

HOW TO FIX "ERROR OCCURRED DURING ACTIVATION FOR IMESSAGE (OR FACETIME)" ON MAC.

It's another regular day.

You start up your Mac and if you see an update on your Mac then you make sure to give your Mac the update it needs to keep your Mac in fine shape.

However, once everything's updated, you try to open up your Messages or your FaceTime on your Mac but you find that the very first thing that you see is an error saying "An error occurred during activation. Try again. Could not sign in to iMessage (or FaceTime)."



Not so great. So the next course of action you take is to check whether it works on your iPhone or iPad (if you have any one of those) but curiously your device works as you are able to receive messages and make calls on your device(s).

It seems it just doesn't work on your Mac and particularly once after that you've updated it. So what do we do?

In this guide, I'll show you what I tried and how I did manage to fix the error and have both my iMessage and FaceTime working flawlessly on my Macbook Pro. 😊

Error Occurred During Activation for iMessage or FaceTime on Mac: 13 Ways

1. REMEMBER TO ENABLE YOUR APPLE ID FOR MESSAGES.

The very first thing to do is to cross out that you have enabled your Apple ID for Messages. If you haven't then it explains why you may be getting the error.

Here's how you enable your Apple ID for Messages:

Step 1: Jump into your **Messages** and then from the top menu select **Preferences**.

Step 2: Next, select **Accounts**.

Step 3: Now do you see **iMessage** to your left hand sidebar? Alright, select **iMessage**.

Step 4: For the final step, check if your Apple ID information shows up. Also make sure that you check the little box for **Enable this account**. If you find that it was already checked, then just uncheck, count to 30, and then come back to check the box once again.



You can try signing once again into your Messages or FaceTime application on your Mac to see if the error has gone.

2. CHECK IF THERE IS AN OUTAGE FROM APPLE'S SIDE.

At times it could just all be a problem with Apple having a system outage or something and besides it's best to check it before we get into the nitty-gritty fixes.

Anyhow an outage happens more often than you think. To check if Apple's system is down, just jump into the [Apple System Status page](#) and pay attention to both the **iMessage** and **FaceTime** statuses.

If the statuses show up as yellow then that means there is an issue from Apple's side which they're most likely already working on fixing it.

However if it shows up as green, then there no issues that hold up Apple's services. Keep reading to find out what else that you can try to fix the "Error occurred during Activation error" error.

System Status

● Available

● App Store	● iBooks Store	● iTunes U
● Apple Business Manager	● iCloud Account & Sign In	● iWork for iCloud
● Apple ID	● iCloud Backup	● Mac App Store
● Apple Music	● iCloud Bookmarks & Tabs	● macOS Software Update
● Apple Music Subscriptions	● iCloud Calendar	● Mail Drop
● Apple Online Store	● iCloud Contacts	● Maps Display
● Apple Pay	● iCloud Drive	● Maps Routing & Navigation
● Apple School Manager	● iCloud Keychain	● Maps Search
● Apple TV	● iCloud Mail	● Maps Traffic
● Back to My Mac	● iCloud Notes	● News
● Beats 1	● iCloud Reminders	● Photo Print Products
● Device Enrollment Program	● iCloud Storage Upgrades	● Photos
● Dictation	● iCloud Web Apps (iCloud.com)	● Radio
● Documents in the Cloud	● iMessage	● Schoolwork
● FaceTime	● iOS Device Activation	● Siri
● Find My Friends	● iTunes in the Cloud	● Spotlight suggestions
● Find My iPhone	● iTunes Match	● Volume Purchase Program
● Game Center	● iTunes Store	

If you are experiencing an issue not listed here, [contact support](#).
Looking for developer system status? [Find it here](#).

Last updated today, 10:52 PM MT.

System Status

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United States

3. CHECK YOUR DATE & TIME SETTINGS.

Adjusting to make sure the Date & Time settings are correct has seemingly worked for some users over at Apple's Support Communities.

Here's how you can make sure that your Date & Time Settings are in check:

Step 1: Jump into your **Apple Menu** and then select **System Preferences**.

Step 2: Next, select **Date & Time**.

Step 3: Now what you do is, is to check and verify that the date, time and the time zone that are your Mac is in are all correct and precise.

Step 4: Done? Great. Next, just check the box for the setting **Set date and time automatically**. Now if the checkbox was already checked, then uncheck it, count to 30, and then check it back again.



However, if the checkbox was dimmed, then click the little lock icon below and then enter your administrator password.

4. CHECK YOUR APPLE ID.

If your Apple ID or its password is wrong, then chances are it could be the reason why you're not being allowed to activate your iMessage or your FaceTime and hence why it throws the error.

Here's you can check to make sure everything's correct with your Apple ID:

- Step 1:** Go ahead open up your web browser (or if you're reading this on your Mac, then go ahead open up a new tab) and then jump to your Apple ID account page and then sign in with the same Apple ID that you're using with your Messages and FaceTime.
- Step 2:** Now we've arrived at a crossroads and there's two ways this can go:
1. You are able to sign in with your Apple ID (which is great!). You can then jump to [Step 3](#).
 2. You are not able to sign in with your Apple ID. You're going to need to then follow the on-screen instructions to reset your password or visit Apple's iForgot page.

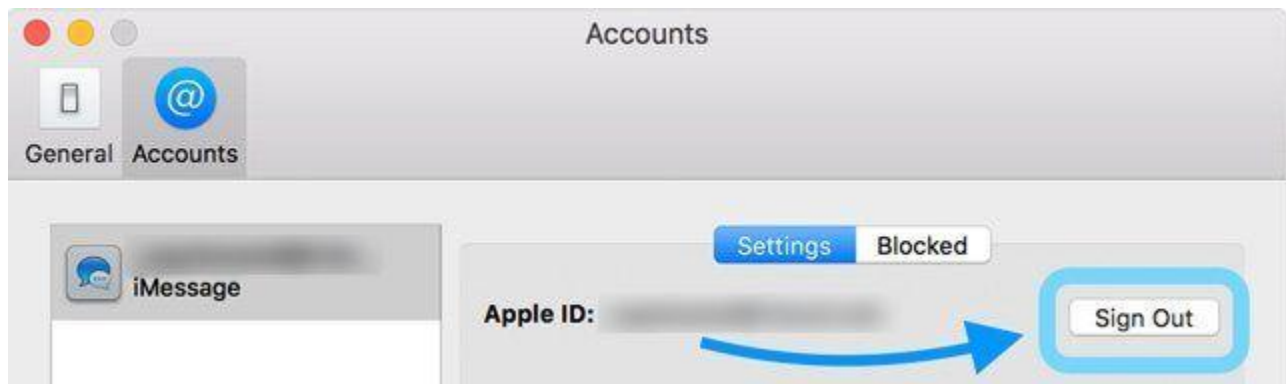
It could very well be...

It could also be that your Apple ID is disabled which could be because you may have entered your password incorrectly too many times in a row or you simply may not have used your Apple ID for a long time which caused it to be disabled since it was inactive.

If you think any of those situations seems to resonate with you or you simply want to check to make sure, then I go over in the following writeup on [how you can fix an Apple ID that is disabled](#).

Step 3: Next, on your Mac, open your **Messages**, then **Preferences** and then select **Accounts**.

Step 4: Now select your **iMessage** account and then click **Sign Out**.



Step 5: Count to 10 seconds and sign back in with the same Apple ID you just signed out from.

Step 6: Great. Repeat this for your FaceTime too by opening up your **FaceTime**, then **Preferences** and then **Settings**.

Step 7: Select to **Sign Out**, count to 10 again and then sign back in with the same Apple ID that you just signed out from.

5. Reset “NVRAM”.

Now you don't really need to know what the heck “NVRAM” is in order for you to try this. It's all simply put just a bunch of settings that deals with how your iMessage and FaceTime work and it is located in a specific site. That specific site in your Mac is what's called NVRAM (or PRAM if you're on an older Mac).

Note

Once you reset your Mac's NVRAM, settings like your Sound Volume, Display Resolution, Startup Disk selection, Time Zone will be reset to default. So make sure to remember what you've set for those settings (you can even write them down someplace). This is so that once you've reset it you can then adjust it back to your previous settings.

Alright. Here's how you reset it:

Step 1: Go ahead, shut down your Mac then turn it on and immediately press and hold down all the following four keys (as your Mac boots up): **Option + Command + P + R**.



Step 2: Count to 30 seconds and then release the keys. Your Mac will appear to restart while as you hold down the keys. But make sure to take note of the following:

Note

1. If your Mac typically plays a startups chime everytime it boots up, then what you do is you release the keys after the second startup sound. Here's a [great guide by Apple](#) themselves on recognizing your Mac's chime.
2. If your Mac is an [iMac Pro](#) or if you have one of the [MacBook Pro models from 2018](#), then release the keys after the Apple logo appears and disappears for the second time.
3. Also if you're using a firmware password, which if you don't know what it is then it is mostly likely that you've not set a firmware password, but if you have then you are going to need to [turn off the firmware password](#) first before you reset the NVRAM.

Step 3: Lastly, once you've reset the NVRAM, you can update the settings like your Sound Volume, Display Resolution, Startup disk selection, and Time zone back to how you first initially set it.

6. CHECK ANY THIRD-PARTY NETWORKING OR SECURITY.

If you have installed any firewall, anti-virus security, VPN, or any third-party networking software onto your Mac, then make sure to check that it isn't blocking any of the network ports that iMessage and FaceTime use. You don't have to disable everything and it's best you try by temporarily disabling the software one by one or the ones you're suspicious of and then once disabled try signing into iMessage and FaceTime again. 😊

7. TRY OPENING IMESSAGE AND FACETIME FROM THE APPLICATIONS FOLDER ITSELF.

Some of our readers have reported that their Messages and FaceTime immediately started working the moment they opened the Messages or FaceTime app from the **Applications** folder on hard drive of the Mac. Try it, Jump into your hard drive of your Mac, open up the **Applications** folder and then open up either **Messages** or **FaceTime** and check out if it launches and you are able to sign in without getting thrown at with errors.

If it works, great! You can remove the old icons from your Mac's Dock and then drag the new, error-free ones from the Applications folder into the Dock.

If it doesn't work, don't get discouraged. 😊 Keep reading and eventually you will definitely get one to work.

8. HAVE YOU RECENTLY MIGRATED YOUR MAC USER ACCOUNT?

If you've migrated your Mac user account, maybe because you may have bought a new Mac or what not, then you may have information associated with your ID that's no longer valid.

Here's how you can correct the error.

Step 1: Go ahead close your Messages or your FaceTime on your Mac and then jump into your **Applications**, then **Utilities** and then select **Keychain Access**.

Step 2: Next, do you see **Login** to your top left hand sidebar? Good. Select **Login** and then select **Passwords** from the lower left hand sidebar.

Step 3: Now using **Spotlight Search** (it's the search bar), type in **"IDS"**. Look closely for an item that shows your unique Apple ID together with a **"-AuthToken"** at the end.

Here's an example: **ids: yourname@youremail.com-AuthToken**

Step 4: Found it? Great! Now these IDS-AuthTokens are like special encryption keys (safe keys) for your iMessage that are kept on your Mac. I know removing encryption keys sounds like opening yourself up for trouble, but no. You see, once you remove these keys, your Mac and Apple Servers will automatically create new ones and rebuild them. Fresh keys!



Step 5: So yeah, delete the file(s) which contains the Apple ID you're having problems with. Don't delete anything else that does not have the Apple ID email address you're having problems with in it.

Step 6: Finally, just close the window, restart your Mac, and then launch your Messages or FaceTime again. Try signing in again and it should work.

If it still doesn't work, then try this ...

9. PART II: A FEW ADJUSTMENTS.

If you had done the previous trick but you still find that your FaceTime or Messages throw an error like “Could not sign in to iMessage. An error occurred during activation. Try again.” then there’s one more additionally thing that you can do to try and fix it.

This time, you’re going to do exactly the same as what you did before this except you’ll be removing certain other files from your Keychain.

Here’s what you do:

Step 1: Jump back into your **Applications**, then **Utilities** and then select **Keychain Access**.

Step 2: Now look for these two files:

ids: identity-rsa-private-key

ids: identity-rsa-public-key

Also if you find the same exact file that you had deleted before which goes by:

ids: yourname@youremail.com-AuthToken

Then select that too.



Name	Kind	Date Modified	Keychain
IDS: @gmail.com-AuthToken	application password	May 12, 2018, 11:39:04 AM	login
ids: personal-session-token-cache-v2	application password	Today, 2:02 PM	login
ids: personal-public-key-cache-v3	application password	Yesterday, 7:26 PM	login
ids: message-protection-public-data-registered	application password	May 22, 2018, 6:22:51 PM	login
ids: message-protection-key	application password	May 12, 2018, 11:38:25 AM	login
ids: identity-rsa-public-key	application password	May 12, 2018, 11:37:59 AM	login
ids: identity-rsa-private-key	application password	May 12, 2018, 11:37:59 AM	login
ids: identity-rsa-key-pair-signature	application password	May 12, 2018, 11:37:59 AM	login
IDS: @gmail.com-AuthToken	application password	May 22, 2018, 6:22:42 PM	login
com.apple.ids: localde...d-113a7c...	application password	May 12, 2018, 11:37:59 AM	login

Step 3: Now once you’ve selected those files, delete them. Again nothing is going to happen as your Mac and Apple’s Servers will create a brand new one that is updated and fixes your error.

Step 4: Once you’ve deleted, restart your Mac and try once again signing into your iMessage or your FaceTime.

10. PART III: SCREW IT, DELETE THEM ALL.

If you tried deleting file by file and it still throws an error, then just go ahead delete all the files with “ids” in front of it.

Here’s how:

Step 1: Jump back into your **Applications**, then **Utilities** and then select **Keychain Access**.

Step 2: Next using **Spotlight Search** (the search bar) type in “IDS”.



Step 3: Finally, just delete all those files (under the **Kind** category, do make sure the files are of **application password** of kind).

Step 4: Once you’ve deleted them, again close your **Keychain**, restart your Mac, open up either your iMessage or FaceTime and try signing again. It should work. If not, there’s few other methods that you can take up to try and fix the error.

11. TURN OFF THE ICLOUD KEYCHAIN.

Your iCloud Keychain is meant to link up your usernames and passwords, credit card information and your WiFi network information across all your devices (that are signed in using that same Apple ID).

But your iCloud Keychain can get confused at times with your Mac’s Keychain (the ones we had deleted earlier in the earlier parts) which includes your iMessage and FaceTime keys.

So the way to get over this situation is to turn off the iCloud key since it is messing things up. Here’s how you do it:

Step 1: Go ahead open up your **System Preferences** and then select **iCloud**.

Step 2: Next, uncheck the box for **Keychain**.

Step 3: Done? Good. Now choose to **Keep on this Mac** a copy of all your Safari passwords and credit cards onto your Mac. This safely keeps all your information so that it doesn’t get deleted all together with your iCloud Keychain itself which would be a waste.

Step 4: Great! Once you’ve done that just close your **System Preferences**, restart your Mac, open back your iMessage or FaceTime and then try signing again and see if it works.

12. REMOVE YOUR IMESSAGE AND FACETIME KEYS FROM YOUR KEYCHAIN.

You must be pretty tired of having to read “keys” and “Keychain” by now, I assure you this will be the last, so hang in there.

This method works to refresh the encryption keys that is being held and used by your iMessage and FaceTime. Here’s how you do it:

Step 1: Go ahead select **Applications**, then **Utilities** and then your **Keychain Access**.

Step 2: Next select **Login** from the top left hand corner and then select **All Items** from the lower left hand sidebar.

Step 3: Now using **Spotlight Search** (the search bar) type in “FaceTime”.

Step 4: You should be presented with a select number of file(s). Delete the files or file.



Step 5: Repeat **Step 3** and **Step 4** but this time typing in “iMessage” into **Spotlight Search** and delete those files too.



Step 6: Once you’re done, just restart your Mac, launch either your Messages or FaceTime and try signing again.

13. DELETE YOUR MAC’S PUSH NOTIFICATIONS FOR IMESSAGE AND FACETIME.

Whenever you send a message on your Mac, your Mac uses a special file called a APSD file (Apple Push Notification Service Daemon) that’s stored in your Mac. This file helps your Mac to log in and send message alerts to iMessage and FaceTime using Apple’s network.

Think of it as a middleman between Apple’s Servers and your iMessage or FaceTime Applications.

Particularly, if you notice that the last time your FaceTime or iMessage synced was sometime ago and you find the APSD file is not updating it to today’s date, then there’s a high chance that the reason you’re getting an error is a problem with that file itself.

Understand? Well, it’s great if you do understand but nevertheless that’s not the important thing here. The important thing now is that we fix it and the way we do that is we remove this “APSD” file from our Mac, then let our Mac recreate the file.

So let’s do that.

Note - It’s important to [back up your Mac](#) before doing this. This is so if anything goes wrong we have backup.

Now there’s two ways you can do this:

1. Using your Mac’s Terminal. (Fastest)

Step 1: Open up your Mac’s **Terminal** and then copy (**Command + C**) and paste (**Command + V**) the

following command into your Terminal:

```
sudo rm LibraryPreferences/com.apple.apsd.plist
```

Step 2: Once you've copy-pasted the command, hit **Enter** and that's it! The file will be removed with just one command.

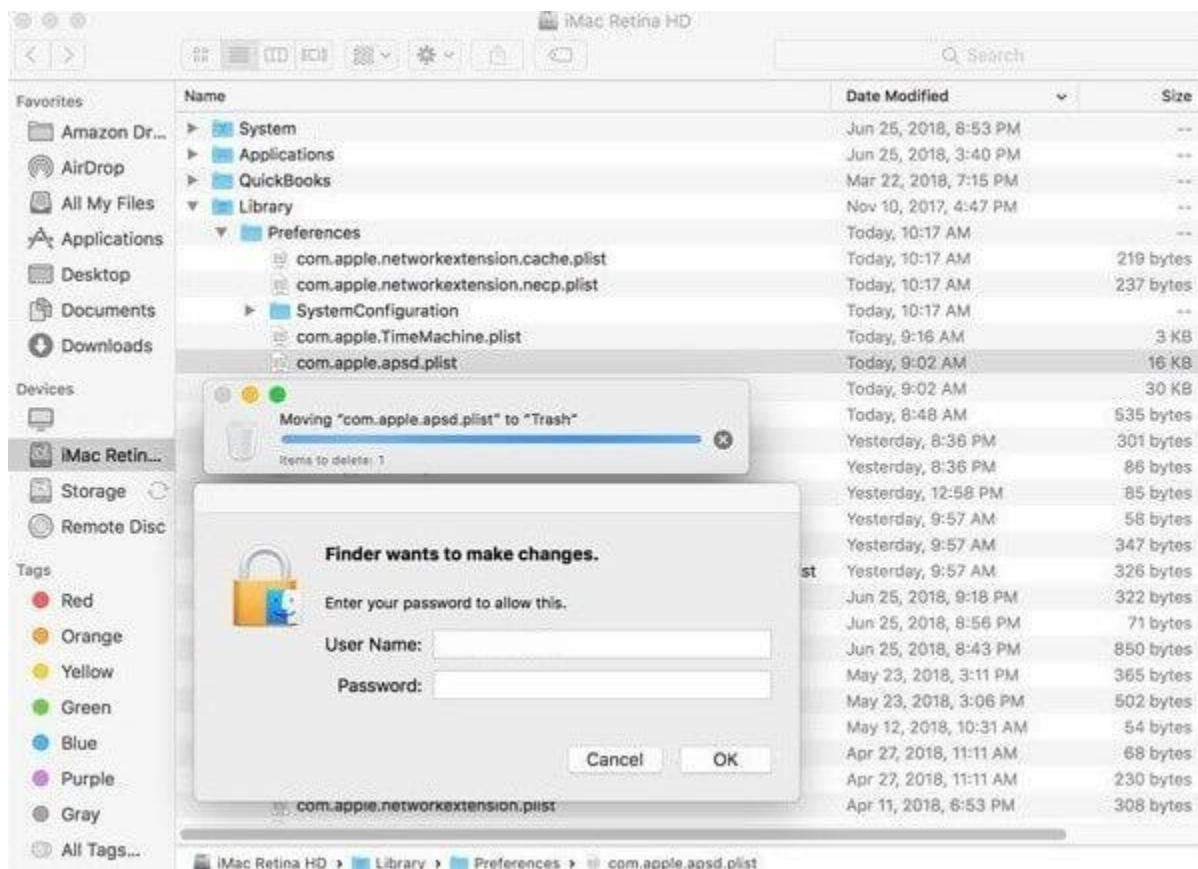
Step 3: Finally, just restart your Mac and then try signing into your iMessage and FaceTime to check if it works.

2. Without using your Mac's Terminal (Simplest)

Step 1: Jump into your hard drive, then **Library**, and then **Preferences**.

Step 2: Now drag the item named **com.apple.apsd.plist** and drop it into your **Trash**.

Step 3: Next when you're prompted to enter your **Admin password**, enter your Admin account password to remove the file.



Step 4: Finally, just restart your Mac and then try signing into your iMessage and FaceTime to check if it works.

For the most part, the problem should be fixed now that that you deleted and rebuilt the "APSD" file.