SAVING THE DEAD
Digital Legacy Planning & Posthumous Personhood

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Outline

1. Facebook
2. Google
3. Emerging Solutions and Future Directions
I. Facebook
Remembering Mark Zuckerberg …

We hope people who love Mark will find comfort in the things others share to remember and celebrate his life.

Learn more about memorialized accounts and the legacy contact setting on Facebook.

November 2016
Facebook grants father's wish to see his dead son's personalised video

February 7, 2014

Liza Maria Garza

Facebook has granted a US father's tearful request to unlock his dead son's social media page and give him access to a video compilation of photos and posts he had been unable to view.

Tearful plea: John Berlin, Photo: YouTube

- Facebook turns 10 years old
- Facebook releases personalised videos

John W. Berlin II
First of all I just want to thank everyone for all the shares and support. We couldn't have done this without you. This is the official Facebook video of my son Jesse Berlin
Share • February 8

482 people like this.
6,316 shares

Stella Bowman I wonder how we can ask facebook to have one page we can upload pictures of a child we lost and share our pain, making this will help us with our lost that we can share to others... this was a nice memory of Jesse.
February 8 at 8:43am • Edited

Kira Black-Widow Rodzczno You truly are an inspiration to all of the families who have lost loved ones. Thank you for speaking out. I'm very sorry for your loss.
February 8 at 8:43am

How do I report a deceased user or an account that needs to be memorialized?

Memorializing the account:
It is our policy to memorialize all deceased users' accounts on the site. Memorializing the account set privacy so that only confirmed friends can see the profile (timeline) or locate it in Search. The profile (timeline) will also no longer appear in the Suggestions section of the Home page. Friends and family can leave posts in remembrance. In order to protect the privacy of the deceased user, we cannot provide login information for the account to anyone. However, once an account has been memorialized, it is completely secure and cannot be accessed or altered by anyone.

If you need to report a profile (timeline) to be memorialized, please click here.

Removing the account:
Verified immediate family members may request the removal of a loved one’s account from the site.
Facebook: Memorializing Accounts

Memorializing Accounts

What does memorializing an account mean? Does it deactivate or delete it?
When a user passes away, we memorialize their account to protect their privacy. Memorializing an account sets the account privacy so that only confirmed friends can see the profile (timeline) or locate it in search. Friends and family can leave posts in remembrance. Memorializing an account also prevents anyone from logging into the account.

Was this answer helpful?

Source: https://www.facebook.com/help?page=842
2012 Facebook …

- ALL (memorial) or NOTHING (deleted).
- No CURATION of the final memorialised page.
  (Many loved ones ‘drive’ the account after someone dies since they’ve been left the password, despite this being a Terms of Use violation).

→ CONTEXT COLLAPSE (Marwick and boyd, 2011).

- Memorialised = space to remember, space to post about the deceased.
- There are also memorial pages (created specifically, not timelines) but that brings the grief trolls.
Now (2015): Facebook Legacy Contact

Legacy Contact

My Legacy Contact
A legacy contact is someone you choose to manage your account after you pass away. They'll be able to do things like pin a post on your Timeline, respond to new friend requests, and update your profile picture. They won't post as you or see your messages. Learn more.

Choose a friend [ ] Add

Your legacy contact won't be notified until your account is memorialized, but you'll have the option to send them a message right away.

Account Deletion

☐ If you don't want a Facebook account after you pass away, you can request to have your account permanently deleted.

Close

July 2015
Legacy Contacts

If you're a legacy contact, you can manage a memorialized account and will have the option to do things like:

- Write a pinned post for the memorialized profile (ex: to share a final message on behalf of your deceased loved one or provide information about a memorial service)
- Respond to new friend requests (ex: old friends or family members who weren't yet on Facebook)
- Update the profile picture and cover photo

Legacy contacts can't:

- Log into the memorialized account
- Remove or change past posts, photos and other things shared on the Timeline
- Read messages sent to other friends
- Remove any friends

If you’re not a legacy contact, you can submit a request to memorialize or remove a deceased loved one's account.

https://www.facebook.com/help/241237032913527/
Facebook can’t sell ads to dead people.
But it can sell ads at memorials.
II. Google
2012: To access a deceased relative’s Google account … (1/2)

Part 1

We require the following information:

1. Your full name
2. Your physical mailing address
3. Your email address
4. A photocopy of your government-issued ID or driver’s license
5. The Gmail address of the deceased user
6. The death certificate of the deceased user. If the document is not in English, please provide a certified English translation prepared by a competent translator and notarized
7. The following information from an email message that you have received at your email address, from the Gmail address in question:
   - The full header from the email message. See instructions on how to find headers in Gmail and other webmail email providers. Copy everything from 'Delivered-To:' to 'Content-Type:'
   - The entire content of the message

Mail or fax this information to:

Google Inc.
Gmail User Support - Decedents’ Accounts
c/o Google Custodian of Records
1600 Amphitheatre Parkway
Mountain View, CA 94043
Fax: 650-644-0358
Part 2

Upon receipt of this information, Google will review your request and notify you by email as to whether or not we will be able to move beyond Part 1 to the next steps of the process. If we are able to move forward based on our preliminary review, we will send further instructions outlining Part 2. Part 2 will require you to get additional legal process including an order from a U.S. court and/or submitting additional materials. Please note that submitting these materials will not guarantee that we will be able to provide Gmail content so we recommend not embarking on Part 2 until you hear back from us regarding Part 1. Because of our concerns for user privacy, if we determine that we cannot provide the Gmail content, we will not be able to share further details about the account or discuss our decision.

Source: http://support.google.com/mail/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=14300
NB: Single Google Privacy Policy …

- 1 March 2012: 70 different privacy policies for Google products (Gmail, Blogger, Picasa, YouTube, etc.) merged into a single Privacy Policy.
- +ve simplification
- -ve deep integration across all Google databases about you (watch something on YouTube, see related ads on Blogger).

http://www.google.com/policies/privacy/
And: A Single ‘Delete’ Button, Too …

What happens to YouTube if I delete my Google Account or Google+?

⚠️ If you delete the Google Account to which your YouTube account is linked, you will delete both the Google Account AND your YouTube account, including all videos and account data.

⚠️ If you are using your Google+ identity on YouTube, and you delete your Google+ profile, your YouTube Channel will be affected. Find out more in our article about the effect of disabling Google+.

Source: http://support.google.com/youtube/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=1151740
Single Sign-On.

One password. All of Google.
Want to enjoy the best of Google? Just stay signed in. One username and password is all you need to unlock more features from services you use every day, like Gmail, Maps, Google+, and YouTube.

All your Google eggs in one basket.
Now: Google Inactive Account Manager

**Inactive Account Manager**

What happens to your account when you stop using it?
Google puts you in control. Learn more

**Alert Me**

Provide a mobile phone number to be alerted before any actions will be performed on your account.
You can also add an additional email address.

Add mobile phone number (Required)
Email address
	**tamaleaver@gmail.com**
Add email
Minimum Timeout Period 3 Months ...
Share or Delete.

Notify Contacts and Share Data
Add up to 10 trusted friends or family members who should be notified that your account is inactive. You can also share data with them if you like.

Add trusted contact
Set auto-response in Gmail

Optionally delete account
If you wish, instruct Google to delete your account once all requested actions have been completed.

All data associated with your products will be deleted. This includes your publicly shared data like YouTube videos, Google+ posts or blogs on Blogger. Learn more.

Delete my account:
The Social Media Contradiction
A Social Media Contradiction

“a social media contradiction may arise where users focus on the social elements – often acts of communication and sharing which are thought of as ephemeral and in the moment, comparable to a telephone conversation – while the companies and corporations creating these apps are more focused on the media elements, which are measurable, aggregatable, can be algorithmically analysed in a variety of potentially valuable ways, and can last indefinitely.”

(Leaver & Lloyd, 2014)
III. Emerging Solutions and Future Directions
Perpetu (and other legacy managers)

Who is Perpetu for?

**Online Savvy Folks**
You use social networks. You upload photos and share content. You write emails, not letters. You have an “online presence” that you want to preserve. You need Perpetu.

**Legacy Leavers**
You want to post a last tweet, publish a last Facebook update, or send a final email to your loved ones, in case you pass away. You wish to be remembered, in a certain way. You need Perpetu.

**Estate Planners**
Whether you are a lawyer, a will-writer, or an insurance firm - you don’t have the tools to manage your clients’ online assets, or execute their wishes on those assets. We can help. [Contact us now.]
NB: ‘Be Right Back’, Black Mirror
LivesOn

Your social afterlife

Sign up with Twitter

LIVESON will keep tweeting even after you've passed away. But to do that, you need to teach it.

LIVESON A.I. analyses your original Twitter feed. Learning about your likes, tastes and syntax. (coming soon: recommendation engine)

Tweets will appear via your LIVESON hashtag. Help it become a better you by giving feedback.

Nominate an executor to your LIVESON 'Will'. They decide whether to keep your account 'live'.

When your heart stops beating, you'll keep tweeting
What if...

You could preserve your parents’ memories forever?
And you could keep their stories alive, for your children, grandchildren and for many generations to come?

You could preserve your legacy for the future?
And in this way your children, friends, or even total strangers from a distant future will remember you in a hundred years?

You could live on forever as a digital avatar?
And people in the future could actually interact with your memories, stories and ideas, almost as if they were talking to you?
The Problems with Social Media Resurrection …

- LivesOn, Eterni.Me & similar start-ups presume that human beings can be meaningfully reduced to patterns of information.
- They presume that social media is either unambiguous, transparent, or that multiplicity can be algorithmically understood.
- They presume that re-animating people in digital forms is a goal which justifies itself.
Conclusion I: Ethics

- If social media traces can be amalgamated to inform bots, avatars or anything else, what are the ramifications?
- What a ‘resurrected’ bot be alive?
- Would ‘they’ have any rights (legally or morally)?
- Could a ‘resurrected’ digital person have their own assets? (Or are ‘they’ an asset themselves?)
Conclusions II: History

- Currently, social media services are conceptualised and regulated in terms of the *active user*, but questions of legacy, history, and assets require more collective or transferrable models.

- If the *bulk of user-generated content* is ‘owned’ by *individuals*, does this material have to, or should it, be erased when they pass away?

- In what circumstances does the *historical record* supersede individual terms of use?

- At what point do big data aggregates speak more of the dead than or the living?
HOW WE REMEMBER OUR ANCESTORS:
I found this old picture of my great grandfather. He looks so cool and mysterious!

HOW FUTURE GENERATIONS WILL REMEMBER US:
I just downloaded an archive of my great grandfather’s Facebook updates. Evidently he hated Mondays and loved telling people when he was bored.
Conclusions III: Design of Social Media Platforms

- All social media and digital platforms need to be designed with the potential death of users in mind from the beginning;
- At present the official policies of social media companies and online corporations regarding deceased users are minimal and relatively blunt;
- Where a single account or authentication service is a gateway to different tools, services and content, there should be some ability to separate and curate these posthumously, allowing final curatorial decisions by digital executors;
- Private corporations will increasingly need to officialise their position on the maintenance of posthumous profiles, and re-evaluate these positions in light of actual uses;
- Companies should commit to either maintain or export the user data of deceased users in accordance with their wishes.
Conclusion IV: Wills & Legacies

- Set up, use, and leave a notes in your will saying you’ve set up, any available tools (Facebook Legacy, Google Inactive Account Manager, etc.).

- Given the legal ambiguities of most legal systems currently wills should leave ideal instructions (ie what users would like to happen), hoping that the laws will catch up before they die;

- Due to the lack of available options and the lack of awareness of official options, many users may still resort to *ad hoc responses*, such as transferring control of online profiles to immediate family members after a user’s death (ie leaving the password) which currently violates most Terms of Use etc;

- Do NOT leave passwords in wills (they are searchable documents, and passwords change!).
Questions or Comments?

Or find me later …

http://www.tamaleaver.net/research/the-ends-of-identity/

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