

Reference is Dead...Again

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Virtual Reference Desk Conference 2003

**Reference Roundup—Integrating the Virtual
Reference Experience: Theory and Practice**



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In the Beginning

- Reference as Alternative Interface to Catalog
- Reference as Genre of Publications with Quick Facts and Statistics



1968 Taylor's Question Negotiation

- Reference as Cognitive Process
- the visceral, conscious, formalized and compromised
- Five filters: Character of the search, user's interest, motivation, relationship of the question to the catalog, characteristics of acceptable answer



1981 Dervin's Neutral Questioning

- To assess the situation:
 - Tell me how this problem arose. What are you trying to do in this situation? What happened that got you stopped?
- To assess the gaps:
 - What would you like to know about X? What seems to be missing in your understanding of X? What are you trying to understand?
- To assess the uses:
 - How are you planning to use this information? If you could have exactly the help you wanted, what would it be? How will this help you? What will it help you do?



1999 Radford's Reference Encountering

- Interpersonal Communication Matters
- Building rapport, strategies for relationship development, evidence of deference and respect, face-saving tactics, greeting and closing rituals

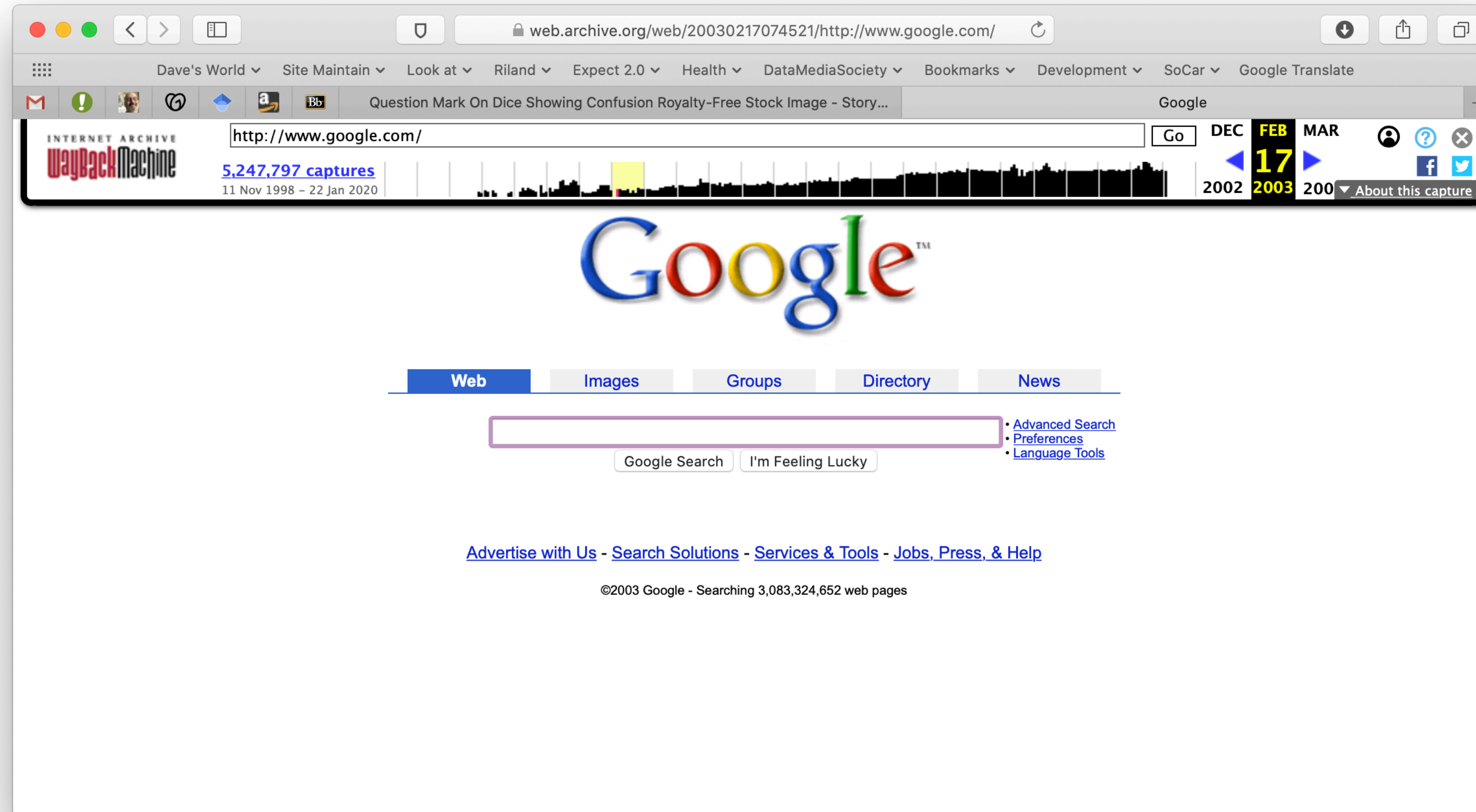


1998-2003 Virtual Reference Desk

- Rise of “AskA” Services
- Treating People as Questions
 - Seeking to Monetize Questions
- Rise of Networked Services
 - Question Point, State-Wide Networks, Virtual Reference Desk Project

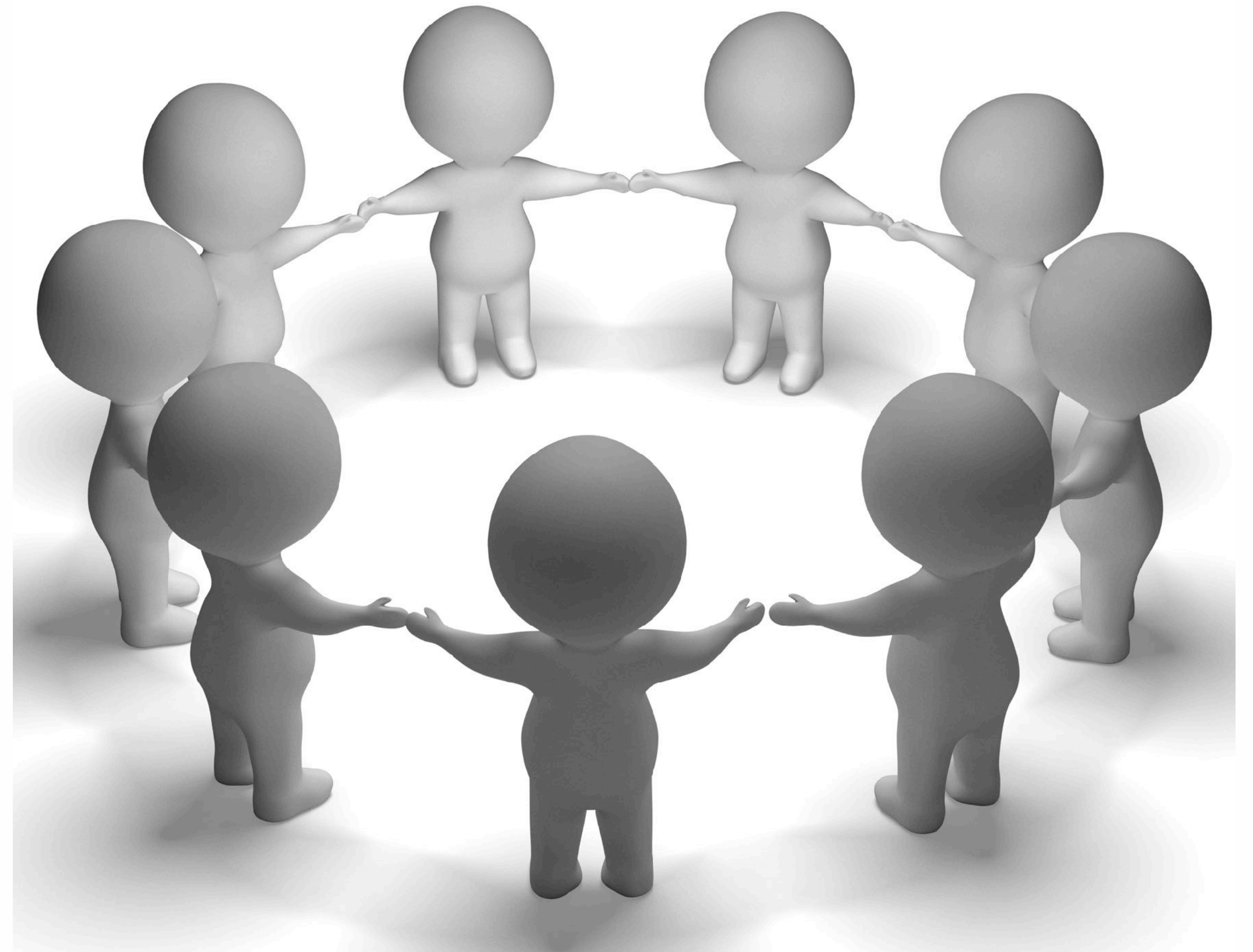


2003 Death of the Reference Resource



Library as Community Hub

- 3rd Space
- Places of Creation
 - Makerspaces, Performance Spaces, Podcasting, Sharing Collections (Baking Pans to Seeds)
- Literacy as Mission Pushes to Community Development to Democratic Instrument



The New Library Formula

- Old: 70% Librarian, 30% Public
- New: 70-80% Public, 20-30% Librarian
- The Boundaries of the Library is the Boundary of the Internet
 - Hotspots
- Community Reference - Go to the Conversation
 - Embedded in Civic and Business Projects (data curator, memory, logistics), Prisoner Re-Integration



People as Learners

- Individuals seek meaning and power through learning
- Learning is the construction and refinement of a worldview through a series of conversations with the self and others that seek agreements
 - Learning is an act of creation and unique to the individual
 - Learning is **ALWAYS** participatory
 - Memory is a collection of agreements in context that evolves over time and with additional context



Library as Movement

- Shape and function of our institutions are unique to our communities
- Professionals serve as the glue that knits the profession and services together
- **Facilitation (supporting people as they transition from one point of understanding to another) and advocacy become core skills**
- Democracy moves from a general goal to an assessable activity
- Realizing “How can I help you?” can be seen as arrogant, “What are you doing today and can I play too?”



Reference Isn't Dying It's Evolving...into Learning

- The reason people weren't asking questions is because people are learners - it's about knowledge not information
- Reference is moving from transactions (question=answer) to relationships (question=curriculum)
- A reference network must be a network of educators, not just librarians (experts, hobbyists, medical professionals)



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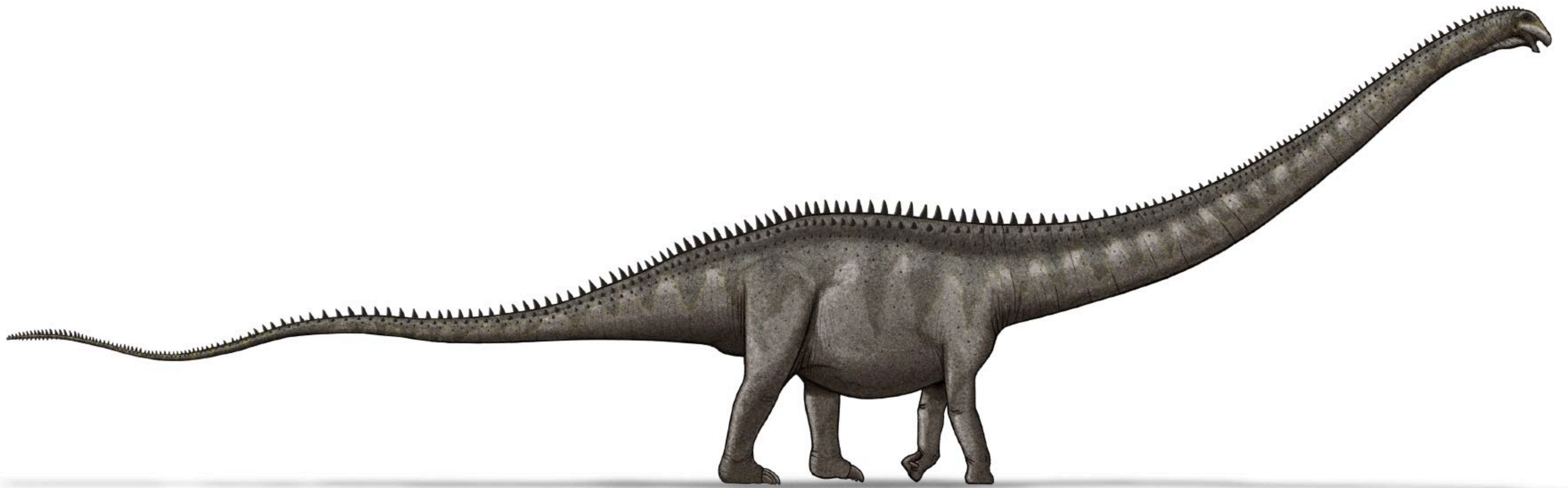
- Assess on impact and learning not numbers
- Model it on a university not a customer support line
- Allow questions to become projects to become courses
- Link to the catalog and digital collections allowing the community **WITH** librarians to write the story of Norway



Our Communities Need Us Now

- In a fragmented digital landscape
- Facing global challenges
- Our Communities, our neighbors, are not seeking answers to questions, they are seeking meaning and power
- We must write the narrative of the community





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Slides:

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