Safe and secure video calls.

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Internet video calls are very inexpensive and convenient, and especially useful for online meetings between two or more parties who cannot – or do not wish to – attend face-to-face meetings, seminars, training sessions and the like. They use your internet connection to make and receive calls.

Video calls between family and friends – as well as meetings and conferences – have exploded in popularity since the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and are likely to remain the norm. Many schools, colleges and universities have also come to rely on video calls to deliver interactive lessons.

Remote or 'virtual' meeting services such as Skype, Zoom, Microsoft Teams, Webex and Google Meet also enable users to share images, documents and other files. Depending on the platform and level of subscription, they may also include text comments, hand raising, polls and breakout rooms.

As is the case with other internet-based services, you need to take care with how you use these.

We've put together some tips to help you ensure your video calls and meetings are safe and secure.

- Use a service that requires a password to set up and access a call or meeting. In this way, only people who are intended to be on the call will be admitted and the chances of your call being 'bombed' (unwanted intrusion) will be minimised. Ensure you use strong passwords, and do not disclose them to anyone else.
- If your service includes a public profile, do not include any sensitive, private or confidential information in it.
- Be wary about whom you accept call or contact requests from. If your service enables you to set up connections, do so only with people you know.
- Quickly block nuisance and fraudulent users from further contact with you and also report them for abuse.
- If you think that you have been persuaded by anyone to part with payment details, contact your bank or card issuer immediately.
- Check regularly with the platform for updates or patches. If notified that they are available, apply them immediately as they normally contain security fixes.
- Ensure you have effective and updated antivirus/antispyware software and firewall running.
- If another party in the call or meeting sends you a weblink in the chat box, click on it only if you know and trust them and believe the link to be authentic. This will help you to avoid fraud or identity theft, or having your device infected with malware.
- Always log out of your call or meeting when it is finished, unless this happens automatically. If you are using your browser (rather than an app), closing your browser may not automatically finish your session.
- Be aware that using these depends on your device having power. If there is a power cut, your device runs out of battery or you experience other problem with the equipment, you will not be able to continue with the call or meeting.

Get Safe Online

Get Safe Online is the UK's leading source of information and advice on online safety and security, for the public and small businesses. It is a not-for-profit, public/private sector partnership backed by law enforcement agencies and leading organisations in internet security, banking and retail.

For more information and expert, easy-to-follow, impartial advice on safeguarding yourself, your family, finances, devices and workplace, visit **www.getsafeonline.org**

If you think you've been a victim of online fraud, report it to Action Fraud, the UK's national fraud and cybercrime reporting centre on 0300 123 20 40 or at www.actionfraud.police.uk

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