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Profile-Eric M. Calaluca

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EC: We have a new division within the company with just this function, to glean deeper analytics on usage, but direct contact with reference library staff tells us that *Reference Universe* is used when someone wants to delve deeply into a topic, or cross outside the comfort zone of their own disciplines. The challenge today for many libraries is to encourage the use of library resources at all, rather than what's out on the open Web. We've found *Reference Universe* is most heavily used where those institutions still put a premium on instruction and training, rather than "one box solutions" which tend to either overwhelm with results.

Reference Universe is designed for exploring new paths of research, new areas of discovery and understanding about a topic. It's about really squeezing all out of your specialized reference works. When you know what goes into publishing these works to begin with, and what libraries do to carefully craft their own collections — you realized how *Reference Universe* unlocks the data in unique way.

ATG: *If you had a crystal ball what do you think it would tell you about the future of reference publishing, the use of research databases, and of course, libraries?*

EC: Quality reference publishing is very expensive, and it's clear that some of the existing reference publishers are cutting back because it is so expensive. That said, it seems clear that the future of the information industry will not be about discrete databases per se.

Let me indulge a bit of my philosophy studies from years past. One might say information may become more a matter of *epistemology* than technology. Content is everywhere: the understanding of it is not.

Researchers need to be encouraged to grasp the meaning surrounding the content. That meaning is always a mechanism for a rich, multi-dimensional understanding. It is a new way of seeing, because it involves letting go of previously held opinions for new ones, that is if, and only if, the old ones have been put to the test and found wanting. They used to call that "getting an education."

Ultimately I see **Paratext** in the *understanding* business. The word "**Paratext**" itself means any and all elements that point one back to the primary source. So, we want to continually improve our resource to move people to the original meaning, and back out again, for deeper understanding.

ATG: *What does that mean in concrete terms for future plans and initiatives at Paratext? Are there new products on the drawing board or planned expansions of existing products?*

EC: We're fortunate to still be a privately held company. Its gives us the space to look a bit further down the road, and roll things out when they're ready. All **Paratext** products are vertical search applications which drill down into a genre or document-type, using human indexing models rather than computer-based

against the grain people profile

Eric M. Calaluca

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BORN AND LIVED: Born in Detroit, MI, but spent most of my life in metro Washington, D.C. area.

EDUCATION: B.A. Classics/Philosophy. MA. Philosophy.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I had completed graduate work in Philosophy in 1987, with the expectation of having a teaching career in Higher Ed. However, my exposure to the scholarly information industry captured my interests and ambitions. I was very fortunate to receive an "apprenticeship" of sorts with **Sir Charles Chadwick-Healey**, followed by the daily insights and mentoring from my business partner **Bob Asleson**. Can't improve on that tutorial. The rare opportunity to create products within an intellectual environment is the most challenging field I can imagine, and it is never boring.

FAMILY: Wife **Samantha**, a psychotherapist, and daughter **Caroline**.

IN MY SPARE TIME: Golf, cuisine, oil painting, and playing hide and seek with my daughter. Golf can wait.

FAVORITE BOOKS: I'm not a voracious reader, I grow impatient at endless character development. Probably a byproduct of the immediacy of business needs on a daily basis. That said, I've recently found myself going back to some philosophy texts after 25 years out of grad school. They carry entirely new meanings now with some years under my belt. For me, **Plato's** allegory of the Cave from *The Republic*, is about the single great distillation of the challenges of life — to separate reality from the shadows on the wall. Seeing our own shadow has to come first, however.

PHILOSOPHY: "A man would do nothing if he waited until he could do it so well that no one could find fault." — **John Henry Newman**

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: I see a real seriousness in the industry I did not see prior to the age of the Web. A realization that we are entering a realm of limitless technological possibilities — particularly in the area of information awareness and assessment of the behavioral habits of people looking for information.

Five years hence, I expect to see smarter librarians, with higher levels of technical knowledge, and smaller companies creating compelling, easily integrated information solutions for scholars and the general needs of libraries. I do not think the Web itself will obviate libraries, at least in my lifetime. Detailed information always requires patience and curation, and ultimately there will always be a market for the complete, the accurate, and the well-constructed scholarly argument. 🌿

string search to unlock materials otherwise missed, and to give richer context to a topic. If you perform a search on the term "Freud" in any discovery system, you might get back 800,000 hits. Perform the same search for articles in specialized introductory works in *Reference Universe* and you might get back perhaps 75 hits. At the outset of research, for both novice as well as experienced researchers, less is often more.

There's little point in sending users into the "deep end of the pool" (not my phrase, but I like it) of journals or dense monographs until they have their bearings, intellectually, on the main themes, topics, etc. That's why a library has MRWs, to help researchers get their bearings, and that is what *Reference Universe* permits in a more comprehensive way.

ATG: *Running a company like Paratext must keep you jumping. What do you do to relax? Are there any activities that you particularly enjoy? Aside from visiting Charleston, what would be your idea of the perfect vacation to help recharge your batteries?*

EC: My golf game is something I enjoy (and endure) when I can; I'm a fairly respectable chef and I began oil painting about ten years ago. However, all of this takes a back seat to the time I spend with our 2-year old daughter **Caroline**, the first for my wife **Samantha** and me. Spending quiet or silly time with her is the antidote. As more experienced parents will surely understand, that kind of time gets me 'out of my mind' and encourages me to be more present. If I can't recharge during that time, I'm not sure any hobby will help.

As for vacations, Italy is my first choice. The quote I remember, though I'm not certain of its source, is that "Italy is a dream that keeps returning for the rest of your life." I can't improve on that description.

ATG: *Eric thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule to talk to us. We really appreciate it.*

EC: It's been my pleasure, thank you. 🌿