

## **MOMMY BLOGGER**

REBECCA ECKLER  
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The latest gift in baby-shower circles is the future, thanks to the a Web-based company called [electronictimecapsule.com](http://electronictimecapsule.com).

Since David Ryan, who lives outside Ottawa, put up the website two months ago, dozens upon dozens of gift-givers have signed their soon-to-be-parents friends up for the modern version of digging a hole by a tree and burying a note in a tin for children to find.

It is also a hit with parents who need their children to know that, though they may not always be around in body, they will be electronically. Forever.

In an age when parents reserve domain names for children at birth, sending electronic time capsules may not be an odd idea. (My child has had an e-mail address since she was six months old.)

Electronictimecapsule.com allows parents to send text, voice messages, videos and photos to their offspring in the year 2045. Or whatever day in the future you like.

Ryan, who became a journal writer after becoming a father, knew that some of his subjects (his feelings after 9/11, baptism, his hard time adjusting to parenthood) would be inappropriate for a young child to read.

"They were deep feelings and very mature topics," he says. "Then, I was playing golf with a friend whose father had passed away. His father had a safe with important documents. All he said that mattered were the letters his father wrote. Then my parents showed me a photo of them in Africa in the seventies. I asked them to describe what was going on. They said, 'You'd have to parachute me back in time to remember.' "

Parents can update their children's e-mail addresses over time, and they will receive notifications of "unlocked time capsules."

"Even if you pass away unexpectedly, it will deliver your thoughts and feelings forever."

Eerie? Yeah. But, like baby video monitors, it takes advantage of parents' fears -- they won't be around forever, journals and photographs may be lost, and children will never know how much they meant to mom and dad.

"I have had some mothers who are sick who have signed up, because they know they aren't going to be around in five years. But I also know that there will be messages left for kids when they turn 17 or 18 saying, 'He's not really your father.' "

It costs \$17 a year. Once a year, you can download your time capsules, too, so you don't have to worry about the company going bust.

It also allows the non-sentimental to open up. "There is a culture twist. I'm French. In our families, we say 'I love you' every five minutes," Ryan says. "But my English friends tell me their fathers never told them, 'I love you.' "