

What happens to our data when we die, Elaine Kasket on a digital dilemma

Elaine Kasket is a counselling psychologist based in London. Her first book, *All the Ghosts in the Machine: Illusions of **Immortality** in the Digital Age*, examines the **ethical** and technical issues surrounding our data when we die.

immortality 不朽; 永生

ethical 伦理的; 道德的

At some point there will be more dead Facebook accounts than live ones.

The Oxford Internet Institute recently predicted there could be 2bn dead Facebook accounts by the end of the century.

That's a lot of data...

Although we're doubling what we can store every couple of years, it's not, like infinite — and our devices capture more and more stuff by default. That **surplus** data, either with the aid of artificial intelligence or human decision making will be **jettisoned**, and big tech will be making those decisions.

surplus 剩余的; 顺差

jettison 抛弃; 扔

Meanwhile, people have to act like hackers to gain access to their relatives' accounts...

They are forced to break the law. They are **impersonating** people, using other people's passwords... I'm not sure if I'm happy to leave someone a set of my passwords; they might find things that were important, but they would have access to everything else. Even if one isn't harbouring toxic secrets, that's still quite a thing.

What's the **bare** minimum you'd advise people to do?

impersonate 扮演; 模仿

bare 空的; 赤裸的

It's a good idea to clean your digital house frequently. If nothing else, you don't want relatives buried under a hundredweight of **undifferentiated** data with no sense of what is important to you. The default is to become a digital extreme **hoarder**, with data up to the **rafters**.

The things which are really important to you, the *artefacts* you want to pass on to future generations, put them in a physical form. You cannot trust corporations to safeguard your data.

undifferentiated 分不开的; 无差别的

hoarder 贮藏者; 囤积者

rafter 房椽

artefact 人工制品