April 7, 2020 - Zoom Privacy Warning and Advisory

In recent days it has come to the attention of security and privacy experts that the Zoom web conferencing tool has various security and privacy issues. Several education institutions and companies have recently prohibited the use of ZOOM for official business activities. While Zoom has recently made emergency efforts to resolve issues, outstanding privacy and security issues still exist.

Why is this advisory important to you as AgriLife employees?
The State of Texas and funding partners have requirements and policies related to data security and privacy protection. These requirements must be maintained in order to assure confidential information and privacy rights are maintained.

Guidance
1. Do not use Zoom if your meeting will discuss any confidential or sensitive Information (i.e. Any research related to controlled information (CUI), HIPPA, restricted, sensitive information that can identify an individual or divulge private information about individuals).
2. Secondly, all security and password controls should be utilized while conducting a ZOOM meeting to lessen the probability of being “zoom bombed”.

Link to Data Classification definitions: https://helpdesk.cvm.tamu.edu/LiveTime/WebObjects/LiveTime.woa/wa/ArticleView?ktblid=681

Please direct any questions you may have to SECURITY@AG.TAMU.EDU.

Overview of ZOOM Issues:
- 1/3rd of ZOOM employees are based in China (Relevant to Export Control & Data Privacy Requirements)
- ZOOM Meetings are not encrypted end to end and can be intercepted by ZOOM employees or hackers
- ZOOM meeting recordings are not encrypted and can be viewed by ZOOM employees or others that may gain access
- Zoom software recently funneled user data to Facebook

Alternative Web Conferencing Tools
AgriLife Extension and Research employees, serviced by AgriLife IT, have two web conferencing solutions and require no additional licensing or costs to utilize. All of these products support secure transmission (end to end) and encrypted storage of meeting recordings and chats.
Microsoft Teams (recommended)
- Supports up to 250 attendees per meeting
- Meeting Duration Maximum: 24 Hours
- Currently installed on all AgriLife Extension and Research computers
- AgriLife FirstCall Teams Training and User Guides: [https://firstcallhelp.tamu.edu/whats-new/teams/](https://firstcallhelp.tamu.edu/whats-new/teams/)

WebEx
- Supports up to 1000 attendees per meeting
- Meeting Duration Maximum: 24 Hours
- AgriLife FirstCall WebEx Access, Training and User Guides: [https://firstcallhelp.tamu.edu/webex/](https://firstcallhelp.tamu.edu/webex/)

Related Articles and Sources
  - Zoom privacy and security issues: Here’s everything that’s wrong (so far) | Tom's Guide
    UPDATED with details of blog post by Zoom’s founder and CEO spelling out fixes Zoom has made and pledge to lock down development for 90 days to find and fix security and privacy flaws, and with ...
    [www.tomsguide.com](http://www.tomsguide.com)
- [https://www.npr.org/2020/04/03/826129520/a-must-for-millions-zoom-has-a-dark-side-and-an-fbi-warning](https://www.npr.org/2020/04/03/826129520/a-must-for-millions-zoom-has-a-dark-side-and-an-fbi-warning)
Zoom Has A Dark Side — And An FBI Warning : NPR

Federal and state law enforcement are asking questions about Zoom’s security and privacy policies, as millions flock to the videoconferencing service ...

www.npr.org

- MYC Schools pull the plug on Zoom following FBI Warning  
  https://appleinsider.com/articles/20/04/06/nyc-schools-pull-the-plug-on-zoom-following-fbi-warning

- NYC schools pull the plug on Zoom following FBI warning  
  NYC schools pull the plug on Zoom following FBI warning. By Amber Neely Monday, April 06, 2020, 08:59 am PT (11:59 am ET) Despite efforts to ramp up security measures, video conferencing software ...
  appleinsider.com


  FBI Warns of Teleconferencing and Online Classroom Hijacking During COVID-19 Pandemic — FBI
  As large numbers of people turn to video-teleconferencing (VTC) platforms to stay connected in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis, reports of VTC hijacking are emerging nationwide.
  www.fbi.gov


  Schools ban Zoom citing security and privacy concerns | TechRadar
  Zoom is being banned by school across the United States following an increasing number of security and privacy issues reported by the app’s users. The video conferencing app has seen a meteoric ...
Zoom CEO says company 'moved too fast' and made 'missteps' as privacy concerns about the popular video conferencing app have snowballed in recent weeks.

The Zoom CEO responded to security concerns like the recent trend of 'Zoom-bombing,' saying his company 'moved too fast' as usage has surged.

www.businessinsider.com

Please direct any questions you may have to security@ag.tamu.edu.