



Levitt Lightman Dewar & Graham LLP
Barristers and Solicitors

Your Digital Life Needs a Plan

A Plain-Language Guide to Digital Estate Planning
for Every Major Platform

*You have a will for your house, your savings, and your jewelry.
But what about your iPhone, Gmail, Facebook, and Instagram?*

Apple

Google

Facebook

Instagram

LinkedIn

X

Microsoft

TikTok

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Platform tools and URLs change over time. Always follow current on-screen instructions. © 2025 LLDG. All rights reserved.



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Your Digital Life Needs a Plan

A question we are asked with increasing regularity is: "How do I deal with my digital assets?" It is a great question, and one that more people should be thinking about.

Think about everything you do online. You scroll through Facebook memories, store decades of family photos in iCloud, and send emails through Gmail. These are not just accounts. They are part of your story.

But if something happens to you, your loved ones could be completely locked out of all of it. Without the right planning, your digital life does not simply fade away. It sits there, sometimes forever, sometimes a target for fraud, and always a source of unnecessary stress for the people you love.

The good news? Most major platforms now have tools that let you decide exactly what happens. This guide walks you through each one, step by step, with no jargon required.

■ **A note from LLDG:** Digital estate planning is an important, and often overlooked, part of your overall estate plan. Once you've set up these platform tools, speak with one of our lawyers to make sure your Will and Power of Attorney formally authorize your executor to manage your digital assets. Platform tools are a great start, but legal documentation is what truly protects your wishes.

■ **Please note:** Platform tools, screens, and URLs change frequently, and each company ultimately decides what information to release to your estate. The steps below are accurate at the time of writing, but always follow the current on-screen instructions.

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01 Before You Start: Build Your Digital Inventory

Before diving into individual platforms, the single most helpful thing you can do is create a **Digital Inventory**: a simple, organized list of all your online accounts and how to access them.

Your inventory should include:

- **Email accounts**
Gmail, Outlook, iCloud Mail. These are often the master key to everything else
- **Social media**
Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, TikTok, YouTube, Pinterest
- **Financial accounts**
Online banking, PayPal, investment platforms, crypto wallets
- **Cloud storage**
iCloud, Google Drive, Dropbox, OneDrive. These may contain irreplaceable photos
- **Password manager**
Make sure your executor can access it with the master password
- **Subscriptions**
Netflix, Spotify, Amazon Prime. These keep billing after death
- **Business accounts**
Domain names, website hosting, business email, Shopify

■ **Security Tip:** Never store passwords in your Will, as Wills become public documents during probate. Instead, use a password manager and give your executor the master password in a sealed letter stored with your estate planning documents, or provide the inventory to your LLDG lawyer for safekeeping.

02 Apple

iPhone, iPad, Mac, iCloud, Photos & More

Ease of Setup: ■ Easy

Tool: Legacy Contact

Where to find it: Settings → [Your Name] → Sign-In & Security → Legacy Contact

Apple's Legacy Contact feature lets you designate up to 5 trusted people who can request access to your iCloud account after you pass away. Apple generates a unique Access Key that your chosen contact must present along with your death certificate.

What your contact/family CAN access:

- ✓ Photos and videos stored in iCloud
- ✓ Notes, messages, files, device backups
- ✓ Contacts, calendars, reminders

What they CANNOT access:

- ✗ iTunes purchases (movies, music, books are licensed, not owned)
- ✗ Passwords saved in iCloud Keychain
- ✗ Anything not backed up to iCloud

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. On your iPhone: **Settings** → **tap your name** → **Sign-In & Security**
2. Tap **Legacy Contact**, then **Add Legacy Contact**
3. Choose someone from your contacts. They do not need an Apple device
4. Authenticate with Face ID, Touch ID, or your passcode
5. An **Access Key** is generated. Share it via Messages or print it
6. **Important:** Store a printed copy with your Will and estate documents at LLDG

■ **LLDG Tip:** Apple recommends printing the Access Key and keeping it with your physical estate documents. A digital copy can be lost if devices are unavailable after death.

03 Google

Gmail, Google Drive, Photos, YouTube, Chrome & More

Ease of Setup: ■ Easy

Tool: Inactive Account Manager

Where to find it: myaccount.google.com → Data & Privacy → Make a Plan for Your Digital Legacy

Google's Inactive Account Manager lets you choose what happens to your Gmail, Drive, Photos, YouTube, and more if your account goes inactive for 3–18 months. You can designate up to 10 trusted contacts, each with customized access to specific services.

What your contact/family CAN access:

- ✓ Gmail (emails and attachments)
- ✓ Google Drive files and documents
- ✓ Google Photos (years of family memories)
- ✓ YouTube channel data

What they CANNOT access:

- ✗ Login credentials to your account
- ✗ Google Pay funds
- ✗ Services you don't specifically include

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Go to **myaccount.google.com** and sign in
2. Click **Data & Privacy** in the left menu
3. Scroll to "**Make a plan for your digital legacy**"
4. Set your **inactivity timeout** (3–18 months)
5. Add trusted contacts and specify what each can access
6. Optionally choose **automatic account deletion** after the period
7. Click **Confirm Plan**

■ **LLDG Tip:** Google cannot distinguish between death and a long vacation. If you go off the grid for 3 months, the plan may activate while you're alive. We recommend setting the inactivity period to 12–18 months.

04 Facebook / Meta

Your Social Memory Book

Ease of Setup: ■ Easy

Tool: Legacy Contact & Memorialization Settings

Where to find it: Settings & Privacy → Settings → Memorialization Settings

Facebook gives you two clear options: memorialize your account (turning it into a tribute space with "Remembering" above your name), or delete it permanently. You can also name a Legacy Contact who can manage limited aspects of your memorialized profile.

What your contact/family **CAN** access:

- ✓ Write a pinned tribute post
- ✓ Update profile and cover photo
- ✓ Respond to new friend requests
- ✓ Manage who can post tributes

What they **CANNOT** access:

- ✗ Login access to your account (ever)
- ✗ Access to private messages
- ✗ Ability to make purchases

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Log into Facebook on desktop or app
2. Click profile photo → **Settings & Privacy** → **Settings**
3. Scroll to and click **Memorialization Settings**
4. Under "Legacy Contact," type a friend's name and click **Add**
5. Optionally allow them to **download a copy of your data**
6. Or select **"Delete After Death"** if you prefer complete removal

■ **LLDG Tip:** If you manage any Facebook Pages as the sole admin, those pages will be removed when your account is memorialized. Add a second admin to any important pages you want to continue.

05 Instagram

Your Visual Story

Ease of Setup: ■■■ Requires Family
Action

Tool: Memorialization Request (no pre-planning available)

Where to find it: instagram.com/accounts/contact/?ctx=deceased

Instagram is notably behind on this front. Unlike Facebook, there is no way to designate a legacy contact or set up post-death preferences in advance. All action must be taken by a family member or authorized representative after your passing.

What your contact/family CAN access:

- ✓ Request memorialization ("Remembering" label)
- ✓ Request permanent account deletion
- ✓ Existing posts remain per original privacy settings

What they CANNOT access:

- ✗ Login access under any circumstances
- ✗ Ability to change content on a memorialized account
- ✗ Access to private messages or data

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. What your family needs to do:
2. Visit instagram.com/accounts/contact/?ctx=deceased
3. Submit full name and Instagram username (@handle)
4. Provide **proof of death** (death certificate or obituary)
5. Choose memorialization OR permanent deletion
6. For deletion: proof of family relationship also required

■ **LLDG Tip:** Because Instagram has no pre-planning feature, leave clear written instructions in your estate documents about your Instagram wishes, and ensure a trusted family member knows your username.

06 LinkedIn

Your Professional Legacy

Ease of Setup: ■■ Moderate

Tool: Memorialization or Closure via Executor

Where to find it: linkedin.com/help/linkedin/ask/ts-rdmlp

LinkedIn will either memorialize or close a profile upon receiving proper documentation. A memorialized profile preserves career achievements and professional connections, a meaningful tribute for those who built a public professional legacy.

What your contact/family CAN access:

- ✓ Memorialize (preserves career achievements)
- ✓ Permanently close the profile

What they CANNOT access:

- ✗ Access to private messages
- ✗ Login credentials

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Executor navigates to LinkedIn's **deceased member request form**
2. Provide full name, profile URL, date of death, obituary link
3. For **closure**: provide court letters of testamentary or administration
4. For **memorialization**: proof of death and relationship is sufficient
5. LinkedIn reviews and processes the request

■ **LLDG Tip:** If the deceased had a large professional following or published articles, consider memorialization rather than deletion. Their career contributions can continue to be a resource for others.

07 X (formerly Twitter)

Deactivation Only

Ease of Setup: ■■ Moderate

Tool: Deactivation Request by Family

Where to find it: help.twitter.com → Privacy Request Form → Deceased User Account Removal

X does not offer memorialization or legacy contact features. The only option is permanent deactivation. A verified immediate family member or authorized estate representative must submit a request with documentation.

What your contact/family CAN access:

✓ Ability to request permanent deactivation of the account

What they CANNOT access:

✗ Login access (ever)

✗ Access to direct messages or account data

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Family member visits X's **Privacy Request Form**
2. Select "**Request removal of a deceased user's account**"
3. Provide a copy of requester's government-issued photo ID
4. Provide a copy of the deceased's **death certificate**
5. Submit and await confirmation from X's team

■ **LLDG Tip:** If the account had significant followership (journalist, public figure, business owner), speak with LLDG before requesting deletion, as the account may hold reputational or monetary value.

08 Microsoft

Outlook, OneDrive, Xbox & Microsoft 365

Ease of Setup: ■■ Moderate

Tool: Next of Kin Account Closure

Where to find it: microsoft.com/en-ca/concern/relative

Microsoft allows next of kin to request account closure. Microsoft typically deactivates accounts after about 1 year of inactivity and deletes them after 2 years. There is no legacy contact pre-planning feature. Family must act proactively to preserve OneDrive files and Outlook emails.

What your contact/family CAN access:

- ✓ Account closure upon proof of death
- ✓ Potential content access with legal documentation
- ✓ Xbox memorial options for gaming accounts

What they CANNOT access:

- ✗ Automatic data transfer
- ✗ Access to Microsoft 365 subscriptions

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Visit microsoft.com/en-ca/concern/relative
2. Provide deceased's name, email address, and death certificate
3. Specify closure or data access request
4. Microsoft's team reviews and responds

■ **LLDG Tip:** If your loved one stored important documents in OneDrive or uses Microsoft 365 for a small business, act quickly, as Microsoft begins deleting inactive accounts within 1–2 years.

09 TikTok

Account Removal Only

Ease of Setup: ■■■ Requires Family
Action

Tool: Support Request via Help Center

Where to find it: support.tiktok.com → Account deletion request

TikTok currently does not offer a memorialization feature or any pre-planning tools. Family members can submit a request to have an account permanently deleted. Public videos remain visible unless the account is removed.

What your contact/family CAN access:

✓ Ability to request account deletion

What they CANNOT access:

✗ Account access, private messages, or videos

✗ Any memorialization option

Step-by-Step Setup:

1. Go to **support.tiktok.com** and navigate to account deletion requests
2. Submit proof of death and proof of your relationship to the deceased
3. TikTok reviews the request and processes the deletion

■ **LLDG Tip:** If the account was monetized (TikTok Creator Fund, brand deals), consult LLDG before deletion, as there may be outstanding payments owed to the estate.

10 Bonus: Other Platforms Worth Thinking About

Amazon

Accounts cannot be transferred. Executors can close the account with a death certificate. Note: Kindle books, Prime Video, and digital purchases are licensed and they cannot be inherited. Amazon Seller accounts hold real financial value and need prompt attention.

PayPal

Digital wallet balances are part of your estate. Executors can close accounts and claim remaining funds with a death certificate and proof of authority. These are easily overlooked. Also document any Interac e-Transfer history and online banking accounts so your executor knows they exist.

Netflix / Spotify / Subscriptions

Subscriptions keep billing even after death. Your executor should cancel these promptly using your login credentials or by contacting support with proof of death. Keep a complete list of subscriptions in your Digital Inventory.

Cryptocurrency & NFTs

This is the most critical digital asset category. Without private keys or seed phrases, crypto holdings are permanently inaccessible and potentially gone forever. Store wallet credentials and recovery phrases in an extremely secure physical document. Speak with LLDG about formally including these in your estate plan.

Domain Names & Websites

Domain names are valuable assets that expire if not renewed. Include your domain registrar and hosting provider credentials in your Digital Inventory. Update your Will to specifically address websites and digital intellectual property.

11 Your Digital Estate Planning Checklist

Use this checklist to track your progress. Check off each item as you complete it:

FOUNDATION

- ☐ Create a Digital Inventory listing all accounts, platforms, and subscription services
- ☐ Store passwords securely (password manager or secure sealed envelope with estate documents)
- ☐ Tell your executor where to find your Digital Inventory
- ☐ Speak with LLDG to ensure your Will grants your executor authority over digital assets

APPLE

- ☐ Set up a Legacy Contact for your Apple ID
- ☐ Store or share the Access Key with your Legacy Contact
- ☐ Print a physical copy of the Access Key and keep it with your estate documents

GOOGLE

- ☐ Set up Google's Inactive Account Manager
- ☐ Designate trusted contacts and specify what each can access
- ☐ Set an appropriate inactivity period (recommend 12–18 months)
- ☐ Decide whether to delete or preserve your account after inactivity

FACEBOOK / META

- ☐ Designate a Legacy Contact in Facebook Memorialization Settings
- ☐ Decide: memorialize or permanently delete after death
- ☐ Add a second admin to any Facebook Pages you run

INSTAGRAM & OTHER SOCIAL PLATFORMS

- ☐ Leave written instructions in estate documents about Instagram wishes
- ☐ Ensure a trusted family member knows your username
- ☐ Note LinkedIn, X/Twitter, and TikTok preferences in your estate documents
- ☐ Include all social media credentials in your Digital Inventory

FINANCIAL & OTHER DIGITAL ASSETS

- ☐ Document all digital wallets, PayPal, and cryptocurrency holdings
- ☐ Securely store crypto private keys and seed phrases in a physical document
- ☐ List all recurring subscriptions for prompt cancellation after death

- Note any domain names, websites, and associated credentials

12 Next Steps with LLDG

Platform tools are a wonderful starting point, but they are not a legal plan. They don't appear in your Will, they can't be enforced by a court, and they don't cover the countless platforms that don't yet have legacy features.

To truly protect your digital legacy, your estate planning documents should:

- ✓ Explicitly grant your executor authority to access and manage your digital assets
- ✓ Include a Schedule or Memorandum specifically listing your digital accounts and intentions
- ✓ Address any digital assets with monetary value (crypto, domain names, monetized accounts)
- ✓ Be reviewed and updated regularly as technology and your accounts evolve



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Ready to protect your complete legacy, including your digital assets?

LLDG's Wills & Estates team has been helping Etobicoke families plan with confidence for over 70 years. We'll make sure your digital wishes are legally documented alongside your traditional estate plan.

Call us: 416-620-0362 | Toll-free: 1-866-730-4919

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Virtual appointments available. No jargon. No surprises. Just honest, thoughtful legal guidance.

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