

Time to Zoom in to that meeting

What kind of adoption is Zoom seeing in the local market?

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Photography: Karolina Komendera

Zoom was started in 2011 by ex-Cisco engineer and now-billionaire Eric Yuan and, thanks to its ease of use and low latency, it rapidly gained market share, with more than 40 million users by 2015. It was, however, in 2020 that Zoom zoomed into the stratosphere. By May that year, it had 200 million daily meeting participants and by June, 300 million. Today, the platform is enjoying nearly 810 million unique global visitors, which is a dip on previous years. We spoke to Ian Hatton, founder of Totally Morpheus, and Bronwyn Kennedy, director of IT at Netstock, about how the platform is delivering and if they're going to stay within its growing ecosystem.

What made you opt for Zoom?

"As a remote-first organisation, we've never had physical offices and Zoom has been one of the better remote working and collaboration tools from both a connectivity and cost perspective," says Kennedy. "It allowed us to connect our employees across five different countries and bring everyone together on a single platform."

The move to Zoom made sense for Netstock, particularly because Kennedy believes it offered capabilities that were ahead of its time. The platform was easily accessed and used by all employees regardless of technical ability, and it was available both on the desktop and browser so it reduced the barrier to entry.

Hatton says the platform formed part of a group of solutions as his company does a lot of training and virtual service delivery, which meant it needed variety and reliability.

"Zoom was the most accessible and easiest to use," says Hatton. "While we haven't implemented the professional version on every device, we find that it is an accessible price to pay for its feature set and inherent simplicity. At the time, we needed a solution that ticked these boxes – simple, easy to roll out and cost-effective, and Zoom was the perfect fit."

Did it integrate easily?

"Introducing Zoom to the business was easy. The app is universal so people can join on their phone, tablet or laptop," says Hatton. "The bigger issue was actually our user training so people could understand how to use all the features. These were more implementation hurdles than anything technical as people had to get used to working within the Zoom environment."

This is a sentiment shared by Kennedy. Zoom has allowed the company to introduce additional collaboration features while remaining accessible across multiple devices.

"The tricky part came in when we implemented Zoom Phone as we use it for both video conferencing and our global telephony system," she says. "People are used to picking up their mobile phone

and making a call and now we're asking them to phone through the app. We also had to set it up with call queues and other components like a standard video recording system, which was a bit more difficult."

To overcome this challenge and ensure ubiquitous use of the app throughout the business, Netstock switched off other collaboration options so Zoom became the only way to call and collaborate.

"People don't want to move off Zoom onto other telephony systems and many departments are now expanding their use cases into training and webinars," says Kennedy. "The longer we've used it, the more our teams have felt the benefits, especially now we've overcome the initial resistance to the technology."



Ian Hatton, Totally Morpheus

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Will you keep on using the platform?

"This is a tricky one," says Kennedy. "I would love to move off Zoom and onto Google Meet as it comes as part of our Google Workspace environment and Google has made some solid enhancements over the last few years. That said, Zoom is bringing in fresh features such as the AI companion that integrates into other AI solutions and their integrations can go into more of the applications that are in our ecosystem."

Kennedy doesn't believe it is feasible to look at the technologies and say that X is better than Y because it's a subjective view, but from the price and global collaboration perspectives, Zoom remains the leader for the business.

PROS AND CONS

Where Zoom is the heroine:

- The use of Zoom Phone
- Flexibility and a rich feature set
- Tools such as breakout rooms are sophisticated and accessible
- Cost-effective

And where it's the big bad wolf:

- Admin dashboard and ease of setup can be cumbersome
- Integration with Google Drive isn't seamless
- It can be clunky when using some features

"We're starting to use Teams a lot more because it offers other forms of collaboration such as a planner, task status and asynchronous engagement," says Hatton. "Everyone is still more comfortable using Zoom for synchronous communication so I don't see us moving away from it in a hurry, especially since I don't want to retrain everyone. It's still working for us so we will stay with it." ■