Windows 11 preview adds better passkey support, rolls back File Explorer changes

Enlarge / A PC running Windows 11.

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This week’s Dev Channel Windows Insider Preview build for Windows 11 adds another handful of useful and/or interesting improvements to the operating system, most notably improved support for the passkey standard that Microsoft, Google, Apple, and others are currently uniting behind.

Though the Microsoft Edge browser has supported passkeys for a while now, this week’s Insider build expands support to “any app or website that supports passkeys,” which can use built-in Windows Hello authentication (either via a PIN, fingerprint reader, or face-scanning camera) to sign you in without requiring a password. You can also view the full list of passkeys that have been created on your device and delete individual passkeys if you no longer want to use them.

If your browser natively supports passkeys and has its own user interface for handling them, you’ll need to select “Windows Hello or external security key” to use the built-in Windows UI instead.

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The new Insider build also adds support for Unicode 15 emoji, a few changes to Windows’ location-based time zone setting,

and a handful of fixes. But most notably for people who complained about last week's Insider build, Microsoft has rolled back proposed changes that would have removed several relatively obscure settings from the Folder Options window in the File Explorer.

"As is normal for the Dev Channel, we will often try things out and get feedback and adjust based on the feedback we receive," wrote Microsoft's Amanda Langowski and Brandon LeBlanc in a post detailing the new build's changes.

The hodgepodge of different menu styles is a longstanding complaint about Windows—Windows 11 has gone a long way toward making the interface more modern and consistent on the surface, but you only need to go a layer or two deep in a lot of places before you run into some old menu that looks essentially the same way it did back in Windows 95. But when Microsoft attempts to change or remove some of these elements, it invariably triggers a backlash from the handful of users who apparently find these settings essential. It's one reason Windows 11 still includes all of the Windows XP- and Vista-era Control Panel items, even though the Settings app can perform most of the same functions.

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