**Zoom – What You Need To Know**

**Are You Allowing Yourself To Be Exploited?**

**If you are using Zoom, read the information below and make your decision.**

**What Is Zoom?**

Zoom is a videotelephony software program developed by Zoom Video Communications. The free plan provides a video chatting service that allows up to 100 participants concurrently, with a 40-minute time restriction.

**Which Country Does Zoom Come From?**

Zoom is a company which is listed in the US on the NASDAQ, but the software appears to be developed by three companies in China, all known as Ruanshi Software, only two of which are owned by Zoom.

**Is Zoom Owned By The Chinese?**

Eris Yuan, a former Cisco Webex Engineer, founded Zoom in 2011, and launched its software in 2013…A large part of Zoom’s workforce is based in China, which has given rise to surveillance and censorship concerns.

**Privacy**

Zoom has been criticized for its privacy and corporate data sharing policies, as well as enabling video hosts to potentially violate the privacy of those participating in their calls.

In March 2020, a [Motherboard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Motherboard_(website)) article found that the company's [iOS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IOS) app was sending device analytics data to Facebook on startup, regardless of whether a Facebook account was being used with the service, and without disclosing it to the user.

In April 2020, a Zoom data-mining feature was found that automatically sent usernames and email addresses to [LinkedIn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LinkedIn), allowing some participants to surreptitiously access LinkedIn profile data about other users. The companies disabled their integration.

In May 2020, the [Federal Trade Commission](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Federal_Trade_Commission) announced that it was looking into Zoom's privacy practices. The FTC alleged in a complaint that since at least 2016, "Zoom maintained the cryptographic keys that could allow Zoom to access the content of its customers’ meetings, did not provide advertised end-to-end encryption, falsely claimed [HIPAA](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Health_Insurance_Portability_and_Accountability_Act) compliance, installed the ZoomOpener webserver without adequate consent, did not uninstall the web server after uninstalling the Zoom App, and secured its Zoom Meetings with a lower level of encryption than promised. 

<https://www.axios.com/zoom-closes-chinese-user-account-tiananmen-square-f218fed1-69af-4bdd-aac4-7eaf67f34084.html>

**Background:**Chinese pro-democracy activists and dissidents face harassment and surveillance even beyond China's borders. U.S. companies with a presence in China have also faced scrutiny for their handling of content deemed sensitive by Chinese authorities.

In 2019, LinkedIn [blocked](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/meghara/china-linkedin-zhou-fengsuo) Zhou's account from being visible in China, telling him in a message it was because of "specific content on your profile." LinkedIn restored his account after [media attention](https://www.scmp.com/news/china/article/2180620/linkedin-adhering-beijings-rules-censors-chinese-profile-page-us-based).

**Using Zoom: Consider the Consequences**  
China is increasingly bringing its desire to control internet activities beyond its borders to control its citizens and corporations. For companies that want to conduct business in China, the message is clear: Actions that harm China’s interests have implications.

Wang Sixin, a professor at the Communication University of China, said tech companies that have operations in China and rely on its market will “need to respect China’s laws, ethics, political correctness and local people’s feeling.”

Zoom, which maintains a significant research-and-development workforce in China, is now in  
the middle of the clash between free speech and government censorship that has confronted other U.S. based technology companies doing business, or trying to conduct business, in China.

The company’s actions stoked worries that the tech company, which has risen to prominence while millions have been stuck at home during the pandemic, was too close to Chinese authorities who have sought to censor images and content about the 1989 protests and resulting massacre in Beijing. The event is a seminal moment for advocates of democracy in China.

U.S. Senator Josh Hawley, a Republican from Missouri, wrote Yuan Thursday, stating that Zoom was not the first U.S. company to censor users in order to do business in China, but in the end, the Chinese Communist Party would benefit more than the App maker.

“It is time for you to pick a side: American principles and free speech, or short-term global profits and censorship,” he wrote.” –*Bloomberg*

**Zoom iOS App Sends Data to Facebook Even if You Don’t Have a Facebook Account**

“What the company and its privacy policy don't make clear is that the iOS version of the Zoom App is sending some analytics data to Facebook, even if Zoom users don't have a Facebook account, according to a Motherboard analysis of the App.   
  
This sort of data transfer is not uncommon, [especially for Facebook](https://www.wsj.com/articles/you-give-apps-sensitive-personal-information-then-they-tell-facebook-11550851636); plenty of Apps use Facebook's software development kits (SDK) as a means to implement features into their Apps more easily, which also has the effect of sending information to Facebook. But Zoom users may not be aware it is happening, nor understand that when they use one product, they may be providing data to another service altogether.”  
<https://www.vice.com/en/article/k7e599/zoom-ios-app-sends-data-to-facebook-even-if-you-dont-have-a-facebook-account>

**Governments And Organizations Are Telling You Zoom Is Not Safe**

**Australian Government**‘The Australian Defence Force BANS the use of video conferencing tool ZOOM due to “security issues”.  
<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/tvshowbiz/article-8191187/The-Australian-Defence-Force-BANS-Zoom-Hamish-Blake-prank.html>  
  
**Canada**“Canada was an early pioneer in Zoom-skepticism. Ryan Forman, a spokesperson for Canada’s electronic surveillance agency has stated Zoom has not been approved for any government discussions that require secure communications.”<https://privacycanada.net/countries-banning-zoom/>

**German Government**“The German Ministry of Foreign Affairs told employees in a circular to stop using the Zoom App…on grounds if security and privacy concerns.”  
<https://www.zdnet.com/article/us-senate-german-government-tell-staff-not-to-use-zoom/>

**Google**“Google bans employees from using Zoom and told all employees it would block Zoom from working on their Google provided computers and smartphones.”  
<https://www.zdnet.com/article/zooms-fall-google-bans-zoom-from-staffers-gear/>   
  
**India Government**“Not a safe platform: India bans Zoom for government use. India’s cyber security agency warned of the Apps security issues using Zoom for video conferencing.”<https://www.barrons.com/news/not-a-safe-platform-india-bans-zoom-for-government-use-01587054904>

**Release By India Government:** <https://pib.gov.in/Pressreleaseshare.aspx?PRID=1615008>

**NASA**  
“NASA, one of SpaceX’s biggest customers prohibits its employees from using Zoom, said Stephanie Schierholz, a spokeswoman for the U.S. Space Agency.”  
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-spacex-zoom-video-commn/elon-musks-spacex-bans-zoom-over-privacy-concerns-memo-idUSKBN21J71H>

**Netherlands**“The defence ministry in the Netherlandshas banned the use of Zoomvideoconferencing service.”<https://www.telecompaper.com/news/dutch-defence-ministry-bans-use-of-zoom--1335022>

**Taiwanese Government**“Citing security and privacy concerns, Taiwan’s Department of Cyber Security has issued an advisory to all government agencies prohibiting the use of certain video software such as Zoom.”  
<https://www.zdnet.com/article/taiwan-instructs-government-agencies-not-to-use-zoom/>

**SpaceX**“Elon Musk’s SpaceX has banned its staff from using Zoom amid security concerns, disabling all company access to Zoom with immediate effect.”   
<https://www.businessinsider.com/elon-musk-bans-zoom-security-concerns-2020-4>

**New York State Schools**“New York City Schools forbids schools from using Zoom for remote learning due to privacy and security concerns.”  
<https://ny.chalkbeat.org/2020/4/4/21225416/nyc-forbids-schools-from-using-zoom-for-remote-learning-due-to-privacy-and-security-concerns>   
 **U.S. Senate**“The U.S. Senate told members to avoid using Zoom for remote work due to security issues surrounding the videoconferencing App. Senators were asked to use an alternative platform.”  
<https://www.zdnet.com/article/us-senate-german-government-tell-staff-not-to-use-zoom/>

**Class Action Lawsuit Filed Against Zoom In California**  
“The three most significant security issues raised by researchers: Facebook data-sharing, the company’s admittingly incomplete end-to-end encryption, and the vulnerability which allows malicious actors to access users’ webcams.”  
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Xdfisiu2XETY6nVvMyY--cdJ6QVQcZTq/view>

**Former San Jose, CA Zoom Employee Wanted by the FBI for Support to Chinese Government****United States District Court, Eastern District Of New York  
United States Of America *Against* Defendant Julien Jin (FBI Criminal Complaint Filed)**<https://www.justice.gov/usao-edny/press-release/file/1346966/download>

B.6   
“ The PRC (Peoples Republic of China) is a one-party state, whose government is entirely controlled by the Chinese Communist Party ( “CCP”). While the constitution and laws of the PRC government purport to guarantee PRC citizens the freedom of speech, the CCP regards any political dissent as a threat not only to its own political interests, but also to the PRC’s one-party system of government itself. Thus, the PRC government’s national security and law enforcement agencies regard political dissent as a national security threat and routinely monitor and actively censor political speech inconsistent with the CCP-approved political viewpoints, as well as speech that threatens to damage the reputation of the PRC government or threatens to undermine the PRC’s CCP’s-dominated social order.

B.12  
‘The PRC government also prohibits unauthorized religious activities, including online religious discussions. The PRC government requires religious groups to register with government authorities and restricts religious activities by both registered and unregistered religious groups.”

B.20  
“ In sum and substance, JIN( an employee of a San Jose, CA high tech company) stated that the host organization was a Chinese cult the frequently made use of the “Company’s” services and stated that the User Account should be blocked due to the religious ( specifically, Christian) nature of the content.”

B.21  
“The blockage had the effect of disrupting service not only to individual users who had registered free accounts to use this “Company’s” service, but also of disrupting the ability of “Company’s” services to communicate with their employees and business partners in the PRC.”

B.25  
“ In a series of communications, JIN advised the group that he would create 5 “Company” Accounts for officers of MPS’s Hangzhou Public Security Bureau, Cybersecurity Department to use on “ Company’s” PRC Based network and explained the JIN and “Company’s” CEO had agreed with the MPS to use a combination of “Company’s” employee messaging system and WeChat (a PRC Based Internet Messaging Application) to communicate with PRC government officials and to exchange classified information.”

This case is a stunning blow that raises questions how the Chinese governments surveil users and suppress video calls through Zoom…

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2020/12/18/zoom-helped-china-surveillance/>

**Zoom Says Free Users Will Not Get End-To-End Encryption So FBI And Police Have Access**<https://www.theverge.com/2020/6/3/21279355/zoom-end-encryption-calls-fbi-police-free-users>

**What Are Your Alternatives To Zoom?**

**Google Meet:** <https://support.google.com/a/users/answer/9868455?visit_id=637495224652157026-102221223&hl=en&rd=1#zippy=%2Cstart-meet-video-meetings-from-gmail>

**100 participants Allowed On A Free Account**

Anyone with a Google Account can create a video meeting, invite up to 100 participants, and meet for up to **60** minutes per meeting for free.

All the best,

Kat Jennings, CEO

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