

MadisonPhotoPlus the Photo Summit e-Photo Newsletter

NOVEMBER, 2007

Your Pictures - Whose are They? A Problem with a Solution.

Three years ago this month, Marine Justin Ellsworth was killed by a roadside bomb in Falluja, Iraq. He had uploaded many photos, journal entries, etc. Justin's family tried to gain access to his photos and emails, according to CNET News.com, and was barred from doing so.

Yahoo!, Inc., was his email service and also owner of Flickr.com, where Justin had deposited his photos and notes. Yahoo! refused to give Justin's username(s) and password(s) to his father, John Ellsworth.

Yahoo, like most other credible email and web posting companies have hard fast rules regarding the security and privacy any user's accounts. Only the account holder is eligible to retrieve his or her password. (These are the terms most of us check "I agree" when opening an online account without considering the ramifications.) After 90 days of inactivity Yahoo! deletes accounts.

Within that 90 day window, John Ellsworth took Yahoo! to court and got a stay on his late son's account's deletion. After a more lengthy and expensive legal court battle, AP reported that in April, 2005, a probate judge signed an order directing Yahoo! to supply the Ellsworth family with the contents of Justin's email account. They received a CD with over 10,000 pages of material! (Yahoo! did not own Flickr.com at the time, and Justin's photos may have been lost.)

Here's the \$1,000,000 question: Who has access to *your* username(s) and password(s)?

As our society becomes younger, more and more people will never have known communication before cell phones and the internet. The practice of internet based "virtual storage" will become even more prevalent than it is today.

Divorce is certainly not uncommon in our society today. If a family suffers a divorce, who has administrative rights (passwords) to the photos stored on dot com sites? Who gets access to even see the pictures? Probably not the grandparents. One spouse could permanently delete all photos including his or her spouse with children in the photos or not. We know that anger and jealousy can be strong motivators, and people sometimes do irrational things. Imagine for a moment a father losing all the pictures of him with his children, or a girl never having a photo of her mother. The heartbreak would be permanently devastating, spreading from generation to generation as time marches on.

Yahoo! now advises, "Flickr members who want to be sure their photos are accessible to their legal heirs should work with their attorneys to plan for this as part of their estate planning process."

Do you want your pictures to be to be treated as chattel and incur additional monetary expense which is unnecessary? There is a simple solution to this problem:

Print your photos and give copies of them to people who are important to you.

Don't keep them secret.

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A New Staff Member of the Photo Summit?

Jacob Harmen was born to Bret and his wife Karen on October 26th. So far NJ labor laws prohibit him from working behind the counters, but don't be surprised if he makes an occasional guest appearance. Congratulations Bret and Karen!



Our Photo Field Trips were very well attended last month, and we are preparing the photos for presentation on our websites (www.madisonphoto.com and www.photosummit.com). The weather was spectacular and everyone learned how to take better photos.

Thanks for waiting! We are now geared up for folding holiday cards and hardbound digital photo albums. We apologize for the numerous delays, but they are available at last.

Card Appeal

Speaking of cards, when shooting for your photo greeting cards, remember to shoot verticals if your subject matter goes up and down, and compose horizontally if your subject(s) go side to side. Your subjects' images will be as large as possible in your photos and on your cards.

We just spent a few days in Saratoga Springs, NY, and are attaching a few photos. See you soon. Enjoy taking photos.

Lynne & Jerry

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