

Life Matters Media's Guide to Digital Death

Family photos, voice recordings, phone numbers, legal documents, financial information, and more could be lost if your loved ones are unable to access your online and social media accounts after death. As technology reshapes interpersonal communication and document storage, Americans must learn to prepare for the unexpected.

Prepare your digital life

Take a digital inventory

- Consider all of the websites you use for banking, bill paying, shopping, storage of information, social interaction
- Update the information at least every six to twelve months.

Choose a management system to hold the accounts and passwords

- Excel spreadsheet, password protected
- Password Management System (1Password, Dashlane, Keeper, LastPass, MSecure, PasswordBox and RoboForm)
 - Understand the plan if the company fails

Choose a fiduciary to manage the accounts after your death

Keep a paper copy of all important legal documents and at least one paper bank statement yearly.

Communicate with the fiduciary

Wills can contain the password to the Excel spreadsheet or Password management system

- Can be expensive
- There are some digital tools that can help, such as RocketLawyer.com
- Young attorneys are often well-trained in wills and trusts and can draft a will for hundreds- not thousands- of dollars.
- Some accounts are disabled upon death, so the password will not be helpful.

Social media

Facebook allows users to create memorialized accounts and appoint a "legacy contact"

- Facebook allows U.S. users to create memorialized accounts – the word "remembering" is added to the decedent's profile.
- On memorialized accounts, friends can share memories, photos and posts, depending on privacy settings.
- Memorialized profiles do not show up in public spaces, like friend suggestions.
- You can choose a "legacy contact" to administer your Facebook profile when you die.
 - *From the top right of Facebook click the down arrow next to the globe and select settings*
 - *From the left menu, click security*
 - *Click Legacy Contact*
 - *You can also opt to have your account permanently deleted.*

Google offers an inactive account manager or “death manager”

- Allows you to indicate what should happen to digital contacts, emails and web history once they are no longer actively managed.
- As many as 10 approved family members or friends may have access to data from an account, or the account can be terminated and its data erased after a pre-selected time period.
 - *In the Google Account Settings, scroll down the page and click “Inactive Account Manager”*
 - *Then click Setup*
 - *Indicate preferences, time period and alerts*
 - *Click the Enable button*

Twitter:

- You can have a deceased user’s account removed only after submitting an official request to Twitter.
- Twitter will send an email with further instructions and requests for information about the deceased, a copy of your ID and a copy of the deceased’s death certificate.

Yahoo! Mail:

- Unfortunately, anyone who agreed to Yahoo! terms and conditions will lose data after death, because nothing is transferable.
- Your email is quickly shut down after a period of inactivity or death.