. Setting up a meeting generates a meeting URL, and a dial-in phone number and PIN that can be quickly shared with participants.

Getting to the video calling function on Microsoft Teams isn't as straightforward and this is expected since the video conferencing aspect of this solution is just one of the ways team members can communicate. The "Meet now" option is a tiny button found under the chat window in Microsoft Teams. The way this option is presented (it is literally the second to the last option out of seven available), hints that it is intended to be used in instances where a quick video call makes more sense than a prolonged chat.

Edge: Tie between Google Meet and Zoom Meetings.

2. Features and Functionality



Joining a Zoom meeting takes little effort -- just a few seconds if you already have the app installed and only about two extra clicks if you choose the web app instead. When you connect as a guest, you either see a waiting room notice or you go directly to the meeting. If there's no waiting room, attendees can connect and chat with one another before the host arrives. Everyone can choose to enable or disable their video at any time. If you join using your device audio, then you can also mute and unmute by using buttons on the screen, or by using a shortcut if you enable it from your

account preferences.

Zoom Meetings gives you information about the connectivity of everyone on the call. For example, during a small group call recently, one of my participants was connecting from a mobile device over 4G. When her connection was stable, I saw a white set of bars indicating the strength of her connectivity in the lower left-hand corner of her video. Zoom Meetings has a unique Participant Reporting feature that checks all the members who reported at the meeting.

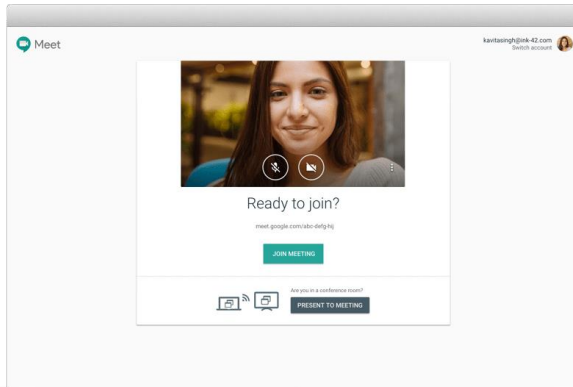
Google Meet is both quick to set up and join. Participants get the option to see how they look and they can mute their microphone and turn their camera on or off before entering a call. Google's intuitive control can cycle the video feeds of participants who are talking, as well as remind you that you are muted if you speak without turning your microphone on. There are useful features include viewing the 10 most active participants as well as being able to send text messages through the interface.

Microsoft Teams makes it easy for users within an organization or a team to jump on a call from a text message thread. Screen sharing and video call recording features are easy to use, but inviting external users or participants

requires a few extra steps and might be less than ideal. It is easy to record video calls and they are automatically assigned to projects, so team members can revisit them at a later date. For organizations like small to midsize businesses (SMBs), as well as schools and universities, Microsoft Teams provides a multifaceted collaboration solution, but video calling is one of its least compelling features.

Edge: Tie between Google Meet and Zoom Meetings.

4. And The Winner Is...



(Image credit: Google)

Zoom Meetings is not without its issues. The sudden shift from a business-focused solution to chosen videoconferencing tool for the masses was quick and unexpected. There are pros and cons to the sudden adoption of Zoom Meetings for everything from office and family video calls, education and remote learning, and even broadcasting and media. The overwhelming adoption of the product has revealed vulnerabilities like "Zoom-bombing." but the company has responded quickly. Zoom will freeze all new product development until it can address privacy and security issues.

Microsoft Teams is a viable option but makes most sense for organizations, like businesses and schools, that are already invested in the Microsoft Office 365 ecosystem. I can't see new users signing up for the service purely for the video calling feature, and it seems Microsoft feels the same way. Upon setting up the free version of Microsoft Teams for individuals, I was directed instead to try and use the free version of Skype. Which, as a video conferencing solution, might be a better fit without the productivity bells and whistles.

Like Microsoft Teams video calling, Google Meet is just one of the many services available to Google G Suite subscribers, but it is far from an afterthought. With ease of use and functionality rivaling PCMag's Editors' Choice selection Zoom Meetings, Google Meet delivers a clear, consistent, and reliable video experience. Google Meet's security and encryption also stands out. The service requires a hard to crack 25-character string for meeting IDs. It also restricts external participants to join a meeting 15 minutes before the meeting starts. Google also meets various compliance certifications, including the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), which covers students and educators. So, while Zoom Meetings already has widespread adoption and is bolstered by its ease of use, Google Meet is similarly easy to use but adds the productivity and security of the Google G Suite at a lower price.

Winner: Google Meet.

<https://www.pcmag.com/news/zoom-vs-microsoft-teams-vs-google-meet-a-videoconferencing-face-off>