

# MANAGING

## How to keep your voice from fading on a Zoom call

**STEVE ALEXANDER**

**Q:** When I'm in a Zoom video meeting, my audio is fine at first. But if I mute myself, then unmute, my audio is hard for other call participants to hear. The only fix seems to be to leave the meeting then rejoin it. Also, I use a Logitech external camera-microphone unit. What can I do?

JOEL BOON, Shakopee

**A:** Because you are using an external camera with a microphone, any Zoom call you are on involves three sets of audio controls — those in Zoom, on your computer and on your camera-microphone combi-

nation. Toggling from mute to unmute on Zoom might affect any one of them, so be sure each one is unmuted and the volume is set appropriately.

Here are some other possible causes:

- USB and Bluetooth connections. If your camera-microphone unit plugs into a computer's USB port, try using a different port (some ports don't provide enough electricity to power digital devices.) If your camera-microphone unit connects to your computer via wireless Bluetooth signals, be sure its battery is adequately charged and that the device isn't dropping its Bluetooth connection. (See [tinyurl.com/ybzs8gta](http://tinyurl.com/ybzs8gta)).

- Other apps running on your computer. Zoom and other internet video services are data-intensive, so shut down any other apps that might be trying to use your internet connection or your computer's processor chip during a video call.

- Background noise. Noise near your computer can make it hard for others on a Zoom call to hear you. The Zoom app has settings that can suppress background noise so that you can be heard more clearly (see [tinyurl.com/y689nbjs](http://tinyurl.com/y689nbjs)).

- Feedback. If anyone on your Zoom call is connected with both a computer and a phone, it

can cause an echo or the squeal of audio "feedback" that makes it harder for participants to hear. Feedback can happen when an incoming sound is played on a computer's speakers, then picked up by the phone's microphone and fed back into the Zoom conversation. The same thing can happen if anyone's computer microphone is too close to his or her external computer speakers.

**Q:** I read your response about fixing location services on an iPad (see [tinyurl.com/y89ot-sly](http://tinyurl.com/y89ot-sly)). I don't believe that iPads or iPhones receive GPS satellite signals and instead get location information from

one or more cell towers. Am I right?

JIM SHOCK,  
Colorado Springs, Colo.

**A:** Partly. The iPhone and some iPads (the Wi-Fi + Cellular models) really do use GPS satellites to identify your location. But GPS signals aren't available when you are inside, so the devices then use what Apple calls "assisted GPS," which combines data from nearby cell towers and Wi-Fi hot spots to approximate your position (see [tinyurl.com/yxpuzw3](http://tinyurl.com/yxpuzw3)).

**Q:** I haven't used online printing. How can I print some of

the 2,500 photos on my iPhone 7?

ANGIE DZIADZIO,  
Enfield, Conn.

**A:** Click the App Store icon on your phone. Then type in the name of a top-rated online printing service (see [tinyurl.com/y7u2pdkn](http://tinyurl.com/y7u2pdkn)), such as Shutterfly, Snapfish, Walmart Photo, CVS, Walgreens, Nations Photo Lab or RitzPix. Click "Get" and then open the app for directions.

E-mail tech questions to [steve.j.alexander@gmail.com](mailto:steve.j.alexander@gmail.com) or write to Tech Q&A, S. 650 3rd Av., Suite 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. Include name, city and telephone number.

# MANAGING

## Use Zoom app's software to block background noise

**STEVE ALEXANDER**

**Q:** I'm trying to block background noise on Zoom calls with students ages 5 to 8 who are at home or in daycare. The students have noise-canceling headphones that block the noise for them, but I have to listen to the sounds of other children, siblings, parents and barking dogs.

The students use iPads that have a plug for their headphones but no plug for a noise-canceling external microphone (headphones that include microphones are expensive.) What can I do?

SARAH RENNER, Minneapolis

**A:** You can block background racket by using noise-canceling software instead of noise-canceling microphones.

There are two types of this software: The Zoom video call app, which has controls for canceling out background noise at the student's end of the conversation. And third-party programs for your computer that cancel out student background noise before the sound plays through your computer's speaker.

In order to use the Zoom noise-canceling feature, your students must connect to the call via the Zoom app on their iPads (as opposed to connecting without the app through

the Zoom website.)

In addition, an adult must examine the app's settings to make sure they aren't set to "original sound," which means background noise is not filtered out. Toggling off "original sound" automatically turns on background noise cancellation. (For directions, see [tinyurl.com/y58k8f39](https://tinyurl.com/y58k8f39)). Unfortunately, the noise-cancellation feature in the iPad Zoom app has its limits. Unlike the computer app, the iPad app doesn't let you adjust to block specific types of sounds. It also doesn't allow noise cancellation to be increased or decreased.

A better solution may be to

download a third-party noise-cancellation program to the PC or Mac that you use for Zoom sessions. The app most suited to your needs is probably "Krisp," which can filter out student background noise before you hear it. Krisp is free to use for up to 120 minutes a week; unlimited use costs \$5 a month. (See details at [tinyurl.com/y5wcz5vt](https://tinyurl.com/y5wcz5vt) and downloads at [tinyurl.com/y95tk8s](https://tinyurl.com/y95tk8s)).

**Q:** I copied some photos taken with a camera to my PC, and from there to my iPhone 6s. The photos are on the phone in a folder called "From My Mac," which is odd because

I've never owned a Mac. Now I'd like to delete those photos, but the phone can't do it. I also tried erasing them via my PC (with and without iTunes), but it can't even "see" those photos on the phone. What can I do?

MARK STEDMAN, Afton, Minn.

**A:** The "From My Mac" folder stores pictures that were copied to the iPhone from any computer. This folder is part of the iPhone's Photos app, just like the "Camera Roll" folder that stores pictures taken with the phone. But, due to a quirk in the iPhone's software, the phone can easily erase the photos in the "Camera Roll," but not those in the "From My Mac" folder.

There are two solutions: You can delete all the "From My Mac" photos by disabling, then re-enabling, "iCloud Photos" and in the resulting menu choosing "remove photos" (see "method 1" at [tinyurl.com/y6xkqhal](https://tinyurl.com/y6xkqhal)). To delete some but not all the photos, try computer apps "CopyTrans Photo" (\$20, see [tinyurl.com/y76refj9](https://tinyurl.com/y76refj9)) or "DearMob iPhone Manager" (\$30-a-year, see [tinyurl.com/y23bsnyw](https://tinyurl.com/y23bsnyw)).

E-mail tech questions to [steve.j.alexander@gmail.com](mailto:steve.j.alexander@gmail.com) or write to Tech Q&A, 650 3rd Av. S., Suite 1300, Minneapolis, MN 55488. Include name, city and telephone number.