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Author: Mr. Rob Alderson
The Netherlands, alderson@wetransfer.com

A MESSAGE FROM EARTH: REIMAGINING THE GOLDEN RECORD 40 YEARS ON TO
EXPLORE HOW CULTURAL CURATORS CAN USE SPACE AS A STORYTELLING TOOL

Abstract

WeTransfer is one of the world's biggest file transfer services, with 42 million monthly active users in 195 countries. It believes creative thinking has the power to change the world. Today more than ever, we want to show how creativity can be a force for optimism, and push people to go beyond the safe, the obvious and the predictable.

In 1977, humanity launched two spacecraft that are farther from Earth than anything we've ever sent. On board are two gold-plated records as a message from us, drifting endlessly towards whoever or whatever might find them. They carry greetings, music, sounds and images. They represent people, creativity and technology—a best-of this planet mixtape drifting onwards.

It's a selfless act of cultural diplomacy. A global statement of hope, determination, and goodwill. Dazzled by the audacity of that idea, and the ambition of Carl Sagan and his team, WeTransfer launched its own tribute to the project, an online exhibition called A Message from Earth. We commissioned 40 artists, musicians, photographers, writers, comedians, and more to celebrate the spirit of the Golden Record in its 40th year.

The project delivers an eclectic range of exclusive content, alongside interactive elements that bring the user into the experience too, whether that's remixing sounds or talking to stars. Each chapter stands alone as a content experience, but they also feed into a cohesive whole, a creative universe into which we want users to lose themselves.

In this presentation we will explain how this project came into being, how we remixed and reimagined the original ideas for this new context and the challenges we faced balancing broad appeal with scientific credibility. We will look at the results, and from there extrapolate how brands and other cultural curators could and should use space as a means of telling interesting, engaging and unexpected stories that reach beyond the confines of the scientific community.