

# Include online accounts in Will

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It is always a good time to think about how your belongings are protected, including setting up a Will or updating your existing Will.

Wills commonly make provision for family and friends, dealing with assets such as real estate, shares, bank accounts, family heirlooms, vehicles, furniture, and artwork. However, people often overlook how they want their digital assets dealt with after they pass away.

Digital assets can include things such as iTunes and Spotify accounts, Airpoints, Flybys and other loyalty programmes, Linked In, Cloud storage, Facebook, email accounts and other digital correspondence such as Skype. Some of these digital assets can have significant financial worth, which you may want to transfer to another owner after your death.

Many will have huge sentimental value to your loved ones, such as your photos and messages.

It is important to identify your digital assets and plan for how you want them to be dealt with.

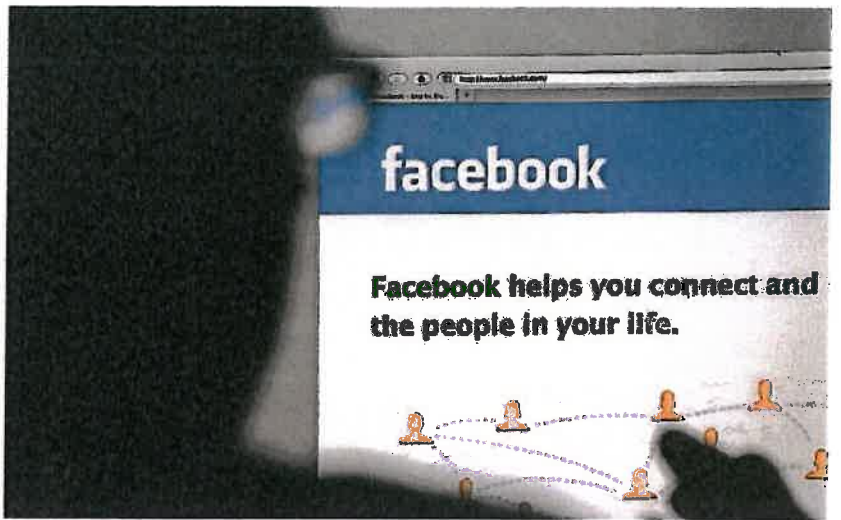
Online providers have their own policies about what happens to their content once the user dies.

Your rights to your digital assets will vary from provider to provider, but in most cases you will be able to decide whether your accounts should be deleted, memorialised, transferred or gifted to someone else.

In a recent case, a woman realised after her husband's death that she did not have access to their Apple account. A simple password reset was not sufficient, and instead the woman was faced with a lengthy battle, including the need for a court order, to get a new password without losing all the information that was linked to the account.

Make sure you have an up to date Will which deals with your digital assets, so that after you're gone your family and friends are not left wondering what to do with the important content of your online accounts, or faced with difficulties in dealing with the assets.

Funds held in KiwiSaver and superannuation schemes are an asset that many people disregard or forget about when evaluating



Estate planning should include what to do with your online assets.

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their finances. However, as time goes on and you accumulate a much larger balance, a KiwiSaver or superannuation account may become one of your most valuable assets.

Many people are not aware that if their KiwiSaver or

superannuation balance is more than \$15,000 at the time of their death, their scheme provider will not release the funds until the Court has granted administration of their estate. Obtaining this grant of administration is usually straightforward if you have a valid Will in place when you die.

However, it can be complex, lengthy, and stressful for your loved ones, if you die without one. If you are a member of KiwiSaver or a superannuation scheme, you should have a valid and up to date Will that provides for how your complete estate will be

distributed.

This will ensure that the funds can be paid to your estate when you die, without any unreasonable delays or expenses for your loved ones. If you do not have a Will or need to update your existing Will get professional advice about what you need to put in yours.

If you have a legal inquiry you would like discussed in this column please email Alan on [aknowsley@raineycollins.co.nz](mailto:aknowsley@raineycollins.co.nz)  
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