

Dealing with Death? Get on Facebook

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Discovery News:

Anywhere from 1.8 to 3 million Facebook users will die in 2011, according to separate estimates from the digital legacy sites 1000Memories and Entrustet, likely transforming those posthumous profiles into digital epitaphs.

With Facebook swelling to more than 750 million members as of June, dealing with death online — through both the profile pages of the deceased and dedicated memorial pages — has become standard behavior. Now, it's almost as commonplace as sending condolences and attending funerals.

“In the advent of growing online populations who are also inevitably aging, it's fair to say that grieving online is becoming a new and necessary death ritual,” said Kimberly Falconer, a clinical psychology PhD candidate at University of Pennsylvania who has studied online grieving.

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