

# Why Would I Want to Pay for a Zoom Videoconferencing Subscription Account? Why It May Be Worth It

By Roger Magnus, Roger Magnus Research,  
[www.rogermagnusresearch.com](http://www.rogermagnusresearch.com)

## Introduction

Zoom Basic (the free version) is a robust videoconferencing product and can perform many useful meeting tasks such as Share Screen and Annotations, Breakout Rooms, Record (to a local computer), and Chat. Of course, as a free product, it has limitations, but what exactly are they and how do Zoom's three subscription versions, such as Zoom Pro, offer more? (Please also see "**6 Reasons to Upgrade Your Zoom Account from Basic to Pro**" at <https://blog.zoom.us/the-many-reasons-to-upgrade-from-zoom-basic-to-pro/>.)

Below are some additional benefits of Zoom Pro:

- **No Time Limit for Meeting with More Than 2 people**  
While the free version limits meeting time to 40 minutes for 3 or more participants, Zoom Pro has a 24 hour time limit for up to 100 participants.
- **Polls**  
The free version does NOT provide this feature, but Zoom Pro allows a meeting host to create single- and multiple-choice poll questions. The tricky thing about Polls is finding where you create the actual questions. After you Schedule a Meeting on the Zoom webpage ([zoom.us/signin](https://zoom.us/signin)) and press the Save button, the confirmation page has a link at the bottom to create these poll questions BEFORE the meeting starts.

**Note: Polls cannot be created during a meeting.**

To start a poll during the meeting, press the Polls Button on the bottom panel. Afterwards, the results of the participant responses will be displayed. You can download a Report of the results of the polls into a spreadsheet after the meeting concludes for 30 days afterwards (Please see **Generating Meeting Results for Registration and Polling** at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/216378603>.)

**Note:** You must have administrator privileges or you may need to ask your Zoom administrator to run the report (Zoom webpage - Admin - Account Management – Reports – Usage Reports – Meeting).

- **Meeting Registration (does not include Webinars)**

In Schedule a Meeting, the host can check Registration Required. Activation ensures that only registered participants can attend the meeting and is a useful security and tracking feature when there are more than a handful of attendees. On the confirmation page, there is a Registration Option area including Approval (Automatic or Manual), Notification to a host's email, registration closing date, participants joining from multiple devices, and what Questions are asked of registrants (Last Name, Organization, Industry, Custom Questions, etc.). Again, with administrator privileges or contacting your Zoom administrator, the host can access a Report (Zoom webpage - Admin - Account Management – Reports – Usage Reports – Meeting) before and up until 30 days after the meeting (see the link for Polls above)

- **Live Streaming**

Enables Live streaming of events on YouTube, Facebook and other services. There is a two-part activation. First, you or your administrator must go to Account Management > Account Settings > In-Meeting (Advanced) to allow Live Streaming Meetings with the service(s) checked. To confirm this is correct, Schedule a Meeting and check the bottom of the confirmation page that Live Streaming displays. Once inside the Zoom meeting app, click on the More button on the bottom panel and select your streaming service to turn on for the meeting.

- **Cloud Recording (Settings – Recording – Cloud Recording)**

Cloud recording enables a host to record the meeting in a location besides the recorder's computer. There are about 10 different basic and Advanced Cloud Recording Settings including different option combinations for screen views including Active Speaker, Gallery View, and Shared Screen; saving chats; and Optimize the Recording for a 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Editor.

- **Co-Host (Settings – In Meeting (Basic) – Co-Host)**  
Makes a participant a Co-Host. There are certain functions a Co-Host cannot do such as Start a Waiting Room/Live Stream or End a Meeting.
- **Administrator/Owner Settings**  
Lock/unlock Settings for users and groups such as Live Streaming (above). The administrator can also access Registration Reports and Require Users to Update Client.  
**Note:** If you are a one-person business or work for a small organization, you have access to these settings or likely know who does. If you work for a larger organization and need access to certain features, find out who the Zoom administrator is. (For more information, see Changing Account Settings at [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363253-Changing-account-settings.](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201363253-Changing-account-settings))
- **Settings in Zoom Pro Not Available in Zoom Basic (As of Dec. 2020, subject to changes and additions)**  
**Note:** In some cases, the settings are additional options for the same features. In other cases, the settings are for features NOT available in the free version
  - **Settings – Meeting -- Security**
    - **Waiting Room Options (4)** - Determine who goes into the Waiting Room before the meeting starts.
    - **Only Authenticated Users Can Join Meeting/Meeting Authentication Options/Only Authenticated Users Can Join Meetings from Web Client** - Limiting meeting participants to a specific group of users who have a Zoom account (and in some cases also have a certain email address domain). (Please see Authentication Profiles for Meetings and Webinars at [https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360037117472-Authentication-Profiles-for-meetings-and-webinars.](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/360037117472-Authentication-Profiles-for-meetings-and-webinars))
  - **Settings – Meeting - Schedule Meeting**
    - **Audio Type** – There are 3 additional options or option combinations besides Computer Audio including Telephone and 3<sup>rd</sup> Party Audio.

- **Settings – Meeting - In-Meeting (Basic)**
  - **Sound Notification When Someone Joins or Leaves Meeting –**  
There are options for Everyone or Host and Co-Hosts only.
  - **When Someone Joins by Phone, Ask to Record Their Voice as the Notification – Yes/No**
  - **Co-Host -Yes/No**
  - **Polling – Yes/No**
  
- **Settings – Meeting - In-Meeting (Advanced)**
  - **Group HD Video – Yes/No** - Enables better quality video for example if the meeting is being recorded and made available later.
  - **Customize Data Center Regions for Meeting/Webinar Data in Transit – Yes/No** - If Yes, a list of 12 countries/regions can be checked.
  - **Show a “Join from Your Browser” Link – Yes/No** - If Yes, this is another access option for those who cannot download the Zoom app for meetings.
  - **Allow Live Streaming Meetings – Yes/No** - If Yes, there are 4 choices of live streaming services.
  
- **Settings – Meeting - Email Notification**
  - **When a Cloud Recording is Available – Notify Host When a Cloud Recording Is Available - Yes/No** - If Yes, there are 2 additional options to send the recording to the person who scheduled the meeting (for the host) or Alternative Hosts (Please see Alternative Host at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/208220166-Alternative-host>.)
  - **When an Alternative Host Is Set or Removed from the Meeting - Notify Alternative Host – Yes/No**
  - **When Someone Scheduled a Meeting for a Host - Notify Host – Yes/No**

- **When a Cloud Recording Is Going to Be Permanently Deleted from Trash - Notify host 7 days before – Yes/No**
- **Settings – Meeting - Other**
  - **Invitation Email - Choose Email in Language to Edit - 7 choices**
  - **Schedule Privilege – Assign Scheduling Privilege to/I Can Schedule for**
- **Settings – Recording**
  - **Cloud Recording – Yes/No - If Yes, please see Cloud Recording section above.**
  - **IP Address Access Control (to make Cloud Recordings) – Yes/No**
  - **Only Authenticated Users Can View Cloud Recordings – Yes/No**
  - **Require Passcode to Access Shared Cloud Recordings – Yes/No**
  - **Viewers Can See Transcript (of Recording) – Yes/No**
  - **Auto Delete Cloud Recordings after \_\_\_ Days – Yes/No - If Yes, can select 30 to 120 days.**
  - **The Host Can Delete Cloud Recordings – Yes/No**
- **Meetings – Schedule a Meeting**
  - **Audio options (4)**
  - **Meeting Options**
    - **Require Authentication to join – Yes/No**
    - **Automatically Record Meeting – Yes/No – This can be done either locally or in the cloud.**
    - **Enable Additional Data Center Regions for This Meeting - Yes/No – The host can check others besides those already checked in Settings.**
    - **2<sup>nd</sup> page (near bottom)**
      - **Poll – Create questions here.**
      - **Live Streaming - Can see video options already enabled in Administrative Settings.**

## **Conclusion**

There are potentially several important reasons to upgrade to a paid Zoom account. They include having access to useful features such as naming a co-host (for large meetings or when there are multiple presenters), adding a poll (for generating audience interaction), enabling a live stream (for certain kinds of virtual events), and recording the meeting in the cloud (for easier access). There are also about 30 additional settings in Zoom Pro that can be activated ahead of time that may foster additional ways of connecting online during virtual meetings. Zoom subscribers (for an extra fee) are also able to buy additional company licenses, a higher maximum number of participants for larger meetings, and additional cloud storage if needed. Of course, in the end, whether Zoom Basic or a subscription version is best depends on what are your or your company's videoconferencing needs and how they may change over time.