

RESPONDING TO ZOOMBOMBERS

WHAT IS ZOOMBOMBING?

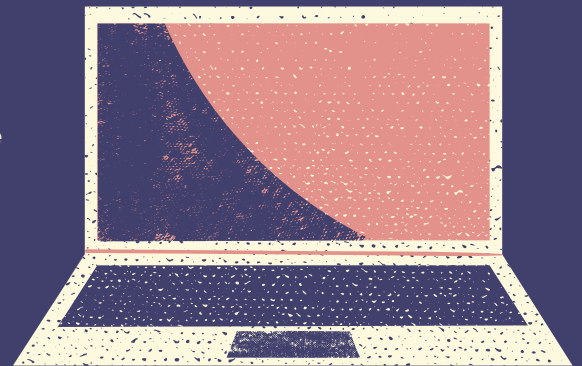
Zoombombing is when our courses and events are disrupted by uninvited guests or “Zoombombers.” Reports across the country indicate that Zoombombers often use racist and hateful language or images with the intent of changing and/or disrupting the dynamics of the group/space.

Colleagues at ACCC have been working diligently to update Zoom settings and provide the campus with tools and tips to decrease the likelihood that our meetings and events will be interrupted.

However, as our security measures get more sophisticated, so will those who wish to disrupt our ability to gather online. Even if you are careful to maximize your security settings when you connect in online spaces, uninvited guests may still find a way in. This makes it critical to prepare in case your online spaces are interrupted by those that intend to cause harm.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO RESPOND?

Research has shown that students notice when instructors ignore disruptive incidents and appreciate when they are addressed openly (Huston & DiPietro, 2007). Data also indicate that not addressing instances of racism in courses negatively impacts students’ experience and success in class (Harper & Davis, 2016).



WHAT CAN YOU DO IN RESPONSE TO AN INCIDENT?

In addition to the resources offered by ACCC, it is essential to take time as a group to process what occurred, create a space for students to share their feelings, and discuss what can be done to rebuild a feeling of safety in the course or event environment. The tips presented in this document were developed to help you prepare and provide support before an event occurs.

CREATING A RESPONSE PLAN

GENERAL TIPS TO CONSIDER



- If you are unable to quickly remove the offending individual(s) and/or material, it may be necessary to end the event or course.
- If you are leading a course or event where you will be regularly hosting meetings on Zoom or another platform, you should consider sharing with students what you would do if you had to end the class. Think through:
 - How would you resume the course?
 - Would you create a new Zoom link or move the conversation to Blackboard, WebEx or some other tool?
 - If your course or event is normally recorded, would you make a new recording of any lecture or presentation materials or edit the recording?

TAKE TIME TO THINK THROUGH WHAT YOU WOULD DO IF YOUR ONLINE CLASS OR EVENT WAS DISRUPTED.

In the moment

- *Stay calm*
- If you are able to remove the person(s) interrupting the course or event, do so. (Refer to [ACCC's tip sheet](#) for information on how to remove individuals from a course or event.)
- If you are having difficulty removing the offending individual(s), commit to follow-up with the participants over email about how you will resume the class or event, then end the Zoom. Follow-up over email as promised.



After the Zoombomber has been removed and/or you were able to resume your class or event

- Acknowledge what occurred and how the incident has had a negative effect on learning and the group's ability to connect. Talk to students about the incident.
- Condemn the inappropriate behavior, and acknowledge that the negative behavior impacts students differently.
- Remind students of the values of the course or event and UIC's commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion for all students.
- Invite students to share their honest reactions about the disruption/offensive material, either through an open discussion, over email or at some other time (i.e. office/drop-in hours).
- If you use community guidelines for respectful communication in your classroom/event space, then revisit these and invite feedback/revisions needed in order for students to feel safe once again in class.
- If the disruption involves a student in your course, you can address it by using options within Zoom such as muting the student's microphone, ending their video, and/or turning off the class chat function. Follow up with the student after the session to discuss the disruption and review class expectations.
- Depending on the nature of the disruption, if warranted, remove the student from the session and contact the Office of the Dean of Students to [file a student conduct report](#).
- Let students know where they can go if they need additional support.
 - The [Counseling Center](#) offers individual and group support to help students handle stress, cope with a crisis or trauma, and address numerous other concerns.
 - The seven [Centers for Cultural Understanding and Social Change](#) provide robust educational and co-curricular opportunities for students, faculty and staff to connect with each other and find solidarity with those who share their identities.
 - The [Office of the Dean of Students](#) has a number of supports available to help address students' concerns and needs to allow them to focus on their academic and social development. The [Diversity Education](#) unit within the Office of the Dean of Students is available to support students, staff and faculty in responding to and intervening in incidents of bias on campus.
- Be transparent. Explain to students that you are working to make sure that your future gatherings are secure. Discuss your intention of seeking support from ACCC to make sure you have the most up-to-date security settings for future class/meeting sessions.

Report the Zoombombing to UIC and to Zoom

- To help track such attacks, the UIC has created a [bias tracking tool](#). If you have an unwelcome guest in your course/event, please make a brief report through the tool. This will help UIC to keep a record of bias instances on campus and coordinate our educational intervention efforts.
- [Report Zoombombers directly to Zoom](#).