

# THOMAS G. DAVIDSON

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Digital journalist who uses communication, technology and management skills to serve audiences, lead and teach teams, and create useful products.

## Core skills:

Digital technologies

Public affairs and niche journalism

Strategic analysis

Cross-functional leadership

Product development

Marketing and advertising

Multimedia communication

General management

## Career highlights:

- Launching a [topic-based curated aggregation news](#) site for PBS, utilizing visual tools and other story forms to offer accessible, continually updated “deep dives” of ongoing stories
- Teaching a graduate course in entrepreneurship and innovation in journalism
- Assisted [two start-ups](#) seeking to solve problems created by cuts at traditional news organizations
- Ran interactive news and content-programming efforts (including development of [niche](#) and [non-traditional](#) sites) for four newspapers and three television stations
- Managed a 50-person city desk in [South Florida](#); mentored [reporters](#) who ended up at the *Los Angeles Times*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Boston Globe*, *Baltimore Sun*, *Newsday* and the Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland
- Studied the Internet’s effects on the economics of mass media, plus entrepreneurship and general business management, during a one-year [Knight Fellowship](#) at Stanford University
- Launched new web sites and interactive products, including the national entertainment site [Metromix.com](#).
- Increased ad revenue, cash flow and audience at two [interactive business units](#)

## Experience:

2010 – date

### **Publisher and senior director, news and public affairs, PBSNews.org**

Building a new digital news destination to:

- Serve consumers’ unmet need for trusted, readily accessible context and depth about ongoing news topics
- Unify the siloed content of signature PBS shows such as *PBS NewsHour*, *Frontline*, *Nightly Business Report* and *Need to Know*
- Create tools that PBS member stations can use to fill gaps in the local news ecosystem
- Grow audience and revenue for PBS and its stations

## **Spring 2011**

### **Adjunct professor, School of Communication, American University, Washington, D.C.**

Leading a seminar course in the weekend master's program in interactive journalism, focused on entrepreneurship, innovation and emerging business models for journalism.

## **2007-date**

### **Initial applications screener, Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford**

Assist the program director and deputy director in assessing applications focused on digital media or entrepreneurship.

## **2009 – 2010**

### **Digital media principal, Davidson and Associates**

Strategic consulting and tactical execution for clients such as:

- The [Knight Center for Specialized Journalism](#), Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland: Strategic review for this 25-year-old training program for mid-career journalists, funded solely by the Knight Foundation. Recommended replacing the existing program with one better suited to the digital-media age, including distance learning and collaboration across the university
- [Localist.com](#) LLC: Business development and product guidance for this Baltimore-based start-up, which manages interactive calendars and directories for universities, publishers and tourism boards. Negotiated and closed a deal with the firm's first media client, TBD.com
- [GrowthSpur](#) Inc.: Strategic development, partner recruitment, vendor assessment and other strategic and tactical work for an early-stage startup that provided training, tools and technology to independent news sites rushing into the vacuum created by cuts in mainstream media

## **2008 –2009:**

### **Vice president of interactive content and programming, Tribune Interactive**

Responsible for all interactive content production for four Tribune Company newspapers and three television stations throughout the northeast United States

- Shared best practices across the group, immediately increasing traffic at lower-performing sites by more than 10 percent
- Relaunched the television station sites, tripling their traffic
- Launched new audience and sales initiatives, such as a regional breaking news site for Connecticut

## **2006 –2008**

### **Project director, Tribune Interactive corporate staff**

Executive staff for the senior vice president of local market operations:

- Expanded Tribune's Chicago Metromix brand to a national joint venture that now spans 37 markets and 4 million users per month.
- Launched "Newsroom Now," a companywide initiative to increase production of online content from our print newsrooms. Text, photo and video updates to the sites increased more than 20x, triggering audience growth of more than 50

percent

- Expanded production and programming of online video; monthly streams tripled (to more than 7.5 million) in less than a year
- Negotiated a distribution and revenue-sharing agreement with Google's YouTube, expanding the audience for our video by 10x.

## **2005- 2006**

### **General manager, interactive; director of multimedia, South Florida *Sun-Sentinel***

Led the 40-person interactive unit attached to Tribune's *Sun-Sentinel* in Fort Lauderdale.

- Refocused the staff on innovation and product development, increasing revenues by 25% and cash flow by 34%
- Beta-tested the first "comment on this story" functionality in Tribune, generating 1 million additional page views per month
- Integrated production operations with the newsroom

## **2000 –2005**

### **Interactive general manager, Tribune Interactive, Hampton Roads, Virginia**

Led the interactive unit and strategic planning at Tribune's *Daily Press* in Virginia.

- Achieved a \$3.3 million swing in operating cash flow, from a \$1 million loss in 1999 to operating cash flow of \$2.3 million in 2005
- Centralized technology with other Tribune sites, allowing an 11-person team to generate more content, traffic and revenue than our original 18-person team
- Optimized classified-ad products for maximum reach, functionality and profitability, including new help-wanted products that raised revenues from \$140,000 in 2000 to \$3.8 million in 2005
- Launched a youth-oriented entertainment site, *7cities.com*, to reach web users who didn't read the newspaper

**1988-1999:** Various reporting and editing positions, culminating as Broward metro editor, the *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

- While city editor, roughly doubled the number of front-page enterprise stories from the local staff by focusing on transportation, immigration and property crimes
- The staff won a variety of awards, including the Livingston Award for Young Journalists and the Brecher Freedom of Information Award
- Earlier, I served as the paper's first chief of correspondents, managing the Washington, statehouse, national and international correspondents
- As a reporter, I covered government, politics, and a variety of special projects

**1982-1988:** Reporter, various newspapers in Iowa, culminating as statehouse bureau chief, Lee Newspapers

## **Education and training:**

Bachelor's degree, news-editorial journalism, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa

Knight Fellowship, Stanford University, 1998-99: A one-year non-degree program for

mid-career journalists, where I studied the economics of the Internet and entrepreneurship at the Graduate School of Business. I also served as research assistant for Nancy Hicks Maynard's book *Mega Media*, gathering and analyzing historic financial data for various media segments.

Newspaper Association of America New Product Development Workshop, January 2005:  
A workshop by Harvard Professor Clark Gilbert on disruptive technological change.

### **Industry, community and professional activities:**

Member, Online News Association

### **Selected conference panels and presentations:**

*How PBS and NPR Can Support Local Journalism*, moderator, South by Southwest Interactive, Austin, Tex., March 2011

*Digital Transformations: the Decline of Scarcity*, NPES: The Association for Suppliers of Printing, Publishing and Converting Technologies, San Diego, November 2007

*Eyes on the Internet: Frames of Reference – Online Video Advertising, Content and Consumer Behavior*, Online Publishers Association, Los Angeles, June 2007

*Online Trends*, Florida Newspaper Advertising and Marketing Executives, June 2006

*Why Multimedia*, National Writers Workshop, Fort Lauderdale, 2006

### **Non-profit and community service:**

Peninsula READS, Hampton Roads, Va., board member and treasurer (2004-2005)

Broward Community College Foundation, Broward County, Fla., board member (2006)

Health Connector of Virginia, Hampton Roads, Va., board member (2007-date)