

Principles for the Standardized Handling of Digital Property Inheritance

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Abstract

The emergence of digital property has sparked another revolution in the expansion of the objects of rights, gradually becoming an important component of citizens' legitimate property. Ensuring the inheritance of digital heritage is an inherent requirement for realizing citizens' digital property rights. However, due to the characteristics of digital heritage-such as the intangibility of its objects, the diversity of its forms, and the complexity of its rights-it poses challenges to the existing inheritance system. The main problems facing digital heritage inheritance are the unclear legal status of digital heritage, the difficulties in applying traditional inheritance models, and the conflicts of rights inherent in digital heritage itself. Digital heritage inheritance should adopt a typological approach, categorizing digital heritage into three types based on their different characteristics: personality rights-based, property rights-based, and composite rights-based. Different types of heritage inheritance should adhere to principled methods of handling, including the principle of party autonomy, the principle of value hierarchy, the principle of proportionality, and the principle of division of rights, all of which are innovatively applied in the context of digital property. A forward-looking legal framework for digital heritage inheritance should define the legal status of digital heritage, establish inheritance principles, and clarify the obligations of third-party platforms. Digital heritage inheritance also requires the coordinated efforts of a digital heritage trustee system, technical protection and regulatory systems, and international cooperation mechanisms. The realization of digital heritage inheritance is not only a necessary condition for safeguarding citizens' legitimate property rights, but also an important component for promoting economic development in the digital age. Effective digital heritage inheritance and reasonable distribution not only ensure the comprehensive protection of citizens' property rights, but also serve as an important indicator of the level of legal civilization in society.

Keywords: digital legacy, personality rights, property rights, inheritance principles

1. Introduction

The United Nations Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage provides the following definition: Digital heritage is defined as unique resources of human knowledge and expression. This includes cultural, educational, scientific, and administrative resources, as well as technical, legal, medical, and other information created in digital form or converted from existing analog resources into digital form. The issue of digital heritage inheritance has emerged as a novel challenge in the legal field in the digital age. A considerable number of practical cases concerning the inheritance of digital heritage have already emerged. For instance, a content creator on Bilibili, a video-sharing platform, born in the 1990s, visited the China Will Repository to draft a will. The creator, who had amassed a following of millions, intended to leave their account to a friend for management after their death and to bequeath their virtual assets, valued at 3 million yuan, to their parents.

Digital heritage is a multifaceted concept that encompasses the legal principles of digital property and inheritance. (Thwaites, 2013) Digital property is defined as property that exists in the form of data and is controlled by a specific entity. Inheritance is defined as the personal legal property left behind by a natural person upon their death. Inheritance is defined as the process of transferring the personal legal property of a natural person to others following their death. China's legal provisions on "digital property" are delineated in Article 127 of the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as the "Civil Code"): In instances where legal frameworks are in place to safeguard data and virtual assets within the digital landscape, these provisions are to be duly implemented. Despite the explicit inclusion of the terms "data" and "virtual property on the internet" in the Civil Code's provisions, this referential clause lacks a clear definition of the scope and content of digital property rights and obligations. Consequently, the application of this clause in cases pertaining to digital property inheritance is

challenging. Digital property has the potential to constitute an estate; however, it possesses distinct characteristics that differentiate it from general estate, thereby presenting numerous challenges for its inheritance. In the current era, characterized by the proliferation of information, it is imperative to establish a corresponding property regime, explore and improve the legal framework for digital heritage inheritance from both legislative and practical perspectives, and continuously refine the relevant laws and regulations governing digital heritage inheritance. This is a critical task of our time.

2. Digital Heritage

2.1 New Types of Heritage in the Digital Age

In the context of digital inheritance law, the right to inherit is attributed to digital assets. The emergence of digital assets is a consequence of the interplay among multiple factors, including the rapid development of information technology, the rise of the digital economy, and the flourishing of the virtual economy. Digital assets refer to forms of property that exist in the virtual space, possess a certain economic value, and can be possessed and utilized. They encompass digital currency, digital collectibles, virtual property, and significant data. The fundamental nature of digital assets is data, expressed through the codes of 0 and 1. The ability to access, modify, and transmit these assets requires the utilization of technological equipment and external virtual network services. A distinguishing feature of digital assets is their existence in a digital form, independent of physical objects. Instead, they depend on computer systems for their existence. This characteristic distinguishes digital assets from traditional assets, which can be physically possessed and controlled. Similarly, digital assets cannot be fully characterized in legal terms as a property subject. The control of digital assets typically necessitates the use of technological tools and the assistance of external services. (Parry, 2010)

2.2 Digital Estate Properties

Comparative Analysis of Digital and Traditional Estates: In the context of legal studies, the definition of digital assets, which are considered part of the digital economy, can be understood through a comparison with traditional assets. Chinese scholar Song Jianwei has defined and enumerated digital assets using the concept of digital property. Digital assets can be described as "rights to possess, govern, and divide that exist in digital formats, including virtual currencies, online assets, and data." (Sun, 2024) Joshua Fairfield, a scholar from the United States, posits that a comprehensive information resource that meets the criteria of "virtual property" must also exhibit the qualities of competitiveness, durability, and interconnectedness. (J. A., 2005) Charles Blazer, a prominent figure in the field of digital currency and blockchain technology, has proposed a set of criteria for determining the merits of digital assets. According to Blazer, a digital asset should meet the following five criteria: Rivalry: The presence of competition among stakeholders. Persistence: The ability to withstand prolonged periods of low-interest rates and maintain its value. Interconnectivity: The capacity for seamless integration and interaction with existing financial systems and networks. Secondary markets: The existence of markets where digital assets can be traded, facilitating their circulation and use. Value-added by users: The contribution of users to the value of the digital asset, through their participation and utilization. (Blazer, 2006)

As previously mentioned, the definition of "digital property" encompasses both traditional property and the characteristics of competition inherent in both. This property can be possessed, controlled, and transferred by an individual or entity, thereby facilitating its role in economic activities. The concept of "property" is deeply rooted in the concept of ownership, which is defined by the possession and control of tangible assets. The competitive nature of this relationship is derived from the fundamental nature of these assets. For example, a single apple can only be consumed once, and the energy it provides is finite. In contrast, the concept of "data" is characterized by its ability to be repeatedly copied and disseminated, resulting in its infinite replicability. This characteristic is distinct from the competitive nature of "property," where rival entities compete for possession and utilization of physical assets.

Data can be considered as a form of non-rival property due to its capacity to be replicated without significant alteration, thereby ensuring its relevance and utility across different users. This attribute of data is distinct from the proprietary nature of information, which is protected by law and can be subject to competition. However, data can be viewed as a form of rivalry, characterized by the pursuit of possession, control, and utilization of data by different entities. This pursuit is not driven by a desire to possess data for its own sake, but rather by the need to utilize it for specific purposes, such as financial gain, the creation of new content, or the protection of intellectual property rights.

Data can encompass a wide range of information, including personal information, social media accounts, and other data. These forms of information are subject to legal protection due to their association with personal rights.

The primary distinction between digital and traditional assets lies in their permanence and interconnectedness. Digital assets possess inherent permanence, unaffected by wear and tear or physical damage. This attribute enables their stable existence as a sequence of 0s and 1s. Conversely, the interconnectedness of digital assets facilitates their accessibility and enhances their value. The accessibility of digital assets is primarily influenced by two factors. Firstly, the ability to control and modify data is crucial. Secondly, the transfer of control over data between different entities is pivotal.

In the context of traditional property, the control status of property is achieved through "publication." For movable property, this primarily refers to the physical possession of the property itself, while for immovable property, it refers to registration. The transfer, circulation, and orderliness of property are also established on this stable foundation. However, in the realm of digital property, there is no direct way to possess or register physical property. Individuals require technical means to create, modify, and control digital property, whether it is a physical medium such as a USB flash drive or a digital platform such as a cloud storage service. A social media account represents a form of digital property control for the user. In the digital space, a similar registration and publication model exists. For example, a social media account on a social media platform can publish content that is visible to other users. This content serves to express the relationship between the account holder and the account itself, and it achieves the effect of publication.

In addition, there are significant differences in the protection and circulation of tangible and digital assets. Traditional assets can be controlled through physical means, while digital assets require technical means, such as the use of passwords and usernames. However, both types of assets are vulnerable to illegal access and theft, which are often achieved through technical means. This type of infringement is often concealed, making it difficult for users to identify it and difficult for them to seek redress. In digital asset transactions, the transfer of assets between parties requires the involvement of a third-party network platform, which may be subject to the terms of a prior contract. The possession and circulation of digital assets, including digital currencies, require technical means to ensure security and facilitate transactions through network platforms.

A comparison of the characteristics of digital assets and traditional assets reveals the distinguishing features of the former. Digital assets are distinguished by their intangibility, variability, and the combination of rights. These characteristics, however, also introduce a series of issues during the process of inheritance.

The second point pertains to the intangibility of the object. Digital heritage exists in the form of data, which is located in the virtual cyberspace and is independent of physical entities. The object in question displays a novel and distinct virtualization characteristic. The intangibility of digital heritage manifests itself in an intangible form within the virtual digital space, relying on modern technological means such as computer code, network protocols, and data storage technologies.

Thirdly, the diversity of forms is evident in the broad scope and diverse forms of expression that characterize the digital heritage. Within the financial sector, this encompasses electronic currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, electronic securities, and electronic insurance policies. Within the domain of entertainment and gaming, the term encompasses a variety of digital assets, including virtual items in online games such as equipment, pets, and character skins, as well as digital music, e-books, and films. Within the domain of intellectual property, it encompasses digital copyrights, digital patents, trademark rights, and software copyrights. In the service sector, it encompasses cloud computing services, big data analysis services, online office software subscriptions, and digital membership services.

Fourthly, the composite nature of rights in digital heritage is a distinguishing feature that sets it apart from traditional property. This distinction is primarily manifested in the dual attributes of property value rights and personality rights in certain digital assets. A paradigmatic example of this phenomenon is the presence of social media accounts. In terms of property value, the cryptocurrencies and virtual items controlled by the account possess clear economic value due to their tradability and market recognition. These assets can be directly converted into real currency or used to exchange other goods and services. The transfer of property rights to heirs generates economic benefits for the owner and becomes part of the estate, triggering inheritance proceedings upon the owner's death. However, from a personal rights perspective, personal social media accounts, emails, photos, and videos stored in cloud storage can contain a significant amount of private information, emotional memories, and personality traits, which can possess significant emotional and spiritual value. It is imperative to acknowledge the profound significance of these assets, which encompass a substantial portion of the deceased's personal privacy and hold profound personal value for the deceased and their relatives.

3. The Dilemma of Digital Estate Inheritance

In the context of the digital economy, digital property has emerged as a novel form of property, exerting a profound and extensive impact on the prevailing inheritance system. The impact is primarily evident in the ambiguity surrounding the legal status of digital heritage, the absence of established principles for its inheritance, and the inherent rights and interests involved in three distinct aspects.

3.1 Pending Legal Determination

The predominant issue confronting digital inheritance is the uncertainty surrounding its legal status. In the conventional legal framework, the term "inheritance" predominantly pertains to tangible assets, including real estate, land, and financial assets such as cash. The conventional inheritance framework predominantly emphasizes tangible assets and a select array of intangible assets, including intellectual property rights and equity interests. The legal status of digital inheritance as intangible property has not yet been recognized. However, with the advent of digital property, the scope of inheritance has become more expansive, encompassing not only traditional assets like real estate and financial holdings but also contemporary forms of property such as digital currencies, online accounts, gaming equipment, and digital artworks. These emerging forms of property frequently lack a clear legal status within the current legal framework. Article 127 of the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China does not explicitly delineate which digital assets fall within the purview of inheritable estates. However, the law does establish provisions for the protection of data and online virtual property. This discrepancy in legal status gives rise to several challenges, including uncertainty regarding the scope of inheritance, difficulty in determining ownership, challenges in assessing value, and an absence of established inheritance procedures.

The identification of ownership in the context of digital heritage serves as the foundation for the transfer of assets. However, given the virtual and intangible nature of digital heritage, delineating ownership is a challenging endeavor. Secondly, the uncertainty surrounding the legal status of these materials complicates the assessment of their value as digital heritage. The legal ambiguity surrounding digital heritage complicates the process of its transmission. In the absence of clear legal provisions, heirs may need to engage in cumbersome legal procedures to confirm the ownership and value of digital heritage. This can increase the cost and time cost of inheritance and may lead to family disputes and social conflicts.

The question of whether the rights held by users (i.e., the heirs) over specific digital properties are ownership or usage rights remains a subject of debate. A prevalent perspective posits that a user's account is analogous to a storage space on a network platform, with the network platform being the proprietor of the digital asset. However, this assertion lacks substantiation. The account's initial purpose is to facilitate users' entry into cyberspace for the purpose of conducting activities and storing digital resources. It should be noted that the account does not possess any inherent monetary value at this stage. Upon entering into a service agreement with an online platform, an online user is granted a basic account, which is not a rare commodity due to its abundant supply and is considered a freely available resource. Conversely, blank accounts possess no inherent value. The underlying rationale for an account's potential transformation into a digital asset is rooted in the process of "value enhancement by users." With regard to the ownership of digital assets of the property right type, the answer can be found in the traditional property right theory.

The network platform offers a fundamental service, with the value of the account stemming from its utilization and operation by users. In the domain of jurisprudence, according to Locke's concept of property rights, the physical products of an individual's labor and work with their hands are considered rightfully theirs. The act of extracting an object from its natural state and then applying one's own labor to it, thereby rendering it subject to ownership, signifies the transfer of property rights. To illustrate this phenomenon, consider the process of registering for and creating a personal social media account. Upon registering, the user enters an initial state, characterized by the absence of any content or interactions. Subsequently, the user updates the dynamics through text, pictures, videos, and other content, constantly sharing their lives and creating a following by browsing proficiently. The prolonged creative labor involved in the development of these accounts contributes to their increased traffic and commercial value. Consequently, as the user's contributions have transformed the online account from its initial blank state, the account's value has increased, thereby precluding the common rights of others. The value accumulated through creative labor is indisputably the private property of the user and should be owned by the user. The platform offers a rudimentary account that functions as a service provider for the storage and transmission of information.

Moreover, Hegel's theory of property rights underscores the notion that individuals possess the prerogative to personify their volition in any given entity, thereby conferring upon it a sense of personal ownership. The assertion of this right by man is predicated on the premise that the object itself is devoid of such a purpose; rather, it derives

its provisions and soul from man's will, which is the foundation of man's absolute right to appropriate all objects to himself. To illustrate this phenomenon, consider the case of an online game character. Game users have invested a significant amount of emotional energy in these characters, with some even perceiving the virtual image of the character as a representation of their own existence within the digital realm. It has been posited that the prerogatives of the deceased (i.e., the user) with regard to such digital assets should be accorded to ownership. Consequently, it is imperative that network users be recognized as legitimate owners of their digital assets. In the event of an inheritance, the network platform must collaborate with the heirs to facilitate the transfer and delivery of these assets.

3.2 The Application of Traditional Succession Models in the Digital Property Context: A Challenge and Its Implications

The application of traditional succession models in the digital property context poses a significant challenge due to the complexity and unique nature of this field. Legal succession and testamentary succession, two fundamental principles of traditional inheritance, are particularly challenging to apply in the context of digital property. The unique nature of digital property presents challenges in directly applying traditional principles of succession.

The unique nature of digital property engenders a significantly more intricate distribution process in comparison to physical property. The distribution of traditional property is typically determined by its physical form and value, while digital property is often characterized by its intangibility, replicability, and other attributes, which give rise to multiple interests.

A significant distinction between digital property and traditional physical property pertains to the delivery method. The delivery of traditional physical property typically relies on physical means, while the delivery of digital property relies entirely on network technology and electronic means. To illustrate, within the context of inheritance proceedings, the delivery of digital assets to beneficiaries via electronic mail, cloud storage, and analogous means may become imperative. This delivery method presents a series of challenges.

3.3 Conflicts of Interest in the Digital Heritage Itself

There are various forms of digital heritage. However, in terms of the types of rights it contains, digital heritage mainly contains two kinds of legal rights and interests: personality rights and interests, and property rights and interests.

Initially, the focus is on personality rights and interests. Digital heritage encompasses a range of rights and interests, including personal information rights and privacy rights. Personal information is codified in the Chinese Civil Code within the section entitled "Personality Rights." This section delineates the attributes of personality interests, thus establishing a legal framework for their protection and governance. The right of the deceased individual to exercise control over the portion of their digital estate that pertains to personal privacy information. These digital estates are frequently associated with the decedent's personal life, emotions, memories, and other aspects, reflecting the decedent's personality traits and spiritual interests. The aforementioned examples include network photo albums and microblogging accounts that chronicle the heir's life, ideas, and emotional expression. These accounts are subject to the citizens' right to privacy.

Secondly, the concept of property rights and interests is examined. Digital heritage, moreover, encompasses a wide array of property rights and interests. Digital property rights and interests are distinct from traditional property rights and interests. They exist in the network or on data carriers and are not occupiable in physical space. They are intangible, and their value is demonstrated through their use. They lack a material form, yet they can be traded and transformed into actual economic benefits. More specifically, this includes the ownership, use, income, intellectual property, and claims of digital property.

The digital heritage paradigm is characterized by an inherent tension between the rights and interests of various stakeholders, which is further exacerbated by the challenges posed by the digital nature of the heritage in question. This tension is particularly pronounced during the process of inheritance, as it necessitates a delicate balance between the rights of the various parties involved and the interests of the collective.

4. International Judicial Practice and Theoretical Research on Digital Inheritance

In addressing the numerous challenges associated with digital inheritance, nations have adopted divergent judicial approaches and cultivated a range of distinctive legal theories based on their legal systems and cultural contexts. This article provides a concise introduction to and analysis of the judicial practice and theoretical research of the United States, Germany, and China in dealing with digital inheritance.

3.1 United States

The first documented instance of a legal dispute concerning digital inheritance in the United States is known as *Ainsworth v. Yahoo*. This case signifies the inaugural occurrence of a legal dispute over digital inheritance within the United States' legal framework. The incident in question stemmed from the actions of a father named Ellsworth, who sought to honor the memory of his son, a victim of the Iraq War, by accessing his late son's email account. However, Yahoo! denied Ainsworth's request under the Stored Communication Act ("SCA"). The case was subsequently adjudicated in a court of law, which ruled in favor of Ellsworth, determining that Yahoo Mail was obligated to grant him access to his account. However, Yahoo Mail declined to comply with the court's directive, invoking the privacy provisions outlined in its Terms of Service (TOS) and the SCA's provision that prohibits the platform from disclosing account information to third parties. However, Yahoo adopted a compromise strategy of creating a CD containing all the contents of the account and delivering it to the father of the original account user, Ellsworth. (Ajemian v. Yahoo!, 2017)

In the United States, a series of bills have been passed to provide a framework for the development of digital legacy inheritance laws in the states. These include UFADAA (Uniform Fiduciary Data Access Act), PEACA (Privacy Expectations Afterlife Choice Act), and RUFADAA (Revised Uniform Fiduciary Data Access Act). The Uniform Fiduciary Data Access Act (UFADAA) was legislation that was designed to grant estate administrators access to a deceased person's digital accounts. This legislation was subsequently amended by the Uniform Fiduciary Data Access Act (UFDAA), which emphasized that the inheritance of digital estates should be based on the express wishes of the decedent. This amendment was intended to gradually relax the conditions for obtaining relevant access. The UFADAA endeavored to address the issue of estate administrators' access to digital assets through implied authorization. However, the act proved controversial due to its potential to infringe upon decedents' rights. The UFADAA represented a controversial attempt to address the issue of administrators' access to digital assets through implied authorization. The act was met with controversy due to its potential to infringe upon the privacy of the deceased. This led to the establishment of the RUFADAA, which instituted a three-tiered system of prioritized access. The RUFADAA emphasizes the deceased's express consent and establishes a prioritized order of "online wills, offline wills, and terms of service." However, the U.S. system remains deficient in addressing asset-based digital legacies and private information of an altruistic nature.

4.1 Germany

Germany's "First Digital Inheritance Case" decision is the subject of this section. (Deusch, 2018) In December 2015, the German Federal Court of Justice established a precedent by recognizing the legal rights of inheritance pertaining to digital accounts, marking a significant development in the realm of digital estate law. The case under discussion arose in 2012 when a 15-year-old girl was fatally struck by a subway train and subsequently succumbed to her injuries under unclear circumstances. The girl's mother, as the designated beneficiary, petitioned for access to her daughter's former digital accounts with the objective of ascertaining the cause of death through her social media accounts. Subsequent to the initial and secondary instances, the German Federal Court of Justice (BGH) ruled that the girl's parents were entitled to inherit and access their daughter's social media accounts pursuant to the generalized inheritance provision of Section 1922 of the German Civil Code (BGB). In light of this case, a prevailing trend in German jurisprudence is to elucidate the concept of digital inheritance through the interpretation of prevailing legal frameworks. According to Section 1922 of the German Civil Code, heirs are entitled to inherit all rights and obligations of the decedent upon his or her death, including assets, liabilities, and all related rights and obligations, which are assumed by the heirs collectively. (Steiner & Holzer, 2015) However, it should be noted that there are divergent perspectives within the field of German jurisprudence. The case's significance lies in its establishment of the inheritability of "digital heritage" through a judicial decision. However, despite this, the German legislature appears to be more conservative on the issue of digital heritage legislation. The German legislature advocates the interpretation of existing laws and encourages users to designate the heirs of digital heritage and the scope of inheritance through the will in advance. In the theoretical realm, certain scholars advocate for the differentiation between highly personalized data (e.g., private communications) and general information. The former is proposed to be prohibited from inheritance, while the latter is permitted for the broader transfer of contractual rights and obligations. The academic community has yet to reach a consensus on the inheritance of special data, such as the goodwill of online stores or credit ratings. An alternative viewpoint proposes a binary division between property right attributes and non-property right attributes, and advocates for the construction of differentiated inheritance rules. (Mährke-Sobolewski, 2015) Furthermore, the notion that users should proactively arrange the management of their digital legacy through pre-life agreements is gradually gaining traction, underscoring the expanded application of the principle of autonomy of meaning in the digital era. (Sorge, 2018)

4.2 China

In the People's Republic of China, the legal framework pertaining to digital inheritance is characterized by a certain degree of ambiguity. While the General Principles of Civil Law addresses personal information and data protection, the provisions are general and lack specific operational rules. Additionally, the Law of Succession does not explicitly include digital information in the scope of inheritance. While there is a general consensus on the legal aspects of virtual property inheritance, there are still significant gaps in the relevant legislation. Notably, China lags behind in the technological development of digital inheritance treatment, including the lack of innovative measures such as memorial accounts and inheritance contact services. As the age structure of Internet users undergoes change and awareness of digital inheritance grows, it is expected that related disputes will increase in the future. The legal norms associated with digital inheritance encompass constitutional norms as well as civil code norms. The research in the field of legal theory concerning digital inheritance addresses fundamental issues in this domain and explores the development of legal frameworks for the governance of digital assets. (Lin, 2009)

A substantial corpus of research has been amassed on the subject of digital inheritance models by Chinese academics. The focal points of this research include the attributes of digital inheritance rights, the inheritance models of personality rights and interests, the inheritability of digital inheritance, and the obligation of third-party online platforms to cooperate in the inheritance of digital inheritance.

In terms of inheritability, Peng Chengxin and Li Jiatong posit the concept of digital inheritance, encompassing personality rights and interests, as a potential inheritable entity. This is achieved through typological distinction and the principle of meaning autonomy. The objective of this study is to examine object attribute identification, with a particular focus on autonomy extension to establish layered inheritance mechanism. The identification of object properties, that is, the establishment of standards for assessing personal data property attributes, will result in the inclusion of economic value of digital property in the scope of inheritance objects. The layered inheritance mechanism involves the establishment of distinct inheritance rules based on data types. It employs the principle of "limited inheritance and purpose limitation" for data that pertains to privacy. (Peng & Li, 2024)

With respect to the aforementioned inheritance model, Liu Yonghong and Tang Yang posit that, given the extant theoretical disputes and practical difficulties, the theoretical framework of "composite superiority of data rights" can be introduced to reconstruct the inheritance system of digital heritage. The model's foundation is data mobility, with digital heritage regarded as a bundle of dynamic rights. It employs a hierarchical inheritance mechanism through typological analysis. (Liu & Tang, 2023)

In the context of digital heritage rights, Cong Xuelian and Qiu Lipei posit that digital property fulfills the dual legitimacy requirements of the acquisition path and the nature of the content. To illustrate, users of social media network accounts possess the right of ownership over their digital heritage. The legitimacy of this process is rooted in the fact that, upon completion of the registration and purchase procedures outlined in the network service agreement, the user acquires ownership of virtual goods, accounts, and other digital assets in accordance with the prevailing laws. The acquisition process is governed by the principles of contractual freedom and autonomy, aligning with the legal requirements for such transactions. The extant laws and regulations do not encompass such digital property in the category of prohibited or restricted circulation, and its content attributes have the validity recognized by law. This dual legitimacy is essential for ensuring the circulation of digital property and maintaining the stability of rights within the legal framework. (Cong & Qiu, 2023)

With respect to the ambit of digital inheritance, Zhang Dongmei propounds the position that China's inheritance legislation delineates inheritance as the aggregate of legal assets bequeathed by the deceased at the time of their demise. This purview encompasses income, immovable assets, movable assets, proceeds from intellectual property, and an array of other diversified forms. It is noteworthy that this definition permits legal interpretation through the open-ended provisions, thereby affirming the inheritability of novel forms of property. (Zhang, 2013)

5. Classification and Resolution Pathways for Digital Heritage

5.1 Methodology for Classifying Inheritable Digital Assets

Digital heritage possesses the characteristics of intangible subject matter, diverse forms, and composite rights. This makes it difficult to effectively address it through China's existing property inheritance system. This paper employs a typological classification method to categorize digital heritage.

First, the concept of digital heritage is divided into three categories based on the characteristics of different rights. The initial category pertains to digital heritage, which is predominantly characterized by personality rights. The second category is digital heritage, which is dominated by property rights. The third category is digital heritage, where personality and property rights coexist.

5.2 Digital Heritage and Personality Rights

The preeminence of personality rights in the context of digital heritage primarily signifies the deceased's personal privacy, dignity, spiritual value, identity, and reputation—that is to say, non-material personality rights. According to the prevailing legal framework, personality rights are considered non-transferable and non-inheritable. However, despite the absence of direct economic value attributed to these data, they assume considerable significance in ensuring the preservation of the deceased's dignity and safeguarding their personality rights. Consequently, these data should be transferred to their designated heirs. The heirs shall be the custodians of these data, responsible for their acquisition and maintenance. For the deceased's relatives and descendants, including the heirs, these data carry significant emotional value and commemorative significance, reflecting the deceased's personality traits and life trajectory.

When dealing with such digital heritage, the primary principle to be observed is the protection of the user's personality rights and the respect of the user's privacy and intentions. Strict compliance with relevant laws and regulations on the protection of personality rights during the inheritance process is required to ensure the confidentiality of user information. Concurrently, the rights of the heirs should be safeguarded to the greatest extent possible, including fulfilling the emotional needs of relatives toward the deceased and handling these assets in the most appropriate manner.

5.3 Digital Heritage Governed by Property Rights

The concept of "digital heritage dominated by property rights" pertains to digital assets that have the potential to be converted into economic rights, either directly or indirectly. This category comprises virtual currencies, balances on online payment platforms, digital artworks, and the right to operate online stores, all of which possess clear economic value. The transfer of such digital assets should adhere to the general principles of property inheritance, ensuring the transfer of property rights and safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of heirs.

In the context of managing such digital heritage, it is imperative to place greater emphasis on the ownership and inheritance of property rights. In accordance with pertinent legislation and regulations, legal heirs are entitled to inherit these assets and dispose of them. Concurrently, particular emphasis must be placed on the evaluation and allocation of their economic value. This necessitates the evaluation of the market value of digital heritage and the establishment of a sound distribution mechanism to ensure that the heritage is distributed fairly and reasonably among heirs or rights holders.

5.4 Digital Heritage and the Intersection of Personality Rights, Property Rights, and Other Legal Entitlements

A particular category of digital heritage is characterized by its simultaneous encumbrance of both personality rights and property rights. This category includes self-media accounts and personal brand online stores. This category of digital heritage inheritance is characterized by its complexity.

Given the varied nature of digital heritage rights, the legal protection methods and inheritance models differ, precluding a simple disposition of digital heritage according to the inheritance methods of personal rights or property rights. This presents a challenge in the context of digital heritage inheritance. When dealing with such digital heritage, it is imperative to thoroughly evaluate the equilibrium between personal rights and property rights. On the one hand, the deceased's personality and wishes ought to be respected and their reputation and privacy protected; on the other hand, the economic rights of legitimate heirs should also be ensured. When dealing with such digital heritage, it is imperative to strike a balance between personal and property rights.

5.5 An Examination of the Inheritability of Diverse Forms of Digital Heritage

A historical analysis of legal evolution reveals a general pattern of legal development through typification, culminating in individualization. Typification signifies the inaugural stage of individualized legal development and constitutes a pivotal component in the evolution of legal systems toward individualization. The most reasonable approach to digital heritage inheritance is to decompose it based on different rights characteristics and distinguish between different types of digital heritage for separate disposition. The typology of digital heritage is a prerequisite for this process. The digital heritage can be categorized into three types: those dominated by personality rights, those dominated by property rights, and those where both personality rights and property rights coexist. This paper further analyzes the inheritable nature of these three categories of digital heritage.

5.6 The Inheritable Nature of Digital Heritage: A Dominance of Personality Rights

The preeminence of personality rights in the realm of digital heritage is indicative of the personal identity, emotional memories, and privacy information of the deceased. This type of digital heritage is closely tied to the user's personality and involves personality rights such as privacy rights, reputation rights, and portrait rights.

According to the prevailing legal framework, personality rights are considered non-transferable and non-inheritable. Nevertheless, digital carriers of personality rights possess substantial emotional and spiritual value and should be preserved. The security requirements for such data and the emotional reliance of close relatives should be addressed through data inheritance.

The legal framework for the transfer of digital heritage related to personality rights has been established in foreign legislative models. The Information Act of Hungary has introduced provisions pertaining to the processing of personal data of deceased individuals. According to the stipulations outlined in the pertinent legislation, data subjects are permitted to appoint a designated individual, who may be a close relative, to assume responsibility for the exercise of their personal data rights subsequent to their demise. Spain's Data Protection Act does not apply to the personal data of deceased individuals. However, Article 3 of the Act states that heirs have the right to access the personal data of the deceased from data controllers and processors. Furthermore, heirs have the right to request the deletion or correction of such data. This right is contingent upon two exceptions. First, the right to access and request deletion or correction is prohibited if the deceased expressly prohibited such actions during their lifetime. Second, the right to access and request deletion or correction is prohibited by law.

The transfer of digital heritage, chiefly pertaining to personality rights, ought to be executed in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. Online platforms are not entitled to retain such data and are therefore obliged to assist heirs in handling the relevant heritage. The transfer of such heritage to the deceased's close relatives should be executed in an unalterable format, with the option of either archiving or deleting it in cyberspace. This approach is intended to maximize the protection of the deceased's personality rights and the legitimate rights of their family members.

5.7 The Issue of Inheritability of Digital Heritage is Predominantly Governed by Property Rights

Digital heritage, under the governance of property rights, possesses an economic value that can be quantifiable and exchangeable within the market. According to the provisions of the Civil Code, an estate is defined as the personal lawful property left by a natural person at the time of death. Given the evident pecuniary worth of such digital heritage, it can be regarded as an estate that can be inherited. In practice, the main obstacles to inheriting such property arise from the involvement of online platforms. In some cases, digital platforms may impose restrictions on the transfer of digital assets through prior contractual agreements. In other cases, heirs may be required to provide the deceased's death certificate, proof of inheritance rights, or other relevant documents. However, it is important to note that such prior contractual agreements are not able to supersede the ownership rights of the deceased with respect to their digital assets. Furthermore, these agreements lack the legal authority to interfere with the inheritance process of digital assets.

In the context of digital heritage, which is predominantly characterized by property rights, it is advised that online platforms streamline the inheritance process and offer user-friendly services for the transfer of heritage assets. Concurrently, heirs are advised to seek the counsel of professional lawyers to ascertain the legality and validity of the inheritance process.

5.8 The Transfer of Digital Assets with Composite Entitlements

The concept of digital heritage, which encompasses both personality rights and property rights, encapsulates the unique identity and emotional recollections of the deceased. This heritage also possesses a certain economic value. The inheritance of such digital heritage is complex due to its involvement with both personality rights and property rights. In the context of inheritance proceedings, it becomes imperative to strike a balance between these two categories of rights. Heirs may need to engage in negotiations with online platforms to facilitate the transfer of the estate. It is essential to ensure that the privacy rights and intellectual property rights of all parties involved are protected during this process. In the case of original works created by individuals, heirs may be required to obtain relevant copyright certificates to ensure their legitimate rights and interests. In the context of digital heritage that encompasses both personality rights and property rights, online platforms must prioritize safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of heirs.

The inheritable nature of digital heritage is a complex and highly controversial issue. A comparison of the inheritable nature of different types of digital heritage reveals significant disparities. Article 124 of China's Civil Code adjusts the legal framework through the expression "inheritance right—property inheritance right," thereby continuing the legislative tradition of protecting private rights while reserving institutional space for the expansion of the scope of rights objects. This evolution in legislative techniques essentially represents the adaptive adjustment of law to societal development needs. The evolution of the concept of property can be characterized by distinct phases. In Roman law, the concept of "things" was limited to tangible property. In modern civil law, intangible property was incorporated into the scope of protection. The digital age has introduced new challenges in

recognizing novel forms of property. Personal data, as a distinct entity characterized by both personal attributes and property value, exerts a direct influence on the application of inheritance rules. When data control rights can generate economic value and possess transferability, their property attributes gain a substantive legal basis for recognition, providing a theoretical foundation for overcoming the traditional constraint that "only property can be inherited."

In the context of digital heritage characterized by a preponderance of personality rights, it is imperative to honor the deceased's expressed wishes and safeguard the privacy of individuals. Conversely, in scenarios where property rights predominate, streamlined inheritance processes should be implemented to safeguard the legitimate rights of heirs. When both personality rights and property rights are present, a balanced approach is essential to facilitate the seamless transfer of digital heritage.

6. Inheritance Models for Digital Heritage

The inheritance of digital heritage is a multifaceted process that encompasses not only the transfer of legitimate property rights but also a variety of other considerations, including personal privacy, data security, and cyber ethics. Typological segmentation is a prerequisite for the implementation of digital heritage inheritance. Through a thorough examination of the inheritable characteristics inherent in diverse forms of digital heritage, it becomes evident that these various forms possess distinct inheritance logics. Digital heritage inheritance must ensure the efficient circulation of property and the protection of the personal rights of the heirs. At the present stage, the inheritance of digital heritage should be achieved through the establishment and application of principles for the same. In contemplating the future of digital inheritance, it is imperative to recognize the necessity for updates to the legal system and the establishment of more comprehensive institutional safeguards.

6.1 Principles of Digital Inheritance

This paper posits that four principles should be observed in the process of digital inheritance: the principle of party autonomy, the principle of value hierarchy, the principle of proportionality, and the principle of distinction of rights. These principles ensure the legality, rationality, and fairness of inheritance.

6.1.1 The Principle of Party Autonomy

The principle of party autonomy, also referred to as the principle of voluntariness, is defined as the right of civil subjects to engage in civil activities in accordance with their own rational judgment. This principle is also defined as the right to autonomously participate in and manage their private affairs, and to be free from unlawful interference by state power or other civil subjects. In the domain of digital inheritance, this principle is exemplified by the right of the decedent to autonomously determine the method of inheritance and the heirs of their digital assets through wills, agreements, or other means during their lifetime.

The principle of priority of the parties' will holds sway in the matter of the inheritance of digital assets. This is primarily due to the fact that the parties possess the right to dispose of their property rights and personality rights in their digital assets. With respect to property rights, the relevant parties may dispose of such rights by express declaration in a will, thereby transferring the ownership of property-related digital assets to the heirs. This assertion has been validated by the prevailing legal framework. With regard to the personality rights embodied in digital assets, the decedent, as the rights holder, also has the capacity to dispose of such exclusive rights, such as personal information and privacy rights, by transferring the data carriers containing such information to the heirs. The methods of inheritance for personality rights and property rights can be consolidated under the decedent's free will, manifesting through the transfer of data control rights.

This principle is reflected in practice through the testator's ability to explicitly designate the heirs of their digital heritage in a will. To illustrate, a testator (i.e., an individual who writes a will) has the capacity to stipulate in a will the heirs of their digital heritage, including game accounts and virtual currencies, for internet users who possess virtual property. This approach is predicated on the fundamental principle of honoring the wishes of the deceased and ensuring that their digital heritage is inherited in accordance with their expressed expectations. The testator may enter into an agreement with a network service platform, thereby stipulating the method of inheritance and the heirs of their digital heritage. However, when exercising their autonomy, the deceased must not violate mandatory provisions of national laws or administrative regulations, nor must they contravene public order and good customs. Furthermore, in the context of digital assets pertaining to sensitive domains such as personal privacy or national security, the methodologies employed for inheritance may be subject to more stringent restrictions and regulatory oversight.

The prevailing legal framework accorded primacy to the principle of party autonomy in wills. According to Article 1,123 of the Civil Code of the People's Republic of China, the handling of inheritances is governed by statutory

inheritance in the event that a will exists. Testamentary inheritance or bequest is implemented if a will is absent. In the event that an agreement regarding bequests and support is in place, the terms of that agreement are to be adhered to.

In accordance with international practices of digital inheritance, certain online social media platforms have already implemented a feature that allows users to specify during the registration process whether they consent to the inheritance of their accounts by designated heirs. This approach enhances the certainty and feasibility of digital inheritance.

In the context of the inheritance of digital property, testamentary succession should be regarded as the primary principle. This approach ensures that the deceased's intentions are honored and executed, providing clarity and stability to the legal expectations of all parties involved in the intricate and continually evolving process of digital property inheritance. By prioritizing the implementation of wills, it effectively addresses various conflicts of interest in the context of digital property inheritance. This approach promotes the lawful and orderly transfer of digital property, facilitating the smooth progression of assets to the intended beneficiaries. Additionally, it serves to safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of both the deceased and their heirs, ensuring a fair and equitable distribution of assets in accordance with the wishes of the decedent.

6.1.2 The Principle of Value Hierarchy

The principle of value hierarchy is predicated on the notion that, in the event of conflicting legal rights and interests, it is imperative to establish a hierarchy of values and interests, thereby ensuring that the most paramount values and interests are accorded precedence. This principle finds application in circumstances involving a conflict between personality rights and property rights in the inheritance of digital assets. In instances where the realization of one type of right necessarily infringes upon another type of right, the principle of value hierarchy should be applied to prioritize the realization of rights with a higher value hierarchy.

In the context of digital inheritance, this principle is manifested more specifically in the need to prioritize and balance digital assets during the inheritance process based on different value objectives and interests, ensuring that the most important value objectives and interests are given priority. In the context of digital inheritance proceedings, it is imperative to elucidate the legal attributes of various rights and interests. A systematic prioritization and balancing of these rights, with the paramount concern being the safeguarding of personality rights, is essential. Subsequent to this, the order of priority should be the delineation of property rights.

To illustrate, the digital heritage bequeathed by the deceased may comprise data with composite rights, encompassing personal privacy and personal information pertaining to the individual's personality rights, as well as property value, which can be acquired, exchanged, or disseminated. Given its status as an integrated entity, the act of sealing it for the purpose of safeguarding privacy invariably constitutes an infringement on the effective transfer of property rights. Conversely, in the event of inheritance, the article's property attributes enable its trade or publication, a process that inherently infringes upon the individual's personality rights. In such cases, the privacy rights of the deceased should be prioritized over the potential property rights of the heirs. The disposition of such digital assets should be conducted in a manner that prioritizes the protection of personal rights, with restrictions on the circulation of property rights.

6.1.3 Proportionality Principle

The proportionality principle posits that the means employed to achieve a legitimate goal must be proportionate to the goal itself. That is to say, the means employed should be commensurate with the gravity of the goal, and should avoid excessive interference or harm to other legitimate rights and interests. The principle of proportionality in digital inheritance signifies the notion that, subsequent to the implementation of the value hierarchy principle in determining the priority of rights protection in digital inheritance, the impact on subsequent rights should be minimized when protecting rights with a higher value hierarchy.

The principle of proportionality is manifested in the digital inheritance process by prioritizing the protection of personality rights under the value hierarchy principle while ensuring the appropriateness, necessity, and balance of inheritance methods to maximize the inheritance of property rights. The impact of the protection of personality rights and pre-contractual obligations of network service platforms on the inheritance of property rights should be minimized. The proportionality principle can be achieved through the principle of distinction of rights.

For instance, in the context of a comprehensive self-media account, the protocol dictates that data pertaining to personal privacy and information security be safeguarded. Subsequent to this, data with property value should be transferred to the designated heir, thereby ensuring the legitimate rights and interests of the heir.

6.1.4 The Principle of Division of Rights

The principle of distinguishing rights in digital inheritance refers to the distinction between property rights and personality rights in this context. This principle finds its primary application in the context of digital assets, where the distinction between property rights and personality rights can be clearly delineated. Given that personality rights in digital assets should primarily be protected through privacy safeguards and limited inheritance, while property rights should be transferred or delivered, distinguishing and separating digital assets can maximize the effective protection of both types of rights.

In the intricate tapestry of digital heritage, personal rights—including personal privacy and reputation rights—due to their highly personal and sensitive nature—ought to be accorded primary protection. This is imperative to ensure that such information is not disclosed or abused during the inheritance process. Moreover, it is essential that platforms release their control over data within legal boundaries, releasing limited data to close relatives. Conversely, the transfer and delivery of property rights, including virtual currency and digital works with economic value, should be prioritized to ensure that these assets can be legally inherited by the rightful heirs in accordance with the law.

The meticulous identification and disassembly of digital heritage is imperative for the effective safeguarding of these two rights. A relevant example of this phenomenon can be observed in the analysis of social media accounts. This category of digital heritage frequently encompasses both personality rights and property rights. The maintenance of confidentiality is of paramount importance in the context of personal rights, particularly in the case of private chat records and unpublished photographs contained within an account. These records must be meticulously safeguarded to ensure the privacy of the deceased is preserved. In the event that limited data with emotional value is explicitly stated or clearly indicated in the will for close relatives, it is recommended that this data be backed up and delivered to the heirs. The question of intellectual property rights in the context of online accounts has become a subject of increasing importance in the digital age. The question of whether publicly posted photos, articles, and other works within an account should be treated as property rights and legally transferred to heirs has become a matter of significant legal and ethical concern. The ability of heirs to inherit a portion of the account's legitimate property has become a matter of significant interest, and the question of how to proceed in cases where there is an absence of explicit property rights has become a matter of significant legal and ethical concern. By establishing such a distinction and implementing appropriate handling procedures, it is possible to ensure that the deceased's personal privacy and dignity are respected, while also ensuring that the property rights associated with digital heritage are transferred in a reasonable and lawful manner.

6.2 *Various Types of Digital Heritage Inheritance Models*1. *Inheritance of Digital Heritage Dominated by Personality Rights*

6.2.1 The Inheritance of Digital Heritage Dominated by Personality Rights is Chiefly Concerned with the Principles of Autonomy of the Parties and Proportionality

The application of the principle of party autonomy in the inheritance of digital heritage, characterized by an overarching concern for personality rights, entails a commitment to adhere to the wishes and decisions of the deceased with respect to the disposition of their digital assets. Specifically, in the event that the proprietor of digital assets has explicitly articulated their intentions with regard to the disposition of their digital heritage through a will, a bequest agreement, or other means during their lifetime, then such digital heritage ought to be managed in strict accordance with their wishes. The fundamental tenet of this principle is the protection of an individual's autonomy and privacy rights, ensuring that the manner in which digital property is handled aligns with the owner's expectations and intentions. In practice, respecting the principle of party autonomy necessitates the establishment of robust mechanisms for handling digital heritage to ensure that the owner's wishes are effectively carried out. The establishment of a digital will registration system could facilitate the process by which individuals document their intentions regarding the management of their digital heritage. Such a system would allow owners to register their intentions through designated platforms or institutions.

In the absence of a will, the primary objective of inheritance law should be to safeguard the individual's personality rights. The fundamental principle of privacy must be upheld, and the social media accounts of the individual in question should be preserved and frozen. Subsequently, the categorization and identification of digital assets is imperative, with data involving privacy and personal information being subject to destruction. It is imperative that data of sentimental value to the individual, their heirs, or close relatives be backed up and delivered for safekeeping.

The principle of proportionality is primarily employed in the context of the inheritance of digital assets, particularly those characterized by personality rights. This principle serves to calibrate the scope of these assets and the methods by which they are distributed. It is imperative to establish clear definitions for the scope of digital assets

governed by personality rights, with the objective of averting their proliferation or encroachment upon the implementation of property rights inheritance.

6.2.2 Inheritance of Digital Assets Dominated by Property Rights

The inheritance of digital assets dominated by property rights is principally characterized by the principle of the testator's autonomy. This principle innovatively applies existing legal inheritance models to digital assets.

6.2.3 The Issue of the Inheritance of Digital Heritage, Which Encompasses both Personality Rights and Property Rights, is a Complex Matter that has yet to be Fully Resolved

When personality rights and property rights coexist, the principle of party autonomy must be applied with priority. In the absence of a valid will, the determination of rights protection priorities is to be made in accordance with the principle of value hierarchy, while the scope of protection for personality rights is to be delineated through the principle of proportionality. The principle of rights disaggregation for digital heritage shall be applied to achieve reasonable inheritance.

The principle of party autonomy is of paramount importance in the context of the inheritance of digital heritage. Personality rights and property rights are considered legitimate rights that parties can dispose of through their intentions. In the event of a will, its provisions should be given priority. Third-party online platforms should cooperate with the will in disposing of digital heritage. To illustrate, in the context of the inheritance of social media account ownership, if the deceased requests that digital assets within the account be distinguished and distributed to different heirs, the third-party platform should also cooperate to complete the process.

A relevant example is that of social media accounts, which serve as a paradigmatic form of digital heritage, wherein personality rights and property rights coexist. These accounts contain a plethora of information regarding the owner's personal information, social relationships, speech records, digital works, and other content. When dealing with such digital heritage, it is imperative to give full consideration to the owner's intentions and privacy requirements during their lifetime. In the event that an individual has explicitly expressed a desire to remove their social media account or particular content therein prior to their demise, it is imperative that this request be honored and the requisite actions be taken. Conversely, if the deceased has stipulated in their will that they prefer the text or images to be transferred to their heirs, the platform is obligated to comply with this stipulation.

The principle of value hierarchy stipulates that, in instances of conflict between personality rights and property rights, priority should be accorded to the protection of personality rights. The Proportionality Principle dictates that the method of inheritance employed in the context of digital assets must be deemed appropriate, necessary, and balanced to ensure the optimal transfer of property rights. Concurrently, endeavors must be undertaken to mitigate the impact of factors such as the safeguarding of personality rights and the pre-contractual obligations of online service platforms on the transfer of property rights. The principle of distinguishing rights necessitates the categorization of digital inheritance into two distinct types: property rights-type and personality rights-type. This classification is imperative for the effective management of such cases, ensuring that each type of digital inheritance is addressed in a manner consistent with its designated rights and responsibilities.

7. Conclusion

The advent of the novel concept of digital property has, without question, precipitated a profound revolution in the domain of the expansion of the objects of rights. This development has engendered an array of unprecedented challenges and impacts on the prevailing inheritance system. Digital heritage, characterized by its unique characteristics of intangible objects, diverse forms, and composite rights, is gradually emerging as a new issue that urgently needs to be addressed in the field of inheritance. The challenges associated with the transfer of digital heritage primarily manifest in three domains: the ambiguity of its legal status, the challenges in applying conventional inheritance models, and the inherent conflicts of rights.

Digital heritage, in essence, comprises a multifaceted array of rights encompassing both personality rights and property rights. This concept encompasses both personal interests, such as privacy, reputation, and likeness, and property-related rights, including economic value and usage rights. In the context of the prevailing legal framework, the regulations that govern the inheritance of digital heritage are dispersed among various legal provisions, including the Constitution and the Civil Code. However, the interpretation and application of these regulations continue to encounter significant challenges.

The inheritance of digital heritage should adopt a classification strategy, categorizing digital heritage into three types based on their distinct characteristics: personality rights-based, property rights-based, and composite rights-based. In the course of this process, a series of principled methods should be observed, including the principle of prioritizing the intentions of the parties involved, the principle of value hierarchy, the principle of proportionality,

and the principle of dividing rights. In the context of digital heritage, which is predominantly characterized by personal rights, it is imperative to prioritize the safeguarding of privacy and spiritual value. Decisions regarding the preservation, destruction, or transfer of digital heritage to close relatives should be made in accordance with the wishes of the deceased. In the context of digital heritage centered on property rights, it is imperative that the property's nature be clearly delineated, and that distribution be executed in accordance with the directives outlined in the deceased's will or the prevailing statutory inheritance regulations. In the context of digital heritage, which encompasses both personal and property rights, it is imperative to thoroughly examine the interconnection between these two rights. Moreover, a meticulous analysis of specific cases is essential to ensure that they are adjudicated in accordance with established principles of inheritance.

The realization of digital heritage inheritance is not only a crucial step in safeguarding citizens' legitimate property rights but also a key driver for the development of the digital economy. The effective inheritance and reasonable distribution of digital heritage are directly related to the complete protection of citizens' property rights. Furthermore, these phenomena serve as an important indicator of a society's level of rule of law and the realization of fairness and justice. The inheritance of digital heritage has the potential to fully unleash the value of digital assets, thereby injecting new vitality and momentum into the development of the digital economy. It is our objective to explore and refine this system in a continuous process, with the aim of providing robust legal safeguards for the inheritance of digital heritage.

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