A FREE COMPANION TO YOU DON'T OWN ANYTHING ANYMORE

The Ownership Inventory

A one-hour workbook for walking your house, finding out what you actually own, and keeping the things you would be sorry to lose.



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How to Use This Workbook

Set aside an hour, take a pen, and walk through your house.

You Don't Own Anything Anymore starts with a walk from the shelf to the driveway, adding up what you could sell, lend, keep or hand to your kid without anybody's permission. For most Americans under fifty, the answer is the furniture. This workbook turns that walk into something you can do this afternoon. The book says most people find it takes about an hour and changes maybe a dozen purchasing decisions a year.

It has seven parts:

1. **Three questions** to ask of anything you pay for.
2. **The four powers**, and the two columns you sort everything into.
3. **The room by room walk**, with a page to fill in.
4. **What ends it**: the five ways a license runs out.
5. **The keep list**: the forty or fifty things you would be sorry to lose.
6. **What outlives you**: getting the things you made somewhere your family can reach.
7. **The ten minute jobs**: settings to change and moments to speak up.

> *I thought that once purchased, the books were mine.*

Antoine Bruguier, in the 2009 lawsuit after Amazon reached into Kindles and took back copies of 1984.

Part 1: Three Questions

Don't bother reading the terms and conditions. They can be changed whenever the company likes. Learn the shape of the arrangement instead.

1. **Does it keep working when the payment stops?** Switch off the internet and imagine the account deleted. If the thing stops working, you have a license, whatever the button said.
2. **Can anybody outside your house reach it?** A disc on a shelf can't be edited, pulled or switched off. A file on an account can.
3. **Is what you do with it being written down somewhere you can't see?** A disc reports almost nothing. A stream reports when you stopped, which scene, and what you opened instead.

These take about a minute, and the answers do not change when a company decides to change its terms.

Part 2: The Four Powers

Ownership, stripped of sentiment, is four powers. A license removes all four, and you only notice when you try to use one.

POWER	YOU FIND OUT YOU DON'T HAVE IT WHEN...	SOMETHING OF MINE I COULDN'T DO THIS WITH
Keep	...the server goes down	
Lend	...your brother asks to borrow it	
Sell	...you need the money	
Leave	...a lawyer asks for an inventory of the estate	

Mark the two columns

As you walk, sort everything into one of two columns.

Column 1: Yours

Keeps working with no account, no payment and no network. The paperbacks, the records, the discs, the saucepans, your grandmother's can opener.

Column 2: Licensed

Everything else. The film library on the television, the music app, the books on the reader, the photo app on a subscription, the car's switched-off features.

For every Column 2 item, the walk in Part 3 asks what ends it. Use the codes from Part 4: **L** licensing deal, **X** shuttered server, **S** lapsed subscription, **F** firmware update, **D** your death.

Quick count before you start

MY GUESS	COLUMN 1 ITEMS	COLUMN 2 ITEMS	MONTHLY SUBSCRIPTIONS
Before the walk			
After the walk			

Part 3: The Room by Room Walk

Write each item down. Column 1 or 2? If 2, what ends it, would you mind losing it, and does a Column 1 version exist?

The shelf: films, music, books, games

ITEM	COL 1 OR 2	WHAT ENDS IT	MIND LOSING?	COLUMN 1 VERSION? (DISC, EXPORT, DRM-FREE COPY, NONE)

The living room: television, streaming box, smart speaker, consoles

ITEM	COL 1 OR 2	WHAT ENDS IT	MIND LOSING?	COLUMN 1 VERSION?

The kitchen

ITEM	COL 1 OR 2	WHAT ENDS IT	MIND LOSING?	COLUMN 1 VERSION?

The office: computer, software, printer, photographs

ITEM	COL 1 OR 2	WHAT ENDS IT	MIND LOSING?	COLUMN 1 VERSION?

The driveway

FEATURE OR SERVICE	COL 1 OR 2	WHAT ENDS IT	MONTHLY COST	ALREADY IN THE CAR, WAITING FOR A PAYMENT?

Part 4: What Ends It

Every Column 2 item ends one of five ways. None of them needs anybody to delete anything, which is why almost none of them makes the news.

CODE	WHAT ENDS IT	AN EXAMPLE FROM THE BOOK
L	A licensing deal between two companies you have never heard of	In December 2023 Sony told PlayStation owners that 1,318 Discovery titles they had bought would leave their libraries, and walked it back only after enough noise. In 2026 StudioCanal films, Terminator 2 and Paddington among them, were set to leave UK libraries.
X	A shuttered server or store	In July 2019 Microsoft left the book business and deleted every ebook it had ever sold. Readers who had written notes got an extra twenty-five dollars of store credit.
S	A lapsed subscription	Every track downloaded from a music subscription is encrypted and dies the day you stop paying. HP's All-In Plan printer goes back in a box when you cancel.
F	A firmware update	HP's Dynamic Security, from 2016, arrived through updates that installed themselves. A cartridge that printed on Tuesday threw an error on Wednesday.
D	Your death	The terms say the license is personal and non-transferable. A film library bought one title at a time over fifteen years ends at the moment of death.

Read the line at checkout

On every major digital storefront selling film, television, music, books or games, the word buy means a license. Some storefronts now say so at checkout because California's AB 2426 made them. It is there because somebody fought to put it there, and reading it is the least you can do.

Buying a disc online? Spot the counterfeit

- [ ] The plot summary in the listing matches the actual show
- [ ] The release traces to a named distributor with a catalog you can look up
- [ ] Region coding fits the country where it was pressed
- [ ] The packaging matches images the distributor itself published
- [ ] No “region free” label on a title no studio has released
- [ ] No “complete series” box set of a show still airing
- [ ] Not a PayPal-only seller shipping from one overseas location
- [ ] The same photographs don't appear across storefronts with different names

When in doubt, search the title plus the distributor name rather than the title plus the word Blu-ray. If no distributor comes up, no distributor exists.

Part 5: The Keep List

Not everything, which would be absurd and expensive. The forty or fifty things you would be sorry to lose, on a shelf, in a copy nobody can reach.

#	TITLE	HOW I HAVE IT NOW	PHYSICAL OR DRM-FREE SOURCE	GOT IT
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				

Keep going on another sheet. Start with what streaming does not carry: old television, anything nobody is promoting, the later seasons that never came out on disc.

Where to buy

- [ ] Buy the physical copy from a label that made it properly. The boutique labels named in the book include Criterion, Arrow Video, Vinegar Syndrome, Kino Lorber and Severin
- [ ] Prefer vendors who do not lock things, and pay them slightly more when they ask. They run on margins a few thousand customers decide
- [ ] For the old Westerns and monster pictures that are not coming to streaming, build the collection one at a time off eBay, the way people always have

Part 6: What Outlives You

The library dies with you regardless; the terms say so. What can survive is the part you made, if somebody can open it without asking a company for permission.

Get the files off the service

- [ ] Export photographs, writing, recordings and records as ordinary files
- [ ] Use formats that open without an account
- [ ] Put them on a drive somebody else can plug in, in a place somebody who is not you can find
- [ ] Do it twice

Write down how to get in

STEP (ABOUT TEN MINUTES EACH)	PERSON NAMED	DATE SET UP	NOTES
Apple legacy contact			
Google inactive account manager			
Password manager emergency access			
Where the local drives are kept			
How to open an encrypted drive			

A drive that is encrypted with no second key is, to the person who inherits it, several pounds of aluminum containing noise. Making the data unreachable by everyone else and making yourself reachable are the same decision looked at from two ends.

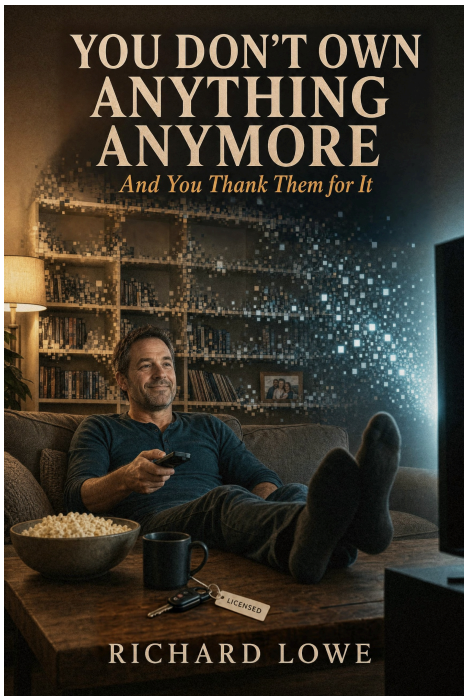
Part 7: The Ten Minute Jobs

None of these changes the industry. They change what is held about you, and that is the part you can still reach.

- [ ] Turn off location history on your phone
- [ ] Go through the privacy settings on the television. Automatic content recognition reads whatever is on the screen, discs and home video included. A set used as a plain monitor is only out of it if it stays off the network
- [ ] Check the settings on the refrigerator screen, the smart display and the computer's lock screen for promotions you can switch off or reduce
- [ ] When a right to repair bill comes up in your state, take ten minutes to support it
- [ ] When a Copyright Office exemption comment period opens, take ten minutes to file
- [ ] When a petition about a switched-off game or a buried film gets going, sign it. A finished film shelved for a tax write-off was sold and released after enough people made noise

The Whole Story

This workbook shows you what you have. You Don't Own Anything Anymore shows you how it happened: from a 1908 ruling about an eighty-nine cent novel to deleted ebooks, heated seats by the month, printers that refuse a cartridge, and televisions that report what you watch.



You Don't Own Anything Anymore:
And You Thank Them for It

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