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## Publisher Profile-Paratext

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*Universe? Are there other similar initiatives on the horizon?*

**EC:** Even for companies as established as Elsevier, making their publications more regularly accessed is a value. I had spoken with Suzanne BeDell of Elsevier about this content and she understood implicitly the value for both organizations. It's a very important addition for us, and a testament to the product's significant evolution. Our coverage of STM reference is now on a par with Humanities/Social Sciences. And, yes, there is more to come, but I'd hate to preempt the surprise...

*ATG: When should we be looking for an announcement? Are you adding more science content?*

**EC:** We expect to have an announcement this fall, and yes, we are certainly adding new STM Reference data into *Reference Universe*, as well as keeping up with the Humanities/Social Sciences content. There's still plenty more to do to, and we're focused on improving this product all the time.

*ATG: You have also added access/indexing to numerous Oxford online reference titles via Reference Universe. Adding all of this content must require a substantial investment. Will library subscribers see an increase in subscription rates to help cover the costs?*

**EC:** 2013 marks 25 years for me in the academic information business, and I am confident that Paratext has both the most consistent pricing, and lowest levels of price increases, of any information provider. Because we aren't a legacy microfilm or print publisher who migrated to electronic offerings, we were able, from our founding, to establish efficiencies within in our company that allow us to keep adding content and software enhancements without significant price increases. Our product renewal rates exceed 95%, which I think says a lot about value and ongoing access rates.

*ATG: Can we take from this that libraries will not see subscription increases in the near future?*

**EC:** Only minimally. All our customers have realized that we really hold the line on increases, which rarely exceed 2% annually. And given how low cost these are to begin with, that's seems to be a reasonable rate. What we're most proud of is the breadth of types of libraries that use Paratext resources — from the largest ARLs to community colleges and private schools. We try and stick with meat and potatoes resources, so they have application for every size library.

*ATG: Will all this added content enable you to offer more flexibility in subscriptions to Reference Universe? For instance will libraries only interested in the science coverage be able to subscribe to a "science" subset of Reference Universe?*

**EC:** The remarkable aspect about a carefully-selected specialized reference collection is the opportunity for serendipitous discoveries — one never knows what work has valuable

## against the grain publisher profile



### Paratext

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**OFFICERS:** Eric M. Calaluca

**ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIPS:** NFAIS, ALA (RUSA), ACRL.

**KEY PRODUCTS AND SERVICES:** Reference Universe, 19th Century Masterfile, Public Documents Masterfile.

**CORE MARKETS/CLIENTELE:** Academic, special, and publish libraries globally.

**NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES:** 30

**HISTORY AND BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF YOUR COMPANY/PUBLISHING PROGRAM:** Paratext is an independent library information company based in Northern Virginia, founded on 1993. Paratext specializes in detailed bibliographic databases in History, Major Reference Works, and U.S. Government Documents. Paratext products are fully-hosted resources for libraries, using our proprietary search and retrieval software, linking to millions of full-text documents from Oxford, Gale, Readex, Springer, Elsevier, Taylor & Francis, Wiley/Blackwell, Sage, and numerous other publishing organizations.

**ADDITIONAL ITEMS OF INTEREST TO ATG READERS:** Paratext employees are both librarians and non-librarians, from all fields including history, sociology, Web design, computer science, media, and general business administration. Emphasis is placed on solid bibliographic underpinning of our products, but cognizant of the rapid pace of Web-based search and the daily development of increasingly sophisticated online information resources. 🌱

information. The *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages*, for example, may have information on alchemy and chemical experimentation within medieval monasteries. That won't show up in a search limited by LC Subject Headings. My experience has been that interdisciplinary applications are the main research value of *Reference Universe*. By seeing the entire collection of MRWs — at a granular level — all the variant possible research paths begin to emerge. This is really making use of all the reference resources in one view.

*ATG: According to a recent press release Reference Universe "provides both collection level scope and index level analysis of major reference works." What does that mean exactly?*

**EC:** It's about breadth and depth. The strength of *Reference Universe* is as much defined by what is *not* included as what is. We do not include scholarly monographs, journals, festschrift, nor conference proceedings or local maps or almanacs. It's about bringing the cream to the top — the Major Reference Works. And while it is a fairly small "universe" of titles — approximately 50,000 published in the last 40 years — Paratext has aggregated over 35 million bits of metadata related to those titles. That number grows constantly as we add new data and fill in the back file of titles.

The breadth is the ability to see the *entire* MRW collection. The depth is the exhaustive indexing available for his collection — a mi-

croscope trained upon a "universe," you might say. Since each query matches a library's own reference collection, it's unlocks hundreds of thousands of dollars of important resources, and fosters new interdisciplinary papers, articles, and even new scholarly works.

*ATG: In a world where students are happy to rely on Wikipedia, how does a product like Reference Universe remain viable? Can you point to an example of where a library has been successful in convincing students that products like Reference Universe are preferable?*

**EC:** I sense that the ease and usefulness of Wikipedia has reminded us that quality introductory information is vital if you're going to get anything done in the area of serious research. I use Wikipedia, as lots of folks do, but it is clearly not the same as rigorously vetted content which has gone through editorial oversight. We have librarians tell us they have users who usually start with Wikipedia and then move to *Reference Universe* for that "due diligence" in their research. One doesn't obviate the other, in my opinion.

*ATG: Can you tell from your usage statistics if there are any individual libraries that are particularly successful in getting their students to use Reference Universe for "due diligence" in their research? Are there any Reference Universe user groups that share their success stories?*

*continued on page 48*