

## FEATURE

## 22 free screen-sharing apps for work-at-home collaboration

Want to share your screen to collaborate with a colleague, or remotely access someone's computer to troubleshoot a technical problem? Whatever your screen-sharing need, here are 22 free collaboration apps that do the job.

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The flood of employees working from home due to the Covid-19 outbreak has caused many companies to explore different ways for people to communicate and collaborate, with apps and services replacing in-person meetings or gather-around-a-desk sessions.

Screen sharing, where one person shares their computer's desktop or a single application with one or more people, generally serves one of three purposes:

1. Quick collaboration and meetings between co-workers.
2. Client communications, such as sharing a presentation or other application.
3. Technical support for IT staffers (or any tech-savvy individual) looking to solve a remote worker's computer issue.

Because of these different purposes, screen sharing is seen as a feature in different types of applications and services, from web conferencing and video chat services to remote access apps. In addition, there are a number of tools that just do screen sharing as their main functionality.

Fortunately, several of these apps and services have expanded their free offerings due to the current Covid-19 situation. Time limits on meetings, the number of participants allowed, and other restrictions on free versions have been lifted by some companies, at least temporarily.

**[ Related: Coronavirus prompts collaboration tool makers to offer wares for free ]**

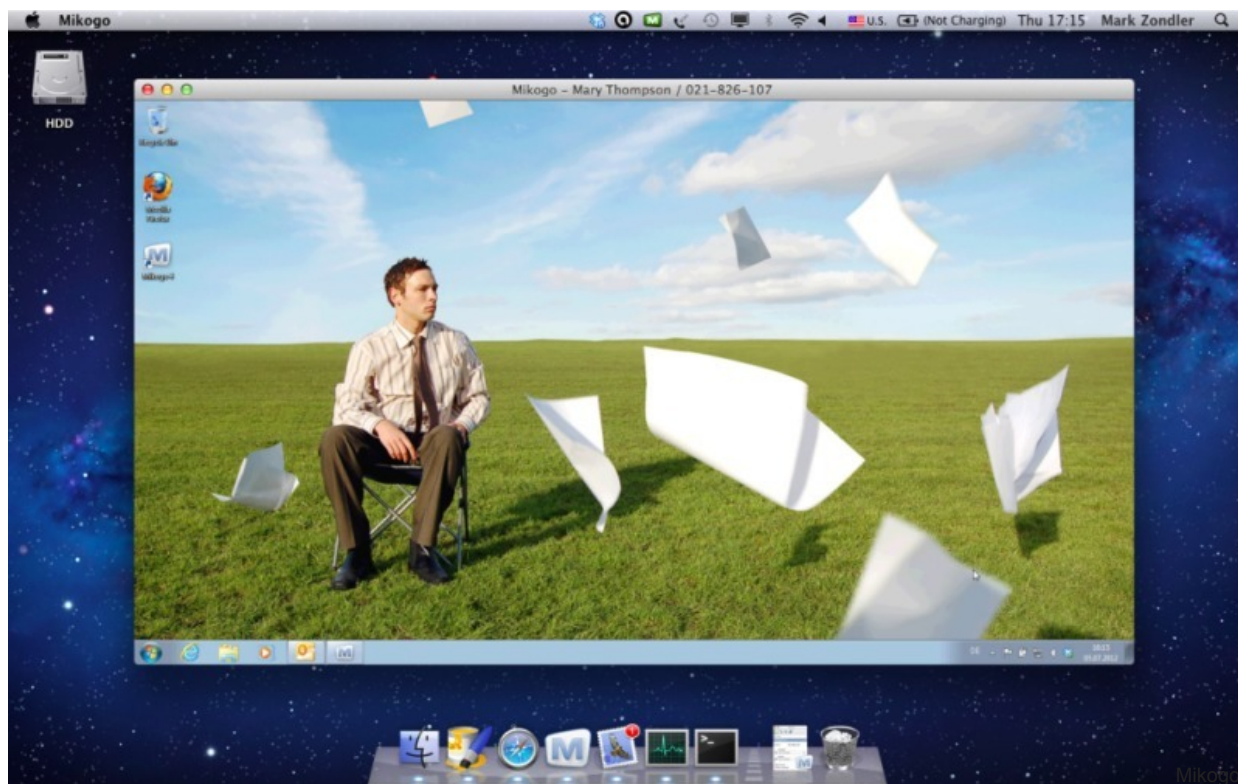
Here is an array of apps and services that offer free screen-sharing capabilities, organized by the main focus of the tool (remote access, web conferencing, or screen sharing alone). Note that many free tools are not suitable for sensitive communications. Any organization that needs to share private company data should look to enterprise-level products.

## **Screen sharing as a primary function**

### **Dead Simple Screen Sharing**

Dead Simple offers screen sharing via web browser, through the installation of a Chrome or Firefox extension; no signup is required. An entire screen or just an application window can be shared with up to four participants — the host can email links to participants. The basic plan supports screen sharing and audio; other plans include videoconferencing features and support for up to 150 people for \$18 per month.

### **Mikogo**



The free version of Mikogo allows presenters to share their screen, document or application with one person live over the web. Participants do not need to download or install plug-ins. Voice conferencing and remote support features are also available, but not video conferencing. The service currently offers a free 14-day trial of Mikogo Professional, which allows up to 25 meeting participants; after the 14 days are complete, the account automatically changes to the free version.

**[ Become a Microsoft Office 365 administrator in record time with this quick start course from PluralSight. ]**

## **Screenleap**

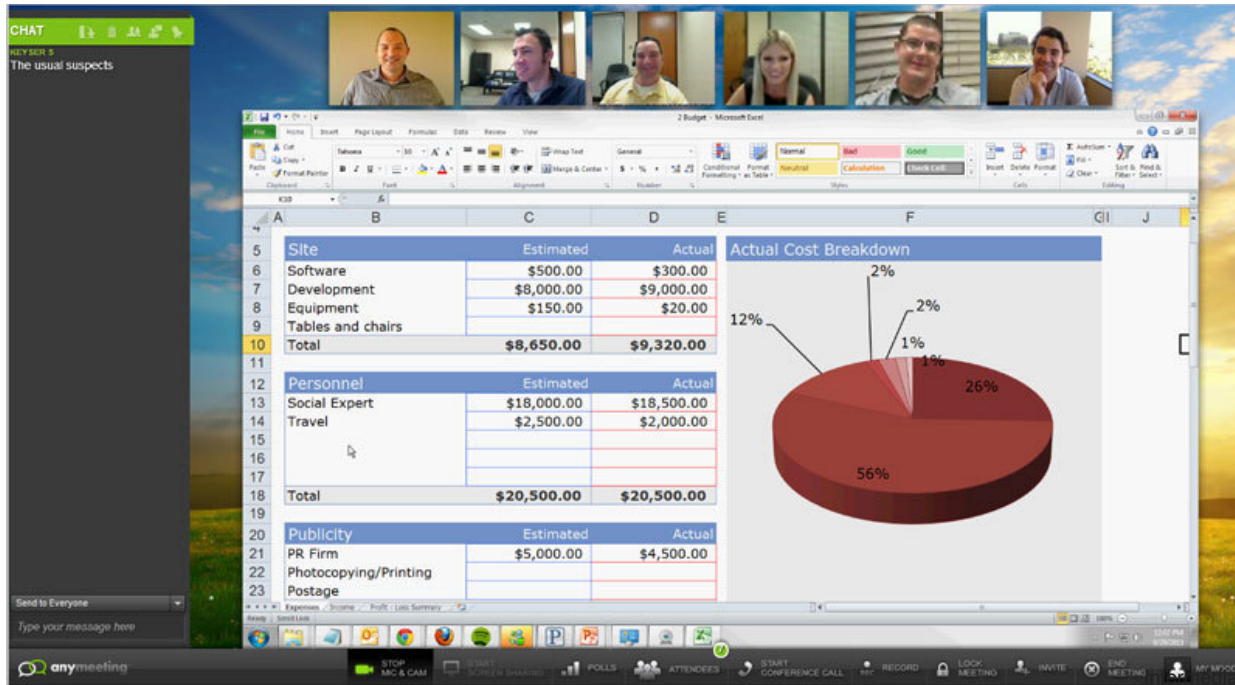
Screenleap lets you share your screen instantly to any device with a browser. Sharing is supported from Windows, Mac, iOS, Android or any OS that supports the Chrome browser. With an app download, you can quickly "share your screen now" to start the share. There are no audio or videoconferencing features with the free version, but you can type in a chat window to communicate with participants. The free plan allows up to 40 minutes per day, up to eight viewers, and two meetings. Basic plans start at \$15 per month, with higher-end plans available.

## **Show My PC**

The person who is sharing their screen downloads an app, with Show My PC providing an access code for others to view. Viewers can then see the presenter's screen, but not control anything. There are no audio or video capabilities either. The company also offers home or office PC access services starting at \$5 per month.

## Screen sharing through videoconferencing

### AnyMeeting



AnyMeeting's Pro Video Conferencing plan, normally \$13/user/month, is now free for users through the rest of 2020. In addition to the videoconferencing features, screen-sharing tools include desktop sharing, application window sharing, and individual Chrome tab sharing options. Meeting participants can also annotate on a shared screen in real time during a meeting.

### Cisco Webex Meetings

Cisco recently adjusted its meeting limits and participant limits for Webex; the free plan now gives you meetings with up to 100 participants (up from 50), HD video, screen sharing, and a personal room, with no time limits on meetings (it used to be 40 minutes). The service does require you to sign up for a Webex Meetings account.

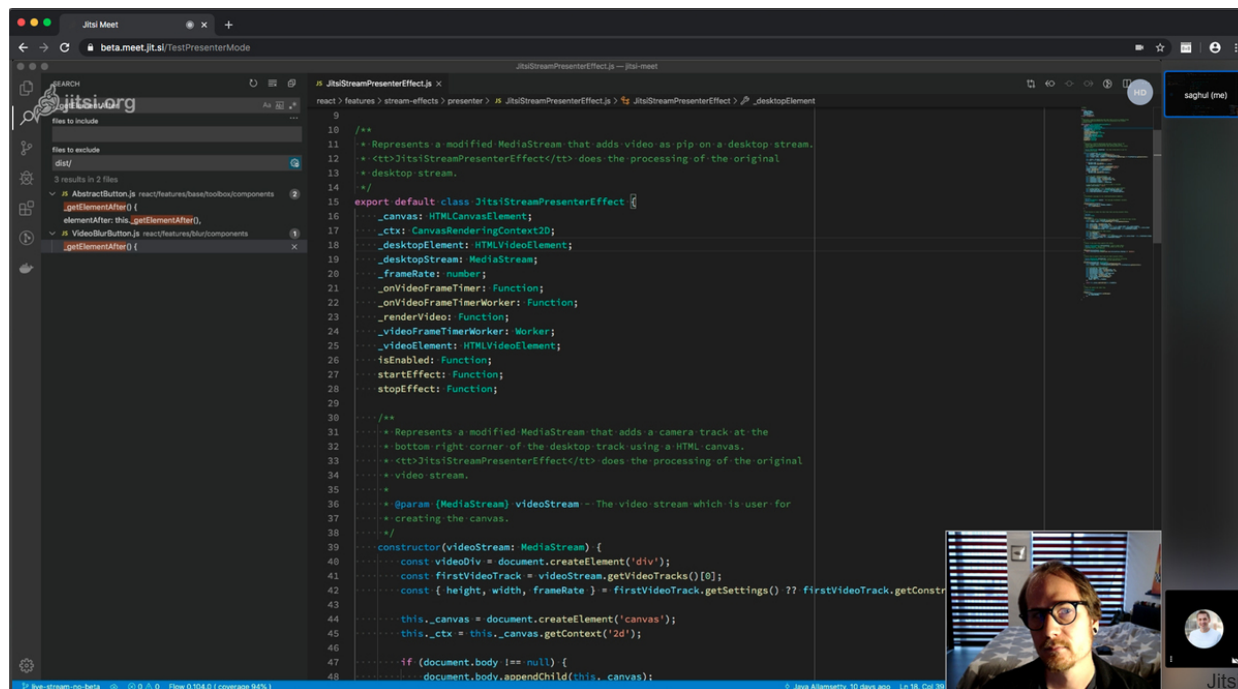
## Discord

Originally designed for gamers looking to connect via voice, video and text, Discord allows screen sharing among its many features. Discord “channels” can be set up via web browser, or an application can be downloaded to a computer. It works with multiple mobile devices as well. The host and participants need to register for an account.

## Google Hangouts

In Google Hangouts video and audio calls, you can share your screen with other users. During a call, you have the option to choose a presenter and start a screen share. Hangouts are free and users just need a Google account — which most people have already. Users can schedule meetings through Google Calendar, which gives all attendees the meeting URL. Google also offers a business version of Hangouts called Google Hangouts Meet as part of its G Suite office suite.

## Jitsi Meet



This free multi-platform, open-source videoconferencing service offers screen-sharing capabilities during calls, including the ability for a host to share YouTube videos with participants. No accounts or downloads are required to use Jitsi Meet. Calls can be

hosted right through the website, with Chrome extensions also available. People can be invited through a simple, custom URL, and users can trade messages and emojis with integrated chat during calls.

## **Proficonf**

The free version of Proficonf offers unlimited meeting times with up to two participants and supports screen sharing, media sharing (including YouTube links), file sharing and a whiteboard. Additional Pro and Premium versions offer more participants (up to 250 in premium), along with additional permanent rooms. The host needs to sign up for an account.

## **Skype**

One of the original videoconferencing services via account and download, Microsoft-owned Skype also allows you to create video meetings with no sign-ups or downloads if you don't feel like downloading the app or signing up for an account. Screen sharing is supported through the free call offering. For companies looking to expand collaboration options for remote workers beyond video calls and screen sharing, Microsoft has a free version of its Teams software available to download; Teams is also included with many Office 365 business plans.

## **UberConference**

The free version of UberConference supports up to 10 participants, but there is a 45-minute time limit on calls, and PINs are required. These can usually be handled through a calendaring application, however. Screen sharing is started through a share button on the UberConference dashboard.

## **Whereby**

With Whereby, video meetings are conducted through a browser — no downloads or logins are required for guests. The free version gives you one user and one meeting room for up to four participants, with Pro and Business versions offering additional



meeting rooms and users. The free version also supports YouTube video watching in addition to basic screen-sharing functions.

## Zoom



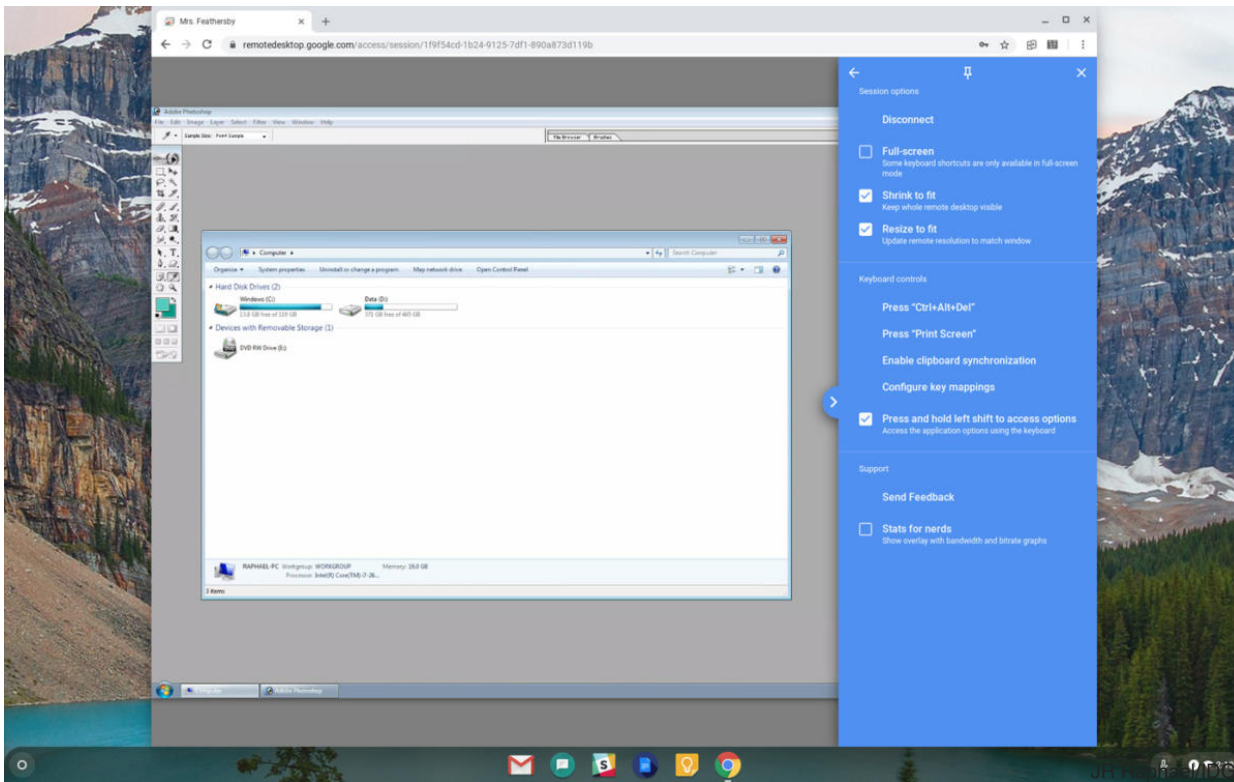
Zoom's basic plan is free and allows for an unlimited number of meetings, with no time limits for one-to-one meetings. For meetings between three to 100 people, a 40-minute time limit is instituted, with upgrades available for longer meetings. Screen sharing includes desktop, application window and whiteboard, and also a connected iPhone or iPad (via AirPlay or cable).

## **Screen sharing through remote access**

### AnyDesk

The AnyDesk remote desktop software supports many different operating systems, including Mac, Windows, Linux, Android, iOS, Chrome OS and even Raspberry Pi. It's free for personal use; business plans start at \$11 per month.

### Chrome Remote Desktop



Chrome Remote Desktop lets you access another computer through a Chrome browser, a Chromebook, or an Android or iOS device. You can set it up for short-term access, such as for ad hoc remote support, or longer for remote access to applications and files. It offers cross-platform support, including Windows, Mac, and Linux systems.

**[ Related: Chrome Remote Desktop: 4 easy steps to get started ]**

## LiteManager Free

LiteManager Free is remote desktop software that includes the main functions and features of the regular LiteManager program (omitting extras like audio-video chat, recording, and ticketing). It lets you control up to 30 computers.

## MingleView

MingleView, a free peer-to-peer Remote Desktop sharing and control-based application, also lets you host online meetings and presentations with friends, family and work colleagues. Participants can join a meeting or troubleshoot any PC with a six-digit meeting ID. The tool supports unlimited participants and connections and works on Windows computers only; no Mac version available.



## Remote Utilities

The Remote Utilities remote access program lets you connect to a remote PC over LAN or the internet. The free edition offers 16 different connection modes, firewall bypass capabilities, and connection over the internet by ID or by IP address/DNS name. A commercial edition is also available.

## TeamViewer

Connection Extras Help

Remote Control | Meeting

**Allow Remote Control**

Please tell your partner the following ID and password if you would like to allow remote control.

Your ID: 123 456 789

Password: 1234

Use your personal password to access this computer from anywhere.

Partner ID: [Input field]

☒ Remote control  
☐ File transfer  
☐ VPN

Connect to partner

Ready to connect (secure connection)

John Doe >> TeamViewer

TeamViewer lets you establish a connection to any PC or server within a few seconds, controlling the PC remotely as if you were sitting in front of the system. In addition to screen sharing, users can share video and audio with participants, and you can opt to show parts of your screen or individual applications if you want to avoid sharing an entire desktop. File sharing, chat and whiteboard features are also supported. The app requires a download, and you can email meeting invitations to other participants. TeamViewer is free for personal, non-commercial users — generally for students, friends and family support.

## **UltraViewer**

The free UltraViewer app lets you control a partner's computer to support them as if you were sitting in front of their screen. You can send and receive files via a chat window, as well as toggle the chat on and off. It supports screen sharing with multiple computers but is available for Windows only (XP, 7, 8, 10, Windows Server).

## **VNC Connect**

The VNC Connect service offers a free home subscription for personal or hobbyist use, which lets you access up to five internet-connected computers securely from any device running the VNC Viewer app. However, the company doesn't offer any support for home subscriptions. A 30-day free trial of the company's Professional and Enterprise versions is also offered. Using the tool requires downloading the VNC Server app to the computer you want to control and the VNC Viewer app on the device you want to control from; both apps are available for an array of operating systems including Windows, Mac, Linux, iOS, Android and Chrome OS.

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*Keith Shaw is a freelance digital journalist who has written about the IT world for more than 20 years.*

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