WhatsApp adds biometric authentication to link phone, web accounts

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WhatsApp users with biometric authentication—including facial recognition and fingerprint features—enabled on their phones will now have an added layer of security if they want to link their accounts with

their computer's web browser or desktop app.

The Facebook-owned platform announced on Twitter that the new feature will roll out Thursday. The messaging app currently has more than 2 billion users.

The feature applies to users who have the facial or fingerprint authentication on, including those who have iPhones operating iOS 14 and greater with Touch ID or Face ID and Android users with Face Unlock, Fingerprint Unlock or Iris Unlock enabled.

Once a user tries to access their WhatsApp account on the web or desktop app, they will be required to verify their identity using the face or fingerprint unlock on their phone. Then, they will have to scan a QR code with their phones. After the two-layer authentication, users will be able to view and send messages via WhastApp from their computers.

To stay logged in after linking the devices, users can check a box next to "Keep me signed in" on the QR screen on their computer to stay logged in on the device.

"As people increasingly use WhatsApp Web and desktop to communicate privately with their friends and family, we wanted to introduce an additional security protection to provide peace of mind to users," a WhatsApp spokesperson told U.S. TODAY.

The company says the app cannot access the biometric information stored by a device's operating system.

The [messaging app](#) is also rolling out a visual redesign to the WhatsApp Web on phones over the coming weeks.

The news comes after WhatsApp announced an update aiming to refresh

the app's terms of use and [privacy policy](), which was originally met with skepticism among users over privacy concerns. The date of that new policy rollout was pushed back until May 15.

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