



POSTCROSSING

"Send a postcard and receive a postcard back from a random person somewhere in the world!"

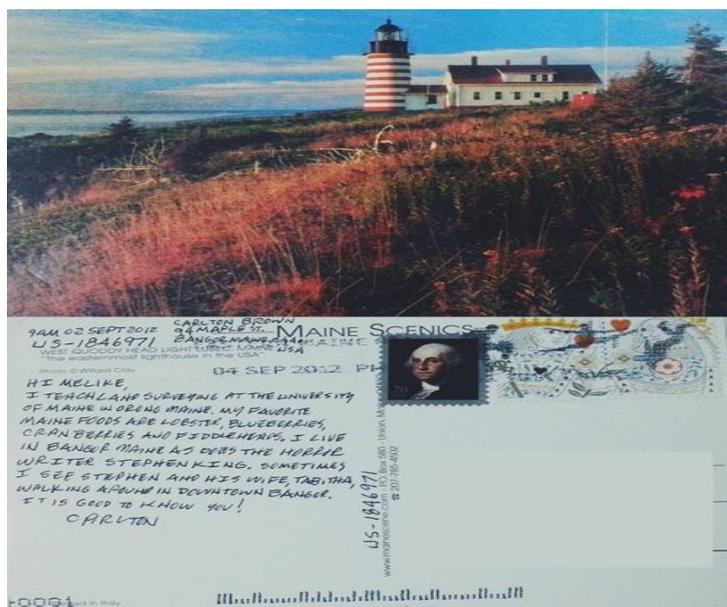
When was the last time you got excited while checking your mail box, discovering colourful, cheerful postcards instead of gloomy bills and credit card receipts? Our grandparents or maybe even parents still cherish the good old days when people sent postcards and letters to each other on special days in place of soulless text messages.

Inspired by the Bookcrossing website, student Paulo Magalhães, a postcard lover and collector, created Postcrossing Project and started the website on July 14, 2005. The central concept of Postcrossing is that if a member sends a postcard he or she will receive at least one postcard from a random *postcrosser* somewhere in the world. If you want to become a postcrosser, you first should register on the website and click the "Send a Postcard" button. Then you will receive another postcrosser's address and a special registration code which is called "Postcard ID" (e.g.: TR-17990). After you send your postcard with the Postcard ID on it, you will wait for the receiver to register the Postcard ID which is on the card. At this point, you are eligible and in line to receive a postcard from another user who requests to send a postcard. The origin of the postcard is a surprise! The Postcrossing system allows for the same two members to exchange postcards only once.

When considering the consequences of releasing our addresses, there is no need to worry about it. The Postcrossing website does not release addresses to anyone but the user requesting to send a postcard. Moreover, you can have up to five postcards traveling at any single time. Every time one of the postcards you send is registered, you can immediately request another address, a scheme which prevents falsifiers from acquiring the entire address data base. In addition, there is an option to choose if you don't want to get a postcard from your own country. You may feel safer after ticking off that option.



On your profile, you can mention all sorts of things about your life, your hobbies, your family and job etc. You can also write down your preferences for postcards. For example if you don't like handmade cards, you can mention it. You can also prompt potential senders as to what you'd like to read. A card with only "Happy Postcrossing" written on it is just as boring as a credit card receipt. So you can also write something interesting on your postcards like poems, jokes, a recipe or even draw something on it.



It is a great feeling to find a postcard in your mail box sent from a random person anywhere in the world. A good idea is to archive them in a little box, because sometimes that may be your private treasure box wherein you find tiny bits and pieces of happiness from around the world.

In Postcrossing, I met my two penfriends and have

cultivated a truly international network. For instance, I received the postcard on the left from a university teacher who lives in the same town as Stephen King and his wife. He writes that he sometimes sees the Kings walking around downtown.

Sometimes I get E-mails from other postcrossers who want me to send a postcard for a family member or a friend or a teacher of theirs as a surprise. Later they send me a postcard in return.

This project is a great chance to acquire different experiences and mementos. If you like meeting people from different countries and cultures, this project is just for you! It is so exciting to have contact with a person who may never be within the same borders!