Technology and Information Risks Regarding Online Meetings in the Covid-19 Era
Q & A Regarding Zoom and Other Meeting Tools

Have there been popular media reports related to information security and Zoom?
Yes.
- Uncovered security issues: https://www.cnet.com/news/zoom-every-security-issue-uncovered-in-the-video-chat-app/
- Complete bans: https://www.techradar.com/news/more-top-companies-ban-zoom-following-security-fears
- Leaks to the dark web: https://www.nbcnews.com/tech/security/passwords-email-addresses-thousands-zoom-accounts-are-sale-dark-web-n1183796
- How to prevent Zoom bombing: https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-prevent-zoom-bombing

Why does USF not officially" endorse" Zoom for online meetings?
Continued security concerns persist with Zoom. It's important to know that all online meeting platforms before Covid-19 were not ready to absorb all of traffic flooding to their servers. Making an official endorsement of one single online meeting platform is challenging due to the fact that many of these tools were in still in developmental stages at the start of 2020. The reason why the United States has not seen a full collapse in online video services, despite the rush of global internet traffic added to the already-busy streaming services from Amazon, Disney, Netflix, Hulu and other services is due to: 1) the separations between the hardware and software running our internet switches versus the, 2) servers and software running the all of the online meeting platforms we use today. The current security problems with Zoom are mostly rooted in how this company's software functions and what happens to the data that filters through Zoom servers, and then out to the internet.

Is Zoom completely banned from being used at USF?
No. Not at this time. USF IT does not, however, endorse use of Zoom for meetings related to sensitive information. USF IT always encourages use and experimentation with a variety of technologies. Use of Zoom (and explosive growth of their brand recognition) is happening worldwide, and alternatives (BigBlueButton, Adobe Connect, WebEx, Skype, MS Teams, Facebook, WhatsApp, etc.) are plentiful during this challenging time. Many of these platforms are currently free to use and test.

Alternatives: https://time.com/5819327/zoom-alternatives/

As the world continues to embrace the advantages of working through online meeting software platforms, patches to security holes in these systems will emerge, new features will be fine-tuned and added. The entire USF IT apparatus is organized and oriented around technology use that is secure, efficient, innovative and enjoyable. Achieving all of these goals at once can be difficult, and as a result, our operations scale tips more towards security. This stance moves us away from recommending investing further resources in Zoom at this time.

Which online meeting tools is USF IT endorsing and supporting at this time?
We will help with, and encourage questions about, any platform. Any communication you may have received from any technology area at USF regarding an online meeting tool means that, in the very least, our staff have been experimenting and testing the technology in multiple arenas since before Covid-19. At this time, we are finding more secure emerging market potential with the tools available under our current technology contracts for Microsoft Office 365 and Instructure's Canvas learning management system. This means that MS Teams and BigBlueButton represent the "root" of any possible endorsement we can give in this unprecedented time when so many competing products have quickly made their technologies free to use for all. This does not mean our stance

on this is permanent as we recognize that future enhancements to all online meeting tools are in development, and some of these tools may even require subscriptions after we emerge from Covid-19.

I like Zoom and I'd still like to experiment with it, or other variants. How can I reduce risks with these tools?
Understandable. Here are some information security tips:

From the company:

- Best practices: https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/03/27/best-practices-for-securing-your-virtual-classroom/
- Always keep your Zoom client updated (for phones, tablets and computers): https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/201362393-Viewing-the-Zoom-version-number
- Response to University of Toronto's Citizen Lab research: https://blog.zoom.us/wordpress/2020/04/03/response-to-research-from-university-of-torontos-citizen-lab/

Remember:

- No matter what platform is used, meeting recordings (should you enable this feature), in classes, are educational records subject to FERPA. Student notification and consent is required.   Meeting recordings for administrative work are subject to data retention and security policies. All recordings are for university business use only and should contain content consistent with face-to-face encounters.
- Recordings that show students may be kept and used by instructors for the current classes in which they are enrolled and may not be used by other instructors in subsequent semesters. Retention past one year is not advised.