

A handwritten card sealed by technology

By Eilene Zimmerman, New York Times

Communication today is faster and more ephemeral than ever. We fire off emails, skip the punctuation in our texts, and watch our photos and messages vanish in seconds on Snapchat.

Digital tools have made communicating with others easier but not necessarily more thoughtful, and this bothered Sonny Caberwal, an entrepreneur. “We’re in a rush to make everything disappear,” he said.

Receiving a physical, handwritten thank-you note or letter these days feels special, but it also requires some work. “You have to assemble all the pieces,” Caberwal said – including paper, a pen, the recipient’s address, an envelope and a stamp – and then the note has to be written and mailed, all of which is time-consuming. He wanted to enable people to do that more easily, by harnessing technology to create a product that still felt very personal and worth keeping.

His company, Bond, harks back to a time of fountain pens, creamy sheets of writing paper and wax-sealed envelopes. Caberwal, founder and chief executive of the New York City start-up, describes it as “the opposite of Snapchat.” Bond was started in 2013, and has about 50 full-time employees and several high-profile backers, like Gary D. Cohn, the president of Goldman Sachs, and the rapper Nasir Jones (known as Nas).

Although handwritten notes and cards may seem like artifacts of the 20th century, greeting cards are still a strong business. According to the Greeting Card Association, Americans purchase about 6.5 billion cards a year and annual sales are estimated to be \$7 billion to \$8 billion. Despite a culture awash in digital communications, the greeting card and

stationery industries have not declined precipitously but have remained largely flat, said Patti Stracher, director of the National Stationery Show, an annual trade show and business event for stationery, greeting card and gift companies.

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