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# ESTATE OF THE UNION

A Newsletter from the team at Stanziola Estate Law

July 2023



## WHAT IS DIGITAL ESTATE PLANNING?

*And why is it important?*



When designing an estate plan, people often overlook the importance of including digital assets in their plan. Digital assets can be emails, social media accounts, online subscriptions, e-commerce accounts, online photos, applications, loyalty programs, cryptocurrency, and more. In this day and age, we all have a digital footprint, and it is important to protect our digital legacy. With digital estate planning, you can protect online assets from risks like identity theft or fraud, and you can give your family members the peace of mind that there is a plan in place. Having a plan can alleviate the stress of managing digital assets just as an estate plan can do for other types of assets. Including digital assets in your plan will give you the peace of mind that all of your affairs are in order.



## To create an effective digital estate plan, follow these steps:

### 1 Create a list of your digital accounts and passwords.

Keep all your account and password information in one place and let trusted family members or friends know where that place is. We recommend using an online password manager such as Keeper which can be shared and conveniently updated as needed. Many password manager applications provide encryptions to keep your information extra secure.

### 2 Create a list of mobile devices and computers, including usernames and passwords.

It is important that you let family members know the passwords to get into devices such as your phone so they can access your password manager or be able to complete two-factor authentication when accessing your accounts. Without a second form of authentication, many accounts may be inaccessible.

### 3 Where possible, designate a legacy contact.

You may have the option to designate a legacy contact on your phone or social media account, and this will give that person access to your account once you have passed away. If you have an iPhone, you can set up a legacy contact for your Apple ID by going to Settings and Passwords & Security. Once adding your contact, they will receive a notification. You will then share an access key with them which they can use at your death along with a death certificate to gain access to your data. Social media accounts such as Facebook also have an option to designate a legacy contact to manage your account.

### 4 Outline your wishes.

List your intentions for your digital assets. What accounts should be deleted right away? What accounts should be archived? Do you want certain accounts to be allocated to a specific friend or family member? For ecommerce assets such as airline miles, be sure to check the terms of use to see if they are eligible for allocation. In some cases, you may need to request that there be a beneficiary. If you have cryptocurrency, be sure your trusted family members know where to access your digital key. If you have a valuable domain name, have an agreement in place for its allocation.

*In summary*, to have a complete estate plan, you must include your digital assets. We all have a digital footprint, and it is important to manage it and to have a digital estate plan in place to make life easier for trusted family members and friends. If you have any questions about digital estate planning, please contact us.



*Don't have an estate plan in place? Are you wondering if your current estate plan is subjecting any of your assets to probate? Are you unsure of the next steps? Please contact us at Stanziola Estate Law for a complimentary estate evaluation so we can help determine what options are right for you!*

Questions or comments? Jim Stanziola ([jim@stanzialaw.com](mailto:jim@stanzialaw.com)) or Grace Stanziola ([grace@stanzialaw.com](mailto:grace@stanzialaw.com))

*Note: The contents of this newsletter are intended to be informational; under no circumstances should this be interpreted as legal advice.*