

Website offers emails from beyond the grave

September 17 2009, by Amy Coopes



Andrew Slattery, a director of the website 'From Beyond 2 U', is seen displaying the site which allows personal notes written prior to a person's death to be sent to loved ones in the future, at Woden cemetery in Canberra.

The fear of dying suddenly, without the chance to mend wrongs or say goodbye, has prompted an Australian entrepreneur to start a website where people can contact loved ones from beyond the grave.

Peter Ingram, a security systems retailer, watched as within just two weeks of being diagnosed with a brain tumour an aunt lost her ability to speak, write, or even smile.

She was 100 percent conscious and able to understand what was happening around her, but remained silent until her death, taking her secrets, thanks and regrets to the grave.

"I'd known her for 20 years and to me that was devastating," said

Ingram.

Ingram recently launched Australia's first virtual time-capsule site, FromBeyond2u.com, where the living can leave videos, photographs and documents to be sent out to loved ones after death.

For one dollar a week users can store their "cherished digital memories" and programme farewell messages for the time of their death and on fixed dates such as birthdays or anniversaries into the future.

"It's not a new concept, leaving things, letters for people, videos, messages, but the Internet has changed what we can do with it," Ingram told AFP. "You can keep in touch today, tomorrow and beyond."

Subscribers can write their own eulogy and create a multimedia tribute for use at their funeral, and bequeath their photo and video files.

Whilst living, they can use the site as a place to store and share their files with friends and family all over the world. A certificate with an activation code in the event of death is given to every user to be left with their will or next of kin.

Part [social-networking](#) hub, part memoir project, FromBeyond2u is one of just a handful of such sites worldwide, and its appeal lies in creating "everlasting love" for generations to come, Ingram says.

It could, of course, have less savoury applications, he said.

"I had a radio station ask me the other day 'What if people leave nasty messages? Maybe I want to tell my mother-in-law for the next 10 years that I didn't like her,'" Ingram said.

"I guess she can change her email address if you keep on badgering her

with emails, but that's not what it's about."

People could also use the future messages service to posthumously speak to a mistress or spill their darkest secrets, knowing they wouldn't have to deal with the consequences, he added.

"That's none of my business, you can do whatever you want," he laughed.

Ingram said he had already accumulated plenty of embarrassing footage of his "angelic" son on the site in preparation for his 21st birthday celebrations.

"This is you chucking a tantrum, this is you when you're nine years old telling me you'll always love me, even when you're a teenager," he joked.

"Hopefully at his 21st I will have 12 or 13 years of backed-up photos and memories and hopefully I'll be there. But if I do kick the bucket they'll all be there for him," added Ingram.

Users could also leave more obscure instructions they might overlook in a legal will, such as where they kept their motorcycle keys or hid precious things, he said.

Far from being morbid or narcissistic, Ingram believes the site encourages sharing with family and community.

"I think the number one (aim is) definitely sharing the love with loved ones and being there for them, and not to be forgotten, that's a fear of mine," he said.

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