

# THOMAS G. DAVIDSON

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## Business and product leader

- Launched Passport, a streaming service for PBS station donors, raising \$4 million in new contributions to stations
- Built and launched *Metromix*, a local/national network of digital entertainment sites for Tribune Co.
- Operated two interactive business units (\$4 million and \$17 million in revenue, respectively); grew audience, revenue and cash flow
- Created a new revenue stream via the first syndication/revenue-share agreement between YouTube and a Fortune 500 multi-media company



## Storyteller

- Doubled on-air and digital audience by revamping a dull nightly public-affairs show to a character-driven weekly newsmagazine
- Worked across silos to launch an educational web-video series, *PBS Math Club*, targeting middle-school girls for PBS Digital Studios and PBS Learning Media ([youtube.com/pbsmathclub](http://youtube.com/pbsmathclub)). Secured a \$50,000 grant for a second season
- Led reporting staffs on local, national, foreign and business desks
- Awarded a year-long John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship at Stanford; studied the economic impact of digital technologies and the Internet on media organizations



## Teacher

- Organized and moderated a 10-city roadshow to launch, promote and socialize the Passport streaming service, resulting in three-quarters of eligible stations activating the service
- Co-authored and led digital-media training for more than 200 PBS station leaders, including 67 GMs/CEOs
- Retrained journalists for a digital future via Tribune's *Newsroom Now* program, and via a startup ad-network "cookbook" for independent site operators
- Adjunct professor of media entrepreneurship at the University of Maryland and American University



## Timeline

### **2016-date: Product development (contract), the USA TODAY NETWORK / Gannett**

- Integrated a new AI-driven provider of help-wanted listings for the USA TODAY NETWORK, leaving an obsolete single-site job board, improving advertiser satisfaction, and tripling job searches
- Rationalized the USA TODAY NETWORK's editorial email system. The old system used multiple architectures created at different times by outside contractors. The new is a flexible, unified suite that can easily decouple and change its parts. Reduced support costs by more than 50%; cut the time to launch a new newsletter from weeks to a matter of hours; closed security holes that caused our email database to be polluted with hundreds of thousands of bot-driven fake addresses
- Working with data scientists, marketers and software engineers to apply first- and third-party data for personalization and other audience segmentation experiments

### **2015 - 2016: Senior director of content, UNC-TV, the 12-station statewide PBS network for North Carolina**

- Pursued and won a \$210,000 federal grant for a documentary film series, *Reel South* — the first six-figure discretionary federal grant UNC-TV had received in more than a decade
- Recast *NC Now*, a nightly public affairs show, as a weekly newsmagazine. Nielsen ratings doubled; multiple segments have streamed 500,000 times or more
- Launched the *North Carolina Channel*, a public-service / public-affairs channel. In less than six months, it generated more than \$100,000 in production partnerships.

### **2010 - 2015: Senior director, PBS Digital**

- Built and launched Passport, an on-demand streaming archive for station donors, and other data-driven experiments to encourage digital donations. In its first year, the service generated \$3.9 million in revenue (at a \$6 million annual run rate) and 50,000 new donors
- Oversaw creation and launch of a new web-video series, *PBS Math Club*, to adapt the PBS Digital Studios/You Tube content model for educational use

### **2011 - date: Adjunct professor, University of Maryland and American University**

- Developed and led seminar classes in entrepreneurial journalism, digital business models and new-product development for graduate students

### **2009 - 2010: Vice president, business and partner development, GrowthSpur**

- Recruited more than 100 independent news and information sites for prototype local ad networks
- Co-developed and led business and sales training for site operators
- Analyzed sales results against our projections—then shut it down fast

**2006 - 2009: Regional vice president of interactive content, and other staff roles, Tribune Interactive**

- Co-led the multi-market, cross-functional team that launched *Metromix*, a local/national entertainment network targeting young audiences
- Directed interactive content operations and new-initiative development for Tribune's four newspapers and three television stations in the northeast
- Built training about online video for *Newsroom Now*; video streams tripled, and other site updates increased more than 20x, triggering 50 percent audience growth

**2005 - 2006: Interactive general manager, Sun-Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.**

Worked across divisions of the traditional organization to integrate the 40-person interactive and digital-video team into existing operations

- Increased revenue by 25 percent, to \$17 million
- Used data to sharpen online video programming (killing a broadcast-style online newscast, adding more individual segments). Monthly streams doubled despite fewer resources

**2000 - 2005: Interactive general manager and vice president, strategic planning, the *Daily Press*, Hampton Roads, Va.**

Led the interactive unit; later added strategic-planning responsibilities for the newspaper

- Achieved a \$3.3 million swing in operating cash flow at the digital unit, from a \$1 million loss to a \$2.3 million profit; grew revenue from \$1 million to \$4 million
- Led strategic planning and managed partnerships with regional broadcasters

**1988 - 1999: Reporter and editor, Sun-Sentinel, Fort Lauderdale, Fla.**

- As city editor, focused the 50-person Broward Metro desk on enterprise reporting
- As the paper's first chief of correspondents, combined the separate state, national and foreign desks into a single team - and increased the flow of 1A stories
- As a reporter, covered politics, suburban development, the statehouse and other Florida weirdness

**Earlier:**

- Reporter, then state capitol bureau chief, for Lee Newspapers, Iowa



**Education**

- Bachelor's degree, news-editorial journalism, Drake University, Des Moines, Iowa
- John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship, Stanford University, 1998-99
- Multiple product-development and digital-transformation programs



**Activities**

- Board member, National Press Foundation, 2013-date; judge for NPF's Excellence in Online Journalism Awards, 2012-date
- Application screener, John S. Knight Journalism Fellowship, Stanford University, 2009-date
- Enthusiastically mediocre saxophonist