

# Lifesize vs. Zoom for video conferencing

A detailed look at the two leading cloud video conferencing solutions

## Both Lifesize and Zoom offer big benefits over a traditional conference call

Video conferencing adoption has exploded in recent years to meet the demands of evolving workplace dynamics. According to Frost & Sullivan, businesses are seeing a wide range of benefits as they replace their outdated audio or web conferencing contracts with modern cloud-based video conferencing solutions. And while both Lifesize and Zoom can improve team communication and collaboration, increase employee engagement and lower operating costs, there are a few key differences in the meeting room solutions, security and reliability standards and overall pricing models worth considering.

### About Lifesize

Lifesize is a cloud-based video conferencing and collaboration platform combining a software solution for personal devices like laptops and mobile phones with a full line of 4K video conferencing systems and wireless sharing devices purpose-built for meeting rooms. The strength of the Lifesize solution lies in the robust global network reliability, security standards and the tightly integrated industry-leading meeting room equipment which is supported end to end by Lifesize.

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### About Zoom

Zoom is a cloud-based video conferencing service built on a custom architecture with downloadable apps for personal devices like laptops and mobile phones. Unlike Lifesize, Zoom does not sell meeting room equipment, instead relying on third-parties that bundle audio and video kits to support their customers' video conferencing needs in meeting spaces. The Zoom video conferencing app allows the largest number of users (1,000 participants) to meet and talk at the same time.

	Lifesize	Zoom
Downloadable application for PC, Mac iOS and Android	Y	Y
Web application (no installation required)	Y	Y
Video calling encrypted end-to-end by default	Y	-
Support for video calls and screen sharing in 4K	Y	-
Max call size	300 live or 10,000 live streamed	1,000 live or 10,000 live streamed
Manufactures fully integrated meeting room systems for rooms of all sizes	Y	-
Maintenance and warranty support	Single vendor, automatic updates and 24-hour hardware replacement for active accounts	Multi-vendor, requires updates to individual kit components, 1-2 year hardware warranties standard

## Zoom rooms just don't cut it

Zoom's approach to video conferencing in meeting rooms is via a component room system, often referred to as a "Zoom Room kit." According to Zoom's website, the following technologies are required, at minimum, for a Zoom Room configuration:

1. High-performance computer (Mac or Windows) that runs the Zoom Rooms software
2. Tablet (iPad, Android or Windows 10) that runs the Zoom Rooms App
3. Display
4. Speakers or sound bar
5. Web cam or supported conference room camera
6. Microphone
7. Additional iPad to run the Zoom Rooms Scheduling Display

## Zoom Rooms require substantially higher maintenance

Zoom recommends that all peripheral devices - including the PC, TV, camera, speakers, microphone and tablet components - be independently updated to ensure rooms remain operational. This applies to both the initial setup and ongoing management of each Zoom Room deployed. Failure to maintain component updates may lead the systems to lose connection requiring room users to delay their meetings in search of another room or cancelling and rescheduling once the room has been fixed.

## Lifesize all-in-one meeting room solution reduces complexity with unmatched 4K quality

Lifesize meeting rooms have been meticulously engineered and simplified to require only a Lifesize camera system, Lifesize Phone HD and a display. The Lifesize solution reduces complexity in the meeting room by providing a purpose-built and rigorously tested meeting room experience that updates automatically to reduce administrative overhead. It's also the industry's only 4K-capable solution for both 4K video streams and full-motion 4K content sharing.

	Lifesize	Zoom
Video solution for personal devices and meeting rooms	Y	Y
Manufactures fully integrated meeting room systems for rooms of all sizes	Y	-
Support for cloud video calls in resolutions up to 4K	Y	-
Support for cloud content sharing in resolutions up to 4K	Y	-
Single vendor for end-to-end support	Y	-

## Security, support and reliability

Video conferencing is a critical component of any enterprise communication and collaboration strategy. It's important to assess whether your video conferencing solution provider meets your business requirements for security, maintenance and support, and reliability and performance.

### Security and transparency

The data security practices and policies built into the apps and services you use to run your business are critically important and can have real consequences if they aren't prioritized by the vendors that you partner with. The [July 2019 Zoom security exploit](#) gives a clear example of how purposefully trading security for convenience and associating your brand with security breaches and vulnerabilities can create hesitations in your partners' and clients' willingness to do business with you.

#### Lifesize

Lifesize has emphasized security and privacy since launching our cloud service in 2014. The Lifesize service, room systems and client software employ WebRTC. Encryption is a mandatory component of WebRTC and applies to both signaling (via DTLS) and media (via SRTP/AES-128). Additionally, Lifesize supports single sign-on (SSO), allowing you to extend your own password retention, complexity and controls consistently to Lifesize. [Learn more about Lifesize Security.](#)

#### Zoom

Zoom operates around the WebRTC standards by communicating through a proprietary downloaded app on each participant's device. Zoom disables security and media encryption by default because it impacts call performance, effectively forcing customers to choose between security and quality. Additionally, according to a July 2019 security disclosure, Zoom's Mac client installs and runs code to bypass security features in the Safari browser. Businesses that choose Zoom for video conferencing should consult Zoom's support documentation for how to enable encryption and ensure end users settings comply with security policies.

	Lifesize	Zoom
Encryption method	128bit AES in flight, 256bit AES at rest	256bit AES in flight and at rest
Single Sign-on (SSO) authentication	Y	Y
Video calls encrypted by default	Y	-
Source code transparency	Built on open source WebRTC standards	Proprietary code base installed on local devices

## Warranty and replacement lifecycle: Lifesize Icon vs. Zoom Room kit

Zoom Room kit deployments utilize off-the-shelf generic computer processing and consumer-grade Windows, iOS or Android tablets as system controllers, which on average [reach obsolescence in 4.25 years](#). Additionally, the continual evolution of apps and software on these devices is effectively a form of built-in obsolescence, with support for apps only extending one or maybe two OS versions back, with developers needing to keep current to remain within the relevant app store.

Conversely, Lifesize Icon series conference room systems provide investment protection due to long managed lifecycles (8-10+ years) and automatic software, firmware and OS updates delivered and managed centrally via the Lifesize cloud service.

The Zoom Rooms application integrates with a number of hardware manufacturers, each of which offer different support and warranties. Buyers should research the differences between each hardware component; however, most room kit bundles come with a 2-3 year limited warranty. While Zoom does provide additional helpdesk services to help customers with diagnostics, the hardware components are not covered.

Through Lifesize's Device Software Subscription (DSS), all Lifesize Icon meeting rooms systems are covered by a comprehensive warranty, including a 24-hour device replacement service and priority support.

	Lifesize	Zoom
Expected Upgrade Cycle	10+ years	4-5 years
Maintenance	Single vendor, automatic updates via the cloud	Multi-vendor, varies by component in the solution
Warranty	DSS subscription covers product for entire lifecycle including 24-hour replacement	1-2 year hardware warranties, varies by component in the solution

## Reliability and performance

Both Lifesize and Zoom provide access to a global network of data centers to allow for global communication, however, the underlying architectures vary in how they connect calls end to end.

### Lifesize

Lifesize employs a modern, global cloud architecture designed from the ground up to meet the functionality, security and continually evolving communication needs of our customers. Delivering real-time collaborative video and audio communications in HD and UHD (4K) requires a no-compromise infrastructure design approach along with application and protocol intelligence to handle the inevitable client-side variations associated with internet bandwidth and connectivity. Our solution intelligently splits different workloads into central and regionalized tasks with resources strategically positioned across the globe to provide proximity and presence worldwide. The same mindful dispersal of resources geographically also increases resilience and reduces the potential impact of localized failures, while keeping in mind regulatory, legal and privacy concerns.

Unlike Zoom, Lifesize also offers customers a financially-backed, [guaranteed service level agreement \(SLA\) of 99.9% uptime](#).

### Zoom

The Zoom service is built on a proprietary code base, which Zoom claims allows it to provide quality and features not supported by WebRTC. However, in a side-by-side comparison it's unclear that Zoom's proprietary code offers any performance gains, while also limiting customers visibility into the code running in their organization.

According to its website, the Zoom cloud runs on a "proprietary global network" with a "geographically dispersed presence allowing our users to connect directly to the Zoom Cloud though a locally-designated point of presence." Zoom does not disclose the location of its data centers; however, following a lengthy January 2019 outage, Zoom attempted to shift blame to its vendor while [acknowledging issues with its underlying architecture](#).

## Lifesize vs. Zoom pricing: Why pay more for Zoom and get less?

Lifesize and Zoom both offer several pricing plans ranging from free solutions for small teams all the way up to enterprise-size deployments. Unlike Zoom, Lifesize offers both software-only pricing plans as well as plans that bundle software and meeting room hardware for customers that are looking for a tightly-integrated conference room plus cloud conferencing service experience.

### Plan customizations vs. usage-based pricing

#### Lifesize

Lifesize offers optional features at a-la-carte pricing allowing customers to customize their plan and only pay for the features they'll use. Features like Microsoft integrations, 300-way calling, and live streaming can be added or left off based on account preferences.

#### Zoom

Despite the promise of straightforward pricing, Zoom maintains a relatively complicated pricing structure in which actual charges fluctuate dramatically depending on the implementation. Customers who are not prepared for the hidden cost of upgrades, options, and usage may find that Zoom is not quite as affordable as expected.

### Hidden IT costs with Zoom

#### PSTN audio conferencing cost example

Replacing outdated audio-only conferencing services with video conferencing that includes audio conferencing is an easy way to fund a video conferencing project. Lifesize offers unlimited PSTN calls in 60+ countries at a flat rate as an annual add-on to the Lifesize service. Zoom charges customers for PSTN by the minute using their published rates, which add up quickly, costing their customers an average 3-5x the Lifesize unlimited plan.

For example, a **10-way audio** (PSTN) conference with participants in the UK is billed at a rate of **\$0.87** per minute (\$0.087 per participant in the call) or **\$52.20** per hour. The same call run on a weekly basis would cost **\$2,714.40** in usage fees for just one recurring meeting. Now consider a monthly all-hands call with hundreds of participants joining an audio-only PSTN line and you can see how easy it is to rack up a \$1,000 bill on a single call. Lifesize offers unlimited audio calling at \$999/year.

#### Maintenance cost example

Zoom Rooms kits are assembled from a variety of consumer-grade devices from multiple vendors all requiring varying amounts of maintenance and updates to keep them paired and connected. Using a conservative estimate that each room kit requires 30 minutes of time per work week to maintain (dock tablets, install updates, reboot devices, replace power cords, troubleshoot incompatibilities), during the course of a year an organization will spend an additional 26 hours per room. For larger organizations with dozens of meeting rooms spanning multiple facilities, this represents a considerable source of administrative overhead.

According to PayScale.com, the average IT Manager in the US earns between \$58-64 per hour. Using the conservative management hour estimates above, **an organization with 10 Zoom Room kits would incur an additional \$15,600 per year in labor costs.**

**\$60** (avg. IT Manager hourly wage) x **26** (avg. maintenance hours per room / year) x **10** (number of Zoom Rooms) = **\$15,600 / year**

## Why choose Lifesize Video Conferencing?

### Hardware and Software Together

By integrating our meeting room systems and cloud service, we enable every person and every conference room with amazing video conferencing.

### Global Network

With data centers in every major geography, our industry-leading global presence helps you connect your global teams through web conferencing.

### Secure Communication

Lifesize uses best-of-breed data centers with independent third-party security and privacy certifications to ensure the most secure and reliable foundation possible for our customers.

### Seamless Integration

Lifesize fits in the workflow of your existing tools to give you the best video experience in the apps and meeting rooms you use every day.

## Communication for the modern workplace

Everything we do is designed, built and supported to make the user experience excellent and effortless from day one. After more than fifteen years of developing [conference room systems](#), [wireless meeting room presentation devices](#), [video conferencing apps](#) and the [global cloud network](#) that ties it all together, we don't settle for anything less than amazing. Lifesize delivers an unmatched, unified meeting experience that you can trust to work the first time, every time.

## Driven by customer obsession

Your business isn't just your products, services or brand. It's people, conversations and relationships. Our customers know they have a true partner in Lifesize who understands their unique needs and is deeply dedicated to their success. We are the industry leaders in customer satisfaction with a [world-class NPS score of 84](#), and we stand behind our service with an [industry-leading uptime service level agreement](#).

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