**Top 5 Video-Conferencing Platforms to Use for Online Small Groups**

With every platform, there are pros and cons. Some are free, but have limitations, and some have month-to-month paid options so there are no long-term obligations. Check them out and see what will work best for you and your small group.

1). **Zoom (**[**zoom.us**](zoom.us)**)**

Zoom is probably the most well-known and the most used of all the platforms, where you can invite your small group onto a “call.” Everyone can speak, hear, and be a part of the conversation/ discussion. There is a free version available, but has limitations, such as a 40-minute time limit (The pro account costs $20/month). It comes with some great features, such screen sharing, breakout rooms, a waiting room where people wait to be admitted to the room, a chat option, and allows up to 100 participants.

2). **WebEx (**[**webex.com)**](http://www.webex.com/)

WebEx is another great option and has similar free features to Zoom, such as screen sharing, host controls, HD video, chat, unlimited meetings, recording, etc. Like Zoom, the free version has a meeting limitation, but ten mins longer (50mins). The starter account is a little cheaper at $17.95 and like Zoom, you meeting can meet as long as they want (up to 24hours).

3). **Google Hangouts/ Google Meet (**[**hangouts.google.com/**](https://hangouts.google.com/)[**meet.google.com/**](https://meet.google.com/)**)**

Google hangouts is more of a casual option and Google meet is more of a business option, which both require a Gmail account for hosts, though anyone can join a meeting. Google hangouts has a limit of 15 participants, but offers unlimited time, while Google meet (free version) can have 100 participants with a 60-minute cap (which isn’t in affect until Sept. 30th). Google Hangouts does not have a phone in option with a G-suite account or breakout rooms, but you are able to chat, as well as share your screen. Google Meet includes features such as scheduling, screen sharing, as well as default privacy protections such as ability to admit or deny entry into a meeting, ability to mute or remove participants).

4). **Facebook Video Chat by Messenger (**[**www.messenger.com/**](http://www.messenger.com/)**)**

**ro:**Accessible via web browser on a computer. Can access with a Facebook account. (If you don’t have a Facebook account, you’ll need to [download the app](https://www.facebook.com/help/messenger-app/218228001910904?helpref=about_content) to your phone and use phone number.)

* **Con:**Phone-in option not available.
* **How to Use:**
	+ Open Facebook Messenger on [web browser](https://www.facebook.com/messages/) or [mobile app](https://www.facebook.com/help/messenger-app/218228001910904?helpref=about_content).
	+ Login (with Facebook account or phone number)
	+ Click “New Message” button to add Facebook friends to group chat
	+ After adding contacts, click the “Video Call” button to start video chat.

5).

**Honourable Mentions**

Amazon Chime ([aws.amazon.com/chime/](https://aws.amazon.com/chime/))

Skype ([skype.com](http://skype.com/))

Facetime

Eztalks (<https://www.eztalks.com/>

FreeConferenceCall ([FreeConferenceCall.com](http://freeconferencecall.com/))

House Party ([HouseParty.com](http://houseparty.com/))

Microsoft Teams

(<https://www.microsoft.com/en-ca/microsoft-365/microsoft-teams/group-chat-software>)