

Chapter 5

Celebrating Lives Beyond on Unveiling the Digital Legacy Manager for Empowering Personal Heritage Preservation

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ABSTRACT

Technology has changed how people communicate, store information, and curate their lives in the digital age. This research study examines the complex management and preservation of digital legacies, a collection of digital assets, online accounts, and personal narratives left by deceased people. Digital inheritance offers a complex issue that requires a holistic approach. This research develops the Digital Legacy Manager software to handle this difficulty. The study discusses unmanaged digital legacies to start. It examines the emotional and psychological effects of impediments to obtaining digital relics of the deceased on bereaved loved ones. It also examines the complex financial and legal issues that arise when digital assets are out of reach, including lengthy legal battles and unsolved financial matters. When digital footprints are ignored, shared experiences, personal narratives, and cultural heritage are lost forever.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

In today's digital era, people rely heavily on technology for communication, storing personal information, and documenting their lives (Heath, 2020; Wijesundara, & Fernando, 2020). The proliferation of social media, email accounts, online banking, cloud storage, and various digital platforms has resulted in the

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creation of vast amounts of digital data (Cleland & Williamson, 2017). While these digital footprints offer convenience and connectivity, they also pose challenges when managing and preserving one's digital legacy after one passes away (table 1).

Table 1. Impact of unmanaged digital legacies

| Emotional and Psychological Toll | |
|--|---|
| <i>Lack of closure</i> | Many individuals suffer from emotional distress and unresolved feelings when they are unable to access or receive messages from their deceased loved ones. |
| <i>Financial and Legal Implications</i> | Unmanaged digital legacies can lead to financial complications and legal challenges, especially regarding access to online accounts and digital assets. |
| <i>Loss of Shared Memories and Stories</i> | Without managed digital legacies, shared memories, stories, and experiences can be lost, leaving future generations without a connection to their family history. |

1.2 Problem Statement

When individuals pass away without a plan for their digital assets and accounts, their loved ones are often left in a state of uncertainty and frustration (Devi & Rajasekaran, 2023). Accessing and managing these digital legacies becomes a daunting task, leading to emotional distress, financial burdens, and legal complications. Furthermore, the lack of access to important personal information, cherished memories, and final messages can deeply impact the grieving process and the ability to honor the deceased's wishes (Regin et al., 2023).

1.3 Objectives

The primary objective of this research paper is to explore the experiences of individuals who have suffered from the lack of access to their loved ones' digital information after their passing. By understanding the challenges and consequences associated with unmanaged digital legacies, we aim to highlight the importance of addressing this issue (Sajini et al., 2023).

The secondary objective is to propose the development of a software application, the Digital Legacy Manager, to empower individuals to preserve and share their digital legacies effectively. This software will enable users to organize and securely store their digital assets, leave messages for their loved ones, and provide a framework for managing and transferring their digital information after their demise (Gaayathri et al., 2023).

Through this research, we seek to shed light on the significance of leaving a meaningful digital legacy, improve the posthumous digital access experience for loved ones, and provide a practical solution that bridges the gap between technology and the human need for connection, remembrance, and closure (Smith et al., 2017).

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