

Researcher Guidance for the Use of Zoom in Data Collection

Guidance provided by the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign ('Illinois') Office for the Protection of Research Subjects ('OPRS') to protect the privacy and confidentiality of participants during the use of Zoom for research. This guidance may be updated with additional information as it becomes available.

Introduction:

The use of virtual platforms to conduct research has become increasingly commonplace. The online platform Zoom is a frequently used host for the collection of primary through interviews and other types of virtual communication. As with most online platforms, privacy and security risks exist unless steps are taken to mitigate these risks by the researcher. This guidance document lays out a variety of ways that researchers can change settings or initiate their virtual meetings over Zoom to provide maximum protection to their research participants.

Privacy and Security Tips:

- 1. Create private meetings.** Using your Personal Meeting ID (PMI) that is specifically tied to your account allows anyone with the number to enter your personal meeting at any time. Avoid sharing this number and instead provide a new, private meeting code for each meeting.
- 2. Disable screen-sharing.** By default, anyone who is entering into a meeting with you can automatically share their screen with the group. To avoid this, the host can go into settings and disable screen-sharing for other participants.
- 3. Understand what Zoom's encryption policy means.** Although others will not be able to access any audio or video content created from your encrypted meeting, this information is not private from Zoom itself. Please make sure your participants understand this.
- 4. Use a meeting password.** By using a password, you can ensure that only those with the password are able to enter your meeting. Although the password function can be turned off, all researchers are expected to use this feature.
- 5. Turn on waiting rooms.** For smaller meetings (not classes or large-scale meetings), you can turn on waiting rooms in the settings. This feature makes it so the host must approve each new attendee prior to them having access to the meeting room.

6. **Don't use Zoom for file transfers.** Please use Illinois Box or another UIUC-approved method of transferring files between the research team and research participants. There is a way to switch this function to off in the settings. This is highly recommended so participants do not accidentally share confidential information.
7. **Lock meetings.** Once all participants have entered the meeting, the host can lock the meeting which will not allow anyone else to join.
8. **Limit research interactions that collect highly sensitive data.** Remember that Zoom may have access to any audio or video collected on Zoom.
9. **Limit the use of the Record function.** Recording sessions presents additional security and privacy risks when not handled properly. Only use this function when absolutely necessary, and be clear with your participants when sessions will be recorded.
10. **When using Record function, always record to the computer.** Though you will have the option to record to the cloud, please refrain from doing so. All recorded meetings should be saved to the computer and then promptly transferred to secure storage (e.g. Illinois Box) and immediately deleted from the computer.
11. **When using Record function, please make sure all participants consent.** The meeting room should require permission and/or alert participants that they are being recorded, however, all researchers are expected to verbally consent participants prior to recording any session. No participants should be recorded that have indicated they do not want this function used.

For additional information and more thorough guidance on how to change settings, please see the UIUC Technology Services [Guidance on Using Zoom](#).

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact OPRS at irb@illinois.edu.

References:

<https://zoom.us/docs/doc/Zoom-Security-White-Paper.pdf>

<https://www.popsci.com/story/technology/zoom-video-chat-privacy-security-tips/>

<https://www.businessinsider.com/how-to-record-zoom-meeting>

<https://answers.uillinois.edu/illinois/page.php?id=99469#additional>

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

IORG0000014 • FWA #00008584
217.333.2670 • irb@illinois.edu • opr.res.research@illinois.edu