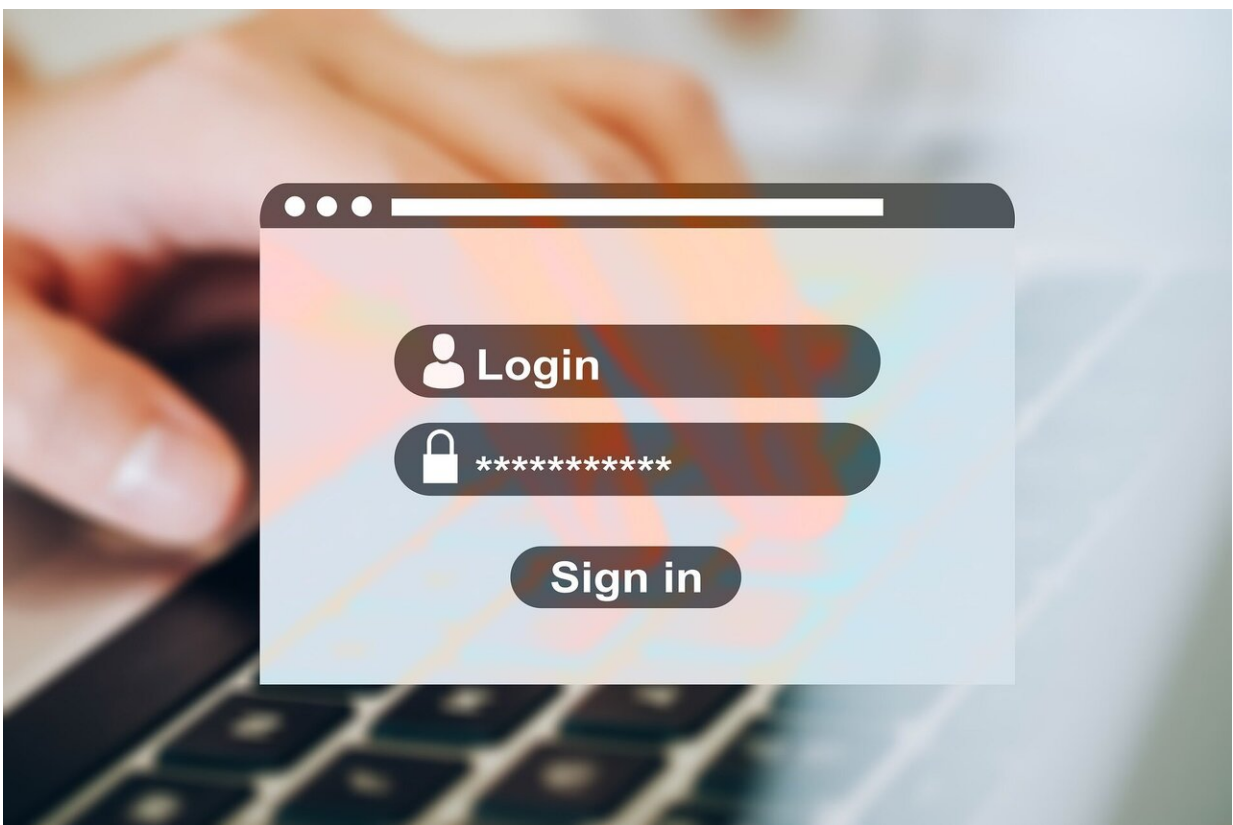


Ready to say goodbye to passwords? Users will no longer need one for Microsoft accounts

September 15 2021, by Brett Molina, Usa Today



Credit: Pixabay/CC0 Public Domain

Microsoft wants you to ditch your password. For good, this time.

The company announced in a blog post Wednesday that it will give [users](#) the option to access their accounts without using a password.

Users can choose between downloading the Microsoft Authenticator app; a [security key](#); a verification code sent to your phone or secondary email address; or Windows Hello, a biometric option that involves scanning your face, iris or fingerprint.

With the Authenticator app, for example, users get notified on their smartphone during a login attempt, and receive a prompt confirming their identity.

Vasu Jakkal, corporate vice president for security, compliance and identity at Microsoft, said in the blog post that the new option tackles two problems: complex passwords people can't remember and passwords that do not offer enough security because they're too simple.

"Nobody likes passwords. They're inconvenient," Jakkal wrote. "They're a prime target for attacks. Yet for years they've been the most important layer of security for everything in our digital lives—from email to bank accounts, shopping carts to video games."

The feature will be rolled out in the coming weeks.

Jakkal said there are 579 password attacks every second, which amounts to about 18 billion annually; one reason that occurs is that [internet users](#) tend to create basic passwords.

According to security firm NordPass, "123456" was the most commonly used password in 2020, followed by "123456789."

Several apps have stepped forward to help users manage their passwords, including NordPass, 1Password and LastPass.

To bolster your password [security](#) without a manager app, NordPass advises creating [passwords](#) for each account, and using a mix of upper- and lower-case letters, numbers and symbols to make them tougher to crack.

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