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ATG Interviews Bipin Patel, CIO, ProQuest

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JM: Profoundly. In that position I was in charge of all the **Society's** businesses and had ten managers reporting to me. **ASQ** made me focus on the customer and his/her requirements for satisfaction. I also learned the vital importance of well-documented processes, measurements, cycle-time, and always listening to the customer (including internal customers). I also started reading the works of the leaders in the quality field, **W. Edwards Deming, Joseph Juran, and Philip Crosby.**

ATG: *What three predictions do you have for publishers?*

JM: Our industry will see more and more and more digitization of copyrighted content. Copyright protection will become even more vital as content aggregators want more and more free content. Learn all you can about copyrights and licensing. And finally, since a new product has to come from somewhere, namely publishers, solid product development processes will always be contemporary. If it's not coming from **Google** or **Amazon** they are not publishers. 🌱

against the grain people profile

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John B. "Jack" McHugh

BORN AND LIVED: Born and grew up in Evanston, IL., a suburb just north of Chicago on Lake Michigan.

EARLY LIFE: **BS Xavier University, U.S. Army,** lived in Cleveland, Boston, and Columbus, OH.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: Currently publishing advisor and consultant. Prior, publishing executive who worked in commercial and nonprofit publishing. Author of 90 papers on publishing management, available at my Website.

IN MY SPARE TIME I LIKE TO: Read, exercise, and follow **Ohio State** and **Green Bay Packer** football

FAVORITE BOOKS: Many. I read U.S. History (presidency, Civil War), biographies and fiction, mostly satire and humor.

PET PEEVES/WHAT MAKES ME MAD: Moron telemarketers who call me and mispronounce my last name "McHugh"—"McHuge," "McHug," "McUgh"—How hard can it be? Give me a break. It's a common Irish name.

MOST MEMORABLE ACHIEVEMENTS: Starting new publishing ventures and my professional writing.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: To remain professionally active and vital along with good health. 🌱

ATG Interviews Bipin Patel

CIO, ProQuest

by **Katina Strauch** (Editor, *Against the Grain*) <kstrauch@comcast.net>

and **Leah Hinds** (Charleston Information Group) <leah@katina.info>

We caught up with **Bipin Patel**, the CIO of **ProQuest**, regarding the all new **ProQuest** platform.

ATG: *When will the new platform be operational for libraries that are ProQuest customers? Do you have a specific date or timeline?*

BP: We are taking a phased approach to migrating customers to this new, ground-up, modern platform. We alerted them to the migration schedule in July, and as we're doing this interview, we're just shy of the first wave of migration in August. The process will allow customers ample time to preview the platform. Further, we are offering a wide variety of tools to help customers with the migration, including support from our training and technical support teams and access to a large kit of helpful materials called "SwitchedOn." Customers also have access to a special Migration Support Website (linked to our proquest.com site) to assist them.

ATG: *It's difficult to comment on the new platform at this time since we cannot see how it works. Is there a website that we can visit that will show us how a search or searches will work on the new platform?*

BP: We're very excited about connecting customers and reviewers with the new platform, and when this interview is published many of your readers will be previewing it. We have been keeping customers updated through a Website that helps them prepare — http://www.proquest.com/en-US/promos/feature08_pg.shtml.

I hope your readers will visit the Website, but let me preface that visit with a quick summary. We started this project because we kept hearing from our customers that people wanted to link A&I to full-text, the ability to cross-search all their **ProQuest** content, and simplification of administration resources for librarians. That was the beginning of a deep journey into what this platform should be... should do, and end-users have been at the heart of it. We dug into the culture of end-users so we could truly understand them. The result is that we've created a search experience that goes well beyond discovery and propels serious research in exactly the way end-users — whether they're students or librarians or faculty members — want that to happen. The platform is designed for purpose, and because end-user needs are constantly evolving, this is a living platform that will evolve with them. We're using an agile process that will iterate to make the platform ever better and ever more

responsive to needs. Because of the process, changes will come in a disciplined way, always driven by customers and end-users.

This is an entirely new search infrastructure that supports libraries and their users, and we feel it will set a new standard for the search and discovery experience. The platform will get the user to relevant content quickly — whoever they are, whatever they're researching — always providing context that helps them understand the content properly, but also helps them understand where they are in the research process. Further, we're introducing very powerful, but intuitive, research tools that allow users to work with the content they find. These are very thoughtfully introduced — the right tools, at the right time, in the right place. And to support librarians, we're simplifying the administration of library e-resources, using the single platform to ease set up, centralize reports, and streamline training.

ATG: *As we understand it, all ProQuest, CSA Illumina, and Chadwyck-Healey products are included in the first release but not databases distributed by ProQuest like Safari, Factiva, and Critical Mention? Will these databases be included as well? If so, when?*

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BP: I'll answer that by backing up a step and explaining that the genesis of the new platform is in library requests to capture all **ProQuest** content in a single search. While **ProQuest** content is very diverse, very comprehensive, why limit this technology to just **ProQuest** brand content? Our goal is to propel serious research, which means we need to enable connections to the wealth of databases that are complementary to what users find in **ProQuest**. So, we turned to our business unit **Serials Solutions** for its linking technology, and shortly after the new **ProQuest** platforms debuts it will include **ProQuest Extended Search**. **ProQuest Extended Search** — due in the first quarter of 2011 — will enable libraries to link databases from other sources into the new platform. This is a simple, turn-key operation for libraries. They simply choose the databases they want to add, and the **Serials Solutions** technology will manage the connections for them. This enables a very rich search across all **ProQuest** content and the other databases that libraries choose to include. This is a free service for up to 20 non-**ProQuest** databases.

ProQuest, **CSA**, and four **Chadwyck-Healey** databases encompass the content available in the first release and we'll continue to add more — including distributed databases — in subsequent releases. However, it's important to remember that all this content along with non-**ProQuest** content can be linked through **ProQuest Extended Search**.

ATG: *Will it be possible to search across databases as well as to search within a specific database with the new platform? Will there be alerts within each database or across databases?*

BP: Our research said that our search framework must allow for a great deal of customization to the end-user's needs. As a result, searches can be constructed to scan the breadth of the content or narrow their search to specific content within subject areas or specific databases. As for alerts, users can construct them based on their own search parameters — whether that's all the databases available to them, or four databases, or one database, and so on.

ATG: *Currently if a user receives an alert to one email address the alert cannot be transferred to another email address that the user has. Will this be changed with the new release?*

BP: We've built a variety of Alerts options for users that were driven by research into their needs. For example, users can create email alerts while logged into their **My Research** accounts. This provides a great deal of flexibility and management options, including the ability to change the email address. In a future release, we plan to also add the ability to send an alert to multiple email addresses, which will give users even more flexibility. Users can also create alerts without creating a **My Research** account. This is a feature customers told us they wanted us to retain from our legacy **ProQuest** platform, which doesn't require registration to create Alerts or RSS feeds.

ATG: *The new platform will merge all available formats such as periodicals, news, archival information, dissertations, eBooks, multimedia, research reports? Will there be icons/graphics/etc. that will identify these formats?*

BP: The short answer is yes, icons identify the format type... and there are so many sources and formats for information today. It's very important to open that spectrum of information for users and enable searching across all types of content.

The larger story here is that the platform includes a number of simple visual cues that help users intuit where they are and what they're accessing throughout the search process. The visual of the interface — the amount of text, graphics, white space, et cetera — was very carefully developed and tested with end-users. In fact, the platform debuted with the fourth iteration of design. We tested consistently, and with each design we moved a little closer to the right mix, the right balance, until we hit the design that users found to be just right. Our goal is to enable the user to focus solely on the research task at hand, with no distractions... no wondering "how do I get there from here?" This platform works hand in hand with the user in the information journey.

ATG: *How will citations tools, e-reserve tools, and course management packages be treated on the new platform?*

BP: I think one of the most important aspects of this new platform is that it is so much more than a "search" tool. The **New ProQuest Platform** is fully at home in an information world that engages and embraces its users. What we've created is a platform for the discovery, gathering, sharing, and creation of content. Certainly, bibliographic management tools such as **RefWorks**, **EndNote**, and others, are important for gathering, sharing and creating content. We've made it very easy to export metadata from the platform into the user's citation management tool of choice. This is an area that will continue to develop and expand and may certainly capture e-reserve tools and course management packages in the future.

ATG: *I noticed that the new platform includes social networking buttons to share articles on Twitter, Facebook, etc. There must have been a large user demand for these options. How do you view social networking in the research world? In your opinion, how important are social networking sites to scholars?*

BP: We all know the importance of **Twitter** and **Facebook** to students — these are primary communication vehicles, so we have very purposefully included in the platform the ability to export and share via **Facebook** and **Twitter**. This enables students' virtual social worlds to blend with their academic worlds. And, just as they tag in their social worlds to direct their peers to things they want them to notice, we've also included a tagging feature that students can use to easily share their discoveries.

We also see social networking growing in importance to scholars, and we consider facilitating this a key objective. **EEBO Interactions** and the **AtmosPeer** project are recent examples of this. We've found that scholars value the opportunity to share ideas and practices, but

venues like **Facebook** don't adequately support their needs. So, we've launched social networks in deep vertical areas of study. **EEBO Interactions** creates a virtual community around the researchers who rely upon **Early English Books Online**, and **AtmosPeer** gathers atmospheric scientists. We also have several other projects under development aimed at facilitating this kind of interaction. What I find so interesting about projects like **EEBO Interactions** is that the discussion among scholars that happens in the community creates altogether new content... it actually expands the usefulness of the database. Given our mission to be central to research around the world, connecting scholars at the exact point of discovery is a core objective. Projects like these enable scholarly discussion and reflection in a global community... this is technology that accelerates scholarship. And although the breadth of features of these social communities is not integrated into the platform as we launch, we are learning from prototypes such as **AtmosPeer** and **EEBO Interactions**. Over time, as we learn from the end-users we will start to incorporate this onto the platform.

ATG: *Speaking of user demand, I know that customer and user requests prompted many of the improvements in the platform. Can you tell us a little bit about the groups of users that tested the platform and the feedback you've received so far? What universities and/or colleges were in the test groups?*

BP: You're so right that users and customers played an integral role in the development of the platform, and it's so much more than an improved platform. It's all new and built for purpose. What that means is that every element in the platform is there to serve a need expressed by users. Getting it right meant consistent interaction with users — testing, shaping, and testing again. We did about 6,000 surveys and interviews, and worked with about 400 librarians in close to 50 institutions of all types — from **ARLs** to school districts. The universities and colleges involved are from around the world and include **Drexel**, **Arizona State**, **Lansing Community College**, **Open University**, **University of Western Sydney**, **University of Wisconsin at Madison**, **Southern Methodist University**, and others. Plus, at **Michigan State University** and at **City University in London**, we conducted three intensive, week-long lab tests with a variety of end-users. In all of the university and college settings, we worked with all types of librarians and administrators to ensure that we created a platform that simplified their lives, too. We also worked with faculty members and students. In some cases, we actually shadowed users in their dorm rooms (don't worry, we got their permission first) so we could watch how they approached their work, how they dealt with distractions, and what derailed the process. I like to think of our development team as anthropologists because they got so deep into the culture of the users.

Ultimately, we were able to create a series of highly-developed personas — profiles of the users that need to be served by this platform. These are very detailed profiles — all of them are named and their pictures are all over our offices. So, throughout the development process — intermixed with testing with real users — we were able to consider how different aspects of

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Wandering the Web — Reviews of Romance Novels: Online Sources for Evaluating Popular Fiction

by **Ellen Micheletti** (ERC Specialist, WKU Libraries)

Column Editor: **Jack G. Montgomery** (Coordinator, Collection Services, Western Kentucky University Libraries) <jack.montgomery@wku.edu>



Column Editor's Note: *It is a privilege to have Ms. Micheletti write for this column. She is an internationally recognized authority on the subject of the romance novel as a genre of popular fiction. She has written well over 800 reviews of romance novels for the popular romance Website, All About Romance (<http://www.likesbooks.com/>), which boasted 4.9 million visitors in 2009. She has also contributed background information on historical periods for readers of romantic fiction to the AAR Website. Ellen has moderated panels for romance authors at the Kentucky Writers Conference and the Southern Kentucky Book Fest. For her day job, Ms. Micheletti is the Educational Resources Center Specialist for Western Kentucky University Libraries and teaches children's literature as an adjunct in WKU's Library Media Education program. — JM*

Romance novels are the most popular form of genre fiction published in the United States. Over half the mass market fiction paperbacks sold are romances. You would think that reviewers would notice such a popular form of fiction, but for a long time it was difficult to find *any* reviews of romance novels, and when the press did notice them, more often than not it dismissed the entire genre with the phrase, “bodice ripper.” Granted, the covers of many romance novels were a bit eye-brow rising, but romance fans quickly learned that the old saying, “You can’t judge a book by its cover” was true. There are some excellent novels out there, but with no guidelines, how to tell the gold from the dross? Happily, there are a number of Internet sites featuring reviews that actually take romance novels seriously.

The Romance Reader — <http://theromancereader.com> — This is one of the oldest reviewing sites for romance novels on the Web. It reviews romances in these categories: Contemporary, Historical, Paranormal, Series, and Eclectica. Reviews are archived under the author’s last name. The reviews are ranked from one to five hearts and there is a sensuality rating based on movie ratings from G to NC-17. Other features are author interviews and a needle in the haystack section where readers can ask questions and get answers.

All About Romance — <http://www.likesbooks.com> — This is the largest reviewing site for romance novels with almost 7,000 reviews in its database. Books are graded A to F and there is a sensuality grade that ranges from Kisses to Burning. AAR has a power search function that allows the reader to search by a wide variety of criteria: author,

title, time period, grade, sensuality, year of publication, etc. There are also lists of books in a number of categories such as: Road Romances, Favorites Funnies, Guardian/Ward Romances, and many others. The site has discussion boards, author interviews, blogs, reader polls, and contests.

Dear Author — <http://dearauthor.com/> — **Dear Author** bills itself as a romance review blog by readers for readers. It features articles on various topics of interest to the romance fan, articles by authors on how they got published, and book reviews. The reviews are graded A to F and are archived under the grade they received. The site also reviews movies and some non-romance titles as well. It also has publishing industry news.

Smart Bitches, Trashy Books — <http://www.smartbitchestrashybooks.com/> — The bitches (**Sarah Wendell** and **Candy Tan**) dish about all things romantic and in the process manage to review books too. The books are graded from A to F and are archived under grade, author and category. **Wendell** and **Tan** have also written a book: *Beyond Heaving Bosoms: The Smart Bitches' Guide to Romance Novels*.

Mrs. Giggles — <http://www.mrsgiggles.com> — If you like your reviews polite and diplomatic, don’t bother with this site. **Mrs. Giggles** is a lady of strong opinions and doesn’t mind sharing them. She backs up her strong opinions with a lively writing style, and agree or disagree, you will find her reviews fun to read. She grades the books on a numerical scale, from 0-100. The reviews are archived under the author’s last name. **Mrs. Giggles** also reviews movies.

Harlequin Publishers — <http://www.eharlequin.com/> — Not really a review site, but it has a lot of information for the reader. **Harlequin** publishes many books a month under the imprints: **Harlequin, Silhouette, MIRA, HQN, RedDress Ink, Kimani, Steeple Hill, and Luna**. This site has information about the books, authors and some free online reads. There are blogs and bulletin boards and much, much more.

Romance Reader at Heart — <http://romancereaderatheart.com/> — This site was originally devoted to historical romances only, but has since branched out to include other romance genres. The reviews are archived under the historical period (Colonial, Georgian, Old West, etc.) and under the name of the author. The reviews are rated from one to four roses, with a flashing rose denoting a keeper. There are links to publishers, a list of forthcoming titles, a blog, and much more. 🌹

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the platform would impact different types of users. I think this approach could be useful for libraries as they consider new policies and programs, and we’ll be introducing these profiles to librarians. Our common goal is to serve the research needs of the community through the gateway of the library. The more we work together and share what we’ve learned, the more we’ll secure the role of the library.

As for feedback, I’m very happy with what I’m hearing... but then, creating a platform that was intuitive, productive, and engaging was what this process was all about. We tested, adjusted, and tested again until we heard “just right.” We wouldn’t have rolled this out if it weren’t ready for prime-time.

ATG: *Will there be extra costs associated with this platform changes? Will database prices be increased in light of discoverability and platform changes?*

BP: This question makes me think of a **Geico** ad where that charming gecko says in his English accent, “Pie and chips for free, what could be better?” We may not be providing a meal, but I’m delighted to tell you there is no additional cost for libraries to use the new **ProQuest** platform. In fact, we’re looking for new ways to use technology to deliver more to libraries without impacting the library’s bottom line. Let me give you an example. In June we launched a very interesting initiative — Open Web Article Linking — which many of your readers are already using. It enables libraries to offer popular content from the Open Web inte-

grated in any **ProQuest** search, and there is no charge for this service. We started the program with content from *TIME*, and we’re in the midst of adding *BusinessWeek*, *Sports Illustrated*, and *Entertainment Weekly*... and we’ll just keep going from there. It works like this: the links from **ProQuest**’s abstracts and indexes go directly to the publisher’s articles on their own Open Websites, while the A&I is searched on the **ProQuest** platform along with other **ProQuest** content. The content is integrated in the search results and links to the full-text on the Open Web. So, these popular periodicals can be viewed along with the high-value content that the library is known for and can be interacted with using very powerful tools. I like to think it’s like getting free pie and chips. 🌹