

TECHNOLOGY

No drop left behind

Do you drink bottled water because tap water makes you nervous? Rest easy. Vancouver-based **Aquatic Informatics Inc.** is working to improve the public water supply. Aquatic's unique software, **Aquarius**, analyzes water quality for human and environmental health purposes, as well as tracking volume discharge at dams and rivers.

"It's basically accounting for the water," says **Ed Quilty**, president and CEO. The **U.S. Geological Survey**, one of the world's largest water monitoring agencies, is a fan--it recently teamed up with Aquatic to analyze its data. Over February or March, employees in offices across the U.S. will start using Aquatic's software to analyze data from its more than 7,000 water stations. Quilty and his team of 10 beat out international competition, such as **Kisters**, a significant German environmental informatics player, to become the U.S. standard for assessing the data.

Aquarius was born out of work Quilty did on his PhD and his

former job. "I spent about 10 years in the water industry, trying to tell clients what was happening with their water," says Quilty. Organizations such as **Environment Canada** collect significant amounts of data on the water supply by placing high-tech sensors everywhere, from rivers to lakes. These sensors generate millions of real-time data points, tracking everything from water quality, level and flow, and climate. Quilty found that without the software to interpret the information, he was struggling with the sheer volume of data in order to make decisions such as whether to increase chlorine, filtering, or how best to allocate water flow. Quilty says Aquarius gives users the tools to plot, visualize and interpret continuous data streams. Artificial intelligence tools also scan the info for errors. "If you're cranking up chlorine or extra filtering, those all have huge expenses," says Quilty. "There's even a bigger expense if you don't do something--you get Walkerton-type stuff happening."

Quilty founded the company in



Ed Quilty

2003 and admits they've seen success quickly. Besides the U.S.G.S. deal, demands from universities such as **Oregon State** and consulting companies such as **Kerr Wood Leidal Associates Ltd.**, based in Burnaby, B.C., are keeping them busy. They're looking to expand, and aim to make "Aquarius the global standard for water quality and quantity," says Jim Wilford, vice-president of sales. "We're saving the world, one drop at a time."

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