

Computer Bytes – May 2021

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Hello Friends & Associates!

It's been a long time since I've had the opportunity to share with local folks and businesses – let's get back to it!

In our new world, online meetings, both for business and family get-togethers, are becoming the 'norm'. I'm sure by this time most of you have tried using Skype or Zoom, or at least heard of them and have an interest. If you're looking for more information, here are supporting notes to help guide you.

For you beginners, basically, these are tools that let you have video and audio on your computer to communicate with others. Both Zoom and Skype are very common and Zoom has been even more prominent of late, due to so many business and home users getting together via Zoom meetings with the computer, webcam, speakers, phone, etc. Both Zoom and Skype promote their tools align with industry-leading security and end-to-end encryption, but Zoom has had some privacy concerns. Accounts have been compromised, creating security concerns. I would add that while confidentiality is always important, most users don't have anything of critical value in a zoom account, or shouldn't anyway. Your email is out there for just about any one to find if they want, so... just continue safe practices for periodic password reset and keeping them secure.

Zoom's free plan is pretty solid, with limitations of 100 participants and 40 minute limitations. Those who need more features can purchase a paid a monthly subscription. The following website gives you their pricing options. You can of course review ALL the various capabilities and features while at their site:

<https://zoom.us/pricing>

As for Skype, prices are "per user" whereas with Zoom, you only pay "per host". You will need to consider your requirements and what option(s) would be best for you. Below is the pricing page – again you can review all the nitty gritty details of the tool while at their site: <https://support.skype.com/en/faq/FA331/what-are-the-different-types-of-skype-subscriptions-and-pay-as-you-go-options> The business version of Skype is included with Microsoft Teams. This means users may find more value in it considering Microsoft Teams comes with many other features, including Microsoft Office collaboration and access to productivity applications. Here's info for the website on that product: <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/compare-microsoft-teams-options>

Zoom vs. Skype are the closest competitors of their kind for inexpensive online meeting options. They are both great options, but Zoom is the more complete solution for business users and work-related purposes. If the few extra features Zoom has over Skype don't matter much to you, then the real difference will be in pricing. Of course there are other options out there but we cannot go into all of them here so we focused on the most common. With a light at the end of the tunnel, the "necessity" of the online activities may become less of a requirement but they can continue to be used actively now that users are more familiar with them.

NOTE: *Our sharing of information within articles includes suggestions and tips. USE AND/OR APPLY AT YOUR OWN RISK. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact our offices for professional service/guidance.*

Until next time, don't forget your backups! For more information, contact Harv Oliver, HANDS-ON Consultations, (805) 524-5278, www.hocsupport.com