

# Internet lifestyles leave digital estates for descendants

August 7 2010, by Glenn Chapman

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As lives move increasingly online, Legacy Locker is building virtual safe-deposit boxes where people can leave digital estates for descendants.

"I have young children that can't read yet," said LegacyLocker.com founder Jeremy Toeman. "One day my blog will have meaning to them in the same way you find an old photo of your grandfather and wonder what the story was."

Toeman launched his startup in San Francisco in April of 2009 after the birth of his first son; the death of his 94-year-old Internet-savvy grandmother, and a turbulent airplane flight.

He owns a set of domain names and realized that while his wife was entitled to them in event of his demise, she would have no way to get them.

His thoughts went to photos, videos, email, and other digital creations people squirrel away at Facebook, Twitter, Gmail, Yahoo!, [Hotmail](#) and elsewhere on the Internet.

"Today, you get a shoe box full of pictures; tomorrow you will get a Flickr account," Toeman said. "Today, you get a diary; tomorrow you will get a blog."

For 30 dollars (US) a year, or a one-time fee of 300 dollars, Legacy Locker acts as a personal online vault for online account login and

password information along with backup copies of documents or videos.

People can also leave messages to be sent to beneficiaries after they die.

Facebook lets people leave their marks online after they have shuffled off their mortal coils, with profiles of the dead remaining as tributes in the global social networking community.

"We created the idea of 'memorialized' profiles as a place where people can save and share their memories of those who've passed," the world's top online [social networking service](#) said in a blog post.

Profiles of dead people do not turn up in friend recommendations or general searches at Facebook.

Legacy Locker is used primarily as an online strong box for Internet account passwords but is building tools to fulfill the vision of being a secure online repository for people's virtual estates, according to Toeman.

"FarmVille is an incredible success online and I am certain there are people out there that shiver at the thought their farm might one day be unattended and whither and die," Toeman said of a Zynga online game with a cult following.

"The same with swords or gold at 'World of Warcraft.' Ultimately, these are acts of creativity, almost art, and like winnings in online poker accounts they belong in people's wills."

He referred to uploads, online musings and other online contributions as a "digital legacy" that should be factored into estates divvied up after people die.

"We are going to help people think about that stuff a little more," Toeman said. "I don't need my Twitter stream preserved for all time, but someone who lives their life on [Twitter](#) might feel the opposite."

A self-described early-adopter of technology, Toeman noted the wisdom of remembering to turn off computers, televisions and other devices and spending time with loved ones while life allows.

"My wife and I are going camping with this weekend with the kids and will be off the grid," Toeman said. "I just hope we don't find ourselves one day in an all online world where people have lost the ability to connect in real life."

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Citation: Internet lifestyles leave digital estates for descendants (2010, August 7) retrieved 26 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-08-internet-lifestyles-digital-estates-descendants.html>

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