

The Best Zoom Alternatives for Video Chatting

HTG howtogeek.com/666554/the-best-zoom-alternatives-for-video-chatting

Tim Brookes



[silverblackstock/Shutterstock](#)

Zoom is a video-conferencing app that's taken the world by storm, but it's only one of many. Whether you're concerned about Zoom's reported privacy and security problems, or you just want a free video-chat solution for a few people, here are some alternatives.

FaceTime on iPhone, iPad, and Mac



Apple

FaceTime is Apple's proprietary voice and video-call service. It's available to anyone with an iPhone, iPad, or Mac. You can't use FaceTime if you don't have an Apple device as the service is baked into all of them.

This video-chat app has long been favored due to its wide availability and ease of use for one-on-one communication and small group chats. However, the service has expanded in recent years and will now support up to 32 people on a single call. Unfortunately, the proprietary nature of FaceTime means people on Android and Windows devices can't join.

FaceTime has a few fun features you can use on a video call if your device supports them. On an iPhone X or later, you can use Animoji or Memoji and replace yourself with a 3D character or apply an artsy filter. Other fun features include stickers, text labels, and shapes.

To use FaceTime, find the contact you want to call on your iPhone or launch the FaceTime app for Mac. You'll see the option to FaceTime with audio or video under the contact's information. You can also initiate a group FaceTime conversation from any iMessage group or in the FaceTime app on an iPhone or iPad. All FaceTime communications are encrypted on both ends.

RELATED: [How to Use Group FaceTime on the iPhone and iPad](#)

Skype and Skype Meet Now



Skype is the most obvious alternative to FaceTime as it comes preinstalled with Windows 10. It also works with your Microsoft account. The big difference here is that, despite being owned by Microsoft, Skype isn't limited to only Windows devices.

The video, voice, and text chat app is available on every major platform, including iOS, Android, macOS, and even Linux. In 2019, Skype received a long-awaited upgrade that increased the maximum number of group call participants to 50.

Skype also isn't just a voice- and video-calling app anymore. You can use it to send files, as a real-time translator, or as a means of sharing your location with friends. You can also use it to call international numbers (for a fee), as a voicemail service, or to forward your calls.

Skype has offered end-to-end encryption on private chats since 2018, but the feature is opt-in. You'll need to click or tap "Start New Private Conversation" to use this feature. Regular video calls are encrypted, but they don't use the same end-to-end encryption as other services, like FaceTime and Duo.

Another option is Skype Meet Now, which you can use even if you're not registered with Skype or Microsoft. You can use it from the Skype desktop client or via the web if you're using Microsoft Edge or Google Chrome. It's a great way to collaborate quickly, and even the meeting host can do so without a Skype account. Simple!

Google Duo



Duo from Google is a video-calling app for Android and iOS. There's also a web version available for anyone on a desktop computer. It supports up to eight participants in a single call, which should be enough to stay in touch with close friends and family.

What makes Duo unique is its call quality. In the Play Store, Google describes it as the "highest quality video-calling app." If you have a reliable internet connection and are sick of fuzzy video, Duo might be worth a shot. Just remember, the video will only be as good as your camera and connection allow.

You can also use Duo to send video messages, which is ideal when someone can't pick up the phone. You also see a live feed of an incoming video call before you answer it, which is slightly odd.

Google has made sure to tout the service's end-to-end encryption, which should provide you with some peace of mind.

Jitsi Meet



Jitsi/8x8

Jitsi is a free, open-source video conferencing solution owned by 8x8. The company uses the technology in its premium enterprise products. You can download and install it on your own server, or, alternatively, you can use the hosted version known as Jitsi Meet.

The service is available via the web, or you can use the mobile apps for iOS and Android. The app is full of features, and the number of participants you can have on one call is (theoretically) limitless.

In addition to group video chats, Jitsi also supports screen sharing, streaming to YouTube, telephone dial-in and -out, and the ability to cast YouTube videos to the whole group. You can also integrate Jitsi with Slack and use it to communicate with your team or clients.

Unfortunately, Jitsi doesn't support full end-to-end encryption. Like Zoom, video sent to the server is encrypted, decrypted, and then re-encrypted when it's relayed to the other participants. This means whomever controls the server could potentially see your chats. If you install Jitsi on your own server, though, this isn't a problem.

Google Hangouts



Google has been pushing Hangouts Meet as part of its G Suite business-oriented tools. It is a powerful video-conferencing solution if you have the budget to support it. For the rest of us, though, the classic version of Google Hangouts is still available and supports up to 10 people on a video call.

Hangouts is available via the web and the dedicated apps for Android and iOS. You can also use Hangouts as an instant messenger to chat with up to 150 of your friends in a basic text chat group. You can also connect a Google Voice account to make calls, send SMS, and

access voicemail services. You can even share photos and videos, stickers or GIFs, or your location via Google Maps with your friends.

The service lacks the end-to-end encryption that FaceTime and Google's other video chatting service, Duo, have. Hangouts encrypts videos and messages between your device and Google's servers, but they're decrypted on the server. This means it's possible for someone other than the intended recipient to see them.

Slack



If you already use [Slack to stay in touch with your co-workers](#), you can also use it to conduct voice and video calls. If you subscribe to the Standard plan or better, you get group video calls that can include up to 15 people.

If you're using Slack to stay in touch with friends, family, or a smaller group, you only get one-on-one video and voice calls. Although it's limited in scope, this can still be a useful way to touch base with only a few clicks.

Slack is available via the web, dedicated desktop clients for Windows, Mac, or Linux, or mobile apps for Android and iOS. You can also integrate other video-chat solutions, like Hangouts and Jitsi, with Slack if you need a greater capacity for group calls.

Like many other services, Slack doesn't use end-to-end encryption. Rather, data is encrypted while it's sent to and stored on the server. Slack previously [announced](#) it made this decision to maintain a higher degree of functionality.

Microsoft Teams



Teams is Microsoft's answer to Slack, and it comes with a generous free option. You can invite an unlimited number of people to your free account. Microsoft describes this as “free, built-in group and one-on-one audio or video calling” for the “whole team.”

Microsoft hasn't made the limitations of the Teams platform immediately clear, but it seems like the biggest hurdle is the ability to schedule online meetings. Regardless of which version you use (free or not), Teams only displays four video streams at once, regardless of who's connected.

The platform packs in a ton more features, though, including screen sharing, web versions of Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, and 10 GB of file-sharing space for free accounts (with a maximum 2 GB attachment size per account). You have to upgrade to unlock some features, like meeting recording or online events for up to 10,000 viewers.

Teams doesn't use end-to-end encryption, but, according to Microsoft, it's encrypted “in transit and at rest.” This means it's possible for other parties to gain access to unencrypted data sent via the app.

Discord



Discord is like Slack, but for communities and friends, with a focus on gaming. In addition to being something of a centralized version of IRC, Discord also supports private video calls for up to 10 participants. This is ideal for connecting with people you already chat with on Discord, without any additional software.

This is all in addition to Discord's primary use, which is as a low-latency voice-chat application. This allows people to communicate in real time via audio, with additional text chat options. This is the main way you communicate on Discord, but the video chat is still a nice feature to have. You can use Discord via a web browser, its Mac or Windows apps, or mobile apps for Android and iOS.

Discord is free, but there's an optional \$4.99 per month Nitro tier. But if you just want to use the service, and the audio and limited video calling abilities, you don't have to pay a cent.

For more casual communication, Discord's voice-only channels are ideal. You might even prefer them as they're easier than setting up a video call.

Discord uses limited encryption, rather than the more robust end-to-end that ensures only intended parties can receive your communication. For the purposes of gaming and chatting with friends, this is unlikely to be an issue. If you're concerned, though, consider using the unofficial [Discord End-to-End Encryption Tampermonkey script](#) (it only works in the browser app, though).

Honorable Mention: Snap Camera

Watch Video At:



<https://youtu.be/Ae3nuKiTAsk>

Snap Camera isn't a dedicated video-calling app, but it can enhance many we've mentioned here. As the name suggests, Snap Camera is the brainchild of Snapchat, and it allows you to use Snapchat's fun filters in your favorite video-calling apps.

After you install the app on your Windows or Mac computer, you can use Snapchat filters on Skype, Google Hangouts, Google Meet, and, of course, Zoom. In addition to the existing filters, you can also create your own—just follow the [detailed guide](#) or [download some templates](#).

If your work chats have become boring, or you want to spice up a virtual get-together (or just have some fun during self-isolation), Snap Camera is a must-have! It's free for the young and young-at-heart.

Video-Conferencing for Large Groups

If you're looking for video-conferencing app that will accommodate a larger number of people (like up to 100), check out [the best free solutions for workplaces](#).

RELATED: [The 6 Best Free Video Conferencing Apps](#)