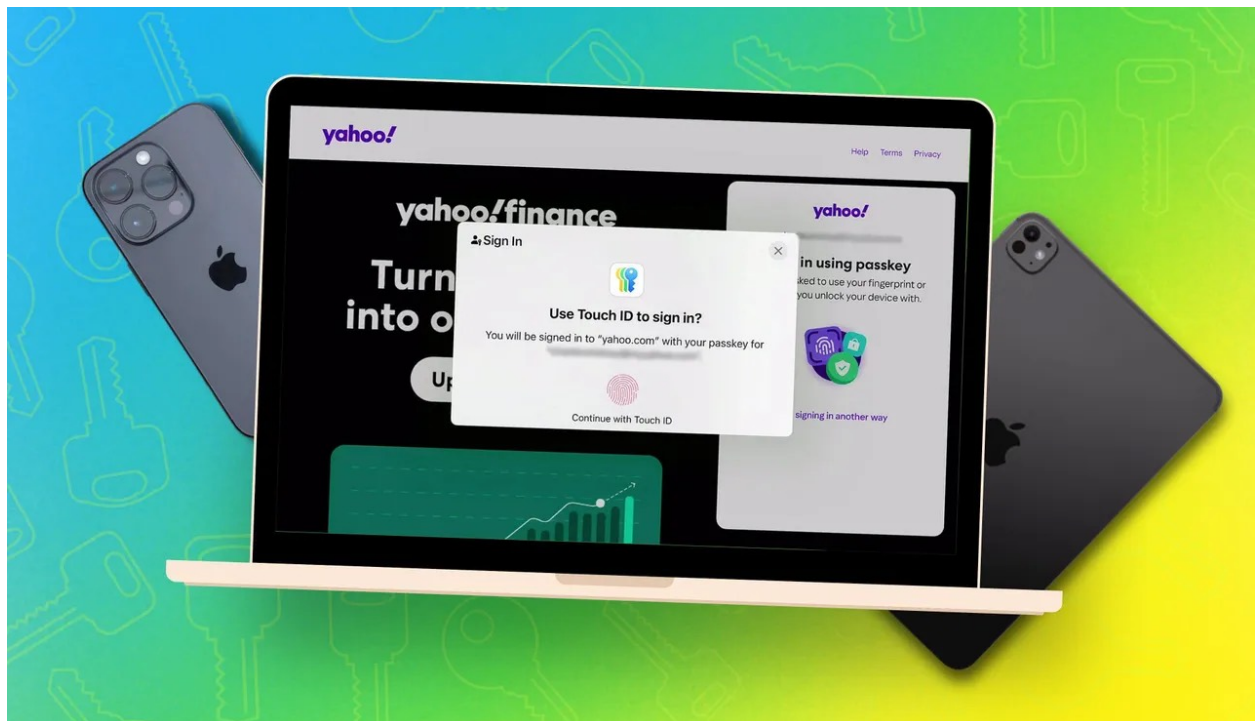


How to set up and use passkeys across your iPhone, iPad, and Mac

Looking to move from passwords to passkeys across all your Apple devices? Here's how to do it.

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Reviewed by Elyse Betters Picaro
ZDNet



Lance Whitney / Elyse Betters Picaro / ZDNET

Passkeys offer a more secure and convenient method of authentication compared with passwords. But they can be challenging to set up and synchronize, especially if you want to use the same ones on a range of devices, such as a mobile phone, tablet, and computer. As one solution, Apple users can save and sync their passkeys across an iPhone, iPad, and Mac.

The key here is iCloud Keychain, which can store passkeys as well as passwords. You first set up a passkey for a supported website on one Apple device, such as an iPhone. With iCloud Keychain, that passkey is synced across any other Apple device you own, such as an iPad or Mac. If all goes well, the passkey can then authenticate your login on whichever device you're using.

Also: [How passkeys work: Your passwordless journey begins here](#)

You're able to create and save passkeys to securely sign in to supported apps as well as websites. Like passwords, passkeys are encrypted through iCloud Keychain. Unlike passwords, they're relatively safe from theft and compromise. To set up and approve the login, you can use a PIN, facial scan, fingerprint recognition, or physical security key.

There's another benefit to using iCloud Keychain to sync passkeys across all your devices. If one device gets lost or becomes inoperative, such as your iPhone, you can turn to your Mac or iPad to use your passkeys and automatically sync them to a new phone.

How to set up and use passkeys on Apple devices

iCloud Keychain is the linchpin for syncing your passkeys, but it works more on the back end. On the front end, you use Apple's Passwords app to set up and manage your passkeys. When you generate a passkey at a supported website or app, Passwords is the program that pops up to save it. To use Apple Passwords, you'll need iOS/iPadOS 18 or higher and MacOS Sequoia 15 or higher.

Though I typically use a password manager to store and sync passkeys, I wanted to try out the process without a password manager, using just iCloud Keychain and Apple Passwords on all my Apple devices, specifically an iPhone, iPad, and Mac. For our purposes, I'll assume you also have all three devices or at least two of them.

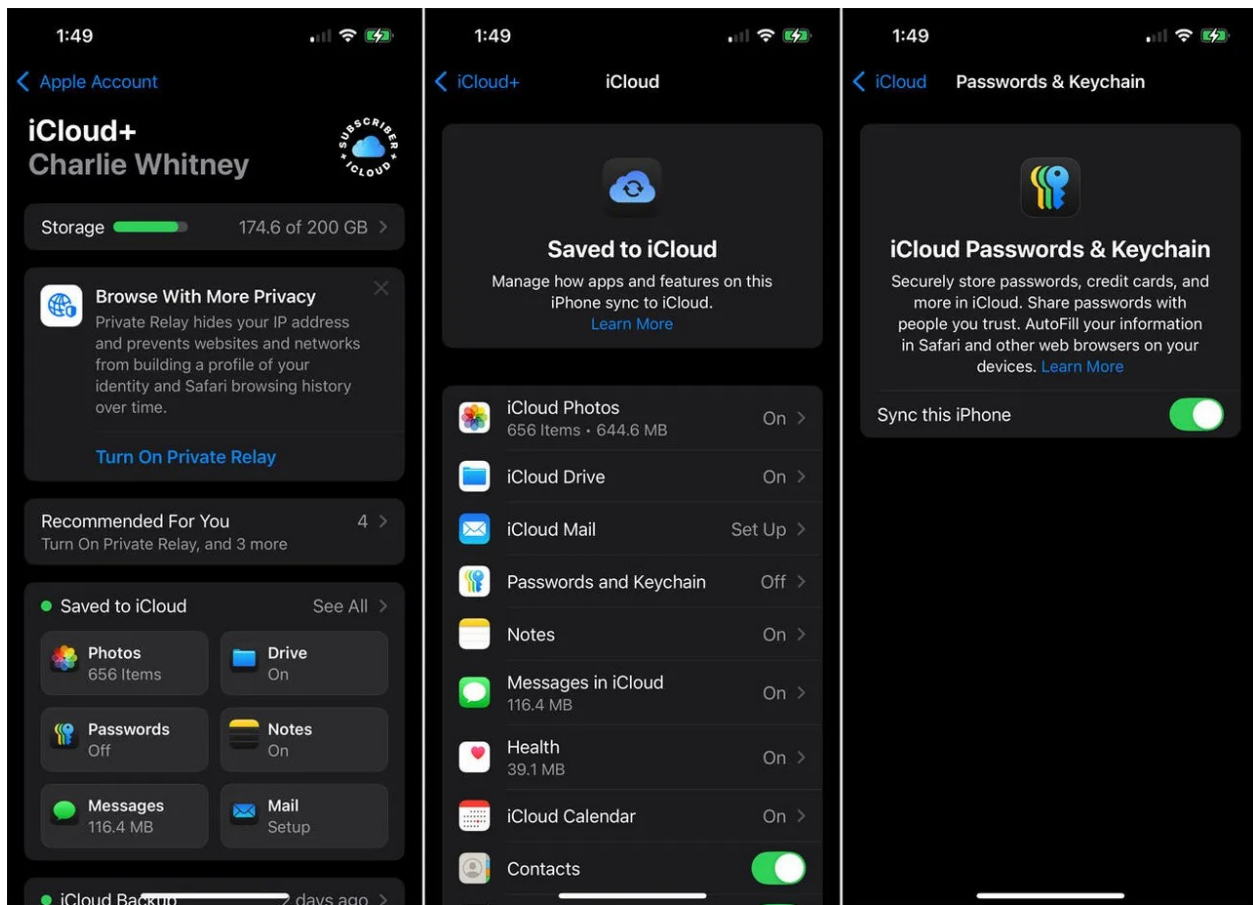
Also: [10 passkey survival tips: Prepare for your passwordless future now](#)

The actual steps for generating a passkey can vary among different websites and apps. You can create a passkey for a brand new account or set one up for an existing account to replace your password.

Now, let's see how this plays out.

1. Enable iCloud Keychain

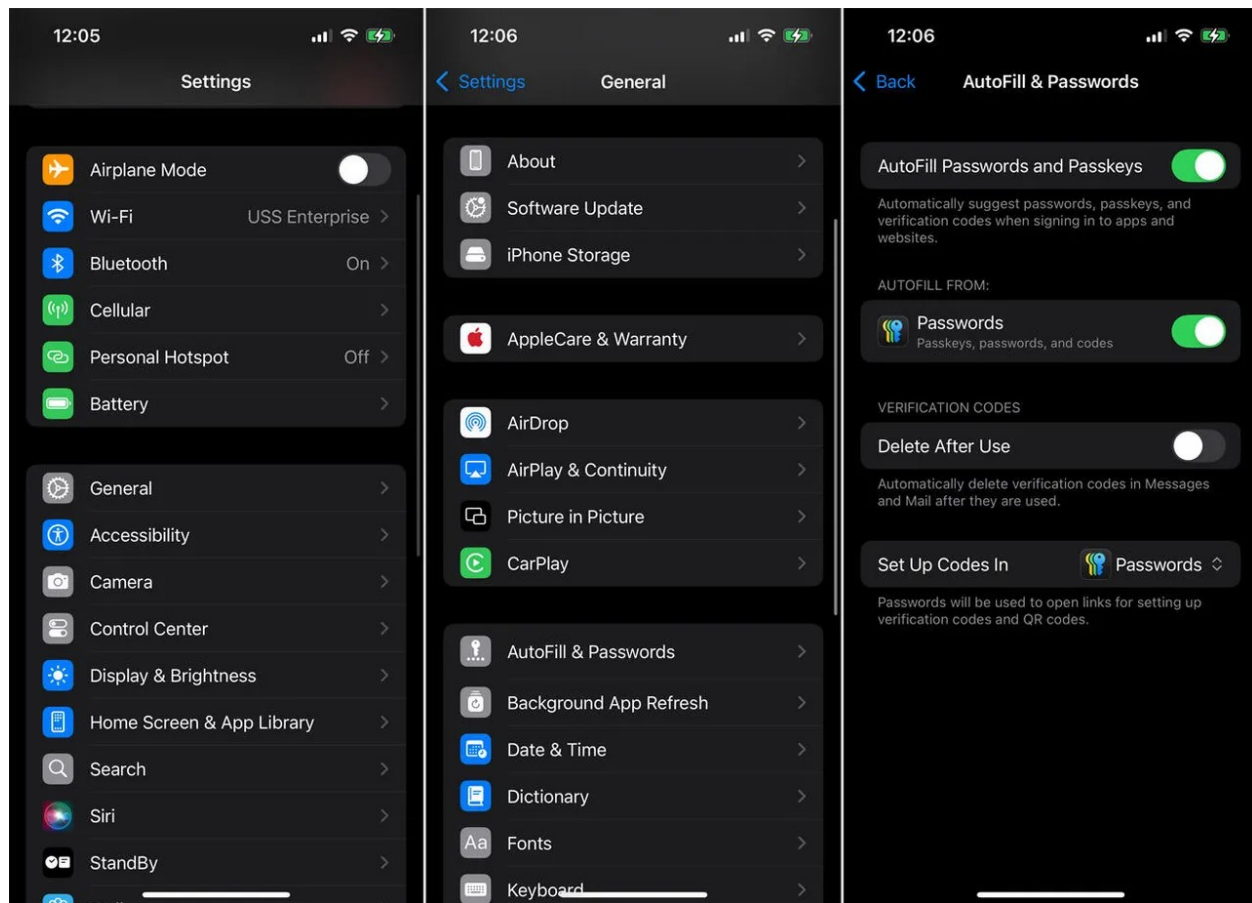
First, you'll have to activate iCloud Keychain if it's not already turned on. On your iPhone or iPad, head to Settings. On a Mac, go to System Settings. Select your name at the top of the screen and then select iCloud. Tap or click the See All button next to the Saved to iCloud section and select Passwords & Keychain. Turn on the switch to sync this iPhone, iPad, or Mac. Repeat that process on each Apple device for which you want to use passkeys through Keychain.



Enable iCloud Keychain

2. Check the settings for Apple Passwords

Next, make sure Apple Passwords is set as the app for autofilling your passkeys. Go to Settings (System Settings on a Mac), select General, and then tap AutoFill & Passwords. Confirm that the switch is on for AutoFill Passwords and Passkeys. In the AutoFill From section, turn on the switch for Passwords if it's not already enabled.



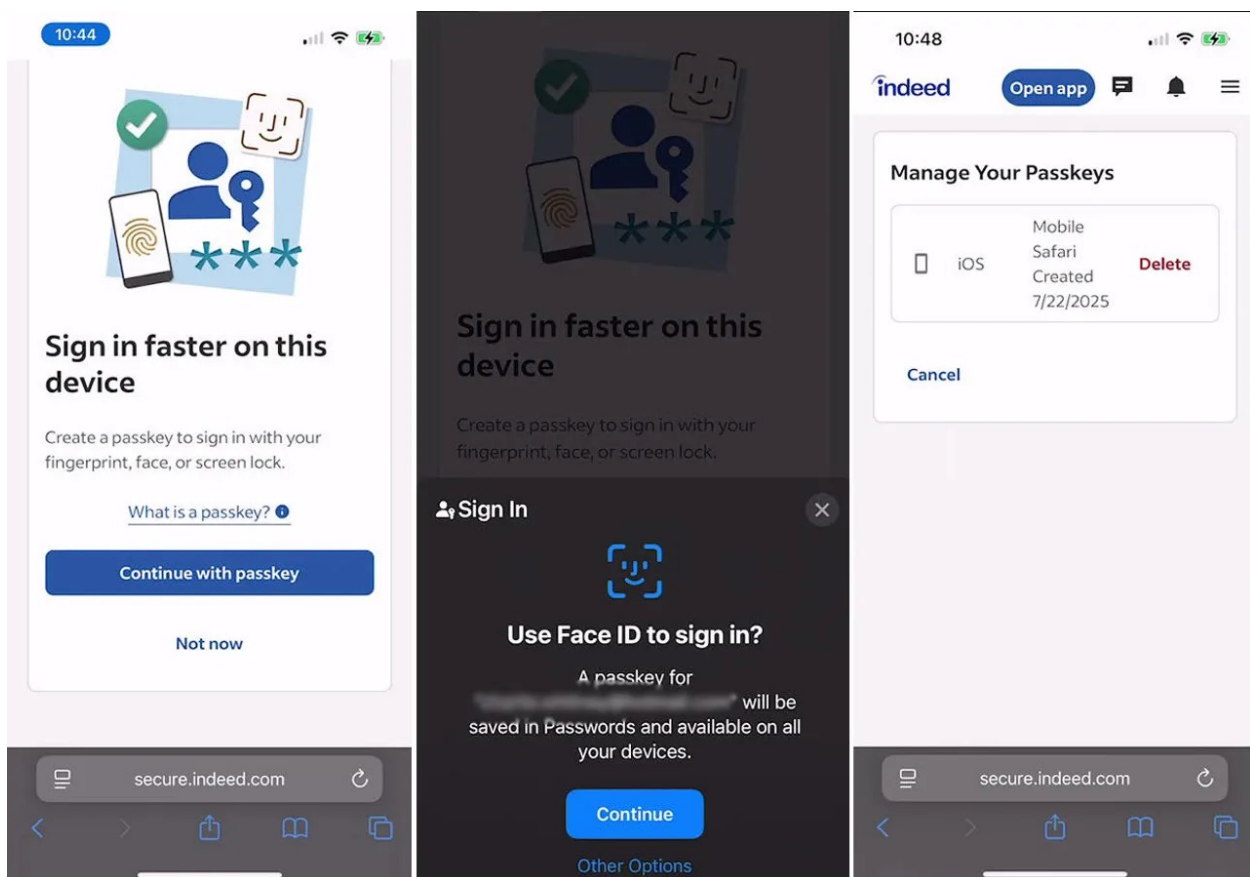
Screenshot by Lance Whitney/ZDNET

3. Create a passkey for a new account on an iPhone

Now it's time to create a passkey. Here, I'm going to use an iPhone and set this up with a new account for which I don't already have a password. For this one, I'll choose the job site Indeed.

Also: [How I easily set up passkeys through my password manager - and why you should too](#)

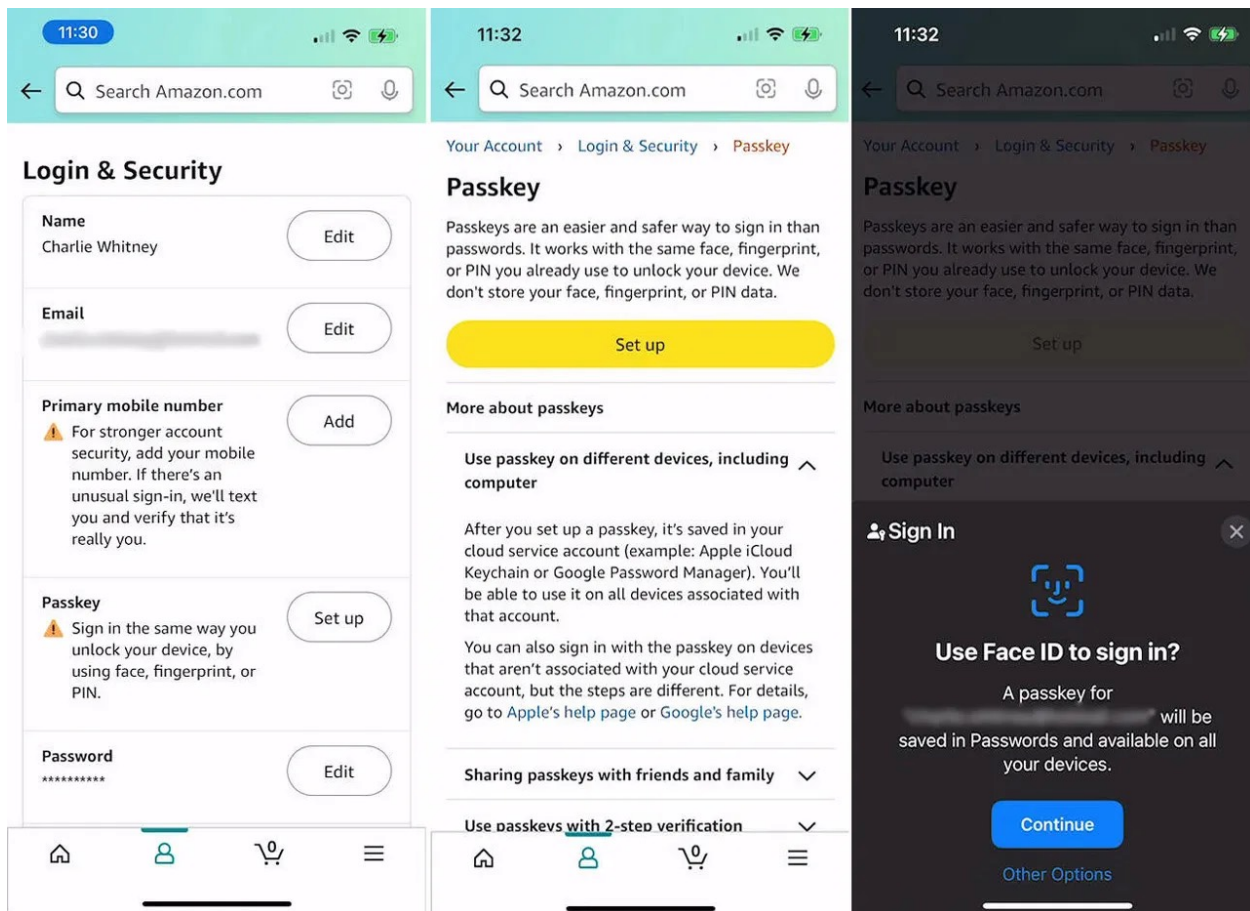
On my iPhone, I browse to the Indeed website and choose the option to create an account. After verifying my email address and phone number, I select the button to continue with a passkey. I'm prompted to use Face ID to sign in and save the passkey to the Passwords app. I'm then logged in to the site with my new account. At the Indeed account screen, I can also see the entry for my passkey.



Screenshot by Lance Whitney/ZDNET

4. Create a passkey for an existing account on an iPhone

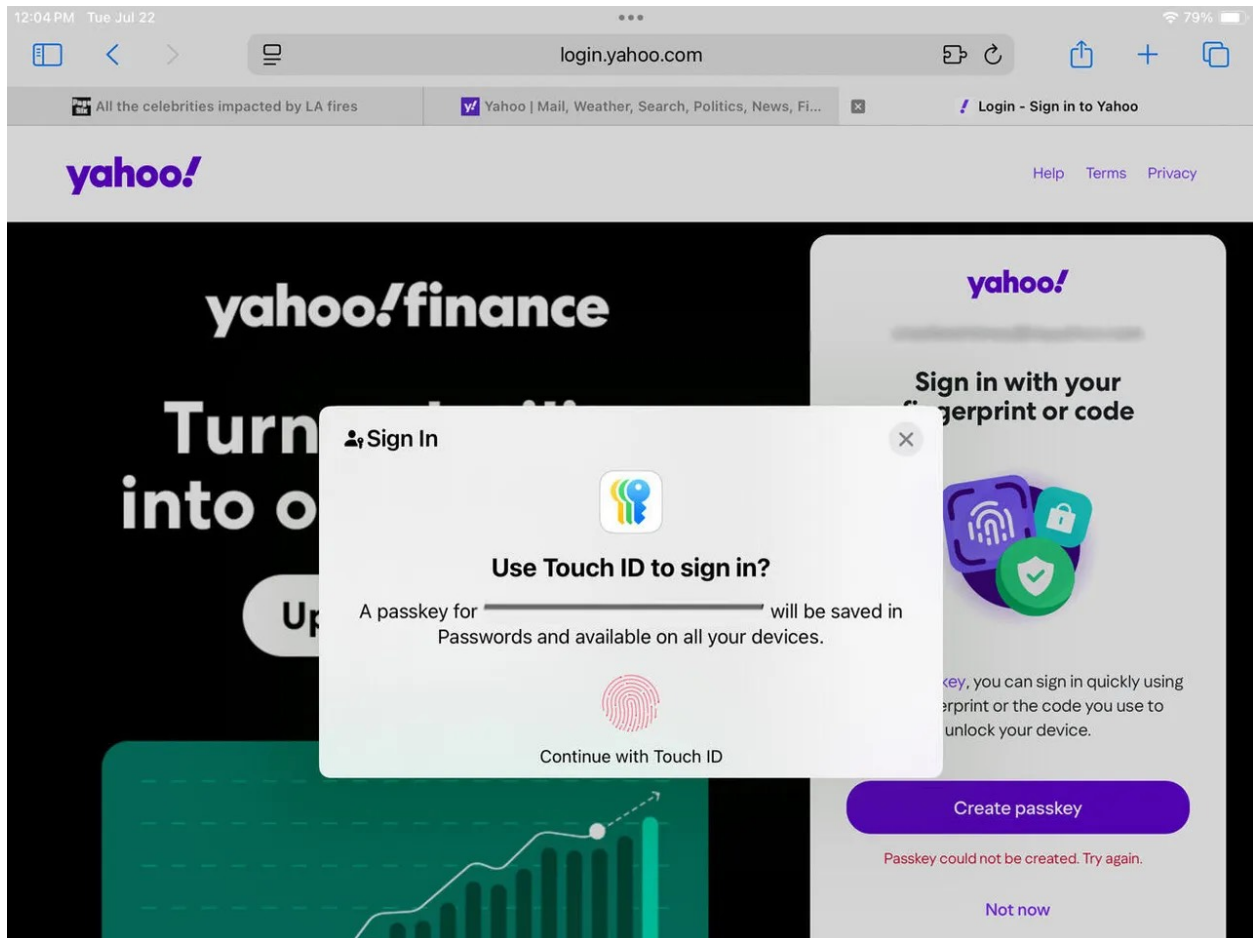
Next, I'll set up a passcode for an existing account for which I already have a password. Here, I'll choose Amazon and I'll use the app. After signing in to the Amazon app, I head to the Login & Security section under my account. I tap the Set up button for Passkey. The next screen shows me an FAQ on passkeys. I tap Set up to continue. I authenticate with Face ID and tap Continue, which then generates and saves the passkey.



Screenshot by Lance Whitney/ZDNET

5. Create a passkey on an iPad

The process for creating a passkey for a new or existing account is the same on an iPad as on an iPhone. For this example, I'm using an older iPad with Touch ID instead of Face ID. I'm also choosing a Yahoo account for which I already have a password. After I sign in to my account, Yahoo asks if I'd rather use a passkey to sign in with a fingerprint or code. I tap Allow. I authenticate with Touch ID, which then saves the passkey to the Passwords app.

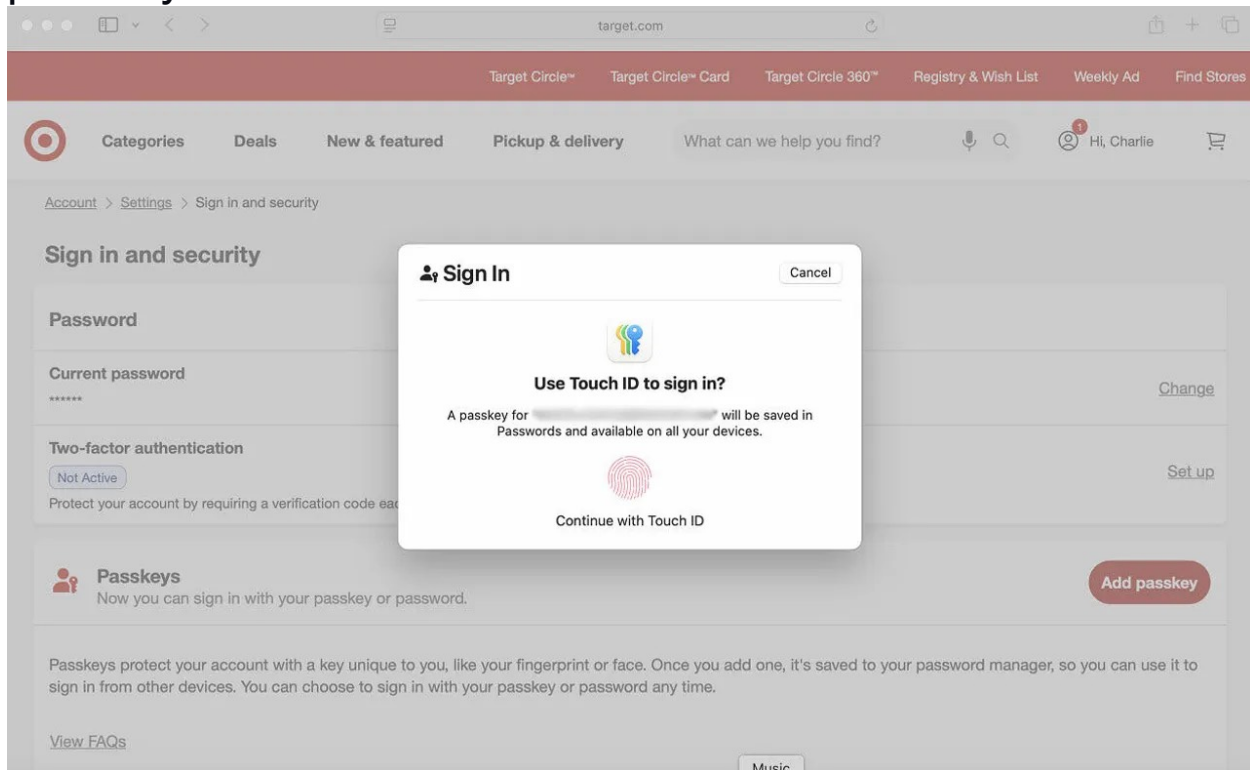


Screenshot by Lance Whitney/ZDNET

6. Create a passkey on a Mac

The steps for setting up passkeys are also similar on a Mac, but let's go through them. Here, I'm using Target. I sign in to the Target website with my existing account password and head to the Sign in and Security section under Settings. I click the button to add a passkey. I'm

asked to authenticate using Touch ID on my Mac, and the passkey is saved.



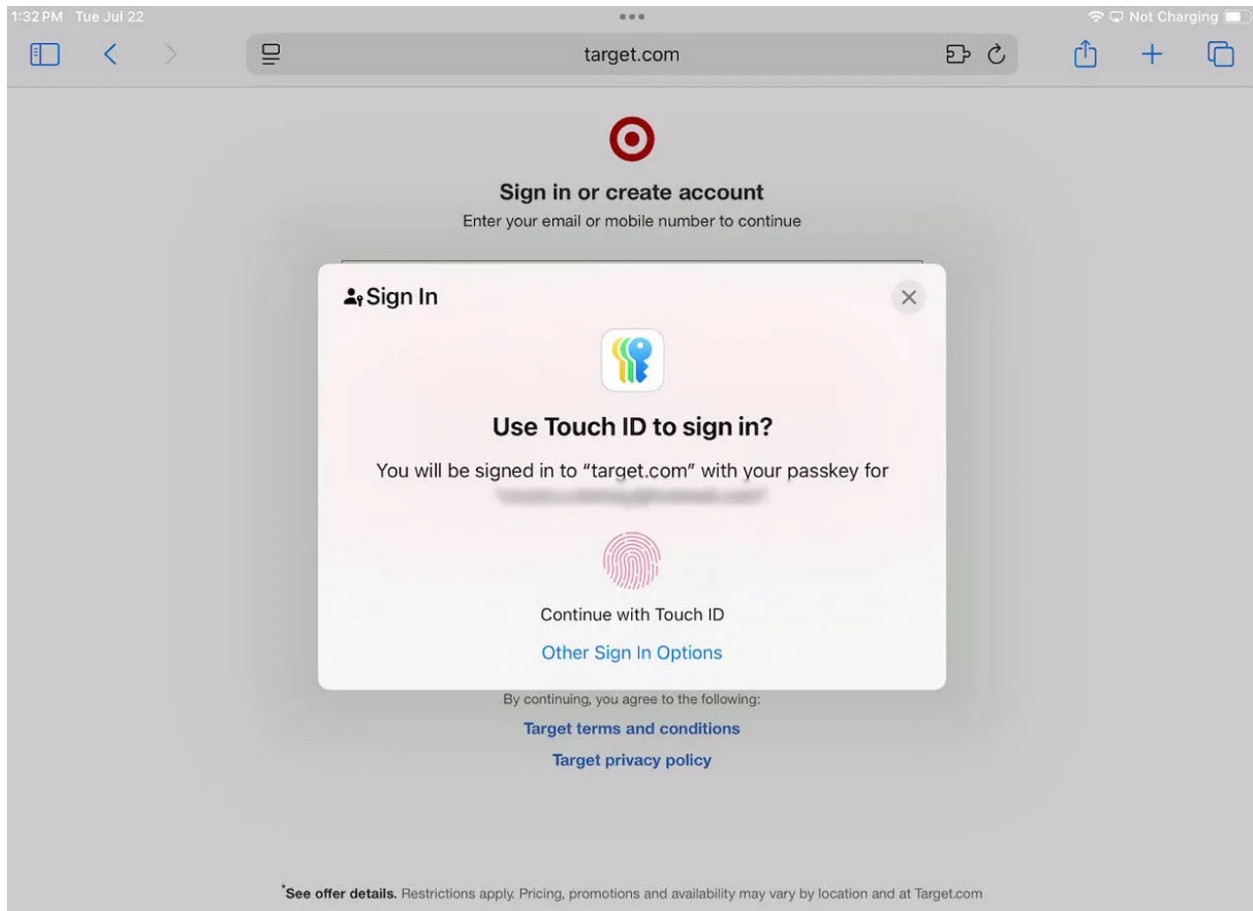
Screenshot by Lance Whitney/ZDNET

7. Sign in with a passkey

Okay, we've got all these passkeys stored in the Passwords app from different Apple devices. The trick now is to make sure you can use any of them to sign in on any device. Fire up your iPhone, iPad, or Mac. Browse to any of the sites for which you've set up passkeys, and you should be prompted to authenticate your account and log in via the passkey.

Also: If we want a passwordless future, let's get our passkey story straight

On my end, I tried this on each device for every one of the sites I set up. The associated passkey prompt popped up, authenticated me through Face ID or Touch ID, and signed me in.



Screenshot by Lance Whitney/ZDNET

8. Access and manage all your passkeys

Finally, you can view and manage all the passkeys for your Apple devices easily enough. On an iPhone, iPad, or Mac, open the Passwords app and select the category for

Passkeys. Right-click or press down on any entry. From the menu, you can copy the username or website URL, move the entry to a shared family group, share it via AirDrop, or delete it.

newsletters

Which sites support passkeys?

A variety of websites now support passkeys, and the number is growing. The following pages list supported sites: [Passkeys.com](https://passkeys.com), [Passkeys.io](https://passkeys.io), [1Password's Passkeys.directory](https://1password.com/passkeys-directory), [Keeper Security Passkeys Directory](https://keepersecurity.com/passkeys-directory), [FIDO Alliance's Passkey Directory](https://fidoalliance.org/passkey-directory), and [Dashlane Passkeys Directory](https://dashlane.com/passkeys-directory).

Is there a universal standard for creating a passkey?

There's no universal standard or consistency for creating a passkey, so the process can easily vary from site to site and app to app.

In some cases, you may be prompted to set up a passkey for a new account right from the get-go. In other cases, you'll have to hunt through the security or login settings to find the option to create one for an existing account. And in many cases, you have to create a password before you can set up a passkey. Yep, these are some of the obstacles that get in the way of passkeys.

Also: Why the road from passwords to passkeys is long, bumpy, and worth it - probably

But once you find the right setting, storing the passkey through Apple Passwords and iCloud Keychain should take care of the rest of the process.

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original article:

[https://www.zdnet.com/article/how-to-set-up-and-use-passkeys-across-your-iphone-ipad-and-mac/?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsalerts&zdee=\[Contact.email_zdee\]](https://www.zdnet.com/article/how-to-set-up-and-use-passkeys-across-your-iphone-ipad-and-mac/?utm_source=iterable&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=newsalerts&zdee=[Contact.email_zdee])