

A guide to protecting digital memories for future generations

Insights - 11/09/2023

In today's digital age, we have a significant amount of our lives stored online.

It's important to ensure that our loved ones can access these digital assets in the event we're unable to do so and it is this concern that has recently been the centre of an illuminating campaign by STEP about how people can preserve their digital legacy at www.memories.step.org.

For me, the three key takeaways to ensure digital assets won't disappear when you die are:

1. **Prepare a digital assets inventory**

Begin by creating a list of all your digital assets. For example: digital wallets, e-mail accounts, social media profiles which will often store sentimental items such as photos and videos, cloud storage, blogs and any other online accounts you own.

2. **Use legacy contact or inactive account manager features**

Platforms like Facebook and Google have features that allow you to designate a person who can manage your account after your death. For Facebook, this person is called a Legacy Contact. For Google, you can set up an Inactive Account Manager. Essentially, such tools allow you to decide how your loved ones can access your accounts should you lack capacity to access them yourself, or after your death. If you don't take measures to manage such platforms after your death than the default position can, for example, lead the personal representative of an estate potentially needing a court order to obtain the account holder's data.

3. **Legal documentation**

Consult with a lawyer to prepare a will with a digital assets clause or add such a clause to an existing will. This should detail your digital assets, provide access to them and specify how you want them handled.

Clearly, planning for the management of your digital assets is a crucial aspect of estate planning in the digital age. But by taking measures now, you can ensure that your digital life is handled according to your wishes, and your loved ones can access important information if needed.

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