

Frequently Asked Questions

Element General

Can spaces be deleted?

Spaces in Matrix are just rooms with some extra metadata. You can delete them the same way you delete rooms. If you are an EMS admin, see [How do I delete a room or a space?](#)

How do I enable guest users in a room?

Set the following settings:

- Security & Privacy -> Encryption -> Encrypted: Off ¹
- Security & Privacy -> Access: Public
- Security & Privacy -> Access -> Show advanced -> Enable guest access: On
- Security & Privacy -> Who can read history: Anyone

Guest users only work if a native user on the default homeserver configured in your client is a member of the room. For example, to join a room on your EMS server as a guest using the client at <https://app.element.io/>, an account on the matrix.org homeserver must be a member of the room.

¹ Guest users will technically work with encryption enabled, but guests will not be able to read any messages as they do not have the keys to decrypt them.

It's not recommended to add encryption to public rooms. Anyone can find and join public rooms, so anyone can read messages in them. You'll get none of the benefits of encryption, and you won't be able to turn it off later. Encrypting messages in a public room will make receiving and sending messages slower.

How do I get my access token?

The access token grants full access to your Matrix account. Do not share it with anyone.

- Open Element Settings
- Click `Help & About`
- At the bottom, under `Advanced`, click `Access Token`
- Copy your token

How do I link to my space outside of my Element Web?

Spaces are just rooms, so you can link to a space the same way you would a room—for example, <https://matrix.to/#/#community:matrix.org>.

My secret storage (key backup) secret key/passphrase has leaked, how do I reset and secure it again?

1. Backup your message encryption keys, see [Export and Import E2E Room Keys](#)
2. In Element Web/Desktop settings, under `Security & Privacy` -> `Secure backup`, click `Delete Backup` repeatedly until all backup versions are deleted.
3. Click `Reset` under `Secure Backup`.
4. Click `Reset` under `Cross-signing`.
5. Import the message encryption keys you backed up earlier. See [Export and Import E2E Room Keys](#)

What are the permissions required to start a video call?

In a room with more than two members, voice and video calls are done using the Jitsi integration. Users need "Modify widgets" permissions to add the Jitsi widget to the room and initiate a call.

Once the call is initiated, anyone in the room can join.

What does the different MAS access token prefixes mean?

`mat_` are next gen auth access tokens, short lived; `mar_` refresh tokens
`mct_` are compatibility tokens, usually don't expire; `mcr_` are compatibility refresh tokens (very rarely used)
`syt_` are imported synapse compat access tokens; `syr_` imported compat refresh tokens

What is the preferred resolution for room and space icons?

Room and space icons can be shown in a full-screen lightbox, so the resolution should be high. The homeserver will create a smaller thumbnail that is displayed when viewing rooms and spaces normally.

Matrix General

Can encrypted messages be recovered?

If you want to restore encrypted messages to your Matrix account, you need to have access to your encryption keys that were used to encrypt those messages.

If you have lost your encryption keys, you will not be able to decrypt these messages and they will remain encrypted.

However, if you have used multiple devices to access your Matrix account and have access to the encryption keys on one of those devices, you can try using that device to decrypt messages.

Can I sign in to multiple Matrix accounts in Element Desktop?

If you have multiple Matrix accounts - for example, an EMS account and a matrix.org account - you cannot log in to both simultaneously in the Element Desktop client today. However, you can launch multiple Element instances locally via [its Profiles feature](#).

Do you have tips for migrating between Matrix accounts?

Currently Matrix doesn't support moving communication history over homeservers. The suggested manual method is to invite your new user (for example on an EMS cloud server) over to the same rooms as your old user and give your new user the relevant power levels, if possible.

Old messages in a room will be visible to the new user depending on the room history setting. If you have a room with history open to members, you will be able to simply scroll back to read history (assuming at least one homeserver in the room has the history available locally). Note that changing the room history visibility setting for a room doesn't affect old messages in the room. For rooms where history is limited for new users in the room from "join" or "invite", there is no way to retrieve that history using a user who was not present in that rooms.

Note for encrypted rooms, please ensure to export encryption keys from your old account and import them to the new account. This will allow you to decrypt encrypted room history for messages you have access to. You can do this from the "Security & Privacy" settings in Element.

It may also make sense to export important messages to file, in cases where you cannot get access to them from your new account, for example due to room message visibility settings. Element allows you to export chat history from a room from the room context menu.

How do I add a password if my account was created using SSO?

If your account was created using SSO, for example via GitLab or Apple, **and** your homeserver supports multiple authentication methods for an account (matrix.org does), follow these steps to add a password to your Matrix account. Note, you will need access to the third party SSO account you used to create the account.

1. Add an email address to your account. See [Add Email to Your Account](#).

2. Open a new Matrix client, for example <https://app.element.io> in a private/incognito browser window, then reset the password for your account. See step 3 and onwards in [this](#) guide. Note signing out all other devices when prompted is optional for this guide to work.
3. You can now sign in to your Matrix account using either your original SSO account, or the password you just created.

How do I manually tombstone a room?

This can only be done by room admins (by default). This action cannot be undone.

- Set the Default role in the room to Admin

Roles & Permissions

No users have specific privileges in this room

Permissions

Select the roles required to change various parts of the room

Default role

Admin

- Open Element Devtools by entering `/devtools` in Element

* Commands

`/devtools`

Opens the Developer Tools dialog

expa

`/devtools`



- Click `Explore room state`
- Click `Send custom state event`
 - Event Type: `m.room.tombstone`
 - State Key: leave empty
 - Event Content:

```
{
  "body": "This room has been replaced",
  "replacement_room": "!roomIdOfNewRoom:serverdomain.com"
}
```

- Click `Send`

Developer Tools

Send custom state event

Room ID: `!PreuFcVYhfjsKaQkj:element.io`

Event Type

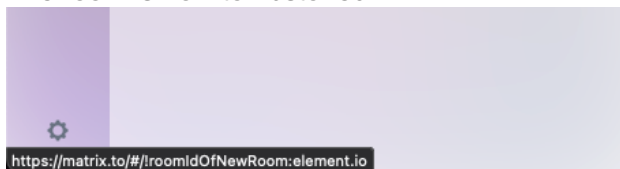
`m.room.tombstone`

State Key

Event Content

```
{
  "body": "This room has been replaced",
```

- Optionally copy room settings and move aliases to the new room
- The room is now tombstoned



3:33PM

 twilight upgraded this room.



This room has been replaced and is no longer active
The conversation continues [here](#).

What characters can I use in my username/localpart?

Your Matrix username/localpart can only contain lower case letters, numbers, and the characters `. _ = - /`.

What is an Identity Server, and how does it work?

The best response to 'What is an Identity Server' is detailed in section 2. of the vector.im Identity Server privacy policy, available here: <https://element.io/legal>.

New Vector runs two identity servers, one at matrix.org and another at vector.im. These servers run in a closed federation - this means that if you add (or remove) your data from one, it is added to (or removed from) the other automatically, too.

The behavior and role of Identity Servers are changing. Historically, Identity Servers provided three sets of functionality:

1. They let users publish their third-party identifiers (email/telephone number) to a directory to allow other Matrix users to discover them.
2. Letting users send invites to a Matrix chat room to an email address instead of a Matrix ID.
3. Letting homeservers send emails/SMS text messages to verify that they belong to a given Matrix user so that the user can log in to the homeserver using a third-party identifier instead of a Matrix ID.

Identity Servers continue to provide the functionality described in 1. However, the features described in 2. and 3. are now provided by the homeserver instead and will be deprecated and phased out of the Identity Server in the future.

For a period in 2019, while privacy functionality was being enhanced on vector.im and matrix.org, these Identity Servers were restricted to only provide services for users on New Vector homeservers. Once privacy improvements landed, this restriction was lifted.

Revision #2

Created 13 June 2025 11:49:00 by twilight

Updated 13 June 2025 11:53:36 by twilight