

# Travis Alber

Director of User Experience at Medicus Life Brands

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## Summary

Webby-nominated, product-focused leader with 17 years of experience executing digital product design and user experience. Executive manager of creative teams across web-based, mobile, and app environments. Expert at leading creative discovery processes, and well versed in process components such as personas, mental models, sitemaps, wires, prototypes, testing and FRDs.

General UX principals travel across industries; designing for behavior change, driving social sharing, or optimizing for repeat engagement apply everywhere, even though a lot of my work has been in healthcare and publishing. In the Healthcare industry, I've worked in both HCP (Health Care Professional) and DTC (Direct to Consumer) areas, on global and US projects. In Publishing, I've run product for my own companies, and consulted on large and small digital projects for publishers and book industry startups. I'm familiar with Adobe Creative Suite, Omnigraffle, InvisionApp, Just in Mind, Sketch, Flinto, EPUB tools, and various approaches to social platform projects, content marketing ecosystems and testing strategies.

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## Experience

### **Director of User Experience at Medicus Life Brands, Digitas Health NY**

January 2014 - Present (2 years 8 months)

I run the UX practice at Medicus and Digitas Health NY. This includes:

Managing user experience for mobile and web-based products; focusing on global brand.coms, microsites, responsive sites w/in US, client internal platforms (ex Sharepoint), and mobile apps (irep, skura, and native apps). Involved with market research, persona development, content strategy, requirements gathering, interface architecture and overall user experience. In addition, working to establish a process that integrates UX within the larger agency goals and build up the internal team. Clients and brands include Daiichi Sankyo (Lixiana), AbbVie (Humira, Duopa), Pfizer (Rebif, Duavee), Mead Johnson (Enfamil), Sanofi, Boehringer Ingelheim (Gilotrif), Novocure (Optune) and Proctor & Gamble.

### **Founder, Head of Product at ReadUps**

September 2013 - Present (3 years)

I founded a web-pasted social reading system. ReadUps is a website for people meet up inside what they read. Users join via Twitter, then read books, writing samples, or imported urls at a distinct web address. The social core includes messaging in real time, as well as leaving shared comments and responses on the text.

When the schedule runs out, the ReadUp disappears. <http://www.readups.com>

### **UX Manager at Saatchi & Saatchi**

July 2013 - December 2013 (6 months)

Consulting on user experience and design for mobile and web-based pharma products. Establishing a process that integrates UX within the larger agency goals.

Brands include Benicar / Azor / Tribenzor, Humira, Nasacort, NexGard, Frontline, GetMeHome.

### **Product Specialist at panOpen**

August 2013 - October 2013 (3 months)

Helped define user experience and feature set for the digital textbook platform. Fleshed out both reading and editing systems.

### **Founder at BookGlutton, Inc.**

October 2006 - October 2013 (7 years 1 month)

Often described as a cross between a book community and an ebook reader, BG integrates a number of Web 2.0 technologies with digital books. It allows people to chat chapter-by-chapter inside the books, to create shared annotations, and to read something actually designed for the screen. BookGlutton launched Jan 08.

- Founded company to create the first browser-based e-book application, including real-time chat, asynchronous paragraph annotation, and virtual book clubs.
- Grew to 140,000 monthly unique users and 20,000 members, with over 1000 books for sale from publishing partners including O'Reilly Media.
- Managed publisher partnerships including Random House, Girlebooks, McGraw-Hill.
- Earned two Webby nominations, two W3 awards, NPR's All Things Considered coverage, and mentions in Wired, TechCrunch and Mashable.
- Still the only e-book reading system to support real-time conversations using in-book chat.
- Authored and revised Pending Patent: A Method for Allowing Users of a Document to Pass Messages to Each Other in a Context-Specific Manner.

### **User Experience Consultant at Brandtworks Inc**

January 2013 - March 2013 (3 months)

Consulted on interaction design, conducted stakeholder interviews, created wires (responsive) for corporate site, contributed to Discovery process.

### **Digital Strategist at O'Reilly Media**

December 2012 - January 2013 (2 months)

Consulted on social reading features and systems. Wrote white paper presenting market overview.

### **Founder at ReadSocial**

2011 - 2013 (2 years)

Developed a product (API) that connects readers inside and across systems, allowing people via different ebook devices, magazines, and blogs to share comments inside what they read. We're breaking people out of their silos with an eye toward more open conversations. Developers and publishers can use the ReadSocial open source libraries (web, iPad, ibooks) to drop in groups and paragraph-level comments whenever they distribute their content. <http://www.ReadSocial.net>

- Founded company to create the first API to connect readers across different long-form reading platforms.
- Led Business Development initiatives for strategic partnerships, building relationships with Big Five publishers, top design agencies and thought leaders in digital publishing.
- Concepted and oversaw UX on Readum, the first tool to annotate Google ebooks with Facebook Groups.
- Led PR and Media strategy for promoting a proof-of-concept implementation of the API.

<http://www.readum.com>

### **Acting Creative Director at NetGalley (via Firebrand Technologies)**

2012 - 2012 (less than a year)

Led redesign of 7-year old site with special attention to usability and simplicity. Dashboard systems, community growth and an updated look and feel were focuses of the relaunch. Reviewers, librarians and marketing professionals can order pre-release copies of books (galleys) and have them sent to digital readers (like the Kindle) via the new <http://www.NetGalley.com> site. Likewise publishers can manage requests and content distribution.

- Handled content reorganization from the ground up with special attention to different user types and dashboard requirements.
- Created fully documented wireframes and Photoshop mockups under budget and on time.
- Consulted on UX as they moved through development, working with engineering and management teams, and post-launch, on feature updates.

### **Art Director at Fortnight Journal**

January 2011 - July 2011 (7 months)

- Led interactive redesign for an journal of international art and media that focuses on millennials (coming Sept 2011)
- Project managed Romanian development team's site updates
- Concepted changes to the paginated reading system, annotations and footnotes
- Recommended ways to integrate rich media into article layout
- Worked with team on creative ways to promote "fortnight" in design and presentation as a core concept (the passage of time and the fortnightly posting is a key differentiator)

### **User Experience Lead at Broadcastr.com**

June 2010 - July 2011 (1 year 2 months)

- Led UX for crowdsourced storytelling site and location-aware app with 40,000 active users and 8,000 recorded stories.
- Created interface that allowed users to record stories on mobile phones and pin recordings to locations on a Google map.
- Coordinated wireframing schedule with remote engineering team's agile development workflow, to roll out Android and iPhone apps.
- Concepted features to balance user-generated content with features from over 100 partner organizations.
- Partners included Fodor's, National Park Service, Audible, and the 9/11 Memorial & Museum.
- Managed UX for a streamlined version of the iPhone app (based on metrics and user feedback), launching in Sept 2011.

### **User Experience Architect at Bibliocommons**

April 2011 - May 2011 (2 months)

- Consulted with cutting-edge library service that adds social features to the online library experience (including profiles, lists, reviews and recommendations integrated with the library catalog)
- Evaluated user flow and error messaging for NYPL rollout

### **Senior User Experience Designer at ACX Audio Creation Exchange (Audible / Amazon)**

November 2010 - March 2011 (5 months)

- Consulted on groundbreaking n-sided marketplace for audiobook production and distribution (used by Random House, Harper, Wiley, Pearson Education, and Writers House at launch).
- Analyzed and improved UX for complex marketplace interactions between rights-holders and audiobook producers.
- Recommended UI and design changes for recording and evaluation of incremental sign-off, approval, contract design, and overall site structure.

### **Mobile Product Lead at Electric Literature**

June 2010 - October 2010 (5 months)

- Managed UX for iPad-based Electric Publisher partnership projects
- Developed iPad wireframes for Human Rights Watch iPad app.
- Designed interface to allow users to get weekly updates about human rights events.
- Assisted in optimizing the long-form reading interface for comfortable consumption of reports ranging from 30 to 120 pages.

### **Board Member at The Champaign-Urbana Design Org**

February 2009 - June 2010 (1 year 5 months)

CUDO is a professional organization for Champaign-Urbana designers (web / interactive / print) that creates networking events, informative presentations and social activities.

### **Art Director at GloboMaestro**

September 2009 - January 2010 (5 months)

- Designed Webby-nominated luxury travel site.
- Created designs for the blog and video platforms used by luxury hotel concierges at the St. Regis, Fairmont, Mandarin Oriental, The Surrey and The Bowery Hotel.
- Incorporated localized ratings (via customized Google Maps), comments and personalized communication between users and experts in New York, Miami, San Francisco and Santa Monica.

### **Product Design Consultant at Flat World Knowledge, Inc.**

November 2007 - February 2008 (4 months)

- Advised on initial product plans for the Flat World Knowledge system used by 150,000 students annually.
- Consulted on design of online reading system for open-source textbooks with additional print and ecommerce solutions, a beta that led to \$25M in venture funding.
- Made recommendations for the collaborative writing system for higher education including user flow through site, composition process, book-editing, and catalog management (currently used by 850 universities in 44 countries).

### **Creative Director at JLOOP.com**

June 2003 - April 2006 (2 years 11 months)

Acted as creative director for rich media pieces, online community projects and marketing; led discovery, set goals and requirements, ran brainstorming sessions, managed timelines and production.

Led discovery and management for a number of projects, including a project-management tool, a parent-child time-management site, an interactive arts-education project, numerous motion graphics pieces, an international coaching site, a wedding photography business and a public speaking site with an ecommerce solution.

### **Art Production Manager at Cisco Systems**

June 2002 - May 2003 (1 year)

- Served as art and production manager for team of 12 in the R&D department Creative Learning Studio.
- Planned and supervised production for non-traditional interfaces and motion graphics, and functionally managed Flash creative team.
- Launched a 5-part, worldwide interactive training module to help integrate new company acquisitions.
- Helped establish Cisco's women-friendly workplace rating by creating a bilingual new-mother e-learning class, subsequently licensed by the Mexican government.
- Concepted and managed one of the first interactive video projects at Cisco, using Cisco's television studio to cast and shoot the film, then delivering it in interactive pieces via Flash.
- Created a Flash-based, puzzle adventure game to underscore management training (aligned with Six Sigma classroom training).

### **Sr. Multimedia Artist at Organic**

2000 - 2002 (2 years)

Introduced role of multimedia artist to consult on rich media options, worked from San Francisco and Detroit offices. Clients included Dodge, Macys, Sony, Driving.com, Midway Games, Sprint, Visa.

Responsibilities: created storyboards, produced Flash pieces, met with clients to refine concepts.

## **Information Architect at Zatso (ReacTV.com)**

1999 - 2000 (1 year)

- Contributed to the design and usability of the video streaming product for local news.
- Made design recommendations on product integration for third-party sites.
- Concepted and created online ads and designs for the corporate site.

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## Projects

### **I am Concrete**

2006 to August 2007

Members: Travis Alber, D. Schmüdde

Directed and wrote screenplay for 43 minute dramatic film: I am Concrete. Format: Panasonic HVX-200.

Production highlights include: exclusively using steadicam to capture long takes of 10-12 minutes that weave through the cast of seven actors and one dancer. Composition duties included traditional piano music and sound design using granular synthesis.

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## Skills & Expertise

**Creative Direction**

**Product Management**

**UX**

**Online Publishing**

**Social Media**

**Omnigraffle**

**Mobile Design**

**Publishing**

**User Interface Design**

**Basecamp**

**MS Project**

**Photoshop**

**Illustrator**

**Flash**

**Graphic Design**

**EPUB**

**Interaction Design**

**Mobile**

**Social Networking**

**Information Architecture**

**Web Design**

**Facebook**

**Content Strategy**  
**Art Direction**  
**Digital Strategy**  
**ebook**  
**Publishing Technology**  
**ePub**  
**Ebooks**  
**User Experience**  
**Online Advertising**  
**Start-ups**  
**Digital Media**  
**E-commerce**  
**Mobile Devices**  
**Strategic Partnerships**  
**User Interface**  
**Mobile Applications**  
**Integrated Marketing**  
**Web 2.0**  
**Content Development**  
**OmniGraffle**  
**Blogging**  
**Content Management**  
**Adobe Creative Suite**  
**Wireframes**  
**Usability**  
**Multimedia**  
**Video**  
**CMS**

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## Honors and Awards

### **Webby Award**

2008

Community Category Finalist

### **Webby Award**

2011

Travel Category - Honoree

### **Webby Award**

2010

Community Category - Honoree

### **W3 Awards for Excellence in Creativity**

2009

Publishing Category - Silver

### **W3 Awards for Excellence in Creativity**

2008

Community Category - Silver

**Pixel Award**

2010

Community Category Finalist

**Brandon Hall Excellence in Learning**

2004

Brandon Hall Excellence in Learning Gold Award

**Macromedia Site of the Day**

2002

Macromedia Site of the Day

**Communication Arts Site of the Week**

2002

Communication Arts Site of the Week

**Flash Forward Film Festival**

2001

Flash Forward Film Festival Finalist, Amsterdam

"Who Is Flora" <http://www.whoisflora.net>

**OneClub Interactive Award**

2000

OneClub Interactive Advertising Competition "Yield CD"

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**Patents**

**A Method for Allowing Users of a Document to Pass Messages to Each Other in a Context-Specific Manner**

United States Patent Application 20090094537

Inventors: Travis Alber, Aaron Miller

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**Publications**

**Book: A Futurist's Manifesto: A Collection of Essays from the Bleeding Edge of Publishing**

O'Reilly Media August 17, 2012

Authors: Travis Alber, Aaron Miller, Hugh McGuire, Brian O'Leary, Laura Dawson

Chapter 12 - Above the Silos: Social Reading in the Age of Mechanical Barriers (Travis Alber & Aaron Miller) "People have always connected through books. As books enter an era in which they too can become connected, we must ask new questions about the nature of reading. We must be free to experiment with the new changing forms of books, the ways that people connect through them, and new modes of interaction. Most importantly—in a many-to-many future, where everything will be connected to everything else—we must look at the ways readers identify with each other, and how they organize meaningfully across the arbitrary divisions created by market forces. Groups of readers and their preferences are, in many ways, more



relevant than any single reader out there. Often a single reader is simply a consumer, a passive audience member, whereas a grouping of consumers can be something much more powerful: a community."

### **30 Days of Rain**

Drunken Boat 2007

Authors: Travis Alber

Interactive fiction structured around 30 haiku about San Francisco, produced in Flash.

### **Dandelion Chance**

New River Journal of Digital Writing and Art Publication 2008

Authors: Travis Alber

Interactive, animated fiction.

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## **Education**

### **Southern Illinois University, Carbondale**

MA, Interactive Multimedia

### **Bradley University**

PostGraduate Digital Work, 1996 - 1997

### **Valparaiso University**

Bachelor's Degree, English / Business, 1992 - 1996

### **Richwoods**

Activities and Societies: Soccer, Theater, Speech Team, Debate

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## 7 people have recommended Travis

"It was a pleasure to work with Travis. Her UX and negotiation skills gave us great confidence during client-facing presentations. She is always opened to common solutions among the group. Her good relationship with art directors and strategists saved us time and energy."

— **Ernesto Espinoza**, worked directly with Travis at Saatchi & Saatchi

"Travis is wonderful to work with--very communicative about goals and expectations, and always open to questions and new ideas. She gives clear direction while leaving room for creativity, which is great as a designer. I also found it easy to work out scheduling and other employment matters with her. It was a pleasure working at BookGlutton!"

— **Mary Cha**, reported to Travis at BookGlutton, Inc.

"Travis is a creative and inspired person. I enjoyed working for her at BookGlutton and learned many things about running a start up. She has a passion for what she does and it shows in her work. Many people have great ideas, but to act on them shows a level of character and drive that not everyone has. Also, some people get lost in the difficulties of putting an idea to work. Travis stays focused and does what it takes to get the job done. It was a pleasure working for Travis."

— **Austin Martinez**, reported to Travis at BookGlutton, Inc.

"Travis has sharp insights into user experience and mobile UI design. She produces superior work on tight deadlines, and is a great person to work with and collaborate on projects. She's equally facile in web and app design. Recently, she was instrumental in helping us redesign and improve the Broadcastr app for iPhone and Android."

— **Andy Hunter**, managed Travis at Broadcastr.com

"Travis first worked with us in 2010. She participated in two months of User Interface design across three platforms (iPhone, Android, Web). We have recently worked with her again for UI, UX, and Graphic design on an interactive kiosk project with the 9/11 Memorial & Museum, and a redesign of the Broadcastr iPhone application. She is creative and hard working. Travis has always delivered solid designs on time

at essential stages in the development of our company. We count her among our most reliable freelancers and never hesitate to call her when we are working on a high-concept project whose results have significant implications for the future of our company. Couldn't recommend her more highly. Scott Lindenbaum Co-Founder Broadcastr"

— **Scott Lindenbaum**, was Travis's client

"Travis is a true professional. She has an excellent design sense, a discerning eye, and makes every effort to stay well-informed on the latest web standards and information delivery methods. Travis was a joy to work with and I recommend her highly."

— **Paul Naas**, worked directly with Travis at Cisco Systems

"Travis is a focused, creative, and inspiration individual. She is a strong program manager, and at the same time an incredible creative guide. I watched her move from a knowledgeable student to a powerful source of interactive genius during her tenure at SIUC. I wholeheartedly recommend her talent and creativity to anyone looking for the bleeding edge of interactive content development."

— **Peter C. Riley, Ed.D.**, taught Travis at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale

[Contact Travis on LinkedIn](#)