

# DIGITAL ASSETS IN END-OF-LIFE PLANNING



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## Things you should know

As more of life is lived online, digital assets have become an important part of end-of-life planning. From photos and videos stored in the cloud, to social media accounts, online banking, subscription services, and payment platforms. Many digital accounts hold financial or sentimental value.

Without a plan in place, families may face unnecessary stress, financial complications, loss of meaningful memories, or even risks such as identity theft and fraud.

Some digital assets may be owned outright, such as personal photos or original content shared online. Others like music, eBooks, or streaming libraries are often licensed rather than owned and may not be transferable after death.

When a death occurs, even in situations where it is expected, events often unfold quickly. Families are left to make decisions while grieving. Knowing where important digital information is stored, how to access accounts, and what the deceased's wishes were can ease the burden in the days and weeks that follow.

While it may feel simplest to close or delete online accounts after someone dies, digital spaces can also hold meaning for those left behind. Social media pages may become places of remembrance, much like photo albums or saved recordings once were. Many people find comfort in revisiting photos, posts, and shared memories as part of their grieving process.

Planning ahead for digital assets is another way to protect loved ones and preserve both practical and emotional legacies.

# Things you should do

- Have a plan for your digital assets, don't leave families scrambling to locate you online documents and passwords
- Make an inventory of all your digital assets
  - List any password-protected physical digital devices, such as computers, smartphones, tablets and hard drives
  - online assets: e-mail accounts, social media accounts, online banking and payment accounts, including PayPal, as well as accounts for Amazon, Apple and Netflix
- Use Facebook's legacy setting
- Appoint a trusted friend to oversee your account after you pass
- Write down your online passwords and accounts, and store the information in a safe place, preferably with your will and other important documents.
- Consider subscribing to a password manager, which is a program that stores different passwords under one master password. Any time you visit a site that requires a login, the password manager will automatically select one for that site. Some password managers come with a digital legacy option, where a designated contact can receive all your passwords should you become incapacitated or die. Some password managers are free, while others charge an annual fee of \$20 or more.
- At a minimum, make an inventory. Make a list of what you own, or have access to, and keep it current.
- Instructions outlining what to do with this list and how to find it need to be shared with family, so they can easily access the most important accounts and close the rest



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## Where to Find Support

The Alberta Northwest Palliative Care Society helps patients and families access the support and resources they need in our community. We advocate for your care, ensure your needs are prioritized, and provide guidance through every step of this journey.

Remember, you are not alone. We are here to support you and your loved ones



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