Google Meet will now let you use custom backgrounds on video calls

Google is introducing custom backgrounds for its Meet videoconferencing platform, the company announced in a blog post. If you use Meet in Google's Chrome browser you should be able to access the feature in Chrome OS as well as on Windows and Mac laptops and desktops. The feature is "coming soon" to mobile, Google says.

There's no browser extension needed to activate custom backgrounds; you should be able to add a background image from your own photo collection or from a library of images provided by Google that includes landscapes, abstract art and (for some reason) offices.

Google Meet custom backgrounds
Google

It may take up to a week before all Google Meet users can access the new custom background option, the company says.

Rival videoconferencing services Microsoft Teams and Zoom both already allow the use of custom images for meeting backgrounds. The three have been adding new features as more people depend on video calls working and schooling from home during the pandemic; in recent months Meet added a blur effect for meeting backgrounds, and introducing real-time captioning, low-light mode, hand-raising and a tile view (the giant Brady Bunch screen) that displays up to 49 people.

Google integrated Meet into Gmail in May, adding a sidebar link and making meetings of up to 100 people with no time

limits available to anyone with a Google account.

In its third-quarter earnings call Thursday, Google CEO Sundar Pichai said Meet had had 235 million daily meetings and more than 7.5 billion daily video calls.

https://www.theverge.com/2020/10/31/21543261/google-meet-custom-backgrounds-video-calls-zoom