

Many major platforms now offer built-in tools to manage what happens to your account. Setting these up takes minutes and saves your survivors enormous headaches.

Google (Gmail, Drive, Photos, YouTube)

Set up Google Inactive Account Manager at myaccount.google.com/inactive

Choose inactivity timeout period (3, 6, 12, or 18 months)

Add up to 10 trusted contacts to notify and/or share data with

Choose which data types each contact receives

Decide whether to auto-delete the account after contacts are notified

If you have a YouTube channel with subscribers or revenue, this is especially important.

Google legacy contacts and settings:

Apple (iCloud, Photos, Messages)

Set up Apple Legacy Contacts: Settings > [Your Name] > Sign-In & Security > Legacy Contact (iOS 15.2+)

Add up to 5 Legacy Contacts

Share generated access key with each contact (print, AirDrop, or Messages)

Legacy Contacts cannot access Keychain passwords, payment info, or licensed media. Apple will permanently delete the account 3 years after Legacy Contact access is granted.

Apple legacy contacts:

Facebook / Meta

Set up Legacy Contact: Settings > Accounts Center > Personal Details > Account Ownership > Memorialization

Choose whether Legacy Contact can download a copy of your data

Alternatively, choose to have account permanently deleted after death

Legacy Contacts can pin a tribute post, change profile/cover photo, accept friend requests -- but cannot read messages, remove content, or log in as you.

Instagram

No legacy contact feature. Account can only be memorialized or deleted by a verified family member.

Download your data periodically (Settings > Your Activity > Download Your Information)

X (Twitter)

No legacy contact or memorialization feature. Verified family member can request deactivation.

LinkedIn

No legacy contact feature. Verified family member can request memorial page or closure.

Export your connections and data periodically

Microsoft (Outlook, OneDrive, Xbox)

Microsoft's Next of Kin process allows limited data access with a court order, death certificate, and proof of relationship. Accounts auto-close after 2 years of inactivity. Among the more restrictive policies -- plan accordingly.

Other Platforms

Check each platform you use for legacy/inactive account settings

For platforms with no legacy tools, ensure credentials are in your password manager

Other platform legacy settings configured:

3.2 -- Email-Specific Considerations

Your primary email is often the skeleton key to your entire digital life -- it is the recovery address for almost every other account. Securing email access for your executor is the single highest-priority digital planning task.

Ensure your executor can access your primary email

Consider setting up forwarding or shared access with a trusted person

Document which email is the recovery address for your major accounts

Quick Reference: Platform Death/Legacy Policies

Platform	Legacy?	Feature Name	Key Limitation
Google	Yes	Inactive Account Manager	Must be set up while alive
Apple	Yes	Legacy Contact	Access key required; deleted after 3 yrs

Platform Legacy Settings

Section 3: Configure Platform Legacy & Inactive Account Settings

Facebook	Yes	Legacy Contact	Cannot read messages or log in
Instagram	No	N/A	Memorialize or delete only
X (Twitter)	No	N/A	Request deactivation with docs
LinkedIn	No	N/A	Request memorial or closure
Microsoft	Limited	Next of Kin process	Requires court order
TikTok	No	N/A	No formal memorialization
Snapchat	No	N/A	No account transfer
Pinterest	No	N/A	Request deactivation