



ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE OF COURTS
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Tom Parker
Chief Justice

Rich Hobson
Administrative Director of Courts

MEMORANDUM

TO: Alabama State Bar

FROM: Rich Hobson
Administrative Director of Courts

DATE: April 8, 2020

RE: video-conference security concerns

The Unified Judicial System (UJS) went live with virtual court hearings on Monday, March 30, 2020 at 8:30 am. The feedback we have received from judges and attorneys throughout the State has been overwhelmingly positive as we strive to keep the Courts open.

With the move toward virtual courtrooms, we must not lose sight of the daily security challenges that come with operating in a virtual environment. We have received several emails, texts, and phone calls concern the published Security vulnerabilities and Zoom. We are aware of these concerns and our IT Security Team continues to monitor and address them. As of April 7th, 2020, Zoom has patched most of the known vulnerabilities with its product.

The bottom line is that we feel confident using Zoom Professional software in the UJS. Here are the most recent security issues posted on the internet concerning Zoom:

1. Security Concern: Zoom meetings are susceptible to Zoom bombing and eavesdropping. **Response:** First of all, we use Zoom Professional which is different from the free version available. Also, we have mitigated this risk by ensuring that all meetings automatically default to private and participants have to use a PIN number to attend the meeting. When judges initiate the Zoom court proceeding, the result for you is a secure tool for your client.
2. Security Concern: UNC paths can reveal usernames and passwords. **Response:** Our Zoom training has emphasized users to not include UNC paths into the chat sessions. Zoom patched this on April 2, 2020.
3. Security Concern: Zoom does not provide end-to-end encryption. Zoom does encrypt all video conferences, except when the data passes thru their cloud. Zoom has stated that

they do not record the sessions or access the actual data content. They do, however, provide third parties such as Facebook and marketing firms APIs to capture metadata for marketing. **Response:** This is common practice on almost all web transactions. Google, Firefox, and Microsoft do this with their web-browsers. Zoom removed Facebook and LinkedIn access on April 2, 2020, though other third-parties may or may not still have access.

In addition to the security features and patches that Zoom has made, we have also added several security features and video conferencing “best practices” behind the scene for our users.

Cyber security is always a concern to us and the IT Team at the Administrative Office of Courts will continue to work to ensure a safe environment for you and the citizens of Alabama.

c: Chief Justice Tom Parker