Managing Disruptions to Zoom Meetings

Background

On March 9, Northwestern University IT made the Zoom web conferencing platform available in all Canvas courses. The threat of Coronavirus (COVID-19) has led many higher education institutions, including Northwestern, to increasingly rely on web conferencing tools to conduct classes. Following this switch, there have been numerous well-publicized incidents of Zoom class meetings being disrupted by students or unauthorized participants. This practice is commonly referred to as “Zoombombing.” In these incidents, the disruptions included harassment, racist or otherwise offensive speech, or images that were sexually explicit or potentially offensive to the meeting participants.

This document provides various actions that you as an instructor and Zoom meeting host can take to prevent the disruption of your Zoom meetings. These actions apply only to your own Zoom meetings. Northwestern IT may implement global settings to Zoom in addition to or in place of the settings described here.

The steps listed in this document are applicable to hosts using Zoom on Windows and MacOS devices. If you are using an iOS, Android or Linux device, refer to the Zoom Help Center for detailed instructions.

Steps to Take When Scheduling a Meeting

Complete these three steps when you schedule a new Zoom meeting in your Canvas course. The settings are found on the Zoom > Course Meetings > Schedule a Meeting page.

Require a Meeting Password

A password for the Zoom meeting adds an additional layer of security to prevent unauthorized participants from joining your meeting. In the Meeting Options section of the page, do the following:

1. Mark the Require meeting password checkbox. The “Enter your meeting password” field will be displayed.

2. Enter a strong password in the Enter your meeting password field.

3. Share the password with the students enrolled in your course by posting an announcement in Canvas.

Mute Participants’ Microphones Upon Entry

By default, participants’ microphones are on when they join the meeting.

1. Mark the Mute participants upon entry checkbox in the Meeting Options section of the page.
Enable Waiting Room

A Zoom waiting room prevents other participants from joining the meeting and interacting with one another until you as the host join the meeting. In the Meeting Options section of the page, do the following:

1. Mark the Enable waiting room checkbox.

2. Clear (or leave unmarked) the Enable join before host checkbox. Important: If this checkbox is marked, it will allow participants to enter the meeting room without your approval.

3. Post an announcement in Canvas directing students to confirm that the name in their Zoom account settings is identical to their name in Canvas. This will make it easier for you to verify the identity of each participant. Share this link from the Zoom Help Center with students, Customizing your Profile.

See Admitting Participants from the Waiting Room below.

Depending on your Zoom account settings, authenticated (“signed-in”) Zoom users may be admitted to the meeting automatically and only guest participants held in the waiting room. For details, see the User settings on the Waiting Room page in the Zoom Help Center. The simplest approach to controlling access to your meeting is to disable the “Enable join before host” setting.

Editing Scheduled Meeting Settings

If you have already scheduled a Zoom meeting in Canvas and want to change the settings, do the following:

1. Click the meeting title listed on the Canvas Zoom page. The meeting details page will be displayed.

2. Click the Edit this Meeting button. The Manage [meeting name] page will be displayed.

3. Mark the Require meeting password, Enable waiting room and/or Mute participants upon entry checkboxes in the Meeting Options section of the page.

4. Click the Save button to update the meeting settings.

Steps to Take During a Meeting

The following are actions you can take to prevent participants from disrupting a meeting, including removing those participants when necessary.

Admitting Participants from the Waiting Room

If you enabled the waiting room when you scheduled the meeting, you will be able to admit or remove each waiting participant. See the Enable Waiting Room section above.

When you first join the meeting, the participant list will be displayed, do the following to admit or remove each participant.
Review each student name listed as waiting.
- Click the **Admit** button to allow a participant to join the meeting.
- Click the **Remove** button to prevent a participant from joining the meeting. A dialog box will be displayed with the participant’s name to warn you that, if the participant is removed, they will not be able to rejoin the meeting. Then Click the **OK** button. The participant is locked out of the meeting.

*Important:* Click the **Admit all** button only if you have thoroughly reviewed the list of waiting participants and are certain all are legitimate.

When the meeting is in progress, waiting participants will be listed at the top of the Participants window. Click the **Manage Participants** button in the Zoom toolbar to display the Participants window, then use the same process described above to add or remove them.

**Lock the Meeting**

To prevent new participants from joining a meeting in progress, do the following to lock the meeting:

1. Click the **Manage Participants** button in the Zoom toolbar. The Participants window will be displayed.

2. Click the **More** button in the Participants window. A pop-up menu will be displayed.

3. Select **Lock Meeting** from the pop-up menu.

This applies to any participant, even those who have the meeting ID and password (if one was required in meeting settings).

**Remove Participants**

To remove a disruptive or unauthorized participant, do the following:

1. Click the **Manage Participants** button in the Zoom toolbar. The Participants window will be displayed.

2. Place the mouse pointer over the participant’s name in the list. A button labeled “More” will be displayed next to the name.

3. Click the **More** button. A pop-up menu will be displayed.

4. Select **Remove** from the pop-up menu. A dialog box will be displayed with the participant’s name to warn you that, if the participant is removed, they will not be able to rejoin the meeting.

5. Click the **OK** button. The participant is removed from the meeting.

**Disable Participants’ Video**

To turn off the video from a participant’s webcam, do the following:

1. Click the **Manage Participants** button in the Zoom toolbar. The Participants window will be displayed with a list of all participants.
2. Locate the participant’s name in the list.

3. Click the video camera icon next to the participant’s name. A slash mark will be added to the video camera icon for that participant.

### Mute Single Participant

To turn off the audio from a single participant’s microphone, do the following:

1. Click the Manage Participants button in the Zoom toolbar. The Participants window will be displayed with a list of all participants.

2. Locate the participant’s name in the list.

3. Click the microphone icon next to the participant’s name. A slash mark will be added to the microphone icon for that participant. Unmute an individual by clicking the microphone icon next to their name in the Participants window.

### Mute All Participants

To mute all participants’ microphones at once, do the following:

1. Click the Manage Participants button in the Zoom toolbar. The Participants window will be displayed.

2. Click the Mute All button in the Participants window. The Mute All dialog box will be displayed.
   
   a. Clear the Allow participants to unmute themselves checkbox to prevent intentional disruptions by students. Students will not be able to activate their microphones.
   
   b. Mark (or leave marked) the Allow participants to unmute themselves checkbox to prevent accidental disruptions by students. Students will be able to activate their microphones when appropriate.

3. Click the Confirm button. The mute all settings will be in effect for all current and any new participants.

Unmute all participants by clicking the Unmute All button in the Participants window.

*Note:* “Mute All” does not mute the meeting host’s or co-host’s microphones.

### Disable Private Chat

Zoom allows meeting participants to use the Chat window to exchange private messages. Potentially, one participant could harass another without you or the other participants becoming aware of the harassment.

To disable private in-meeting chat, do the following:

1. Click the Chat button in the Zoom toolbar. The Chat window will be displayed.

2. Click the ••• (more) button in the Chat window. A pop-up menu will be displayed.
3. Select **Everyone Publicly** from the pop-up menu. A checkmark will be displayed next to that option and private chat will not be an option for participants.

### Place Participants on Hold

You can temporarily disable a participant’s video and audio connections to the meeting. To put a participant on hold, do the following:

1. Click the **Manage Participants** button in the Zoom toolbar. The Participants window will be displayed.

2. Locate the participant’s name on the list.

3. Place the mouse pointer over the participant’s name in the list. A button labeled “More” will be displayed next to the name.

4. Click the **More** button. A pop-up menu will be displayed.

5. Select **Put on hold** from the pop-up menu. The participant list will be refreshed to show the participant(s) who are on hold.

### Turn Off Annotation

With Zoom’s annotation tools, the host and participants can mark-up a shared whiteboard or any screen shared in the meeting. To prevent participants from making inappropriate comments or markings, see the [Using annotation tools on a shared screen or whiteboard](#) in the Zoom Help Center.

### Additional Resources

From Northwestern IT:

- [Zoom Conferencing Service](#) – an introduction to Zoom at Northwestern, includes links to download the Zoom browser plug-in and desktop application.

- [Tips for Protecting Your Meetings from “Zoombombing”](#) – an overview of settings and meeting controls to address Zoombombing.

From the Northwestern IT Knowledge Base:

- [Understanding Zoom privacy and security settings](#) – a detailed list of Zoom settings and meeting controls to prevent and address disruptive behavior

- [Zoom Self-help Articles](#) – various articles that address common questions about Zoom