



Ms Angeline Yeh with her daughter Aaryanna, son Grayson and husband Gex Khaw. Ms Yeh uses Google Photos to organise her digital trove. PHOTO: WHITE ROOM STUDIO

# 7 tips to organise photos and videos

## Parents and experts give advice on how to store precious family memories digitally

Venessa Lee  
Senior Correspondent

During the school holidays, many parents probably took overseas trips or local excursions with their children, snapping many photographs along the way.

Have you ever wondered if you should organise your family photos more efficiently?

Digital experts tell The Straits Times that there is a variety of ways to store cherished family photos and videos. Some people use hard disks, social media platforms or cloud storage systems, or a combination of these.

Dr Jiew Hee Bee, a member of the Media Literacy Council and a father of four, suggests that parents organise photos in a way that is meaningful for them.

The associate professor and programme leader at the Singapore Institute of Technology says: "It largely depends on the person's preference and lifestyle."

"For example, I archive certain memorable events of my children, such as when they receive a prestigious award, on my hard drive, although it is also posted on social media."

Here are other tips to consider when storing digital photos and videos.

### 1 Regularly backup and declutter

At least once a year – more, if she travels or changes her mobile phone – Ms Janice Choong does a "system dump", downloading all the photos and videos on her smartphone into an external hard disk. Even videos posted on TikTok make the cut.

When the 40-year-old is free, she curates the ones she wishes to save into a second hard disk, leaving out images such as photos of meals or outfits.

She sorts the images in this second hard disk into detailed folders that contain photos of her 11-year-old son, Kayden, as well as folders for each of her three dogs – two Westies (West Highland White Terriers) and a Malipo (a cross between a Maltese and a poodle).

The finance manager in the information technology sector started organising the footage in April, before and after travelling to Italy. This ensured her photos from that trip were quickly placed into safe storage. She also worries she might lose her mobile phone while overseas.



Freelance photographer Veronica Ang intends to transfer a Facebook account to her son Reilly, it contains photos and videos from when he was born. PHOTO: COURTESY OF VERONICA ANG

The process can take a few days if there are glitches in downloading, but it is worth the effort knowing that the precious memories are safe, she says.

Ms Chong says losing all the photos on her phone would be a "nightmare".

### 2 Have specific labels

Ms Angeline Yeh, 29, organises her digital trove via Google Photos, a cloud-based tool that can store photos, videos and screenshots. "I organise them by date or occasion, but sometimes, the dates don't mean anything," says Ms Yeh, a chief marketing officer in the bio-technology sector. She has a nine-year-old daughter and a one-year-old son.

She further organises the footage in sub-folders to mark milestones such as birthdays, as well as more mundane events such as playdates.

### 3 Make full use of platform features

Google and other cloud storage systems have features that go beyond storing footage automatically by date and can be synced across different devices.

Google Singapore's Lucian Teo, programme manager, Google.org, says: "Videos and photos stored on Google Photos can be searched by people, places, and even things and activities. We no longer have to spend time tagging, labelling images or creating photo albums."

The new "import photos" feature makes it easy to copy photos from other services, or digitise photos, videos and film, he says.

The app can also remove clutter from one's photo feed, such as images of receipts or presentation slides. He suggests streamlining al-



Janice Choong sorts images into detailed folders that contain photos of her son Kayden and each of her three dogs. PHOTO: COURTESY OF JANICE CHOONG

bums with the app's "Archive" button and archival suggestions.

### 4 Share photos

Mr Teo suggests using Google Photos to set up shared albums to help organise digital photos.

He says: "If you're going on a bigger family trip, you can consider creating and sharing collaborative albums so multiple people can share their photos instantly."

The Google Nest Hub, a smart-home hub which comes with a touchscreen display that can control other smart-home devices, displays an automatically created feed that allows his parents to view photos of their grandchildren, he says.

Apple's iCloud Photos also keeps images up to date spanning different devices.

Its Photos app includes a "For You" tab that searches photos and videos to find moments that stand out. It then presents them in collections called "Memories". It also prompts ideas for adding effects to selected photos, and finds "Sharing Suggestions", which are collections of photos that can be shared.

### 5 Use photos to bond with your kids

Mr Chong Ee Jay, a cyber wellness expert from Focus on the Family Singapore, says organising and sharing family photos on social media has a similar bonding effect.

He says: "Social media presents opportunities for parents to easily create digital photo albums or scrapbooks by compiling photos."

It also presents opportunities for children to be involved in creating family moments by sharing photos and videos on shared platforms.



According to talent manager Seah Jing, the act of organising and retrieving the photos of her son Judah on Instagram is cathartic. PHOTO: COURTESY OF SEAH JING

Social media platforms have in-built ways of organising photos, and not only through chronological posts and highlights.

The TikTok app, for instance, has an option to download and save videos directly onto a device. You can also mark a TikTok video as a favourite and it will be added to your Favourites menu in the profile page to be viewed later, and TikTok Favourites can be further sorted into collections, says Ms Doreen Tan, user and content operations manager at TikTok Singapore.

Going old school and printing physical copies of photographs can also be useful.

Ms Carol Loi, founder of Village Consultancy, which provides digital literacy education to families, educators, youth and children, says: "Printing out special photos in the form of a year book can help to build family heritage, especially when parents involve their children in compiling the photos, as well as reflecting on the memories they evoke."

### 6 Be aware of 'sharenting'

Involving children in sharing and organising media online typically requires parents to be more intentional as the kids grow up.

Ms Yeh says she does not post much of her daughter now that the child is older.

"I'll ask her first, 'Do you think this photo is okay?'" she adds.

Village Consultancy's Ms Loi says: "Keeping photos as secure as possible and respecting children's privacy should be considered regarding organising images involving children."

She advises caution when it comes to "sharenting", or the use

of social media to share images and news of one's children.

Ms Loi says: "Even when social media settings are private, we should remember that whatever is put out should be considered public information. It is hard to take down if it is used by other people. It also makes it easier for others to track our children."

"It would be useful for parents to put themselves in their child's shoes. When he or she is older, how would they feel when they see themselves in their parents' posts?"

Having an open conversation with older kids about their views on personal data and information about them will avoid potential miscommunication, she adds.

### 7 Keep the big picture in mind

Some parents find it helps to have a larger purpose when regularly updating their preferred system of archiving memories of their kids' childhood.

Freelance photographer Veronica Ang hopes to transfer her Facebook account to her 15-year-old son, Reilly, in the future.

This particular private account, which is restricted to family members, contains photos and videos from when Reilly was born. It is organised in detail – month by month in his younger years.

When he is an adult, Reilly can also have the hard disks that Ms Ang, who is in her 40s, has backed up all this material in.

Ms Ang, who is married to a 53-year-old foreign exchange broker, says: "Reilly can look back on these memories next time. He can edit the images for his wedding too."

For Ms Seah Ling, a talent manager in the entertainment industry, the act of organising and retrieving her only child's photos and videos on Instagram can be cathartic.

She and her IT programmer husband, both 33, have a one-year-old son, Judah.

Ms Seah says: "Instagram is the new photo album, I guess. My husband and I look back at my posts and we say, 'How come our son was that small?'"

Even at the end of a long day, when she has had to deal with baby tantrums, she feels good posting Instagram Stories of him.

Ms Seah now has 21,000 photos on her smartphone, which are backed up on Google Photos.

She describes her mobile with its vast collection as a "black hole". She says: "I take it easy and try not to go overboard. As a parent of a young child, I live day by day. As much as I want to archive everything, I also have to be present in the moment."

venessa@sp.com.sg