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Web site helps you go on with your life after you die

You can tie up loose ends You can craft special instructions for loved ones or have letters mailed to foes. You get the last word You have naughty or nice letters mailed when you die. LABEL Deck goes here goes here goes here goes here goes here goes.

By J. ELLIOTT WALKER, The Times-Union

If you died today, would your spouse know to turn the sprinklers off in the winter or even how to pay the cable bill online?

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Big details like burial sites or cremation plans may be discussed beforehand, but a buy a link here

new Web site called YouDeparted.com has dedicated itself to making sure every little detail is

taken care of in case of death.

"I actually sat there and tried to picture my own life ended," said Collin Harris, one of the site's creators. "It's a hard thing to do."

Harris and his son, Nick, came up with the concept for YouDeparted after the elder Harris' father passed away.

"When he died," he said, "there was basically no information."

Harris said he thought about the mess his family would have if he suddenly died, and the idea was born.

The father-and-son combo from Incline Village, Nev., on the north shore of Lake Tahoe, started working on the project in October and launched the

Although none of the approximately 1,000 people who have signed up are from the Jacksonville area, the Harris team is confident it will only be a

Pamela Brooks is a Juno Beach resident who decided to try the Web site. The senior citizen heard about the site through a friend.

"I just think it's a wonderful idea, especially for people in Florida where there are so many transplanted people and their family is all over the country," she said.

Ensure last words

The concept is simple: Users register and enter information, using either templates provided by YouDeparted or by designing their own. Information ranges from simple entry prompts in the templates like gifts and final wishes to more serious prompts like bank and brokerage accounts, debts owed, and secret accounts. Another feature allows users to create letters, nasty or nice, for an extra fee that can be mailed when they die.

Brooks said she didn't put anything extremely personal on her account besides instructions for what to do when she dies.

The Harrises make it clear, however, that YouDeparted does not replace the services of an attorney. The site cannot make things like wills or trusts and warn if users don't have valid documents when they die, nothing they've put on YouDeparted is legally binding.

Nick Harris said a basic account can take as little as 30 minutes to an hour to create, and "as time goes by you can add more details."

Plans start at \$29.95 a year for one gigabyte of storage and work up to \$79.95 a year for five gigabytes of storage. Potential users can also use the "mini-plan" free for 90 days to see if they like the system.

When a user registers, he or she identifies recipients for their account. These are people who will receive specified information when the user dies.

Recipients receive an e-mail giving them a user name and password.

When the user dies, recipients must go to the site to unlock the account. Two safety mechanisms are in place to ensure a user's information isn't released if he or she is still alive.

An e-mail is automatically sent to the other recipients and the account holder when a recipient starts the unlocking process. Account holders have specified how many recipients have to unlock the account before information will be released.

"Everyone has to agree on the death," said Collin Harris.

He also said automatic e-mails to the other recipients could come in handy when a relative lives far away.

Collin Harris has a brother in Asia and said if his brother were to die suddenly, he would have no way of knowing. Now, because his brother has set up recipients in Asia, Harris will learn as soon as they try to unlock the account that something is wrong.



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1 of 2 7/28/2007 3:10 PM Similarly, Brooks said her family doesn't live near her, so she's identified recipients in Florida for her account.

Your info is secure

A user-controlled time delay feature has also been built in "if in any event someone turns against you and tries to unlock the account early," said Collin Harris. Harris said it is unlikely, but if a family had relationship problems, conceivably "some of the recipients could get together" and break into the account. This gives the account holder time to stop the process if he is, in fact, still living.

After the death has been verified and the time delay is over, specific information is released to each recipient.

"My son will get different information than my attorney or my wife," said Collin Harris of the system. "Orly entries marked for Nick will show up when he logs in.'

YouDeparted uses the same encryption technology as the U.S. military to secure information on the site and although the creators said they're curious about what people are putting in their accounts, they don't have any way to access a client's information.

They have no way of knowing when a customer dies and said an account would just eventually expire after non-payment.

And the name? It came from the movie The Departed says Collin Harris.

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A Step-by-Step guide to YouDeparted ?Try the 90-day mini plan for free or play with the Web site's demo toget aquainted with the site. ?Register for the service and identify recipients for your account. eUse the templates provided or create your own and start entering information on the site. Come back as often as you'd like to enter more information. ?You die. ?Your account recipients log-in, and after a time delay, are given access to information you have earmarked for them. ~~~ COMING SUNDAY In Insight: The dead might not tell tales, but www. MyDeathSpace.com pages let them live on

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2 of 2 7/28/2007 3:10 PM