



Family Media Manager

Built by a granddad, for families.

familymediamanager.co.uk

My Story

Family, Privacy & Why I Built Something Instead

Robert George | March 2026

Who Am I?

I'm just a man. A family man who loves his kids and grandkids.

I started out working in home improvement in the seventies, double glazing, plumbing, carpentry, electrics. I became a multi-tradesman. I retrained late in life during the eighties and became an NCR engineer repairing pos (point of sale) and ATM's. Now I'm retired.

Due to health issues, I found myself confined to a chair. Walking had become difficult. To keep my sanity, I threw myself into things I enjoyed, bit of art, photography, technology. Watercolours, pastels, charcoal. And computers. Mostly computers.

I've been doing that ever since. And today, using all of those skills and gained life experience, together with the help of Claude AI, I've built something called FMM and FamilyVault.

One more thing you should know about me. My wife a very skilled UK-trained nurse tells me I have dyslexia. Reading and understanding written text? No problem. But putting words to paper? That's difficult. It's just the way my brain is wired. I've spent most of my life quietly working around it.

The Internet What It Really Is

Let me talk about something most people don't ever think about when they pick up their phone or browse the internet on PC or their Ipad.

The internet is extraordinary. It connects families. It lets you make free phone calls to the other side of the world. It gives you access to almost all of human knowledge.

But it has a dark side that most people simply don't see but may of heard of some expressions like.

The dark web! Hacking! Scamming! people use these phrases without actually knowing why or how these terms could affect them. Unless of course there is a direct impact with them by then its usually to late.

Social Media

Even these have subliminal hidden ways to collect data that most of us are unaware of.

Instagram. Facebook. Google Photos. TikTok. All free to use. But nothing is ever actually free they are collecting your data subliminally. This isn't evil but you do need to be aware of what's happening I personally use social platforms myself every day.

These companies are worth hundreds of billions of pounds. That money doesn't come from you paying a subscription. It comes from advertisers. And advertisers pay more when they can target specific people with specific messages.

So how do these companies learn enough about you to sell that targeting?

What you view online

How you interact with your device and who with,

What device you own

What browser you use

and diagnosed most of all, Your photos.

What Your Photos Tell Them

Every time you upload a family photo, something happens automatically. The photo gets analysed. Instantly. Without asking you. Although, you have already given permission when you signed up and selected yes to the terms of service that you never read! None of us do! They are very long documents very hard to digest. However I digressed.

- Who is in the photo — face recognition identifies every person
- Where it was taken — GPS coordinates or location guessed from landmarks
- How old the people look — age estimation
- What emotions are showing on their faces
- What products are visible in the background
- Who you know — building a social graph from everyone you photograph together

And more subliminally.

This isn't science fiction. This is what these platforms do. Right now. Every day.

And your children? Every photo you upload of them is adding their face to one of the most powerful facial recognition databases ever built. They never consented to that. They're too young to consent. But the data is collected anyway.

The Responsibility on All of Us

I'm not here to tell you social media is bad. Personally, I think it has real value keeping families connected, cheap communication, sharing moments. I use it myself all the time.

But I do think every person who uses technology has a responsibility to understand what is actually happening with their data. And every parent has a responsibility to think carefully about their children's digital footprint.

You are not the customer on these platforms. You are the product.

“But I Use Incognito Mode...”

I hear this one a lot. People think that browsing in Incognito mode, or deleting their account, or clearing their cookies, means the data is gone. Services like this give people a false sense of control.

My honest view? It's already too late. The moment you went online accepted those cookies connected to your ISP or uploaded that photo, it was all analysed. The face was identified and stored. The location was logged. That data is now inside AI systems that have processed it, learned from it, and built it into models that will never forget it even if your account no longer exists.

Incognito mode hides your browsing from the person sitting next to you. It does absolutely nothing to hide it from the platform you're visiting. They still see your IP address, your device fingerprint, your behaviour. Deleting your account removes what's visible to you. It does not undo the analysis that already happened.

That's why the only real answer isn't damage limitation after the fact. It's making better choices before you share. Which is exactly what FMM was designed for.

How I Had the Idea for FMM

My daughter had two wonderful babies one born just before COVID, one born right in the middle of lockdown. You can only imagine the additional stress she and her partner faced during those months as new parents.

I'm a keen photographer. I'm lucky enough to own some wonderful cameras a Nikon D500 for wildlife, a Nikon D850 I use for portraiture. These are high-specification cameras that produce very large files in a format called NEF Nikon's raw format. Lots of detail. Lots of quality.

I set up photo sessions and took pictures of the grandchildren. And my daughter said something very clear: these photos must never go to social media.

She was right. But that left me with a problem. How do I share these images with the rest of the family?

WhatsApp? Compresses the photos badly. Google Drive? That's Google. Dropbox? That's another corporation with access to your files. iCloud? Only works if everyone has Apple.

Nowhere felt private enough. Nowhere felt right.

So I built something instead.

What I Built

Family Media Manager — FMM

FMM is a self-hosted photo and video sharing platform. That means you run it on your own computer or a small server. Your photos never leave your control. There is no data mining. No advertising. No face recognition running on your children without consent.

It has a gallery system with approval workflows. Private, family-only access controls. A full admin dashboard. Video thumbnail generation. Even a Windows installer so non-technical family members can get it running without needing to understand a command line.

It's free. Open source. And it's live right now at familymediamanager.co.uk.

FamilyVault

FamilyVault is the companion tool a personal photo archive manager that runs on your own machine. It uses face recognition, but locally. Your data never goes to the cloud. It indexes your photos, identifies the people in them, and makes your archive searchable.

I built it to manage my own archive of over sixteen thousand NEF files. But it's designed to be useful for any family photographer who wants to organise their memories without handing them to a corporation or losing your existing files.

The Future

We're also looking at video. The same problems that exist with photos scattered files, no intelligent search, no face recognition for creators exist in video too. YouTube's internal systems analyse every frame of your videos for advertising purposes. But they don't give that intelligence back to you.

We think a private, locally-run equivalent face search, speech-to-text transcription, related footage discovery would be genuinely useful. That's on the roadmap.

The Bottom Line

I'm not a tech company. I'm a retired engineer and a grandad who wanted somewhere private to share videos of his grandchildren.

I didn't find what I needed. So I built it.

If this resonates with you if you've ever felt uncomfortable uploading family photos to platforms you don't fully trust then FMM was built for you.

“Built by a grandad, for families.”

familymediamanager.co.uk