

Can Zoom Hosts Really See All Your Private Messages?



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AUGUST 26, 2020, 8:00AM EDT

Viral social media posts are alleging that Zoom’s private messages aren’t really private—if you’re chatting privately during a Zoom meeting, the host can see your entire conversation. Is that true? Well, not exactly.

How Private Messages Work in Zoom

Private messages work just like you’d expect them to. If you send a message to just a specific person, only you and that person can see the message. Zoom’s official website [confirms this](#), saying “Private messages between participants are not viewable by the host.”

Hosts can choose whether private messages are permitted or disable chat completely. However, if private messages between two people are allowed, the meeting host can’t see what those two people are saying to each other.

Recordings and Transcripts Contain Your Private Messages

So how did private messages ever get discovered? Well, one culprit is [Zoom’s recording feature](#). If you record an entire meeting or just the chat from a meeting, private messages visible to you are included in your recording.

When a Zoom meeting participant saves the chat associated with a meeting, it saves every single message that was visible to them. In other words, the host won’t see private messages unless you send those message directly to the host.

However, let’s say you record a work meeting or online lecture. Maybe you were saying some unflattering things about your coworkers or teacher in private messages to someone else during that Zoom meeting. You then then shared your recording or chat transcript with a fellow employee or student who missed it. They could see all the private messages you sent and received during the meeting.

If you keep the recordings to yourself, the messages stay private. However, if you share the recording with someone else, that person can see the private messages.

Maybe you realize this—but, if someone you sent private messages to shares their recording, private messages you sent to them are included in their recording.

For example, here's what a saved Zoom chat log containing private messages looks like. The private messages appear and are marked "Privately":

```
14:39:23 From Chris : Obviously we all agree that pineapple on pizza is a travesty.  
14:39:33 From Chris to Bob(Privately) : Don't tell anyone I said this, but pineapple on pizza is fine.  
14:39:52 From Chris : Now how do we all feel about pepperoni?
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If you shared the chat log with another person, they'd see the private messages you sent and received during the meeting. That's the real privacy threat.

Maybe Don't Send Sensitive Private Messages on Zoom

It's probably best to avoid sending potentially sensitive private messages on Zoom and use another chat client during Zoom meetings if you're sending messages you want to stay private

It's easy to accidentally send a message publicly instead of privately, and most people don't understand the finer points of how Zoom records private messages along with public ones.

However, the Zoom meeting host can't actually see your private messages—not unless you send them (or a recording containing them) to the host. That's not what you need to worry about.

By the way, [Zoom doesn't monitor which apps you're using on a call](#) and send that information to the host, either. The host can see whether you have the Zoom window in focus on your screen in some situations, but that's all.