

Using OBS to display a timer in Zoom meetings

Introduction

Much like in person meetings, sticking to a schedule can be difficult in virtual Zoom meetings. After past virtual meetings, many participants suggested it would be useful to display a timer within the Zoom application for all participants to view. This would allow both the presenter and the audience to keep an eye on the time and prevent presenters from going over time.

This feature is offered by an official Zoom app, but a fee is required to use the app for regular, periodic usage or long, multi-hour meetings. In the interests of cost reduction, our team found an alternative, free software to display a timer during our meetings.

Below is a procedure outlining the set up of this software to display a timer in a Zoom meeting.

Procedure

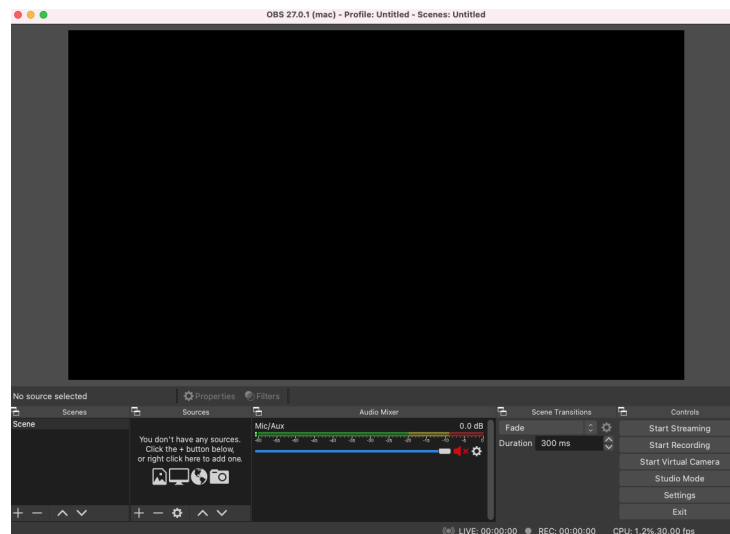
1. Open <https://www.timeanddate.com/timer/> in any web browser

Change the time as appropriate, and click the “Fullscreen” option. Hide the “bookmark” toolbar of the browser if it is visible.

Note: Other timer websites or applications can also be substituted.

2. Download OBS from <https://obsproject.com/> and follow its installation directions

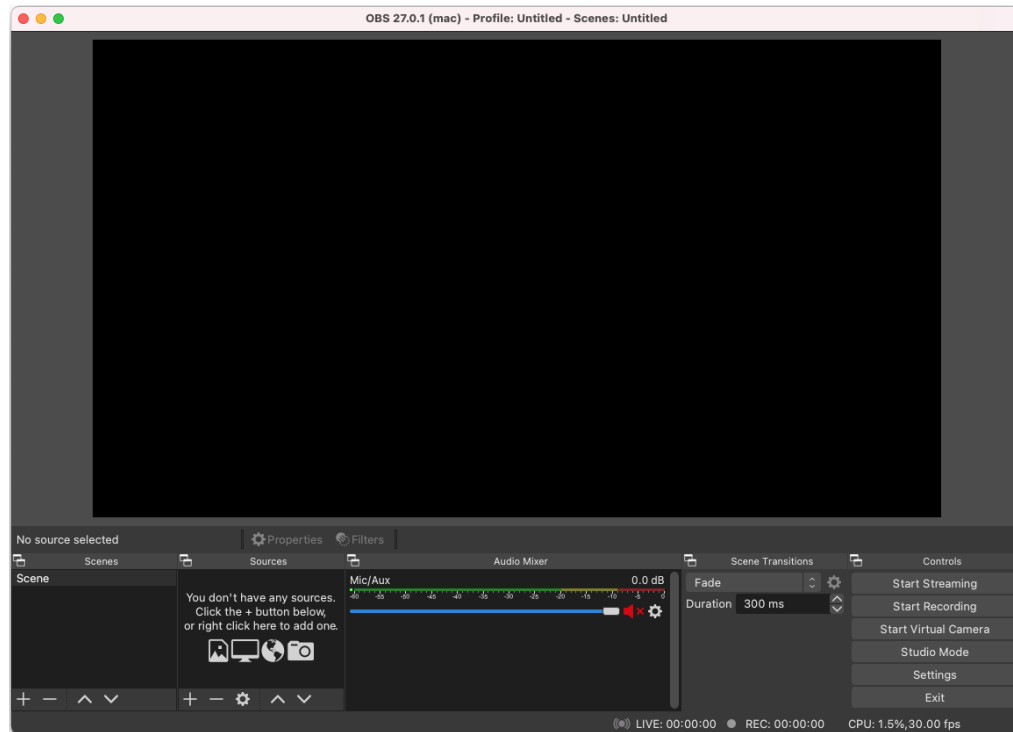
3. Open the OBS application



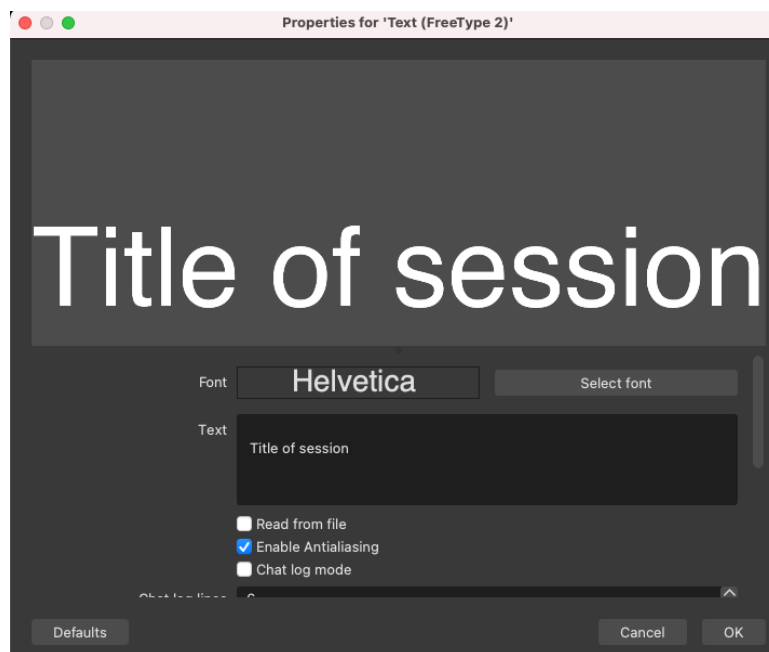
Screenshot of the OBS application window.

The main window is a preview of what will be shown in Zoom. It is currently blank because no Sources have been added.

4. Add video Sources

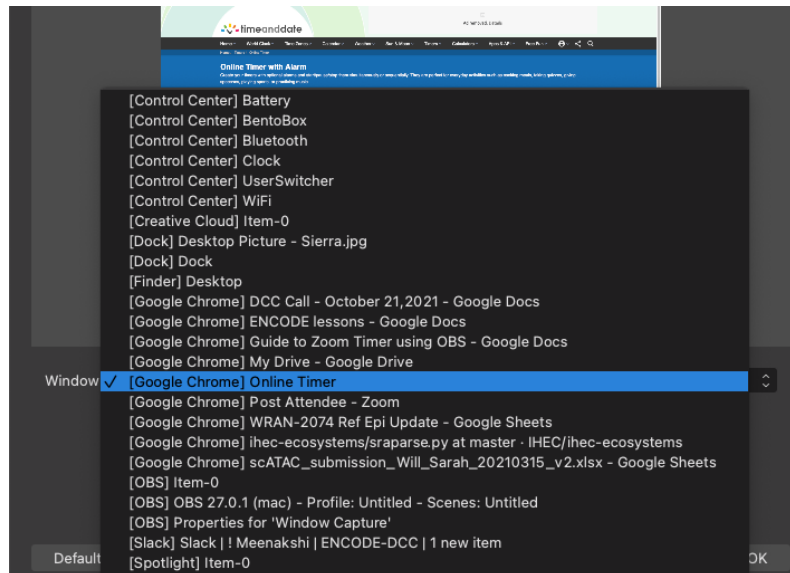


Click the + icon in the “Source” panel. Select **Text (FreeType 2)** Source. Type a relevant label into the Text field, such as the name of the current session.



Properties window for the Text (FreeType2) source. The display text and font options can be adjusted from the properties window.

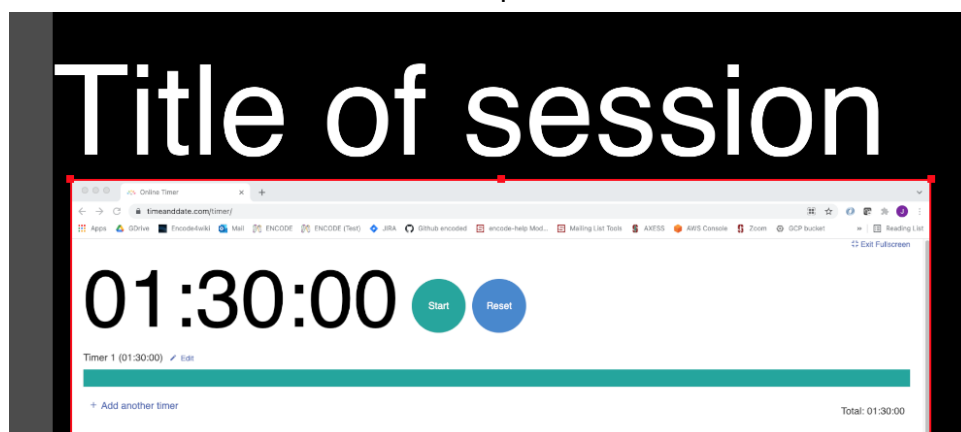
Select **Window Capture** Source. Then, select the window corresponding to the Timer opened in Step 1. This adds a capture of any window open on your computer.



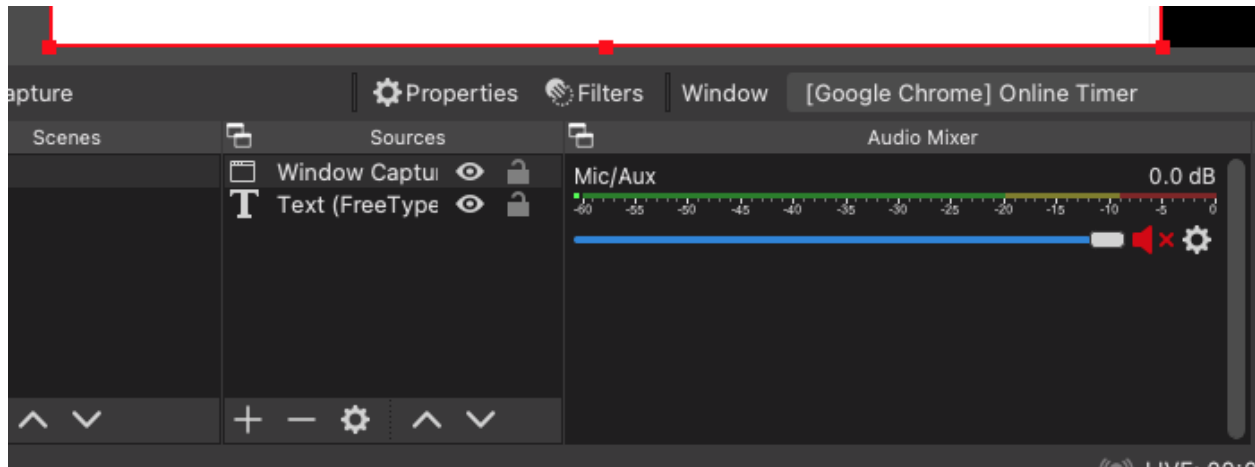
Properties window for the Window Capture source, showing the drop down menu of available windows to choose.

5. Adjust Window capture settings

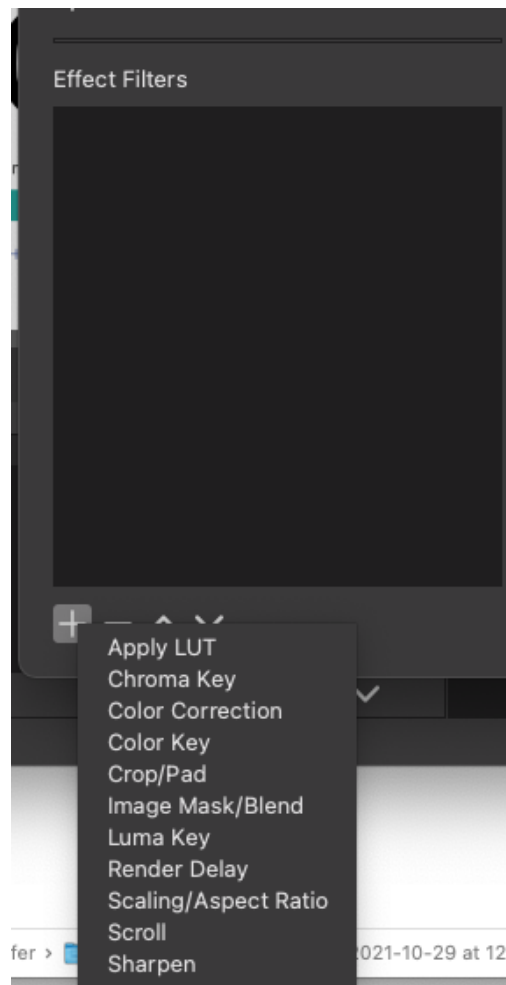
In the main panel, click on the Window Capture of the timer to reveal a red outline. Click and drag on the red outline to resize the window as needed. Click anywhere within the red outline and drag the window to move it around the main panel.



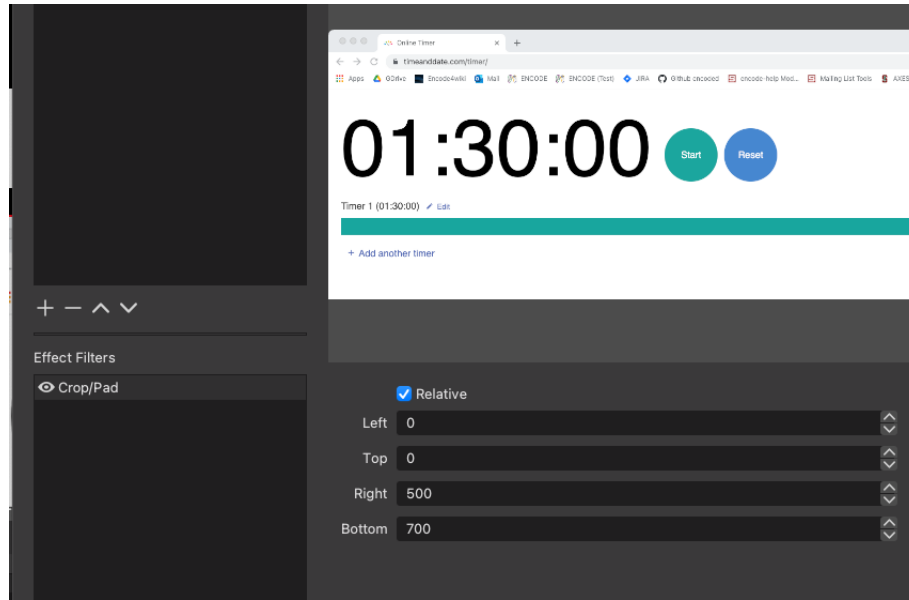
Click the “Filters” button to add Filters to further adjust sizing of the “Window Capture”.



Click the + icon below “Effect Filters” and select “Crop/Pad”

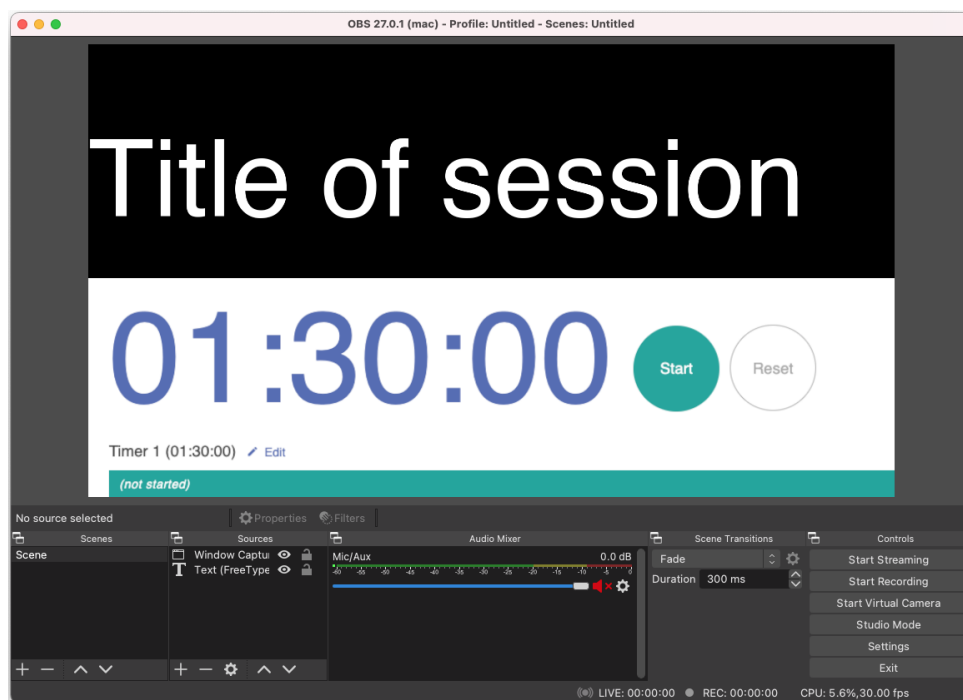


Enter values to adjust the cropping of the window. Higher numbers means more of the source will be cropped from view. The appropriate values will vary depending on the size of the source window.



Example of the filter properties window with values entered for the Crop/Pad filter.

5. Click “Start Virtual Camera” in the lower right corner of the main OBS window



This creates a “virtual camera” which Zoom will detect as a real webcam.

6. Log in and open Zoom

7. Open Zoom preferences and click on the “Background & Filters” section of Zoom preferences

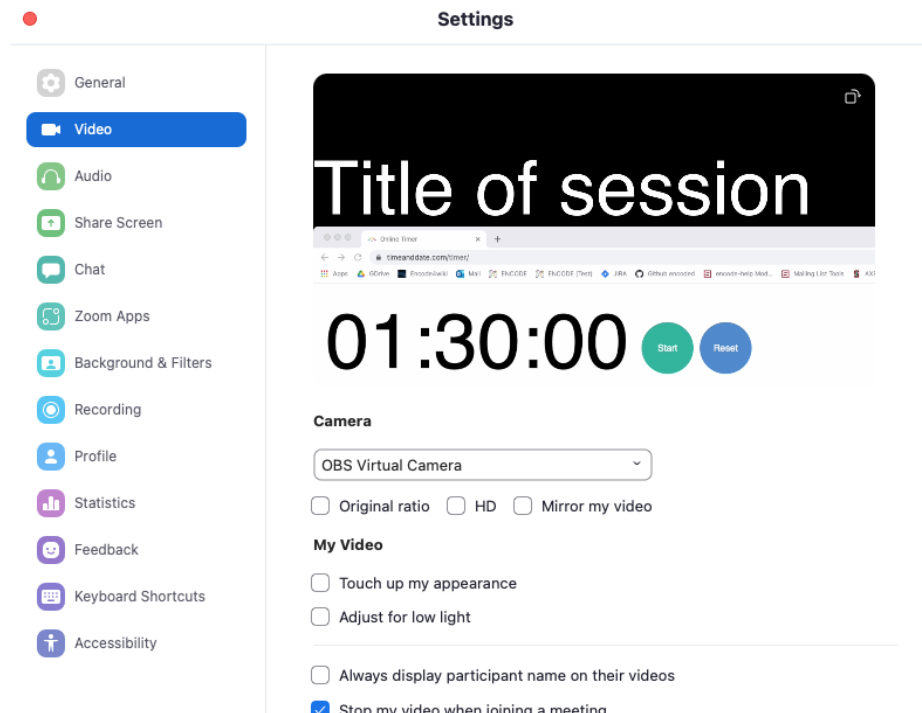
Select “None” for background, if you have a virtual background image set.

8. Click on the “Video” tab in Zoom preferences

9. Under the “Camera” option, select the “OBS Virtual Camera” option

10. Adjust Zoom camera settings

Turn off “My video” options, such as “Adjust for low light.” Uncheck “Mirror my video.”



11. Enter a Zoom meeting and click “Start Video”

Your webcam view will now be replaced with the screen capture set up using OBS.

Zoom Meeting

00:26View

Title of session

01:30:00

Start

Reset

Timer 1 (01:30:00) Edit

Jennifer Jou (Cherry Lab)

Unmute

Stop Video

Security

Participants1

Chat

Share Screen

Polls

Record

Reactions

Apps

More

End