

**State of Missouri
Office of the Secretary of State
Division of Records Services**

**Guidelines for Backing-up Social Media
Accounts**

Records Retention and Sunshine Requests

As stated in the “Guidelines for Creating an Agency Social Media Policy” by the State of Missouri, Office of the Secretary of State Division of Records Management and Local Records Division, agencies should not rely on social media sites to retain their documents, as that responsibility lies with the agency. Posts, comments, polls, photographs and other content may be considered records. Agencies should identify staff whose responsibility it is to ensure these records are exported from the social media site or captured in some other way.

Content on social media sites is also subject to 610 RSMo., more commonly known as the Sunshine Law. Government records on a non-government owned server are subject to a Sunshine request, and legal discovery. Social media companies, however, are not obligated to respond to agency requests - only to what is agreed upon in the Terms of Use or Terms of Service. For this reason, it is important to monitor social media activity and capture all records.

Retention periods for records can vary from one day to permanent/transfer to the Missouri State Archives. The retention time will depend on the content of the record. If an agency is unsure how long a record needs to be retained state agencies should refer to the Missouri General Retention Schedule, their Agency Records Disposition Schedule or contact the Division of Records Management. Local agencies should refer to their Records Retention Schedules or contact the Local Records Division. Some social media sites give users the ability to export their information, while others require the use of third party tools. The responsibility to maintain the records resides with the agency, not the social media company.

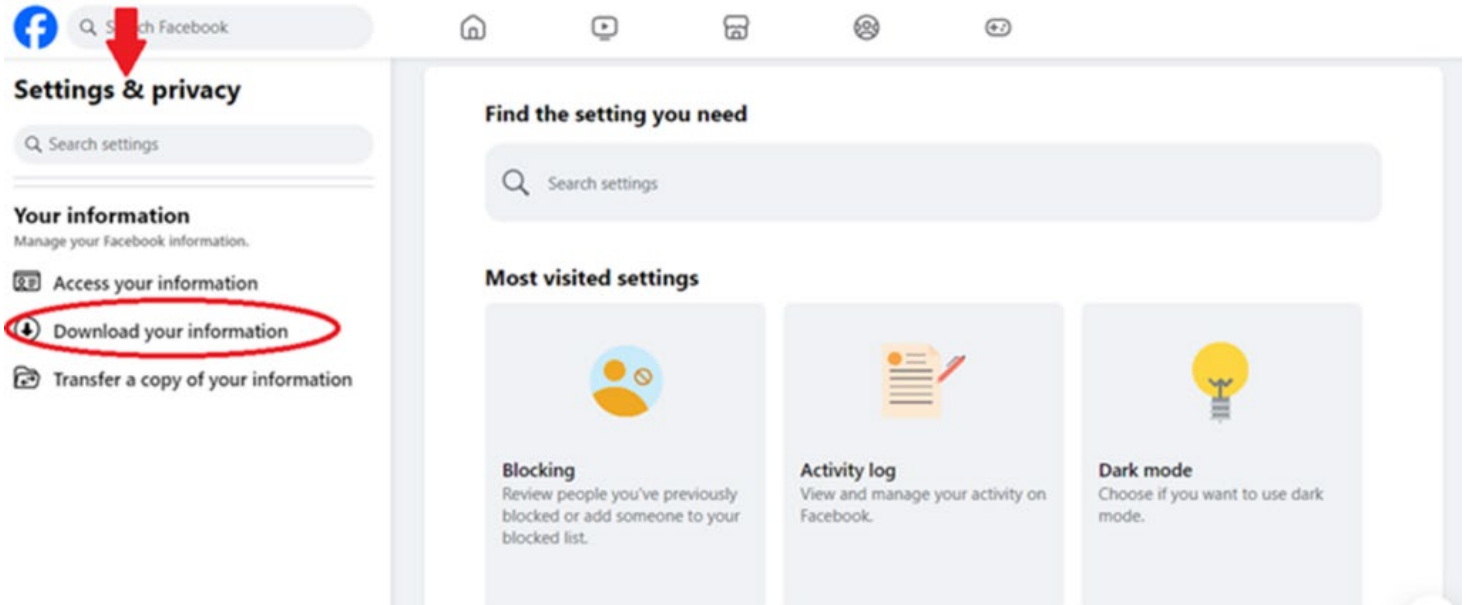
If the site shuts down, crashes, or the vendor arbitrarily changes the Terms of Use, those potential records could be at risk, and without adequate preparation, there is nothing the agency can do to protect itself. Agencies must have a plan and process in place for how records will be saved.

Vendors

The guidelines below are for basic downloads of social media accounts. If an agency has a robust social media presence and requires larger data backups or more navigable files, there are several services and vendors that the agency can hire. The Secretary of State’s Office does not recommend or endorse a particular service or vendor. Please see the National Archives and Records Administration White Paper on Best Practices for the Capture of Social Media Records pages 11-20 for a list of such vendors as of 2013.

How to Download a Facebook Account

1. Click account in the top right of Facebook, select **Settings & privacy**, then click **Settings**. In the left column, scroll down to **Your information**. Next click **Download your information**



2. Select a **date range**. Select the format as **HTML** and the media quality as **HIGH**.

Downloads

[Request a download](#) [Available files](#)

Select file options

You can choose the file format, media quality and date range for your download. HTML format is easy to view, while JSON format allows another service to more easily import the file. Media quality is the quality of your photos and videos but also affects file size.

Format
HTML

Media quality
High

Date range (required)








3. Leave everything in the **information to download** portion checked.

Select information to download

You can download everything or select the types of information you want to download.

Your activity across Facebook Deselect All

Information and activity from different areas of Facebook, such as posts you've created, photos you're tagged in, groups you belong to and more

-  **Saved items and collections**
A list of the posts you've saved, and your activity within collections
[What's included?](#)
-  **Voting**
Location and preferences in Town Hall and the Voting Information Center
[What's included?](#)
-  **Messages**
Messages you've exchanged with other people on Messenger
[What's included?](#)
-  **Posts**
Posts you've shared on Facebook, posts that are hidden from your timeline and polls you have created
[What's included?](#)
-  **Pages**
Your Pages, Pages you've liked or recommended, followed or unfollowed
[What's included?](#)
-  **Polls**
Polls you've created and participated in
[What's included?](#)
-  **Events**
Your responses to events and a list of the events you've created
[What's included?](#)

4. Select **Request a download** at the bottom of the page.

Start your download

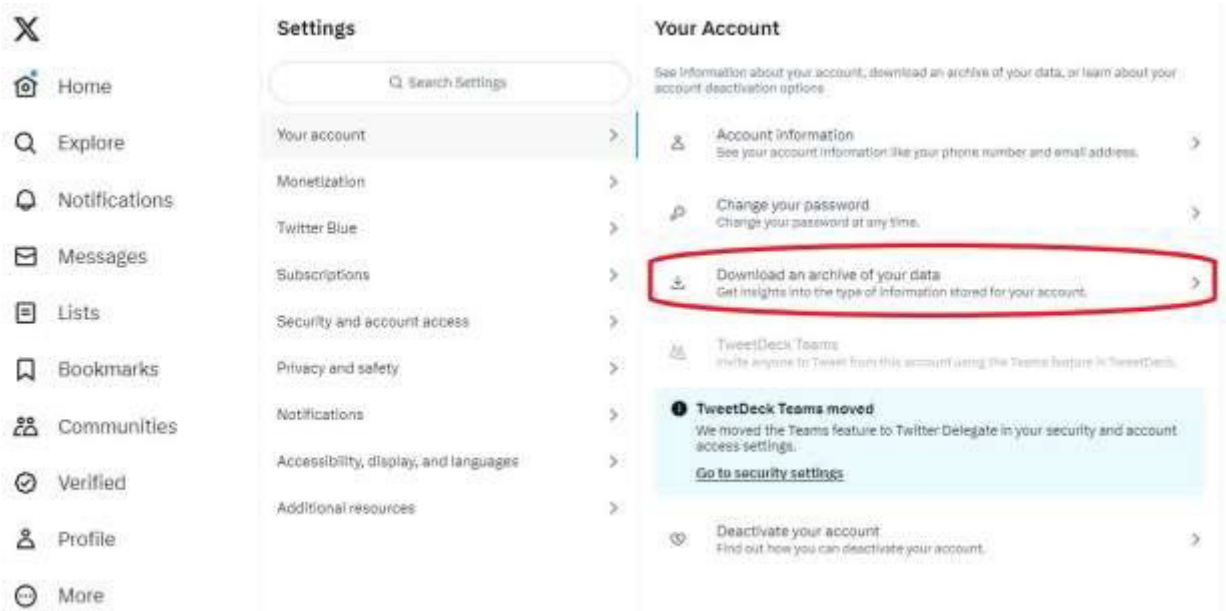
Your download may contain private information. You should keep it secure and take precautions when storing it, sending it or uploading it to another service.

Request a download

It will take a few minutes for the content to download. Facebook will notify you when the file is ready to download. Save the file to an appropriate place your computer with an appropriate naming convention.

How to Download an X Account (formerly Twitter)


1. Click or tap **More** in the main navigation menu to the left of your timeline.
2. Select **Your account**.

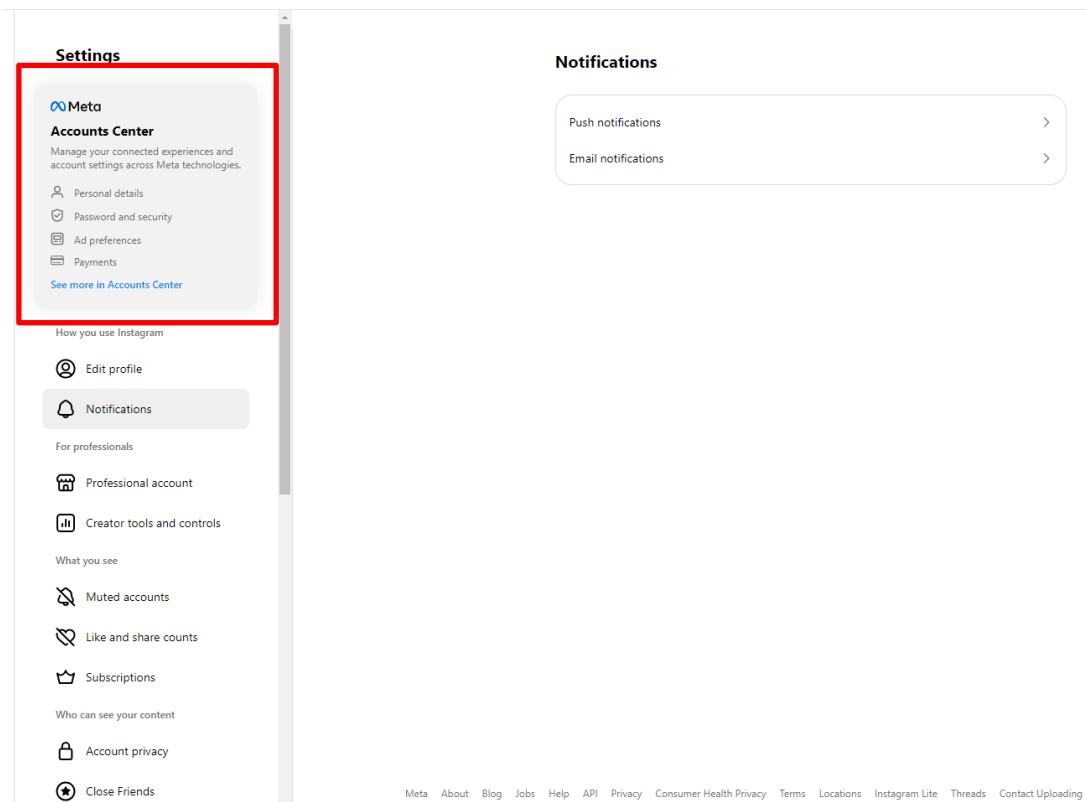


3. Select **Download an archive of your data**, and confirm. Verify your identity through a pass code sent to your email or phone number attached to the account, then select **Request data**.

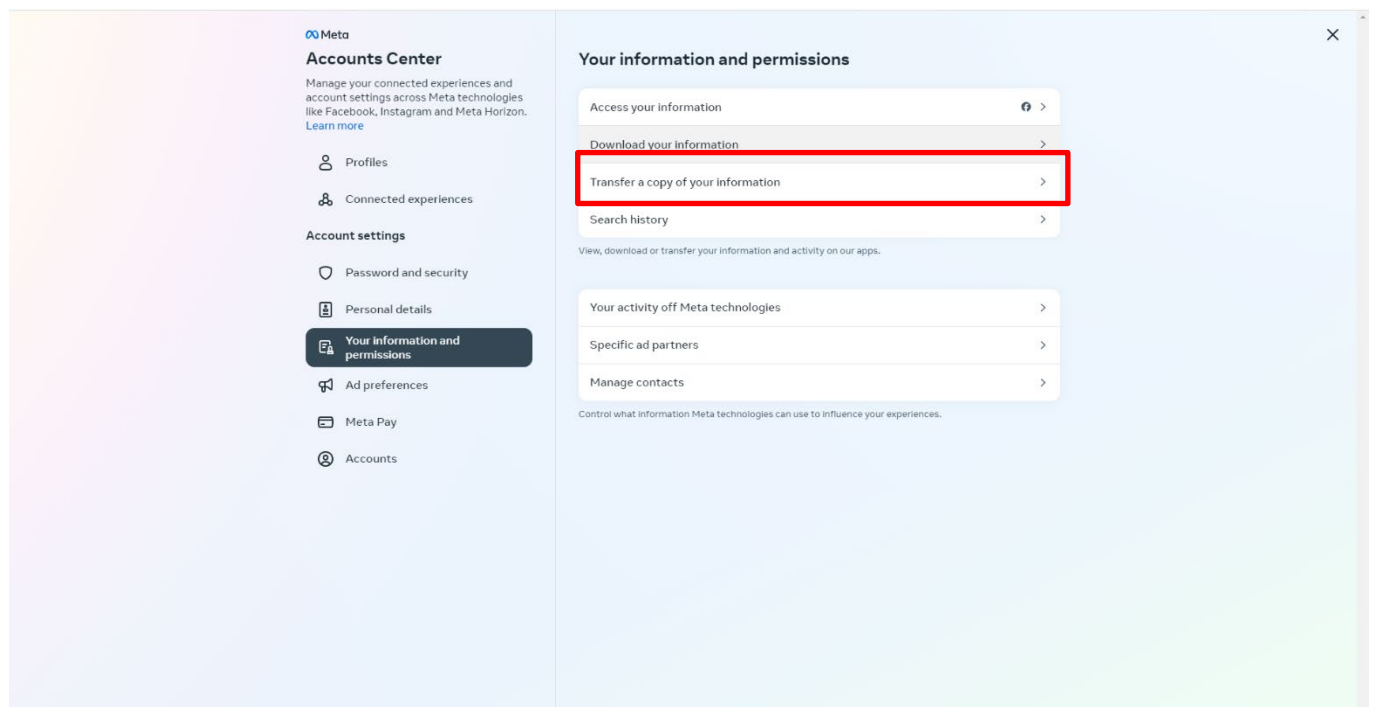
You should receive a notification that X has received your request and will send a download link to your email

How to Download an Instagram Account (On Browser)

1. Click  in the bottom left, then click **Meta Accounts Center**.



2. Click **Your information and permissions**, then **Download your information** and select the profile.



3. Select **All available information**, then **Download to Device**. Enter the email address you would like the data to be sent to, as well as your **Date range**, and leave **HTML** selected, select **High Media quality** and click **Create files**.
4. A message will appear stating that it may take up to 14 days to collect this information and send it to you. The link you will receive is only active for four days, so make sure to download the files quickly.

References:

- 1) State of Missouri, Office of the Secretary of State, Division of Records Management and Local Records Division. *Guidelines for Creating an Agency Social Media Policy*. (2013)
<https://www.sos.mo.gov/cmsimages/localrecords/socialmedia.pdf>
- 2) National Archives and Records Administration. *White Paper on Best Practices for the Capture of Social Media Records*. (May 2013)
<https://www.archives.gov/files/records-mgmt/resources/socialmediacapture.pdf>
- 3) X Help Center. *How to download your X archive*. (October 2023)
<https://help.x.com/en/managing-your-account/how-to-download-your-x-archive>
- 4) Facebook Help Center. *How do I download a copy of my information on Facebook?*
<https://www.facebook.com/help/212802592074644>