

Meet the iPad, your work computer: These 10 apps make real productivity possible

The amount of work I can get done on Apple's tablet keeps increasing. These apps are my secret sauce.



By [Jason Cipriani](#) | January 27, 2020 -- 01:22 GMT (17:22 PST) | Topic: [Mobility](#) - ZDNet

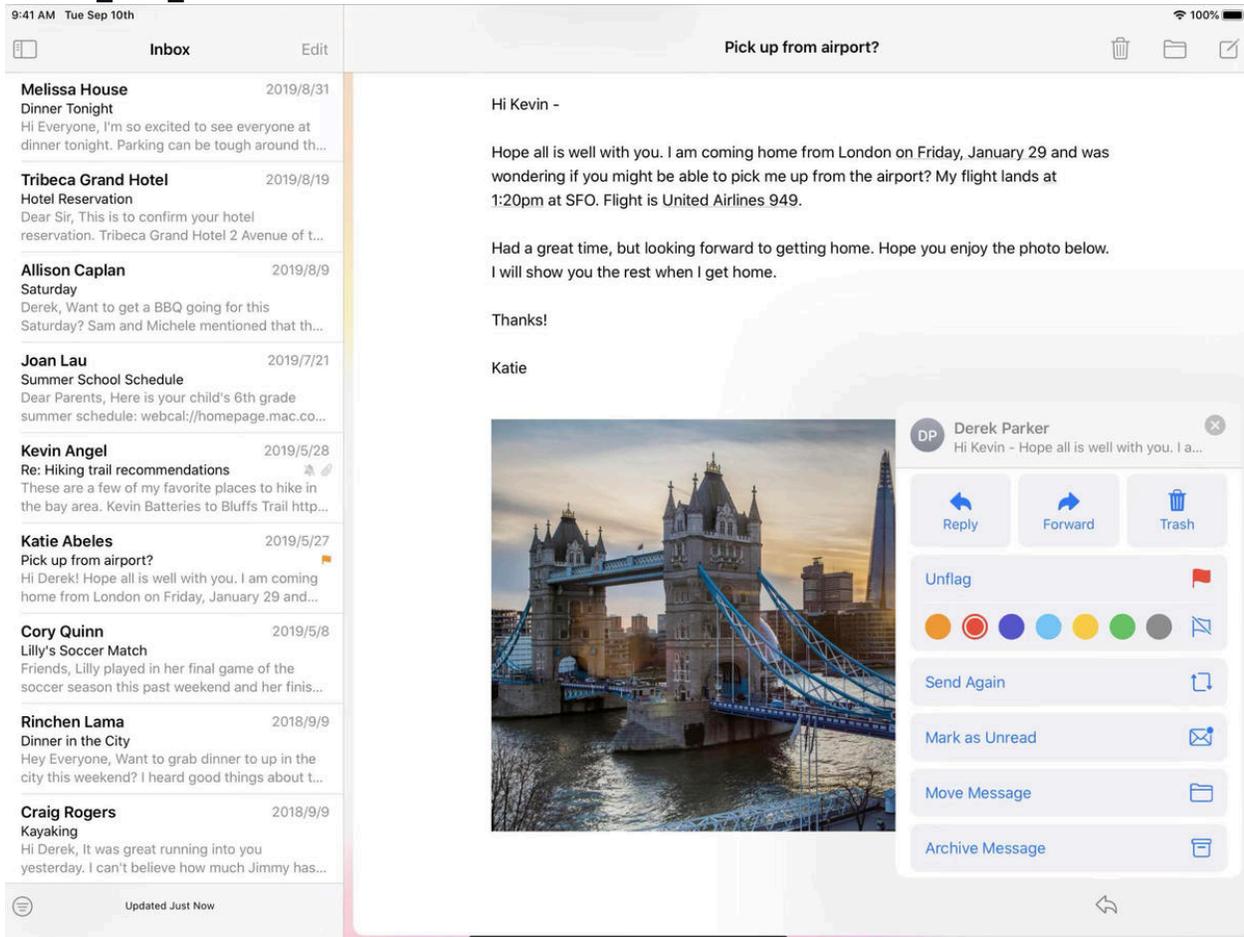


For the past eight years, [the iPad](#) has been a critical part of my daily workflow. From managing my inbox to coordinating my schedule and writing countless stories, notes, and even editing video -- I've done it all on the iPad. As the hardware and software have improved, the amount of work I could get done on the tablet has only increased. Even though it [took nearly a decade for the iPad to get its own operating system](#), the key to using an iPad as a work computer has always been apps.

Not just apps from Apple, but third-party apps from developers who have remained committed to providing high-quality tools for iPad users. Below, you'll find just a handful of iPad apps that make using the tablet for work-related tasks -- and not just browsing the web or watching Netflix -- possible.

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Apple Mail

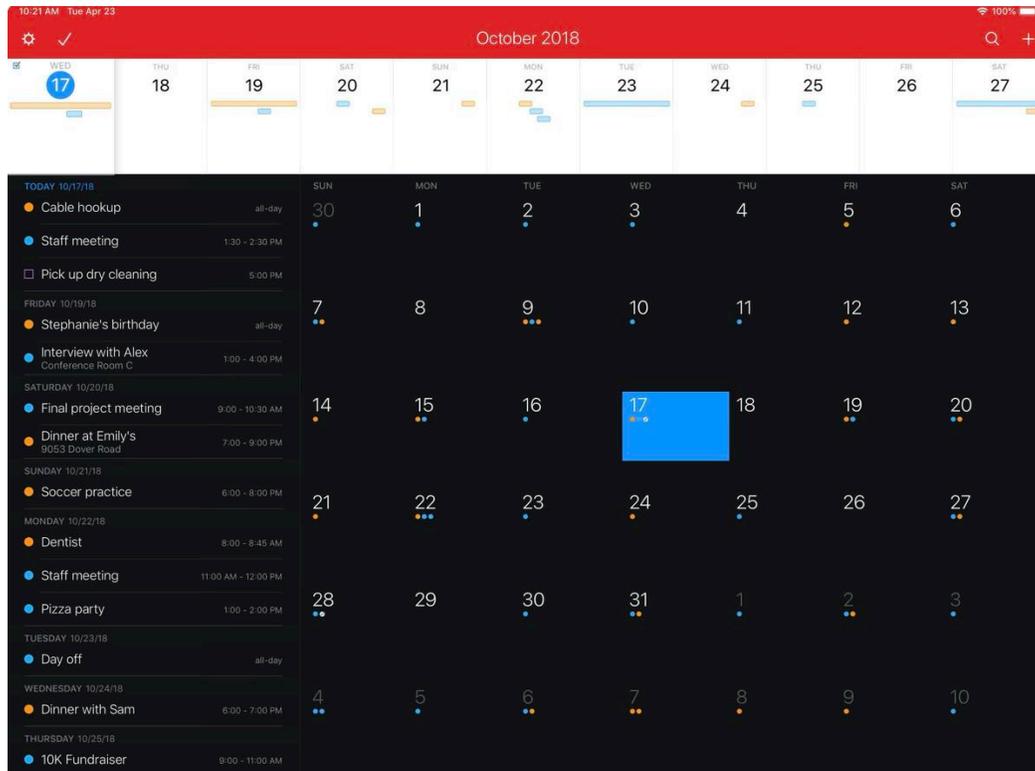


Screenshot by Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

Apple's Mail app is free and installed by default on all iPads. It's gained a lot of valuable features with recent updates and supports all of the new multi-tasking features in iPadOS that make it possible to compose multiple emails and search through your inbox at the same time. I've tried many third-party email apps on the iPad, but I always come back to the standard Mail app.

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Fantastical 2



Screenshot by Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

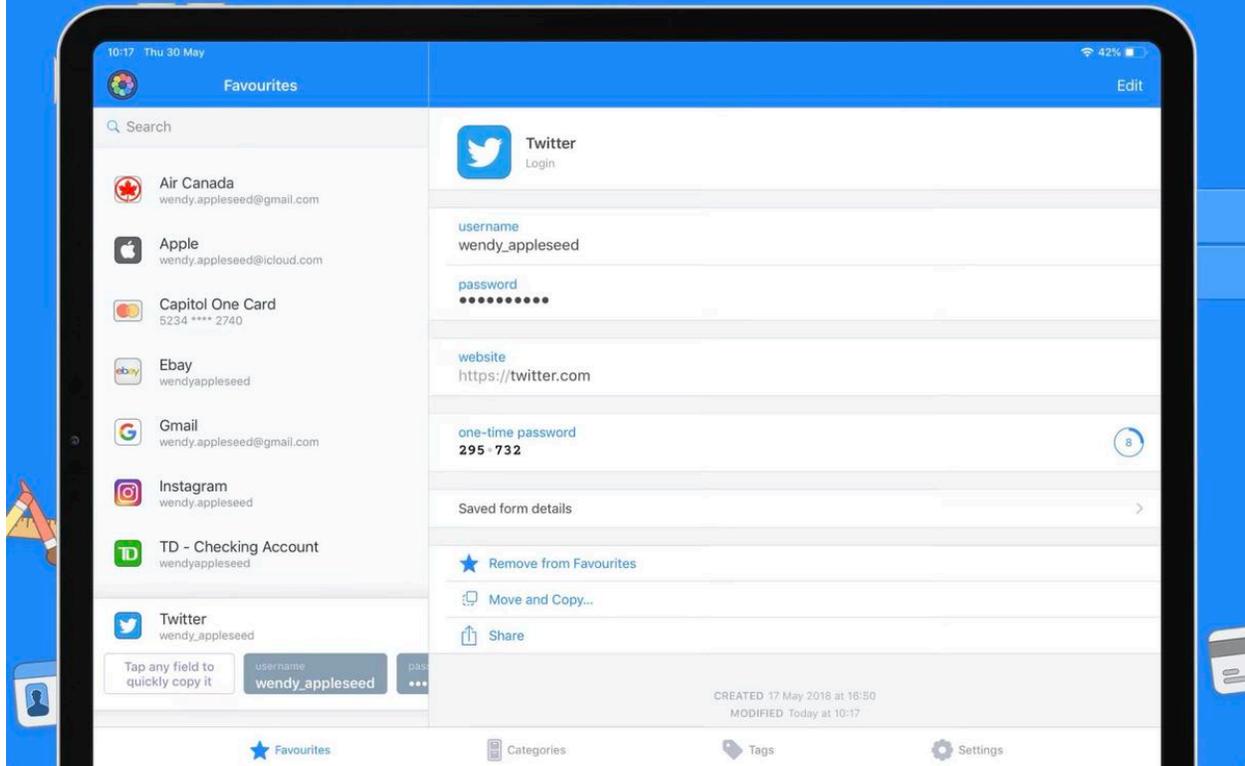
Fantastical 2 is one of the best calendar apps available for the iPad. It combines your tasks and calendar entries into one app, and it's easy to use thanks to features like being able to create a new entry just by typing a single line of text. For example, if you enter "Meeting with David next Thursday at 3" the appointment will be created without any further effort on your part.

The [company behind Fantastical is teasing a big update to the app](#), and I can't wait to see what they've been working on. But that also means you might want to hold off on buying the current version.

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1Password

1Password keeps you safe online.



Screenshot by Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

1Password creates unique passwords for your online accounts, stores them all, and enters them automatically for you in apps and websites. It comes with a 30-day free trial, after which you can sign up for a monthly subscription. It's \$3.99 for an individual or \$6.99 for a family of five.

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iA Writer

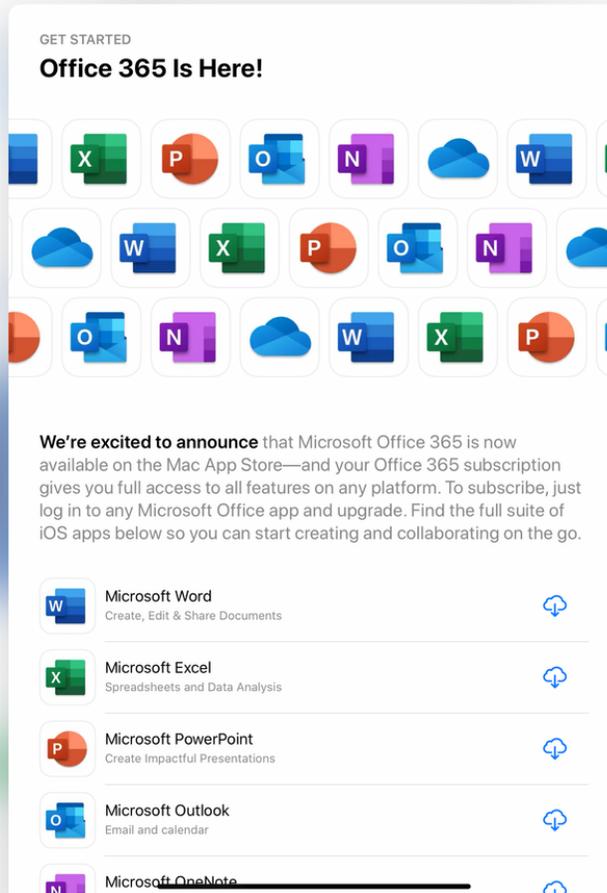


Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

I've tried many writing apps over the years, and I always come back to iA Writer. It's a simple, straight forward text editor that supports the [Markdown syntax](#). You don't have to use Markdown to write, but it makes it easier to export your documents for Word or even in HTML. You can sync your work through iA Writer's built-in support for third-party storage services.

\$8 AT APPLE APP STORE

Office 365 apps

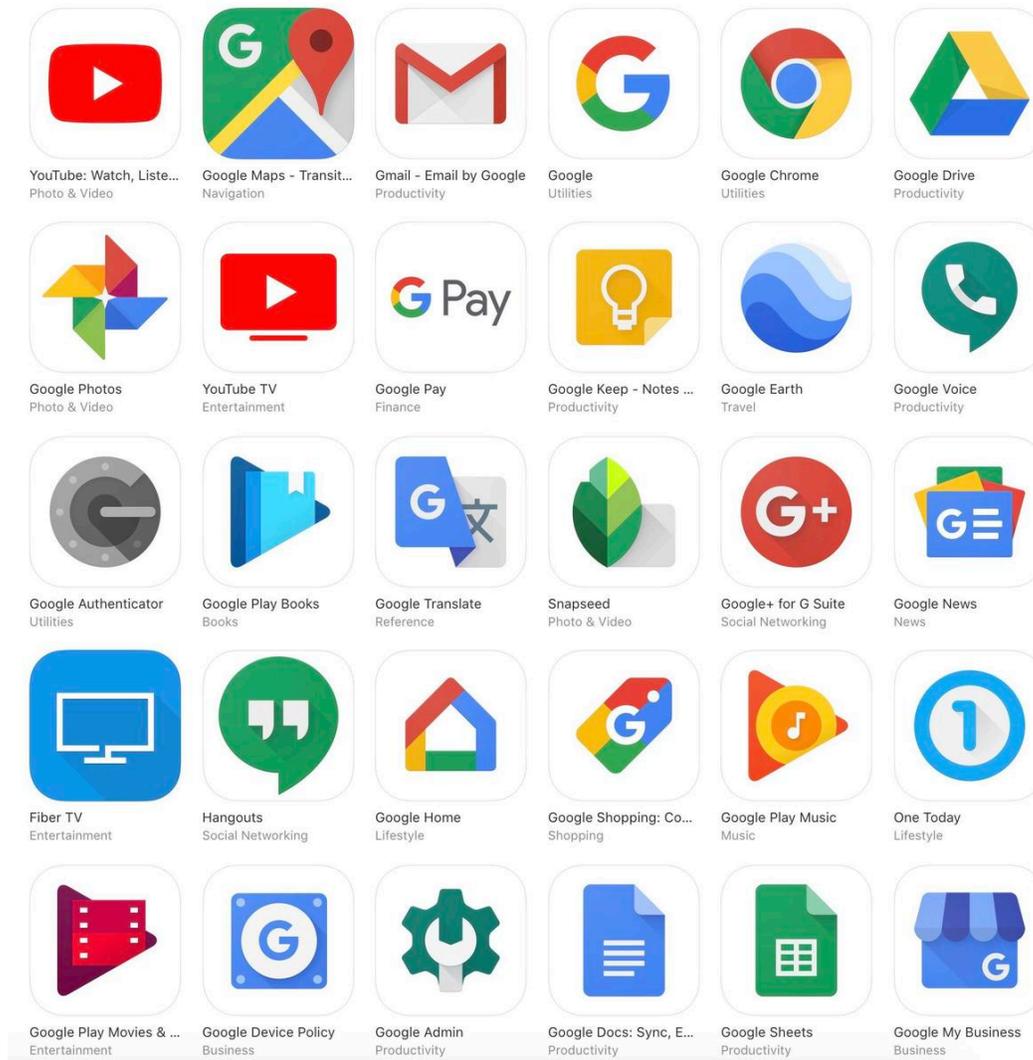


Screenshot by Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

If your employer uses Office 365, Microsoft's suite of apps are available for the iPad. Outlook, Word, Excel, PowerPoint and OneNote are all fantastic apps to get work done with. You'll need an Office 365 subscription to use apps like Word or Excel, however, anyone can use Outlook as their main email app without any fees. If you're not quite sold on using Apple's Mail app, Outlook is as good as it gets.

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G Suite apps

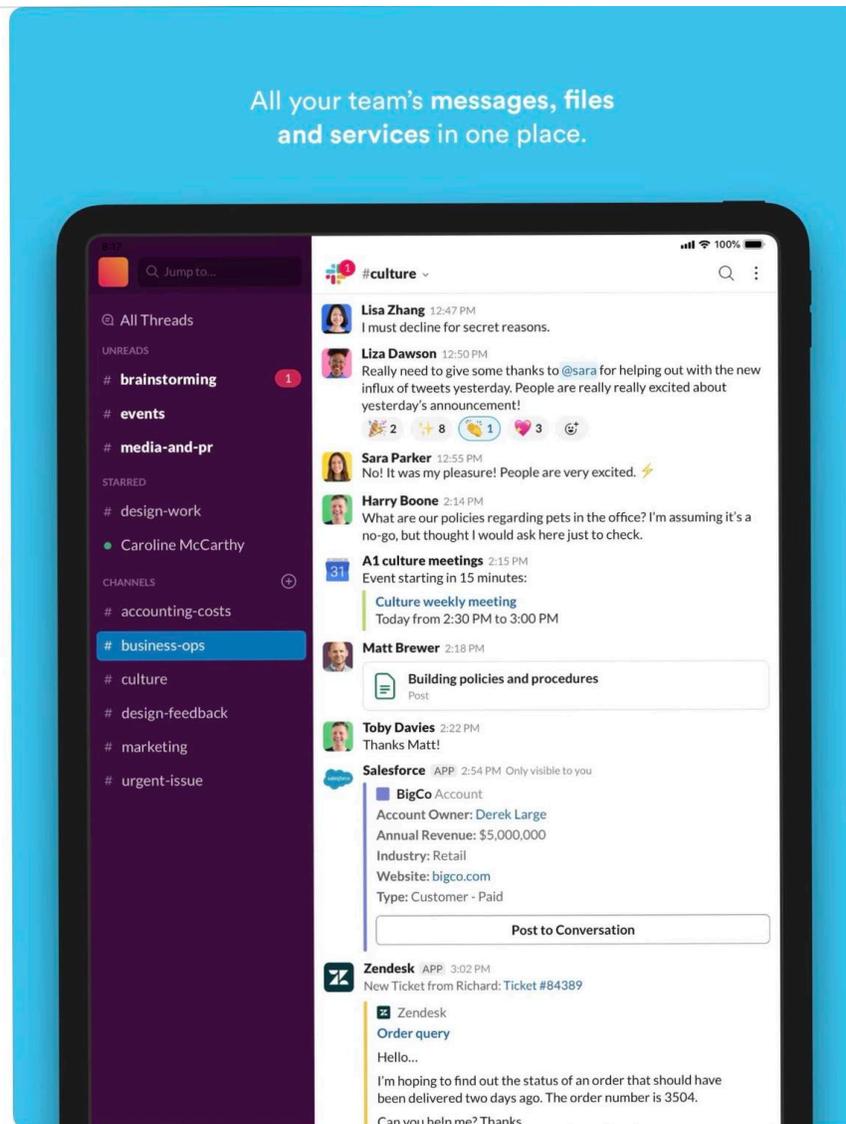


Screenshot by Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

For those who use Google products instead of Office 365, Google all of its core apps available in the App Store. Personally, I use [Docs](#) and [Sheets](#) on a daily basis. I don't recommend using the [Gmail app](#) unless you absolutely have to. It doesn't support multitasking, and adding attachments is more or less limited to your photo library or Google Drive.

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Slack



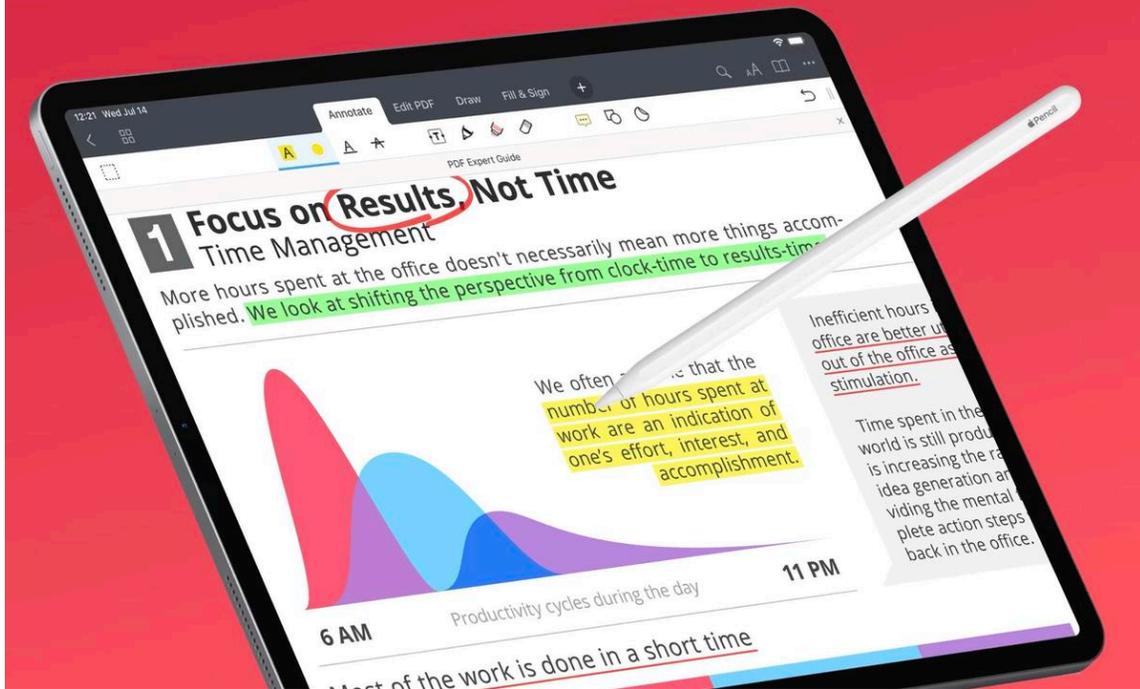
Screenshot by Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

For many, Slack has become a key part of communicating with colleagues. The Slack app for iPad has the same feature set as the desktop version of the website, complete with mention and keyword push alerts. You're able to mute channels, monitor your DMs, and even send GIFs to add some personality to your conversations.

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PDF Expert

Read and annotate like never before



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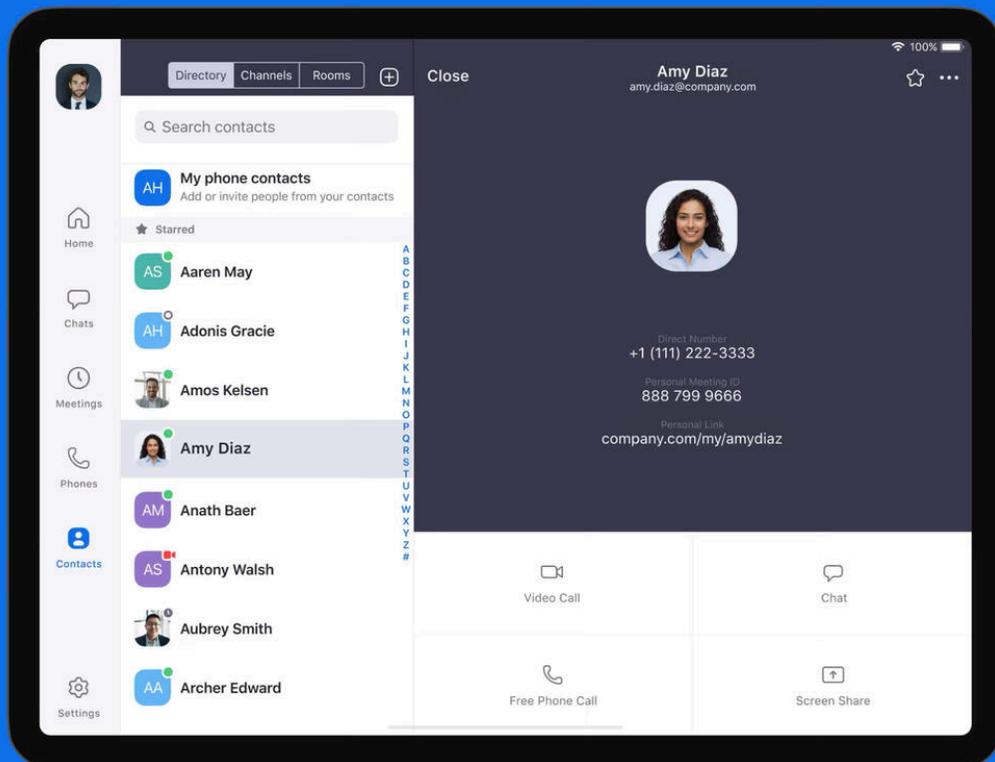
PDF Expert is more than just a PDF reader. This single app lets you edit PDF files, including images and text, along with annotating and marking-up a document. I use it to sign documents, fill out forms, and open ZIP files (seriously, it's the most reliable app for opening ZIP files I've used on the iPad).

If you deal with a lot of PDF files, then PDF Expert is the way to go. It's free to download and use for basic tasks, but you'll need a Pro subscription (\$49.99 a year) if you want to edit PDFs and sign documents. Here's [a breakdown of features unlocked by the subscription.](#)

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Zoom Cloud Meetings

Schedule, start, or join a meeting with ease



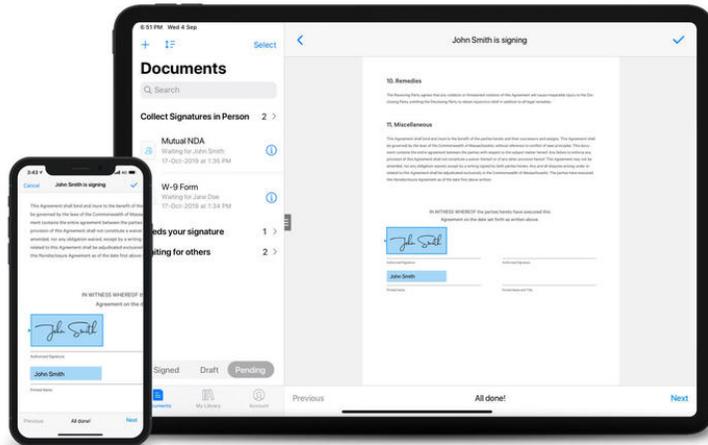
Screenshot by Jason Cipriani/ZDNet

Zoom is an easy and cost-effective way to hold video meetings with colleagues or potential clients. The free iPad app allows you to join or create your own meeting and uses the front-facing camera. I've used Zoom to have someone help me troubleshoot a programming issue via screen sharing, allowing them to see my iPad's display and walk me through a few lines of code.

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SignEasy

SignEasy is a streamlined app for signing documents or sending a document to be signed by a client or coworker. While PDF Expert has a signature feature, it also is a lot of extra app for someone who doesn't need to edit and manipulate PDFs.

SignEasy has one job, and it does it well. You can download the app for free, and then sign up for a subscription based on your needs, or purchase 10 signatures upfront for \$10.

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