

# The Brutal Efficiency of Zoom

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4-4 minutes

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## A funny thing happened on the way to optimizing work



Thank u, next.

I won't pretend to fully [understand](#) this [pop culture reference](#). But it's the phrase that pops into my head when thinking about work these days. Specifically, how we are all working in the era of COVID-19.

That is to say, the era of Zoom.

Now, don't get me wrong. Zoom is great. [Fantastic, even](#). It doesn't seem like an understatement to suggest it has saved some level of GDP as we were all forced into a work-from-home situation practically overnight. Also, in some ways, our sanity. Zoom was there to break our fall. And for the most part — [predictable](#) and [repeated](#) Zoomlashes aside — it has. I'm not actually even talking about Zoom in particular here. It's just the clear mindshare leader right now in the space. That space is video conferencing. And it is brutal.

Again, I say this with some amount of awe and certainly much respect. At the same time, you're killing me, Smalls.<sup>1</sup>

Each and every day I now wake up, get ready for work (which is to say, put on a hat) and head to the office (which is to say, my desk, 25 feet away). Most days, I typically won't leave that desk for several hours. If at all. There I am, glued to Zoom.<sup>2</sup>

Morning meetings bleed into afternoon meetings bleed into late afternoon meetings. But unlike in say, an office — an *actual* office — where I have to move conference rooms and maybe do a lunch meeting, not to mention commute to and from, I'm just sitting here at my desk. One Zoom meeting ends, the next begins. Why not have it start right away? It's so amazingly efficient that I want to punch it in the face.

I know I'm not alone here. And again, this isn't about Zoom. It's about the world in which we currently live which has made [work-from-home a necessity](#) and [the tools that enable this world](#) are optimized to make this world as efficient as possible. In an office, I might grab a quick break in between someone coming in and someone leaving. In Zoom, if I don't click that link on time, I'm an asshole. Everyone knows I'm sitting right there. And I am.

"Hey, sorry I'm late I was just... well, I was just right here, not clicking on that link to join this call. My bad."

I suppose I should note that I'm a bit of an introvert. Some might say recluse, but that's not true, I just — well, it's probably true. So naturally, my life took a few twists and turns and I find myself here as a VC, in a meeting-heavy job. I'm just as surprised as you are.<sup>3</sup> But I get the feeling this isn't a hardship just shouldered by introverts. If anything, I think it may be *worse* for extroverts.<sup>4</sup>

I don't know that we need a solution right now. But I know we do if this is the new normal. Zoom allows for a world in which we can all-too-easily hop from meeting to meeting. It's a world which is too optimized. It's like that first version of The Matrix ([as described by The Architect](#)), the one that was too perfect and so the humans rejected it.

We need to figure out a less optimized version of working from home, as crazy as that sounds. It's for our sanity, really. We need to collectively figure out a way to meet that isn't tapping directly into an information vein. Less mainlining. Less streamlining. Less eyes forward (with no actual eye contact).

Less one calendar link to the next. We need a way to insert randomness and whimsy back into a working day.

Until then, it's thank u, next.