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Profile-Mitchell Davis

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Random House, Simon & Schuster, and even Jay-Z winning a traditional industry award. When we made the move to **BiblioBoard**, they were the first to sign-up.

We are also working with other national libraries such as the **National Library of Chile**, and **National Library of Columbia**, as well as smaller museums and historical organizations like **San Diego Air & Space Museum**, **Louisiana State Museum**, and the **Southern Food and Beverage Museum**. The list of third parties using **BiblioBoard** to create digital products is growing so quickly it is hard for me to keep up with it honestly. We solve a huge problem for these organizations.

ATG: *Other parts of the BiblioLabs family include BiblioBazaar and BiblioLife. How do they fit into what you are trying to accomplish?*

MD: Geez, clearly we have too many Biblios. No, really these are all part of the same process. **BiblioBazaar** was the original company name in 2007, and we have essentially erased that name from our branding. No one could spell it. **BiblioLabs** is the parent company (corporate name), and **BiblioLife** is the brand we give to our in-house created Anthologies to differentiate them from third-party organizations. Hope that makes sense, but all that to say that the whole company (30 of us) are all razor-sharp focused on **BiblioBoard**, which is a product that we think is going to radically disrupt the current publishing and media landscape.

ATG: *We know that building your own business takes a lot of energy but you've got to take a break once in a while. What do you do for fun? Is there an activity or hobby that really puts you into relaxation mode?*

MD: I was lucky to find yoga in my early 20s. In many ways it, along with music and nature, saved my life. I still use it as a way to re-integrate experiences (business and otherwise) and stay focused. I am also lucky to be married to a phenomenal person who is a yoga teacher and nutritionist, and she keeps me healthy. She is also my creative partner, and we have a small production company called **Organic Process**. We produce really inspiring documentary projects, several of them award-winning. I also play in a **Widespread Panic** cover band called **54 Bicycles** and try to go bodysurfing or SUP boarding whenever I can.

ATG: *As someone who lives in Charleston, what would be on your "must see" and "must do" lists for the first time visitor to the Charleston Conference?*

MD: I love this city. I still love riding bikes and exploring the backstreets of Charleston even though I have been doing it for 20 years. I think just hitting the city on a bike with no plan is the best way to experience it. Also, seeing some Jazz music. Charleston has a jazz history that pre-dates New Orleans by 40 years, but no one has really told the story well (at **Organic Process** we worked on a documentary that contributes to fixing that in the future). The music scene is incredible. 🌿

Mitchell Davis

against the grain people profile

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BORN AND LIVED: Charleston, SC.

EARLY LIFE: I grew up in Summerville, a suburb of Charleston, where I played some sports but mostly tried to be popular. I then went to the **College of Charleston**, majored in English and put in the minimal effort required to make Bs and get out in four years. Then I spent some time out West after college washing dishes, climbing rocks, and trying to "find myself" (it mostly worked!). I then returned to Charleston and became an entrepreneur at 24 when I was too stupid and young to know any better. I find I need the challenge of entrepreneurship and building new things to drive my work ethic, which has become stronger and stronger over the years.

PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: I started a small desktop publishing and Web development company in my 20s that was a huge learning experience. This was just as the Web as we know it today was being invented (Netscape 1.0), and the overwhelming potential of the Internet hit me like a ton of bricks. Ultimately, I proved too immature and inexperienced to run my own business, but I met some partners, and we started **BookSurge** in 2000.

BookSurge was the world's first integrated, global print-on-demand and publishing platform. We sold that company to **Amazon** in 2005. I went to Seattle and got what I like to call an **Amazon** MBA (hard-earned!) and then re-grouped with my former co-founders, and we launched **BiblioLabs** in 2007.

We got **BiblioLabs** profitable in 2009 and have built our digital business (**BiblioBoard**) as our own VCs, funding it from cash flow. We unveiled **BiblioBoard** at **ALA Mid-Winter** in January 2013 and will have our official launch in March. We think we have created an entirely new media ecosystem and the platform to deliver it.

FAMILY: Incredible wife and creative partner **Farrah Hoffmire**, two beagles (Freddy and Lucy) and two cats (Nina Simone and Natalie). We also have three great nieces to whom we serve as crazy aunt and uncle.

IN MY SPARE TIME: I spend a lot of time re-charging my batteries, mostly through being with my wife, doing yoga, breathing, sweating, and exercising. I also love to body surf and ride the Stand-Up Paddleboard. I play in a **Widespread Panic** cover band called **54 Bicycles**, which is a lot of fun. I am not spending much time on this now, but over the past eight years my wife and I have produced some award-winning documentaries through our "active philanthropic" organization — **Organic Process Productions**. That has been a fantastic opportunity to travel the world and tell stories we find important and interesting.

FAVORITE BOOKS: Hard, but to pick a few: nearly every book by **Tom Robbins**, **Krishnamurti** writings, *Archaic Revival* by **Terrence McKenna**, *The Book* by **Alan Watts**, *Understanding Comics* by **Scott McCloud**, **Richard Brautigan** poetry books, and **Ben Timpson** art books.

PET PEEVES: Laziness, I guess.

PHILOSOPHY: Do what you can, when you can. If you can't, just don't do it. Also the serenity prayer is pretty spot on.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: Selling **BookSurge** to **Amazon** and playing a part in the successful integration was fantastic. Also, winning the **Publishers Innovation Award** along with the **British Library** on our first digital product is a big one. But, spending the last 18 months building **BiblioBoard** and launching it with the amazing team we have now trumps both of those.

GOAL I HOPE TO ACHIEVE FIVE YEARS FROM NOW: I want to see **BiblioBoard** flourish and reach its potential over the next five years.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS:

Libraries will be competitive with **Apple** and **Amazon** in terms of user experience. Rapid development of new types of user interfaces and sharing ecosystems will allow them to remain competitive over time. This is a key component of the library remaining relevant in the digital future. Once the user experience is competitive, the library will become a sort of Groupon; pooling the resources of its constituents to do group media buying and better leverage tax dollars, tuition, and membership fees (for private libraries, etc.). 🌿