Signing on with Apple could be safer than Facebook or Google

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Most of us hate logging onto new websites and having to register and create yet another new password and screen name combination.

Which is why many of us make the deal with the devil. We do the instant sign-on with Facebook or Google, letting these tech giants communicate our personal information to the app makers, in exchange for the ease of not having to create new credentials. And we trust that our data will be safe, despite Facebook's poor history there or Google's over-reaching desire to target us with more personalized advertising.

Apple has what it says is a better idea. Thursday it's launching an alternative, Sign In with Apple, that promises less sharing of our personal data with the app makers and more privacy controls.

Apple, the company says on its website, "will not track users' activity in your app or website."

There's only one hitch—very few apps have signed on to offer the feature, only eight of them by publication time on Monday, out of the over 2 million apps in the Apple iTunes App Store. But they will.

Apple requires any app developer that offers instant sign-in with Google and/or Facebook to also offer the service from Apple, and has given them a deadline of April, 2020 to implement it. (Developers in the App Store who offer logging in with their personal e-mail won't be required to offer it, however.)

The current tally is eight apps this week, but Apple says you will see many more in the coming weeks, as iOS 13 becomes more widespread and app developers wait for consumers to download the new version.

For now, here's a sampling of which apps have signed up:

—Bird

—LifeCake

—Kayak

—Instacart

—Kitchen Stories

—Pocket Yoga

—Fretello

—LoseIt

To use the service, consumers will need to download the new version of iOS 13, which is available Thursday morning and then update the app of choice that's working with Sign In with Apple.

From there, they will need to log into the app, using their Apple ID and password, the same one they already use to get into the App Store or iCloud.com. Once that connection is established, they will use either Face ID or Touch ID to continue logging in on future uses of the app, depending upon which iPhone they have.

Unlike the competition, Sign in with Apple lets users skip offering their e-mail address to the app developer, instead of letting them use a bogus one that goes directly to Apple, which, "lets users receive email even if they prefer to keep their address private."

Google says for its Sign-in service, it shares your "name, email address, and profile picture" with app developers, while Facebook says the same, with the addition of sharing your "likes."