

## Scientists explain video-conferencing fatigue

27th February, 2021



A new study from Stanford University has investigated the effects on our health of extended spells of video-conferencing. Researcher and communications expert Jeremy Bailenson dubbed the phenomenon "Zoom fatigue," but acknowledged the condition is not restricted

to just that platform. In the past year, most of us have spent extended periods of time online using an array of video-conferencing platforms. The coronavirus pandemic has meant tools like Zoom, FaceTime, Skype and Google Hangouts have been the only way we have been able to see and chat to loved ones. Many companies have relied heavily on video-conferencing for meetings, and educators have used them to teach their lessons online.

Mr Bailenson outlined several factors that make video-conferencing so fatigue-inducing. He said it is not just tiredness and eye-strain from staring at a computer screen for hours and hours. It is also brought about by "cognitive overload" and feeling pressure to be perpetually switched on. We constantly feel we need to be in touch with friends or available for bosses, customers or students. Bailenson cautioned this leads to burnout and stress and can heighten your chance of developing moderate to severe depression. He said this anxiety can adversely affect your self-confidence. This is because of the large number of faces staring at you in meetings. Bailenson likens this to the stresses of public speaking.

Sources: [lifehacker.com](http://lifehacker.com) / [newatlas.com](http://newatlas.com) / [techradar.com](http://techradar.com)

### Writing

Video-conferencing is better than face-to-face. Discuss.

### Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

study / university / communications / expert / fatigue / platform / chat / loved ones / video-conferencing / eye-strain / cognitive / be in touch / depression / faces / stress

### True / False

- a) Oxford University conducted a study on video-conferencing. T / F
- b) A researcher called tiredness while online "Zoom fatigue". T / F
- c) The article says all of us have spent a long time online in the past year. T / F
- d) Educators said they resent having to use video-conferencing to teach. T / F
- e) The researcher outlined seven reasons why video-conferencing is bad. T / F
- f) The researcher said fatigue can come because of cognitive overload. T / F
- g) The researcher said people feel pressure to be constantly online. T / F
- h) The researcher likened video-conferencing to speaking in public. T / F

### Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- |                        |                    |
|------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. <b>investigated</b> | a. defined         |
| 2. <b>spells</b>       | b. happening       |
| 3. <b>phenomenon</b>   | c. acute           |
| 4. <b>array</b>        | d. always          |
| 5. <b>relied</b>       | e. examined        |
| 6. <b>outlined</b>     | f. warned          |
| 7. <b>perpetually</b>  | g. range           |
| 8. <b>cautioned</b>    | h. gazing          |
| 9. <b>severe</b>       | i. periods of time |
| 10. <b>staring</b>     | j. depended        |

### Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think of video-conferencing?
- b) How do you think video-conferencing affects our health?
- c) How much video-conferencing have you done in the past year?
- d) What are the best video-conferencing platforms?
- e) What do you think of 'Zoom fatigue'?
- f) What do you think of school lessons being online?
- g) What would the pandemic be like without video-conferencing?
- h) What would companies do without video-conferencing?

## Phrase Match

- |                                       |                          |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. extended spells                    | a. severe depression     |
| 2. dubbed the phenomenon              | b. on video-conferencing |
| 3. the condition is not restricted    | c. inducing              |
| 4. tools                              | d. to just that platform |
| 5. relied heavily                     | e. your self-confidence  |
| 6. fatigue-                           | f. of video-conferencing |
| 7. It is also brought about by        | g. touch with friends    |
| 8. we need to be in                   | h. "cognitive overload"  |
| 9. moderate to                        | i. "Zoom fatigue"        |
| 10. this anxiety can adversely affect | j. like Zoom             |

## Discussion – Student B

- What do you think about what you read?
- What do you do about eye-strain?
- What do you know about 'cognitive overload'?
- Do you feel you always have to be online?
- How could being online make you depressed?
- What video-conferencing calls have you made recently?
- What do you think of public speaking?
- What questions would you like to ask the researcher?

## Spelling

- tmsncoioncaumi expert
- not csitdertre to just that platform
- needxtd periods of time
- an rayra of video-conferencing
- ielred heavily on video-conferencing
- ueroascdt have used them
- aftgieu-inducing
- brought about by noigevtci overload
- be uplepretlya switched on
- developing edaotemr to severe depression
- this aitnxy
- erlvsyaed affect your self-confidence

### Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. b	4. g	5. j
6. a	7. d	8. f	9. c	10. h

## Role Play

### Role A – Zoom

You think Zoom is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): Skype, YouTube or Twitter.

### Role B – Skype

You think Skype is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): Zoom, YouTube or Twitter.

### Role C – YouTube

You think YouTube is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): Skype, Zoom or Twitter.

### Role D – Twitter

You think Twitter is the best website. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them what is wrong with their websites. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): Skype, YouTube or Zoom.

## Speaking – Websites

Rank these with your partner. Put the best at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- |                   |            |
|-------------------|------------|
| • Google Hangouts | • Zoom     |
| • Instagram       | • Skype    |
| • Messenger       | • Twitter  |
| • YouTube         | • Facebook |

### Answers – True False

a	F	b	T	c	F	d	F	e	F	f	T	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.