

## Managing your digital legacy

It's a sad fact of life that one day we will die.

Many of us think of our legacy simply in terms of money in the bank, superannuation, cars, homes and other physical assets, but with more and more of our lives being lived online we have a large digital footprint we could leave behind as well.

Today we need to think through that digital legacy – what we'll leave online when we die – just as we should our physical assets. Some useful information on what to think consider can be found in this brochure produced with the ACCAN Grants project, [Death and the Internet](#). A simple step is to leave a direction in your will, but this won't necessarily apply to all of the services we use online as these will be governed by the terms and conditions of those services.

So, what do you want to happen with your online material – all those emails, social media posts, files and photos on cloud storage? Some of it may even have financial value and be critical to your family's or business' ongoing well-being. Your family may find comfort in remembering the fun times you had together described on Facebook, or they may prefer to have the account shut down.

Most social media, email accounts and online storage will disappear when the account is closed, but some services have good options you can use. Facebook has an excellent feature called a 'Legacy Contact' which can allow that person to set your account to '[Memorial Status](#)' after your death. Google's '[Inactive Account Manager](#)' allows you to set a range of actions in train once your account goes 'inactive' and this can be useful also. Other accounts may remain the property of the service provider and your family or executor may lose control altogether.

If your accounts are business related, they may be needed if your business is to continue after your death, so you may need to set up systems to allow someone else to take the accounts over.

What's really important is that you take steps to manage your legacy beforehand, and let your nearest and dearest know your wishes.

### Useful links

- ACCAN and the University of Melbourne produced a brochure: [Your digital legacy](#) which gives consumer information on what they need to consider. The ACCAN Grants report *Death and the Internet* may also be of interest.
- Instagram information on [memorialised accounts](#).
- An [excellent checklist](#) from the Law Society in New Zealand which is useful anywhere.
- Australian law firm, Slater and Gordon, has published information on [digital legacies](#).