

Remembering passwords might become passé

By NPR

You're probably well-acquainted with one of life's little annoyances: the password.

Your voicemail. Your email. Your smartphone. Maybe you've got a different one for each – which means you're bound to slip up.

Or maybe you use the same one for everything – a security no-no. The number of sites and services that demand a password or PIN seems to have grown exponentially. And keeping track of the ones you've got? Forget about it.

Well, Silicon Valley titans are getting tired of them, too. At the Tech Crunch Disrupt conference in September, Google's top security executive, Heather Adkins, declared that passwords are dead. And that's straight from a founding member of the security team at Google, home to 425 million email accounts.

Adkins says startups tying their future to passwords might as well give up now, given how much work it takes to keep customers' passwords secure.

But if passwords are a thing of the past, what will replace them?

Wall Street is betting on biometrics. Now that Apple is adding a fingerprint sensor to its newest iPhone, companies that make similar technology have seen their share prices jump. And industry analysts say the market for fingerprint scanners could top \$10 billion in the next five years.

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