

Technology Resources for bundy

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Making Sense of video conferencing tools

You've probably already tried one or even a few video conferencing tools since the COVID-19 crisis started. As you may have already discovered, there are a lot of tools out there. Some may work better in different situations. I've tried to list down some of the more popular tools and give a summary of what they can do and when they are useful. Some tools work well for larger groups and others smaller ones, some have a focus on fun whereas others focus on learning and still others focus on meetings. I've picked seven to focus on but there are many, many more (Webex, Facetime, Duo, Facebook messenger, Viber, Amazon Chime to name a few). So whatever technology you are using don't forget the main aim is to care for, encourage and walk with others (virtually). When all else fails try a normal phone call.

Zoom



Zoom is a business level video conferencing tool. It can be used on phones and computers. It's used by many growth groups and for post church service catch up. You can find more info on [how to get started with zoom here](#). Zoom has been growing steadily in the past few years but its popularity has exploded since the crisis.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's mostly easy to use and get started• Great for larger groups - gallery view allows up to 49 people on the screen at once (computer depending)• Paid version has 'breakout rooms' which is helpful for growth groups and larger meetings. This allows the host to create smaller• Easy to setup a phone dial in• Custom backgrounds can be fun• Screen sharing• Works on most platforms: PC, Mac, Android, iPhone.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calls with more than 2 people are limited to 40min unless you pay for a subscription• Its popularity has raised some security concerns, but Zoom have done a lot to fix this in the last few days. (eg Zoom Security: Here's What Zoom Is Doing To Make Its Service Safer)• There is a lack of clarity on what encryption they offer. Best not to use Zoom for sensitive calls e.g talking with missionaries' in some countries. (zoom end to end encryption video chats meetings)• Connecting audio for the first time can be tricky for some.

WhatsApp



Many people use WhatsApp on their phone for group chat and text messages and for that it works well. But it can also be used to make group call for up to 4 people. WhatsApp is owned by Facebook but you don't need a Facebook account to join. It uses your phone number to authenticate.

WhatsApp is very easy to use especially for those without a lot of technology experience. We successfully got my 83-year-old grandmother independently answering video calls on Whatsapp, and she's loved being able to see her great grandchildren.

For information to get started with video calls on what app click here for [Android](#) or [iPhone](#)

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Integrates easily with your phone on both Android and iPhone• Super easy to use• Great for small groups or one on one calls• No time limits• Many people already have it	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Only works on phones• Limit of 4 people on a voice call• Needs access to all the contacts on your phone

Skype



Skype has been around for a long time and was one of the first software applications to offer free internet calls. It was bought out by Microsoft a few years ago. Although not as feature rich as Zoom it's free and offers no time limit. Up until recently you needed you to create an account but now with [the meet now feature](#) you can create a video meeting without the need to sign up or download software.

For more info getting started with skype meet now click here : [How to use meet now](#)

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free & no time limits• No need to create an account• Works in browser, desktop app, Android and iPhone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doesn't have breakout rooms• Limited to only 25 people in a meeting.

Google Hangouts



If you have a Google (Gmail) account, you can also use Google Hangouts to create a video call for up to 25 people. Each member will also need to create a Google account if they don't already have one. (if you own an Android phone you will have a Google account). To start a Hangout call, follow the instructions here: [\(Hangouts getting started\)](#) . Google also have a Hangouts meet product which is part of their Gsuite package that has slightly more features but does cost money and requires some setup.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free & no time limits.• Easy to use – most people familiar with Google interface.• Works in browser, android and iPhone	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Video call limit of 25 people.• Need a google account• More activity information that google will be collecting about you• No breakout rooms

Teams



Teams is another offering by Microsoft that tightly integrated with Microsoft office 365. It's been designed to work for teams in the business world but is and quickly being picked up by educators and business. Microsoft have recently decided to give it away for free during the pandemic. The initial setup is a little more involved but easy to setup meetings and chat once going. To get started go [here](#)

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free & no time limits.• Interactive whiteboards• Works in browser, desktop app, android and iPhone• No breakout rooms but, if you had a team for your growth group it's easy for people to leave and join the main meeting while starting other meetings concurrently.• Screen sharing and screen control.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are a few steps needed for the initial setup• No breakout rooms

House Party



House party is pitched as a face to face social network, unlike the others that are primarily about video meetings house party is primarily a social network made by a games company. From my limited experience the video quality on house party is good without the millisecond lag that you can sometimes get from other tools. Personally, though the social network features annoyed me, I plan to delete it soon.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Easy to get started• Games and fun features built in• Alerts when others are online and ready for a cha• You get alerted when others on your contact list join Houseparty	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• It's a social network and gets access to your contacts• There have been some security concerns although it's not clear if they are true. (see this article)• You need an account to join

Jitsi.org



If you don't like creating accounts or installing software Jitsi is probably the best option for you. It works from your browser or phone app. It's also an open source software so you could create your own Jitsi server if you wanted to.

To create a meeting just click the one of the links below and give the meeting a name. (If you don't give the meeting a name you will get an auto generated name with 4 random words, the meeting title will then have the random words which can look odd to participants). Jitsi is maintained by a company called 8X8 who off other corporate video and communication solutions.

Once the meeting has started you can send others the link you can use <https://meet.jit.si/> or an Australian hosted version with AU dial in numbers here: [8x8 Australia](#) – although getting the AU version working on your smart phone requires a little more setup.

Pros	Cons
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No setting up accounts• Free and no time limits• Australian phone in numbers (can join the conference from a landline or mobile)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No breakout rooms• If someone else in the world creates a meeting with the same name you will join their meeting• Host needs to setup a meeting password to prevent the above

Tips for running a video conference

So, you're locked at home but still need to run a growth group and connect with others. Here are 11 tips to help you navigate the technology.

1. Test the setup before you start

Most laptops, phones and tablets made in the last 10 years should have cameras speakers and microphones that will work with your video conferencing tool. But if you are going to host a meeting with a larger group and you've never done it before it is always worth making a test call with someone first to make sure your setup is good to go.

2. Set ground rules at the start of the meeting (Raise your hand)

Unlike meeting face to face you will find very quickly that people will (unintentionally) start talking over each other. So, you don't descend into chaos the leader will need set out some rules about who can talk when and when to interrupt. A simple rule is to ask people to raise their hand when they are ready to speak. Most apps will have a raise your hand button or just do it on the video. The leader will need to chair and tell people when it's their turn.

3. Make eye contact with the camera.

Although it may be tempting to check your messages while on a video call, doing so would be just as rude as doing it face to face. If possible, set the camera so you are face-on to the screen and look at the person when you are talking to them. This will help you and others feel part of the meeting. Act as you would if it was a real meeting.

4. Plug your device into power

Although your phone battery may last all day normally you will find that running a vide call is very power intensive. You want to avoid having he call drop out just as someone is sharing something important. If you can plug your phone or laptop into the charger before you start the meeting, then do it.

5. Will you be comfortable for the duration of the meeting?

If you are running a growth group and you anticipate it running for 1.5 hours, then it is worth making sure you've comfortable with the video setup. Holding a phone up for that long will get tiring. For longer meetings try use a laptop/ computer or have your phone resting on a stand.

6. Mute the mike when you are not speaking

Then of course remember to unmute it when you want to speak. The video will get very noisy quickly when there is background noise for 8 different sources. If you mute your mike when you don't need to speak it will make for a much cleaner call. Muting of course has the disadvantage of missing things like laughs and Amen's so remember to unmute.

7. Switch off video when the connection is bad

Most internet connections are designed to download things rather than upload. Streaming video can be a significant upload. If your internet connection is bad and the call keeps dropping out, you may find that disabling the video and just running audio will still let you be part of the meeting.

8. Consider who else can hear You

If you are expecting to talk about sensitive things during the meeting you will need to consider who else can hear the meeting. Are there others in your house that don't need to know personal prayer points? Headphones are a good way to minimise who else can hear the meeting in your house.

9. Video calls will take up bandwidth

Video calls can chew through bandwidth or data (especially true on some phone plans). If you only have a small amount of data on your internet connection it may be worth jumping up to a different plan for the next few months. The more people on the call, the more data you will use. It's also worth noting that a video call will require a good upload connection speed as well download speed – many older internet technology (eg ADSL) have okay download bandwidth (great for Netflix) but bad if you are on a video call. Most video call tools will compensate for this, though it will mean your video feed is very blocky and pixelated on other's screens.

10. If something doesn't work, Google it!

(Or search for help using a different search engine). The IT support that Bundy can provide over the coming months will be limited. If you don't know how to do something, then type what you are trying to do into a search engine. You will likely find someone else with the same issue or a Youtube video with someone explaining what to do.

11. When all else fails just use the phone

There will be times over the coming days, weeks and months when technology will fail us and times when people start to feel isolated. Don't be afraid to call people, an old normal phone call (it's what we did before text messages were invented). If someone can't manage the technology or if you haven't heard from or seen some for a long time give them a call. Even if it's just a five minute "how are you going?" after growth group or later that week.

Security & privacy tips

Stop Zoombombers

As the world quickly embraces video technology so people invent new ways to sin. You may have already heard of the new term [zoombombing](#). A term to describe unwanted people joining a video meeting. Although the term got its name from the Zoom software any video conferencing tool that doesn't require a participant to create an account is vulnerable to this sort of attack eg Jitsi, Skype meet now. However, there are a few things you can do to prevent it.

- 1) Use a password for meeting – this means only those who know it can get in.
- 2) Add a waiting room – so the host must accept people before they can join (Zoom only)
- 3) Use a temporary meeting ID or scheduled meeting link rather than a persistent link. In zoom this is known as a personal meeting ID vs a single meeting.
or
- 4) Use a closed meeting tool such as Teams, Whatsapp or Skype video group chat. The disadvantage is with this method is everyone you want to meet with will need an account on that tool.

For more info have a look at this article about [securing zoom](#)

Don't use the same password EVERYWHERE!!!

But why not...? I have too many passwords and they are so hard to remember (more on that later)! Because our online security is only as strong as the website we use that has the worst security. Here is why, let me run through an example:

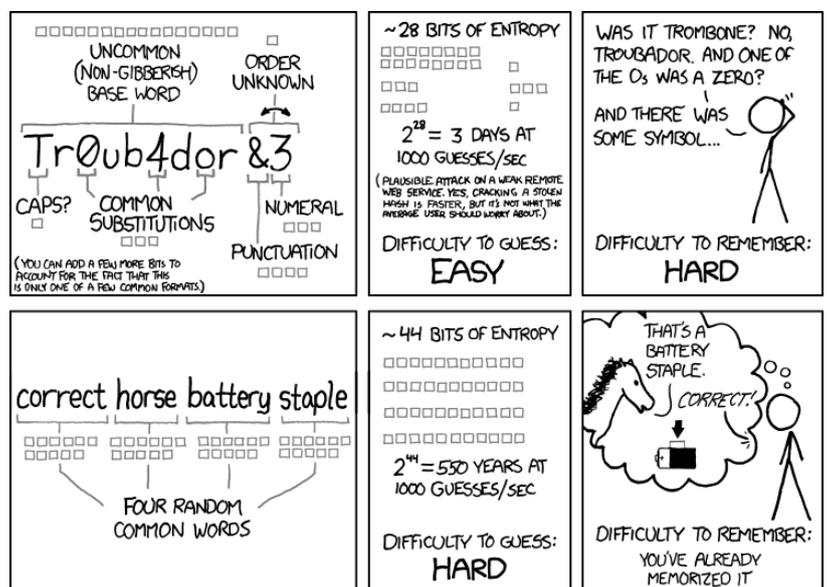
Let's just say your favourite password is "rover" (bad password by the way). It happens to be the password used for Gmail, Facebook, Amazon, ebay and Joespizza.com. Now if Joespizza website gets hacked or even if joe is a "Bad guy hacker", then "Bad guy hacker" now has a list of emails and passwords from anyone who has ever logged onto joespizza.com and of course one of those is your password "rover".

The first thing "Bad guy hacker" is going to do is try the email and password combo on Gmail, Facebook, ebay etc. The next thing you know you have been locked out of all our accounts, or worse... but if you had a different password on all your other online accounts then they would be safe.

Of all the security things you will be told, using different passwords is probably the most important. You don't need to remember all of them the best way to manage all your password is with a password manager. There are lots out there [LastPass](#), [1password](#), [bitwarden](#), [keypass](#), to name a few.

Use a long Password

Computers can same do the task over and over again very well - this after all is what they were designed for. It may take you two seconds to type in your password but in two seconds a specially designed computer program may be able to try 1000 different password combinations. Put simply the longer your password is the harder it is to guess, the more combinations a brute force hacker will need before they can guess it. The following XKCD comic explains it better than I could:



THROUGH 20 YEARS OF EFFORT, WE'VE SUCCESSFULLY TRAINED EVERYONE TO USE PASSWORDS THAT ARE HARD FOR HUMANS TO REMEMBER, BUT EASY FOR COMPUTERS TO GUESS.