Guide to the David Bohnett papers

Finding aid prepared by Sydney Gulbronson Olson
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Title: David Bohnett papers
Identifier/Call Number: X8061.2017
Contributing Institution: Computer History Museum
Language of Material: English
Physical Description: 23.75 Linear feet, 19 record cartons
Date (inclusive): 1996-2005
Abstract: The David Bohnett papers hold materials related to GeoCities as well as other ventures by Bohnett between 1996 and 2005. Types of materials found throughout the collection include correspondence, business plans and projections, executive summaries, merger and acquisition documentation, board meeting minutes, financial and legal documentation, media and public relations kits, promotional materials, fundraising presentations, and press clippings. The collection holds materials from companies such as Geocities, IFILM Corporation, LowerMyBills.com, NotNeutral, PlanetOut Partners, and Xdrive Technologies. About a quarter of the collection holds documentation about companies in which Bohnett invested, such as Gamesville.com, United Online Inc., and Ceiva.
Processing Information
Collection surveyed by Sydney Gulbronson Olson, 2018.
Access Restrictions
The collection is open for research. However, portions of the collection may require review by CHM staff before viewing. Please note that researchers can take pictures or request scans of materials in the collection for their own research use, but are not allowed to share those images with others or publish them without written permission from the donor.
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Preferred Citation
[Identification of Item], [Date], David Bohnett papers, Lot X8061.2017, Box [#], Computer History Museum.
Immediate Source of Acquisition
Gift of David Bohnett, 2016.
Biographical/Historical Note
David Bohnett is a technology entrepreneur and philanthropist who founded the pioneering internet portal and social media site GeoCities.com in 1994. He is also the founder of Baroda Ventures, a venture capital firm, as well as the David Bohnett Foundation, a non-profit, grant-making organization committed to improving society through social activism.
Born April 2, 1956 in Chicago, Illinois, Bohnett earned a BS in business administration from the University of Southern California. He also earned an MBA in Finance from the University of Michigan in 1980. Bohnett started his career at Accenture, then Anderson Consulting, in Los Angeles, after which he held various positions in the software industry. In 1994, he and John Rezner founded GeoCities.com, a media and e-commerce company that was once ranked one of the four most trafficked sites on the Web. It was one of the first social networking sites on the Internet and was the first large internet venture built on user-generated content. GeoCities went public in 1998 and was acquired by Yahoo! Inc. in 1999. Bohnett is also an investor and is the founder and managing partner of Baroda Ventures, a Los Angeles-based venture capital firm, which he started in 1998 after the success of GeoCities. The firm is focused on pre-seed and seed stage investments in the consumer internet, e-commerce, mobile, and digital media industries. Bohnett has been an active partner in Xdrive.com, Wireimage.com, Stamps.com, and LowerMyBills.com, and he currently serves on the Board of Directors of several notable technology companies.
In addition to his career in technology and entrepreneurship, Bohnett is an active philanthropist. He founded and is currently the chair of the David Bohnett Foundation, which is committed to effecting positive change through community building and social activism. He has served in philanthropic leadership positions such as Chairman of the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts and Vice Chair of the Board of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association. Bohnett has also served as Trustee of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, amfAR (The Foundation for AIDS Research), Los Angeles County Museum of Art, and the University of Southern California.
Scope and Content of the Collection
The David Bohnett papers, ranging in date from 1996 to 2005, hold materials related to GeoCities as well as other web and technology ventures by David Bohnett. The collection primarily contains documentation from companies in which Bohnett
was very involved either as a founder, such as GeoCities, or as an active partner, such as Xdrive and Lowermybills.com. Examples of types of materials found throughout the collection include correspondence, business plans and projections, executive summaries, merger and acquisition documentation, and board meeting minutes. The papers include a significant amount of financial and legal documentation, such as early stage fundraising materials, stock certificates and ownership information, company financial statements, IPO and stock information, contracts, and letters of understanding. There are also public-facing materials, such as media and public relations kits, promotional materials, fundraising presentations, and press clippings. Companies represented in this portion of the collection include Geocities, IFILM Corporation, LowerMyBills.com, NotNeutral, PlanetOut Partners, and Xdrive Technologies. About a quarter of the papers hold smaller amounts of documentation about numerous companies in which Bohnett invested, such as Gamesville.com, United Online Inc., and Ceiva. The David Bohnett papers are focused exclusively on Bohnett's professional work in the technology sector and the contents do not address his extensive philanthropic work.

Below is a rough, box-level inventory of the collection. For a more detailed inventory, please contact the archives directly.

Box 1-3: GeoCities
Box 4: iFilm Corporation
Box 5: Lowermybills.com
Box 6: NotNeutral
Box 7-9: PlanetOut Partners
Box 10-14: Xdrive, Inc. and Xdrive Technologies
Box 15: Access Technology Partners, L.P.
Box 16: Investments (Avow; Beverly Hills Internet, Inc.; Blackfilm.com; Bold New World; C1TV; Ceiva)
Box 17: Investments (Critical Path; CreSenda; Datek Online; Dri-Dek; EncrypTix; Gamesville.com)
Box 18: Investments (Halo Promotional Products; Infonautics; Lear; Norman; Pink Paper; PROFITsystems; QuickBrowse.com)
Box 19: Investments (United Online, Inc.; Zero Gravity Internet Group)

Related Collections at CHM
Bohnett, David oral history, Lot X8112.2017, catalog number 102706888.

Subjects and Indexing Terms
GeoCities (Firm).
Entrepreneurship
Startups (Business enterprises)
Venture capital