



Message in a bottle | The Xpragmatic View



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What if you could send yourself an email message five, ten, twenty years in the future... Would you do it? What would you say?

This question was recently posted on one of the discussion forums on [OpenBC](#). Apparently, there is a [website](#) where you can do so.

Well, this is indeed an interesting question, but I fear most of us would be disappointed by the result.

Years ago, I was together with a small group of close friends. It was our last year at the university. This was the era before the Internet, GSMs and other types of modern communication. Therefore, given our different places of residence, orientations and ambitions, we all knew that this was a breakpoint. It was very unlikely that we would meet again.

So we decided getting together again after twenty years at a given time and location and we all wrote for ourselves a little note that we all signed.

I carried the note in my wallet for 20 years and I did not forget the date. Still, I did not go. None of us did.

The main reason for this is that you gradually get to understand that it is rather pointless.

People essentially exist in two dimensions. Our very basic beliefs and feelings are our inner core. This inner core does not fundamentally change, whatever happens to us.

However, people do not interconnect at this level. Our connection with the external world and other humans is largely dictated by our "context". This context is built upon things such the social environment we live in, our education, things that happen, etc. To a large extent, this context is random and we cannot not really control it.

As said, people do not connect to each other at the level of their inner core, but at the level of their context. Therefore, two people who are the perfect match for each other might meet but never get connected because their current contexts do not allow for it.

Years ago, my friends and I had contexts that allowed for great interconnection and fun, but most of this did not reach into our inner self. Twenty years later, you know your context has fundamentally changed and so have theirs. Meeting again would be rather pointless, since not much better than a meeting with strangers.

Therefore, while sending your message to the future, reality is that a stranger will read it...

Have fun!

About the author





Marc Buyens is analyst, management consultant and owner of Xpragma. Marc started Xpragma in 1999 after a 20+ years career in the IT sector. Today, he provides advice, training and mentoring services focusing on the intersection of technological evolution, organisational change and business strategy: a messy world of unfulfilled promises.

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