

How to avoid having your virtual event “Zoom bombed”

Zoom web conferencing is a fantastic tool for virtual gatherings. It’s ease of use and affordability make it perfect for congregations to use for small groups, meetings and even worship. It’s great unless an internet troll “Zoom bombs” your gathering. Nothing is fool-proof, but these are ways you can avoid the trolls:

Don’t share your Zoom link or code on social media

The easiest way to avoid getting Zoombombed is to keep your event private and your invite list small. However, for events like worship services that are open to the public, do not share your meeting link directly on social media. Instead, publicize an RSVP email address where people can state their interest in attending. That way, you can share the event link with only those whom you choose.

Don't use your Personal Meeting ID for the meeting.

Instead, use a per-meeting ID, exclusive to a single meeting. Zoom's support page offers a video walk-through on how to generate a random meeting ID for extra security.

Set a meeting password

A meeting password — which is automatically generated by Zoom — will help prevent uninvited users being able to join your event.

Create a waiting room

A waiting room gives you the ability to put everyone seeking to join the meeting in a virtual holding area. The host can then select only those whom they have invited to the meeting. Sometimes Zoombombers will use familiar names, so be careful to confirm the person’s identity by asking them to turn their camera on.

Set screen sharing to “host only”

One popular way Zoombombers hijack a meeting is through the app’s screen sharing function. When screen sharing privileges are set to “all,” any member who joins a meeting could project offensive imagery to meeting’s participants.

Disable other features

Disable other options, including the ability for others to “Join Before Host.” Then disable screen-sharing for nonhosts, and also the remote control function. Finally, disable all file transferring, annotations and the autosave feature for chats.

Lock the meeting once it starts

Once the meeting begins and everyone is in, lock the meeting to outsiders and assign a meeting host. The host will be able to help control the situation (eject the intruder or mute all controls so that they can’t use their microphone to disrupt the gathering) in case anyone bypasses your efforts and gets into the meeting.