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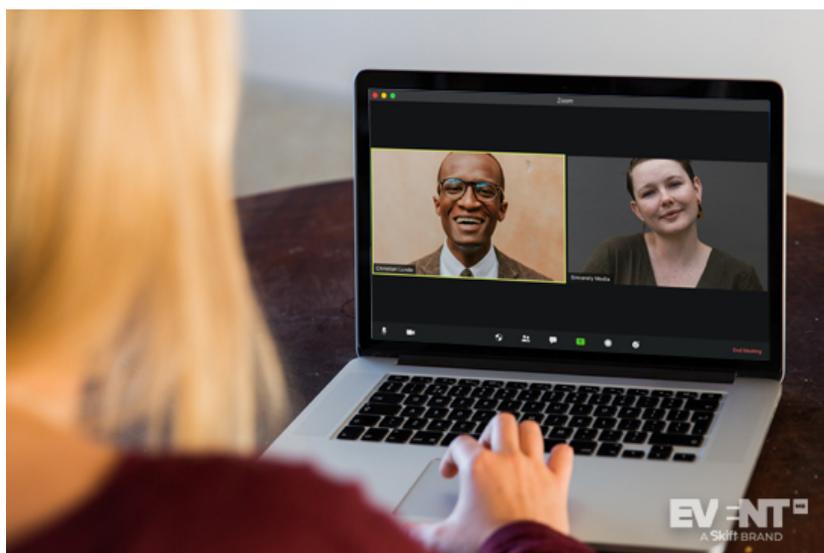
EVENT TECHNOLOGY

Zoom Steps Into Professional Virtual Events With OnZoom

BY DYLAN MONORCHIO

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Zoom has launched OnZoom, a virtual event marketplace where events can be hosted. Who is it for and how does it compare to the current event tech market? Here is what you need to know.

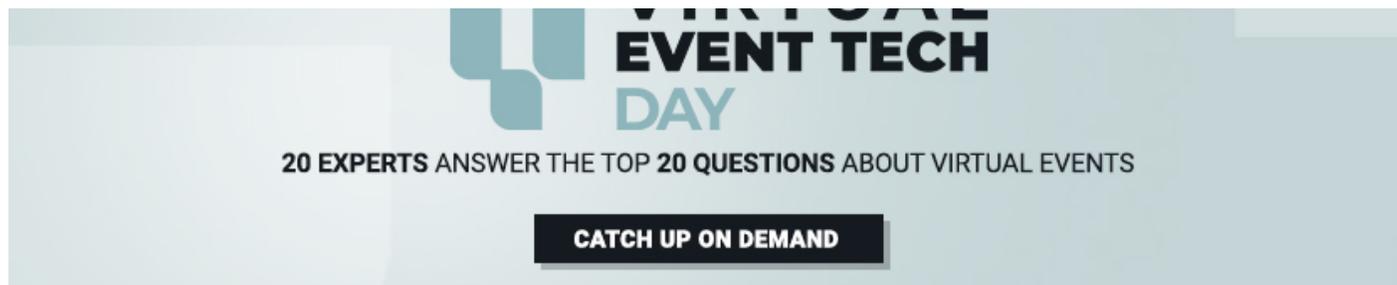


Zoom has become the go-to software for virtual events largely by accident. A popular live streaming tool, Zoom enjoyed a period of ubiquity as event planners defaulted to it after their live events became casualties of the pandemic.

Meanwhile, dedicated virtual event platforms with more robust engagement and production features stepped up to the plate for serious planners — and were **warmly received** by both investors and an industry looking for any way to get back to work.

Well, Zoom has finally taken notice — sort of.

Ten months into the event industry crisis that is 2020, Zoom has launched OnZoom: a virtual event marketplace and platform that tries to bridge the gap between Zoom's basic live streaming functionality and the plethora of other features needed to make a virtual event worth attending.

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Is Zoom Playing the Long Game?

Designed to "support — and salute — the creativity, perseverance, and innovation that enabled so many people to adapt their in-person events to virtual or hybrid experiences," [OnZoom](#) is positioned as an event platform and marketplace where businesses of all sizes can host — and monetize — events. At first glance, it promises to be an amalgam of three typically distinct event tech verticals: a virtual event tech platform with event management feature add-ons within an EventBrite-like marketplace business model. Announced today at the virtual instalment of their annual Zoomtopia user conference, OnZoom's Beta version is currently limited to the US but is expected to expand globally in 2021.

Virtual events represent an opportunity that Zoom is not going to leave on the table. In fact, [DoubleDutch co-founder Pankaj Prasad was brought on](#) to support the development of their virtual event offerings.

And despite other purpose-built platforms beating them to the punch, Zoom continues to enjoy a quasi-monopoly on professional meetings. This huge lead in terms of stability, revenue, resources, and an active user base has afforded them the luxury of biding their time.

However, it remains to be seen whether the features will be worth the wait for the B2B events community. In fact, OnZoom seems to be somewhat geared toward content creators, called "hosts" on the platform. Content like glute-sculpting workouts, improv shows, and music lessons [fall into categories](#) like Food & Drink, Health & Fitness, and Community & Spirituality. Combined with an attendee limit tied to your Zoom Meeting license (the default maximum being 1,000) and the fact

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What Does OnZoom Bring to the Table?

Hosts can create events within the platform, where attendees can find them, purchase tickets, engage with content, etc. OnZoom also supports fundraising, and Zoom covers the processing fees so 100 percent of all donations go to the intended organizations. Hosts can monitor the performance of their events and their channel in general, and Zoom uses AI to moderate all content before it's published to ensure that everything is above board.

There Are Apps, and Then There Are Zapps

In a way, OnZoom seems to be flipping the script when it comes to the trend of consolidation that defined event tech in 2019. OnZoom is a base platform with virtual event staples — live streaming, ticketing, etc — but for everything else, hosts have to download add-ons or “Zapps” (apps designed to run on Zoom) from a Zapp store.

Zapps in the Beta version have been developed by Zoom and by third-party partners like Slack and Asana, whose collaboration and productivity integrations are responsible for the platform's event management features (the "Zoom meeting workflow"). Others like Slido, Kahoot (for games-based learning), and Coursera offer add-ons for creating more educational content and engagement. Eventually, any developer will be able to submit apps to Zoom to be approved, which could present some interesting opportunities for customization.

But while the WordPress-esque plug-in model has worked well for bloggers and some web developers, the utility for B2B events will likely come down to how well they are curated and what sort of support is offered. Some tech-savvy planners may appreciate being able to pick and choose the functions they want to add, but the trend towards tech stack consolidation and all-in-one solutions suggests that planners prefer simplicity.

Nevertheless, **as we predicted**, Zoom is positioning itself well to replace a category of events characterized by unidirectional content delivery that could always have been virtual, and will undoubtedly provide the planners of those events a quick way to monetize that content.

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OnZoom's arrival within the virtual event tech landscape should not surprise anybody, but some who are eager to see large-scale B2B events in a virtual space may be underwhelmed. Considering the progress on the part of dedicated, purpose-built virtual event platforms that have refined their offerings over the past months to include native engagement features and even production support, OnZoom may have a little more catching up to do before event planners have a real reason to pay attention.

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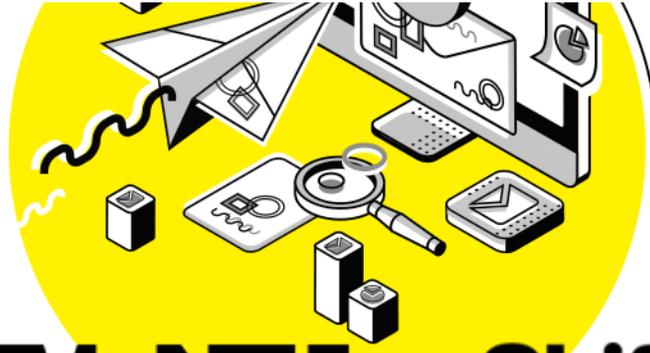


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