



MANAGING YOUR DIGITAL ASSETS

Introduction to Digital Assets

Unlike previous generations, you may own and manage several digital assets—which means anything that is created, communicated, sent, received, or stored by electronic means.

Common Types of Digital Assets*

- Email Accounts
- Cloud Storage
- Word Documents
- Contact Lists
- Website Domains
- Calendars
- Digital Storefronts (e.g. eBay, Etsy)
- Social Media Accounts
- Photos
- Medical Images and Files
- Subscription Accounts (e.g. Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime)
- Cryptocurrency Files
- Gateways to Financial Assets (e.g. Access to Bank and Brokerage Accounts, Cryptocurrency Exchanges)

*Source: Michael Kitces

Protecting Your Digital Assets Through Your Will

Similar to email and online accounts, access to digital assets requires usernames and passwords. While federal and state laws are rapidly evolving, you can take proactive steps to minimize potential obstacles by including provisions in your will that specify how you want these assets to be managed, deleted, or transferred after you pass.

The steps below will guide you through this process.

1. **Make a list** of your digital assets, including usernames and passwords.
This important step will help you see the full extent of your digital estate. Include hardware (computers, tablets, cellphones, e-readers, digital cameras, etc.), social media accounts in your name, online financial accounts, and any bills managed online.
2. **Review applicable user agreements or the terms of use for each account.** In most cases, user agreements govern the conditions under which another person may be granted permission to access and manage the account.

3. **Back up data stored in the cloud** to your own computer or device on a regular basis. That way, the person you authorize access to your personal account may face fewer obstacles.
4. **Determine how each asset should be handled.** You may choose to:
 - Archive personal files, photos, videos, and other content you own or have created;
 - Delete files from your computer or other devices;
 - Maintain online accounts, which may include paying for services to continue (such as web hosting services);
 - Close online accounts, such as social media accounts, subscription services, or any accounts that are paid for (such as Amazon Prime);
 - Transfer any applicable assets to your heirs or a person you name;
 - Collect and transfer any money or usable credits to your heirs or a person you name;
 - Transfer any income-generating items (websites, blogs, affiliate accounts, etc.) to your heirs or a person you name; and
 - Ask your heirs or a person you name to inform any online communities or online friends of your passing, such as posting your testimony of faith in Jesus Christ, and suggesting where the family would like memorials to be sent.
5. **Name your Digital Executor.** First, personally confirm an individual's fitness and willingness to serve in this important role. It may be best to choose a person very comfortable and familiar with all facets of digital media. Keep in mind that this individual will have access to your most personal online information and correspondence in addition to the technical skills required to use email, social media, and to navigate the internet. Once you have secured their agreement, provide consent in your legal documents and applicable online accounts and services.

Sample language designating this role through your will is below:

"I hereby give my lawful consent and fully authorize <name of executor> to access, manage, control, transfer, delete, or terminate any electronically stored information and communications to the fullest extent allowable under any state or federal privacy or other laws, and to take any actions I am authorized to take under all applicable terms of service, terms of use, licensing, and other account agreement or laws."

In most states, a Digital Executor is not a legally binding or enforceable designation. Ask your attorney about current laws in your state.

6. **Store this information** in a secure but accessible location, along with your last will and other estate papers. Do not include passwords or other sensitive information in your will since it becomes public after you pass. Instead, refer to an outside document in your will that contains all pertinent information. This way, you can add to, revise, and update this document without having to formally change your will.

Sample language you could include in your will:

"I have prepared a memorandum with instructions concerning my digital assets and their access, handling, distribution, and disposition. I direct my executor and beneficiaries to follow my instructions concerning my digital assets."

7. **Your attorney** can update your legal documents to include any instructions related to digital assets. Since laws governing digital assets are changing rapidly, it is important to ensure you are in compliance with current regulations. Ask your attorney whether a codicil will work for your situation.

These proactive steps will help give you and your family peace of mind. While advance planning is a part of good Biblical stewardship, as Christians, we have the added peace and knowledge that *"our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ"* (Philippians 3:20, ESV).

If you have any questions, including making a planned gift to BGEA through your will, your BGEA Regional Manager is always available, with no obligation on your part. Go to BillyGraham.org/legacy-planning to find the Regional Manager closest to you.



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For more information, email donor-ministries@bgea.org or call 1-877-243-2202. As always, we encourage you to consult with your personal financial adviser and attorney.