

P04

Back to the Future

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From Past to Present

The role of a programmer in the pharmaceutical industry has seen considerable variation within the past two decades. From poor hardware quality, lack of internet access and less powerful versions of SAS®, all of which we now take for granted. The challenges we are facing today are of a slightly different nature: thinking about saving costs, being innovative and not becoming lazy!

We are moving towards industry wide standards, extensive improvements in hardware performance, improved global communication and we now have the ability to work from home from anywhere in the world. Some of these common practices today were unimaginable 20 years ago. The role of a programmer may be changing, however the primary responsibilities and required skills have remained the same.

Comparing programmers in the past and present helps us to make predictions about the future. We can try and answer the challenging question “what is the future for programmers”?

Following are 5 scenarios of the future of programmers (next 15 to 20 years). What do you think the future for programmers is going to be like?

No significant changes

PRESENT = FUTURE

Rapid improvements in technology and tools

Another half an hour “mate”. Time to head back!

Tell me “buddy” how much longer will it take to run my datasets?

Widely implemented standards

Outsourcing of Programming

We manage and train the teams.

We do all the programming!

Wider and more influential role of a programmer

Science

Statistics

Operations

Safety

Programming

...Yes, but will this help us cut costs?

Do we really need that many outputs? I suggest...