

# A Guide for Managing Your Digital Legacy



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In today's digital world, ensuring your online accounts are handled according to your wishes after your passing is essential. Many major platforms provide options such as **Legacy Contacts** or **Inactive Account Managers** to help you plan ahead.

This guide outlines the setup process and policies for key digital platforms. **Always check each platform's website for updates, as policies may change.**

## Major Platforms and Their Policies

**Google** (Gmail, YouTube, etc., including Android devices using a Google account)

**Feature:** Inactive Account Manager

**How It Works:**

- Set a timeout period (3 to 18 months) of inactivity before Google takes action.
- Choose trusted contacts to receive specific data (e.g., emails, photos) or delete the account.
- Google notifies contacts when the account becomes inactive.

**Setup:** Go to Inactive Account Manager > Click Start and set preferences. (Steps may vary slightly depending on your device or Google account version.)

**Without Setup:**

- Family can request account closure or, in limited cases, access to certain data—but never login credentials.
- If an account is closed, Google permanently deletes its contents, and future requests for access cannot be processed.
- Request access or closure via [Google's request page](#).

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## Apple (iCloud, iTunes, etc.)

### Feature: Legacy Contact

#### How It Works:

- Assign up to 5 trusted contacts to access your data (photos, messages, notes, etc.).
- Excludes licensed media (music, movies, apps) and iCloud Keychain passwords.
- The Legacy Contact needs an access key and death certificate to retrieve data.

**Setup:** On your device, go to Settings > [Your Name] > Sign-In & Security > Legacy Contact.

#### Without Setup:

- Apple provides no access by default; legal processes may be required.
- Users without a Legacy Contact can request account deletion or access through legal means, including a court order.
- Devices with passcode encryption cannot be unlocked, even by Apple.
- More info: [Apple's access request guide](#).

## LinkedIn

### Feature: Memorialization or Removal (No Legacy Contact)

#### How It Works:

- A memorialized LinkedIn account locks all access but remains online.
- Family can request closure by submitting: ✓ Death certificate.
- ✓ Legal proof (e.g., Letters of Administration, Letters of Testamentary).
- Documentation requirements may vary depending on your country or region.
- More info: [LinkedIn's request process](#).

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## Facebook

### Feature: Legacy Contact

#### How It Works:

- Choose a Legacy Contact to manage your profile after your passing.
- They can: ✓ Accept friend requests on behalf of a memorialized account.
- ✓ Change the profile & cover photo.
- ✓ Request account deletion if no longer needed.
- Alternatively, you can opt to have your account deleted.

#### Setup:

- Go to Settings & Privacy > Settings > Memorialization Settings.
- Select a Legacy Contact or request account deletion.

**Without Setup:** Friends & family can only request memorialization or deletion.

## Instagram

### Feature: Memorialization or Deletion (No Legacy Contact)\*

#### How It Works:

- Family can request to memorialize your account (adds "Remembering" to profile) or delete it.
- Memorialized accounts remain visible but cannot be changed.
- No one can log in to a memorialized account.
- Posts & profile remain unchanged, and "Remembering" appears next to the name.

**Setup:** No pre-death setup available – leave instructions in your estate plan.

**Process:** Family must submit a request with proof of death (e.g., obituary, death certificate).

*Yes, even though Facebook and Instagram are both owned by Meta, they have different policies for handling accounts after someone passes away.*

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## Microsoft

**Feature:** No Legacy Contact or Inactive Account Manager

**How It Works:**

- Family can request account closure or limited data access with legal proof (e.g., death certificate, court order).
- Outlook emails and OneDrive files are not automatically transferred—Microsoft only provides access in rare cases.

**Setup:** No pre-death setup available—include instructions in your estate plan.

**Process:** Family must submit a request with legal documentation. [Request account closure or access.](#)

## Twitter/X

**Feature:** [Account Deactivation](#) (No Legacy Contact)

**How It Works:**

- No legacy contact or memorialization options.
- Family can request account deactivation.

**Setup:** No pre-death setup available—include wishes in estate plan.

**Without Setup:** Submit a request via Twitter/X Help Center with proof of death.

## Yahoo, TikTok, Snapchat

- **Yahoo:** Does not allow access after death; accounts auto-delete due to inactivity. [Request Account Closure.](#)
- **TikTok:** No legacy contact; family must request account removal. [Submit a request.](#)
- **Snapchat:** Accounts auto-delete after 30 days of inactivity. [Delete an account.](#)

# Glossary of Key Terms



*To ensure clarity and a comprehensive understanding of digital legacy management, this glossary defines key terms used in this guide, covering concepts related to online accounts, digital assets, and estate planning.*

**Digital Asset:** Any electronic record, file, or data that has value, stored on a digital device or online. Examples include emails, social media accounts, photos, videos, documents, and online financial accounts.

**Digital Executor:** Person designated to manage digital assets after someone's death, including accessing, transferring, deleting, or memorializing accounts.

**Estate Plan:** A legal arrangement for managing and distributing a person's assets after death or incapacitation, often includes a will and trusts.

**Inactive Account Manager:** An online feature that sets instructions for user accounts after inactivity, such as notifying contacts, sharing data, or deleting the account.

**Legacy Contact:** A designated person to manage aspects of an account after the holder's death, with permissions varying by platform.

**Letters of Administration:** Court document authorizing an estate administrator when someone dies without a will (intestate).

**Letters Testamentary:** Court-issued document allowing a named executor in a will to administer the deceased's estate.

**Memorialization:** Changing a deceased person's social media profile to a memorial status, typically adding "Remembering" and restricting certain activities.

# Tips & Final Notes



## Tips for Managing Your Digital Legacy

- ✓ **Create an Inventory** – List important accounts with secure access instructions (e.g., email, social media, banking).
- ✓ **Appoint a Digital Executor** – Designate someone tech-savvy to handle your digital assets.
- ✓ **Use Legacy Tools** – Set up legacy contacts or inactive account managers where available.
- ✓ **Communicate Wishes** – Let trusted family members know how you want your accounts handled.
- ✓ **Seek Legal Advice** – Include digital assets in your estate plan.

## Final Notes:

- Policies vary by platform and may change – always check official websites.
- Some platforms require legal proof (death certificates, court orders) before granting access.
- Without pre-planning, account access may be difficult or impossible for loved ones.

By taking action now, you can ensure your digital legacy is managed according to your wishes, reducing stress for your loved ones in the future.

*Someone's sitting in the shade today because someone planted a tree a long time ago."*

*~Warren Buffett*