### (Approx. 1378 words)

### Using Zoom for Meetings

By Joel Ewing, President, Bella Vista Computer Club(Approx. 13

<https://bvcomputerclub.org>

president (at) bvcomputerclub.org

#### What is Zoom

Zoom is an application available on many platforms and is supported by an Internet service called https://zoom.us. Zoom allows many users to simultaneously view or interactively participate over the Internet in a virtual meeting containing video and audio content without traveling to a physical meeting.

The Association of PC User Groups (APCUG) has been using Zoom for several years to provide virtual conferences and presentations to its member organizations, including the Bella Vista Computer Club (BVCC). BVCC started using Zoom for Board Meetings, General Meetings, and classes in 2020 when COVID-19 made it necessary to restrict in-person meetings. Now that those restrictions are no longer required, BVCC continues, where possible, to simulcast our monthly in-person General Meetings on Zoom for members who cannot participate in person.

#### Zoom Meeting Setup By A Host With A Zoom Account

Zoom meetings are scheduled, started, and controlled by a Zoom meeting host person with a Zoom account. The "host" provides by some means the meeting ID and password to those who are invited to participate in the meeting. Other participants with the Zoom application installed may join a started meeting if they know the ID and password for the meeting or if they are provided a link to the meeting that contains the meeting ID and password. All participants can see video and hear audio from the presenters at the meeting. Usually, video from non-presenting participants is restricted to their image from a webcam, although the host can enable other participants to present video material. For small meetings, individual participants may be allowed to enable their mic to speak; for larger meetings, mic use by non-presenters may be controlled by a host or co-host moderator to minimize interruptions at inappropriate times and prevent two people from speaking at the same time or allowing incidental noises in other participant's rooms from being a distraction.

#### What You Need Just To Watch Or Attend a Zoom Meeting

To join and watch a Zoom meeting, all you need is a device on which you can install the Zoom application, which has a screen to view the video and audio output to speakers, or a headset to hear the presenter. That means even a desktop or a laptop without a webcam or a mic will work fine. You do NOT need to set up an account at Zoom to be a meeting participant.

Laptop computers and even All-In-One computers are more likely to include a webcam and mic, but if not, and you want those optional items to be able to show your face and speak to other participants, USB webcams with mics are not that expensive. I've succeeded with a relatively inexpensive Angetube 920 (about $40) on both Linux and Windows.

#### Installing Zoom

If you have a desktop or laptop computer, download the Zoom application from the Zoom Download Center at https://zoom.us/download (or search for "zoom download"). It should automatically detect whether your operating system is Windows, macOS, or Linux and suggest an appropriate download. After downloading, you should see an option to "Open file" for Zoominstaller.exe to initiate the installation. You DO NOT need to "Sign Up" for a Zoom account to participate in meetings. You may, however, want to select the "Opt-Out" button on the download page to make information available to third parties or various advertising activities (the default is, of course, to "Accept"). When running the install file, you must approve ("Yes") for the Zoom Video Communications app to make changes to your device before it will proceed with installation. After installation, if you search for Zoom, it will find "Start Zoom App," which may be selected to start Zoom. If you plan to use it frequently, you can right-click on "Start Zoom App" and pin it to your Taskbar. The Zoom icon looks like this:

You may need to restart the computer after installation to make Zoom functional. If you want to see an example of installing Zoom on Windows 10, see [this video](https://bvcomputerclub.org/videos/2023-11-zoom_installW10.mp4).

Download the Zoom application from the corresponding App Store if you have an iPhone, iPad, or Android mobile device. On these devices, you have a built-in mic and a camera accessible to Zoom, so you can fully participate by speaking (if the host allows it) and showing your image to other participants. Because of the small display size, I wouldn't recommend using a smartphone for a meeting presentation that expects you to be able to view many presentation slides.

#### Joining a Meeting

When the host of a meeting schedules a Zoom meeting, he sets the planned start time and duration for the meeting, but not unlike an in-person meeting, the exact start time depends on when the host "arrives." Generally, the host would attempt to initiate the Zoom session, and the participants would try to join several minutes before the planned time to give them time to verify they can connect before the actual meeting begins. Suppose a participant attempts to join a meeting the host has not yet initiated. In that case, the default is usually receiving a message indicating the connection is waiting for the host to start. Still, the joining process will be completed once the host initiates the meeting.

Once Zoom has been installed, the simplest way to join a meeting as a participant is to click on a URL link supplied in advance by the host. Clicking on that link starts a two-step process of using your default web browser to cause the Zoom application to start on your device. An alternate way (involving more work) is to manually activate the Zoom application, type in the meeting ID and password, and click "Join."

For an example of using an APCUG post-registration email for joining a Zoom meeting, see [this video](https://bvcomputerclub.org/videos/2023-11-zoom_join1.mp4). For an example of the process for joining an in-progress BVCC General Meeting uses Zoom using the link on the BVCC website, see [this video](https://bvcomputerclub.org/videos/2023-11-zoom_join2.mp4).

#### Controlling Zoom While Attending a Meeting

If you request to join a meeting before the host starts, you may get a message indicating Zoom is waiting for the host. Depending on how the meeting was set up, it may be necessary for the meeting host or a co-host to admit you to the meeting from the Waiting Room. If that is the case, there may be a message about waiting to be admitted.

When Zoom starts from a meeting link close to the meeting time, you will be asked if you want to "Join" the meeting (you do). After responding, you will be asked if you want to "Join with Computer Audio" (you do). If you also check "Automatically join audio by computer when joining," I think it will bypass this Join Audio question next time.

There are various icons and buttons along the bottom of the screen for controlling Zoom – to toggle your mic on/off (if you have one), to toggle your video feed on/off (if you have a webcam), and various other options, not all of which are active depending on how the meeting was set up. If the Zoom window is not wide enough to display all the controls, some will be accessed using the "More" icon.

You generally want to keep your mic muted except when you need to speak. In larger meetings, you may need to get permission to speak by "raising your hand," as having multiple speakers at the same time doesn't work. If you need to leave the room or engage in some activity temporarily you don't want to broadcast (like eating dinner), you should also toggle your video feed off so unsupervised and possibly unintended video is not broadcast to all attendees.

In the upper right corner is a "View" icon, which features the ways you can choose to watch the meeting: Gallery View - thumbnail pictures of all attendees that choose to show their image or just their name; there might be several pages of thumbnails pictures spread over multiple screens depending on how many attendees.

When the presenter shares his screen, most of the Zoom window will be taken up with his shared screen.

To see an example of using some Zoom controls, see [this video](https://bvcomputerclub.org/videos/2023-11-zoom_join3.mp4).