

# Facebook Changes Policy on Privacy Settings for Memorialized Accounts

By [Evan Carroll](#) on March 15, 2014 in [Archival](#), [Technical](#)



Perhaps the tide is shifting to allow users more control of their profiles after death. [Facebook recently announced plans](#) to no longer change the privacy settings of a memorialized account. In an announcement, members of Facebook's Community Operations team said the following.

Up to now, when a person's account was memorialized, we restricted its visibility to friends-only. This meant that people could no longer see the account or any of its content unless they were Facebook friends with the person who passed away. Starting today, we will maintain the visibility of a person's content as-is. This will allow people to see memorialized profiles in a manner consistent with the deceased person's expectations of privacy. We are respecting the choices a person made in life while giving their extended community of family and friends ongoing visibility to the same content they could always see.

This represents Facebook's second major announcement about how accounts are handled after death, but is their first step to allow users control over the process. While not as significant a step as [Google's Inactive Account Manager](#), which debuted last spring, together these announcements indicate a trend towards greater control of the process by users.

## Our Take

At The Digital Beyond we advocate primarily for individuals to have control of what happens to their digital assets following death, and in the absence of instructions, for access to be granted to an executor with a fiduciary responsibility to make decisions in the best interest of the deceased. We believe Facebook's announcement, while limited in scope, is in-line with our stance and is a step in the right direction, therefore we applaud their efforts.

*Update March 17, 2014: An earlier version of this post stated that this was Facebook's second major step. We've clarified the article to state that this is their second major announcement. [Damien McCallig](#) pointed out that Facebook often makes clarifications or minor*

*changes to the memorialization, which are recorded in regulatory filings, media reports and other sources.*

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### **About Evan Carroll**

**Evan Carroll** is an author, speaker and UX strategist who works to make digital experiences more personal, more emotional and more effective. A leader in the developing digital legacy and personal archiving arena, Evan is author and co-founder at [The Digital Beyond](#) and co-author of the book, [Your Digital Afterlife: When Facebook, Flickr and Twitter Are Your Estate, What's Your Legacy?](#). Evan has appeared in numerous media outlets including [The New York Times](#), NPR's [Fresh Air](#), [Obit](#) magazine, NPR's [Here and Now](#), Fox News, [CNN](#) and [The Atlantic](#). A frequent speaker on both marketing and digital legacy, Evan has presented to audiences at SXSW Interactive (2010-2012, 2014), the Library of Congress, and the Internet Archive, among others. Evan holds BS and MS degrees in Information Science from UNC-Chapel Hill's School of Information and Library Science. He can be contacted by emailing [evan@thedigitalbeyond.com](mailto:evan@thedigitalbeyond.com) or via Twitter @evancarroll. Evan's personal site is [www.evancarroll.net](http://www.evancarroll.net).