

This diploma thesis focuses on the topic of posthumous user data management concerning social media platforms. This topic is rarely discussed from the viewpoint of new media studies in academic literature. My thesis endeavours to unveil, contextualize, and critically assess the development of the posthumous data policies in order to uncover the level of control users and survivors have over the deceased users' data. Thus, three case studies of chronological posthumous policy development of major social media (Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn) were conducted and results were compared. The analysis has shown that platforms are rather reluctant to change their posthumous policies. One of the primary triggers for change comes from the users' feedback. Across all three cases every platform provided limited or no information about these policies in their terms of use or privacy policies. The case studies demonstrated that users have very limited choices regarding their data after death directly on the examined social media platforms. Individuals who were close to the deceased account users have the ability to request account deletion or have limited access to the account granted by the platform. The level of data preservation demanded by platforms seems dependent on a given social media's communication specificity and target audience. This thesis aims to contribute to the debate about the possibilities of storing and using data after the death of a user on social networks and to help better understand the current behaviour of platforms regarding their policies. It attempts to outline more clearly the potential direction of their further development. This debate forms the context for the future formation of international and national legislation and is directly related to protecting users' privacy.