

A decorative graphic consisting of several overlapping circles. On the left is a large solid red circle. To its right is a dark blue ring. Below the red circle is a dotted circle. The background is a light beige gradient.

# Guide to a social media afterlife



**PalliativeCare**  
AUSTRALIA

## Guide to a social media afterlife



EACH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM HAS ITS OWN RULES ABOUT DELETION, DEACTIVATION AND MEMORIALISATION

### WHY YOU NEED TO THINK ABOUT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

Have you ever thought about what happens to your social media accounts when you die, or wondered what you should do with a loved one's accounts after they have passed away?

Facebook has 1.44 billion monthly active users<sup>1</sup>, and in the near future it is estimated that the number of dead Facebook users may outnumber the living.

Unfortunately there is not a 'one size fits all' solution to social media. Each social media platform, whether it be Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google or alike, has its own rules about deletion, deactivation, data downloading and memorialisation.

<sup>1</sup> <http://newsroom.fb.com/company-info>

## TRIBUTE OR MEMORIALISED PAGE

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### Facebook

Facebook provides the opportunity for pages to be memorialised. This means that privacy settings remain the same and friends can still post on the page and tag the deceased person in photos.

Once a page is memorialised, it can no longer be changed back to a regular Facebook account. The page cannot be accessed by anyone, including family (unless you appoint a legacy contact). To memorialise your account, you will need to go to *Help Center > Desktop Help > Manage Your Account > Memorialized Accounts*.

A 'legacy contact', is someone you choose to look after your account if it is memorialised (eg. Respond to friend requests). However, the feature is not available in Australia at this point in time.

If you would like to report a profile to be memorialised, you need to contact Facebook and

provide the details of the name of the person, and when they passed away. It is optional to provide proof of death documentation, however Facebook do express the helpfulness of doing this for the memorialization team.

There are also websites that can adopt your accounts (with your permission), and continue to run them as you have requested. [DeadSocial](#), for example, is a website that controls your accounts and can even make posts for you or send emails from your accounts after your death. They help you "Prepare for a digital Death and build your Digital Legacy". DeadSocial is "the free social media tool that allows us to create scheduled messages. These are only distributed across our social networks after we die. This allows us all to say our final goodbyes on our own terms and for us to extend our digital legacy using the social web."<sup>2</sup>

### Family Management

PCA encourages people to plan ahead and leave instructions and passwords to somebody who you trust so that they are able to carry out your wishes for your social media accounts.

Google accounts also encourage you to give them the phone number of a trusted contact, who will be able to download your data if you choose to share it with them.



#### TO MEMORIALISE A FACEBOOK PAGE GO TO:

*Help Center > Desktop Help > Manage Your Account > Memorialised Accounts.*

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<sup>2</sup> <http://www.deadsocial.org>

## DELETION/DEACTIVATION

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If left untouched, most accounts will continue to exist until reported or memorialised.

### Facebook

For Facebook, you can delete or deactivate your account. Deactivation saves information and thus can be reactivated if need be, whereas deletion is permanent, and you will not be able to reactivate your account.

When you deactivate your account, people won't be able to see information on your timeline or be able to search for you. However account information is saved and friends will still be able to see some information, like messages you have sent.

It is important to remember that some things you do on Facebook are not stored in your account, so Facebook will not be about to delete everything along with your account. To deactivate your account you go to *Account Menu > Settings > Security > Deactivate Your Account*. To delete your account, you will need to follow the Contact Facebook prompts under [Deactivating & Deleting Accounts](#).

### Twitter

Twitter accounts will automatically be deactivated if unused in six months.

### Google

Google accounts have [Inactive Account Manager](#) which allows you to share parts of your account or data with a trusted contact, who will not be

contacted by Google until Google deems your account to be inactive (they determine this by monitoring your last sign-ins, your History page, usage of Gmail and Android check-ins). It sends an automated email with a subject line and content of your choosing, and an explanation from google as to why they are receiving the email. If you choose to share your data, the same email will contain a list of the data your contact can access within a specific time period.<sup>3</sup>

### Instagram

To delete an Instagram account, which will permanently remove your profile, videos and photos, you simply need to go to *Accounts > Edit > I'd Like to Delete My Account*. Once deleted, your account cannot be reactivated.

If a family member dies and you would like to deactivate or delete their account for them (and they have not left passwords or used services such as [Inactive Account Manager](#) [Google] or [DeadSocial](#)), you will often need to provide proof of being an immediate family member, and sometimes provide the social media service with proof of death documentation.

### LinkedIn

You can close your account on LinkedIn, which means shutting off your profile and removing access to all your LinkedIn information from their site.

### Letting the account 'sit there'

Accounts that are not automatically deactivated after an inactive time period can just 'sit there'. However, this means that these accounts are open to hackers, and people may get scheduled/automatic notifications from the account. Receiving notifications from or about a deceased person can be distressing for friends and family.



#### TO DEACTIVATE YOUR FACEBOOK PAGE GO TO:

*Account Menu > Settings > Security > Deactivate Your Account.*



#### TO DELETE YOUR INSTAGRAM ACCOUNT GO TO:

*Accounts > Edit > I'd Like to Delete My Account.*

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<sup>3</sup> <https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/3036546?hl=en>

## DOWNLOADING YOUR INFO/DATA

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Before deactivating, deleting or disabling your social media accounts, you may want to download your data from your social media platforms.

### Facebook

To download your data from Facebook, go to *Settings > Download a Copy of Your Facebook Data* or look at the options [here](#) under *Desktop Help > Privacy > Accessing Your Facebook Data*.

### Google

From your account settings you can quickly and easily download data that you created in (or imported into) a number of Google products.

Data is provided in a variety of open, portable formats so you can easily import the data into other internet services. You can download your data via *Account Settings > Account Tools > Download Data*.

### Instagram

Instagram has a web service called [Instaport](#) which downloads your entire archive of Instagram photos to your computer.

### LinkedIn

To download the data from your LinkedIn account, you will need to go to *Privacy Settings (hover over profile photo) > Account > Request an Archive of Your Data (under Helpful Links section)*.



**TO DOWNLOAD YOUR DATA FROM FACEBOOK GO TO:**

*Settings > Download a Copy of Your Facebook Data.*



**TO DOWNLOAD THE DATA FROM YOUR LINKEDIN ACCOUNT GO TO:**

*Privacy Settings (hover over profile photo) > Account > Request an Archive of Your Data.*

*Palliative Care Australia acknowledges the assistance of The Public Trustee for the ACT in preparing this document.*

*Disclaimer: The content in this document is correct as of May 2015*

## CONTACT PALLIATIVE CARE AUSTRALIA

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