

## What to do about your digital assets

When we talk about “digital assets” we mean anything that is not a tangible asset. It is something you own but has no physical existence.

In our busy world it is easy to overlook what might happen to your digital assets when you die or lose capacity (temporarily or permanently).

Your executors or family members will need to access your digital assets to carry out your wishes, for example on death you might want them to exercise your “right to be forgotten” or during lifetime you might want to grant those who have the legal authority (an attorney or court appointed deputy) to look after your affairs to be able to close down or continue to operate your social media accounts, online subscriptions, emails and so on.

### What can you do about this?

1. Keep a list of all of your online passwords and logins and for any of your computers, phones, tablets and so on. You can create a “digital assets log” and store a virtual version securely with a provider of password lockboxes and a hardcopy. You might also inform one very trusted person the whereabouts of the log – for example a close family member and/or one of your executors. Some people store their log with their will. However you must make sure the list is kept updated for it to be any use.
2. Leave instructions with your executors and/or attorney/ court appointed deputy explaining how you would like different digital assets dealt with for example photographs on Instagram, documents stored in your email accounts and any intellectual property for example blogs, e-books and domain names. Consider backing up digital files on cd’s, USB sticks or hard copies on paper. Review the storage methods as and when what you have becomes outdated and useless.
3. Make sure the list is stored safely and cannot be accessed by a third party except in the event of your death or incapacity.
4. Check if the terms of your online accounts state how they will be dealt with on your death for example will they be deleted when you die.
5. Consider how you would like to be remembered on your social media accounts and give your executors clear instructions about how to achieve this.
6. Inform your solicitor about all of the above so that they can provide you with the relevant advice. The best time to do this is when you are making a new will, amending your current will or seeking advice about lifetime planning.