

EE Podcast #59 2011 Year in Review

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Lea Alcantara: This is the ExpressionEngine Podcast Episode #59 The Year in Review. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my co-host, Emily Lewis. This episode is sponsored by EE Coder, the EE experts who play with others. Do you sometimes wish you had a trusted partner for your project? EE Coder brings over 25,000 hours of EE experience the companies with needs like yours. Let's chat, contact EECoder.com.

Emily Lewis: The ExpressionEngine Podcast would also like to thank Pixel & Tonic for being our major sponsor of the year. [Music ends] So Lea, this is our last podcast for 2011.

Lea Alcantara: I know. It feels like the year has just whizzed by.

Emily Lewis: I can't believe it. In fact, I was realizing today I think I've missed the window for getting my holiday cards out. [Laughs].

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: All the time.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I know. You keep getting all these emails from newsletter saying, "Oh, you have this time ship or this time to buy and all this," and then now, I'm like, "Oh, it's done." [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]. Yeah. I think my cards will just say, "I hope you had a nice Christmas because I know you are getting this after it." [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Well, as they say, it's the thought that counts, right?

Emily Lewis: Exactly.

Lea Alcantara: It's the thought that counts. So 2011 was a huge year I think for ExpressionEngine. What would you say is the overall feel of the 2011 for ExpressionEngine?

Emily Lewis: Well, in preparation for this episode, I know both you and I took some time to peruse our EE resources. I spent a lot of time on the EE Insider, which just is a fantastic resource for news and information to keep you up to date, but it's also a great archive for to go back and so as I look back on the year, what really stood out for me is this was the year of growth and growing pains.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: As you know, EllisLab and even add-on developers and EE shops all experienced, it seemed to be, experiencing growth. They are hiring, they are building new things, but then as that growth came, it came with some pains

with dealing with those changes like some of the things that EllisLab, for example, had strived to do to address comments from the community about how they did releases and how they communicated.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I think that's about sums it up really. I feel like EllisLab has really tried to listen to the community and it was kind of, with the year of growth and growing pains, I think it was also the year of formalizing and organizing your systems.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: I feel like especially with EECl, a lot of emphasis was being played on work flow, how they run their businesses, how they made sure sites got launched, et cetera and so forth, and so it was a year of processes essentially as well.

Emily Lewis: And I think that point you just brought up about processes and people's work flow reflects some maturity in terms of the people who have been using EE were not just building out sites, we have established businesses and we've figured out how to most effectively build the sites. Now, all we want to do is become more efficient and streamline how we are doing things, so I think it reflects that people who have been using Expression Engine for a long time really successfully.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure. I mean, I've been using ExpressionEngine for just over six years. Essentially since I launched Lealea Design, I've been almost an EE-exclusive shop since then and from where it started and where it is now, it's kind of mind blowing especially. And again, it's not just EllisLab as you mentioned, it's also the third-party add-on developers.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: How much things have matured, and how, for example, Devot:ee didn't exist for a couple of years, right?

Emily Lewis: Right, right.

Lea Alcantara: And then now, they are a repository. You would find all your add-ons on one place and then developers are also experimenting with different types of licensing agreements.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yes.

Emily Lewis: And yeah. And I also love that developers, EE developers, a number of them have found a niche in developing add-ons like Low this year went exclusively to add-on development. I think it just shows again that maturity in our product and in our services.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, and not just the maturity but a certain investment and trust.

Emily Lewis: Confidence.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, exactly.

Emily Lewis: Yes.

Lea Alcantara: That EllisLab and ExpressionEngine is going to be around for a long time.

Emily Lewis: Right. So let's talk about some of the specifics. Maybe we will kind of just sum up some of the highlights in terms of news and events for the year starting with January of 2011.

Lea Alcantara: Sure. So what happened in January? So I think with January, that was when we started getting news about EECL.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yes.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, that was when they launched sort of like a little placeholder website with the dates telling everyone that it was coming to, I believe, Brooklyn in October.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. And I think one of the bigger announcements I think in January was when Marcus Neto was hired for Enterprise Support & Services.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So that was I think a huge move on EllisLab's part to focus on that type of clientele and need, which they didn't have a focus before. I mean, obviously, enterprise used and continues to use ExpressionEngine, but now they realized that they needed someone full time to deal with those types of clients.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. And not only that they needed someone on staff to focus in that area, but that they were just recognizing the need to look into enterprise support and services. It's something that if our listeners tuned in on Episode 56 where Marcus was talking to us about the different types of support levels, the tiered support system that they are considering. They were also earlier in the year in January talked about bringing ExpressionEngine enterprise license directly to the communities.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So it just definitely reflected a bigger picture perspective at EllisLab, I think.

Lea Alcantara: And I think also in that episode with Marcus, he mentioned that despite the fact that EllisLab and ExpressionEngine, it will always be a software-focused, product-focused company.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: But they finally understand that there is a need for services to go along with that as well, just beyond regular support services that they need to address further needs within the community to deal with client support.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]. So I think that brings us into February which it sort of surprised me. It was news to me that EllisLab didn't have a marketing firm.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So they decided to hire a marketing firm in February to do what marketing firms do and help EllisLab and ExpressionEngine get some exposure and have more, I guess, focused efforts, and to me when I heard about that, that was when I really got the sense that there was going to be a lot of growth with EllisLab this year, which definitely was supported with the different hirings that they had throughout the year.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure, and I think the biggest change in February was when 2.1.4 Beta was released.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And they've really revamped the file manager.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, and that seemed to be something, the file manager. In fact, I know I was putting together all the notes every time I made a note of a new release. There were notes that changes to the file manager were incorporated into it. So it seemed to be ongoing focus this year, and in ExpressionEngine, every update seemed to have some sort of tweak or improvement.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees] Absolutely, absolutely. And I think then we should head on to March. What happened in March?

Emily Lewis: Well, for me, March was always about South By Southwest.

Lea Alcantara: Yes.

Emily Lewis: And frankly, it's always such a fantastic place to see my friends and fellow colleagues and fellow EE devs. EE had a formal meetup on the Friday that the conference started and then there were a bunch of the informal meetups along the way. I got an opportunity to see Leslie Camacho briefly and spend a lot of time talking with Leslie Doherty, but yeah, South By Southwest itself was a bit of a disappointment. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Oh, that's a little too bad because when South By Southwest in previous years, I remember EllisLab really latching onto South By Southwest as a place to gather ExpressionEngine designers and developers.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And that was when they made major announcements.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: They made mistake announcements since I remember they tried to show some ExpressionEngine 2 previews before it was really ready.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: And they were making certain... but I don't know if they were making certain promises, but they made I think announcements that probably weren't ready for primetime at that time, and so South By Southwest has always been closely tied with ExpressionEngine and EllisLab for announcements and things happening, but now it sounds like that it's kind of taken a backburner these days.

Emily Lewis: As you know, I totally agree with you. In fact, my very first South By Southwest was when I got that EE2 preview that you were just referring to.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: I sat down with developers, with Leslie, and we looked at the system, and for me I was blown away and I also had had several cocktails so I wasn't paying attention to the details to know whether they followed through in the end.

Lea Alcantara: Sure.

Emily Lewis: But I think now that South By Southwest has turned into this beast. I mean, it's this social media marketing and networking beast.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: It's not this thing that it used to be. I do think that Austin is a great town and the fact that there are so much music and events, it will still draw people to meet up, but I do think that in terms of EE meetups and people gathering, the EECI Conference is now, I think, probably the primary place. Maybe that didn't have that prominence that South By Southwest had a couple of years ago, but it certainly has built it.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure, and I remember in October, EECI said that this was the largest attendance yet, right? So again, the year of growth.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: More and more people who are dealing with ExpressionEngine want to meet up and things like that, and it sounds like South By Southwest is passé. EECI is the new hotness.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] I know that EECI is higher on my list than South By Southwest for 2012. That's for sure.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure. Me too, me too.

Emily Lewis: So what about April?

Lea Alcantara: April. April, I think, is the month that EllisLab wishes that didn't happen. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: I think they tried to release a new version of ExpressionEngine and then it prompted a rollback. So I think that definitely it had certain feedback from the community. They were a little bit displeased, to say the least, about this type of release.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: And then, "Oh, rollback, oh, with all these issues." And that kind of prompted however... like the silver lining is that it prompted EllisLab to move and formalize a new eight-week release cycle, right?

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: So instead of, I think, before then it was basically randomized. We really didn't know when the next release was going to be. We didn't know why. We just kind of crossed our fingers and hoped, and then suddenly there would be a release, and obviously that wasn't working out for them. So now, I think with the new eight-week release cycle, there are set goals and set plans, and I think that would be a lot easier to manage in general.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, yeah, and I just think when it was happening in the moment, there is the sense of frustration and panic and all of this other stuff. But looking back on it, this is one of those perfect examples in life where you would do something with the best of intentions. You screw it up somehow and you learn from it and then you would take steps to make sure it doesn't happen again. And since then, there haven't been any problems in that sort of scale and I think it just reflects that sometimes you have to have those little painful lessons to actually learn anything.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure, for sure, and I mean, this isn't just for EllisLab, this is for all of us.

Emily Lewis: All of us.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, all of us can screw up, and obviously, I have, and we have to sometimes backtrack. But it's really how we bounce back that reflects on the company.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And I think one thing that we can say is that EllisLab does really care about their users and they do try to be responsive and a lot more...

Emily Lewis: Transparent.

Lea Alcantara: Exactly, exactly.

Emily Lewis: Oh, also in April, there were some educational resources that were available. So Whoooz! who puts on the EECL Conference, they put a number of their 2009 and 2010 presentation videos on Vimeo for you to watch for free.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I know I attended the 2010 conference. There are lots of good information in there. I love having resources online for people to understand different ways of using ExpressionEngine, so I thought that was great news.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And then EllisLab also announced they had a new formal community partner create EE with Creat-EE, which provides online training and education. So April brought us some information and resources.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure. And then May came with more updates of ExpressionEngine with 2.1.5 and like you mentioned it seems the running consistency with releases has been more fine-tuning with the file manager. Obviously, we are summarizing. There has been a lot of bug fixes, et cetera, and moving forward.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. We will be sure to put links in the show notes to people who really want to see the details.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. For sure, and then like on that same note of 2011 being formalizing and processes, et cetera, May also came with a lot of interesting resources about multiple server environments and add-on development as well as config files.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. Some of those resources I thought were just, you know... I love that people still blog and still put tutorials out there.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And the EE community is a constant source of new information, and especially when we've talked about it a dozen times, if not more, EE is one of those systems that you could do things so many different ways.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And I just love that people are taking the time to continue to blog about their work flows, blog about the sites they worked on and how they built them, or how they are approaching things.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. What I love to do is just to compare the similarities and differences. It's interesting to see how similar we actually all tackle a certain thing and then it's also interesting to see where they diverge.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. And so then June comes along.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. In June we had, if anyone has ever done one of those online conferences, Environments for Humans puts on some great ones and this year was the third Engine Summit, which is a day-long online conference focused on ExpressionEngine.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I gave a small presentation on using multiple site manager. Chad Crowell gave a great presentation on evaluating templates and, I believe, structure.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So there were a number of good presentations, and I do know that Engine Summit 4 will be in 2012, and I should have made a note. I suspect it's in the summertime, too, probably around June.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. I'm not a hundred percent sure when it will be, but of course, since this is the EE Podcast, once we have information, we will let everyone know.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: And yeah, Engine Summit is a great option for those who, unfortunately, won't be able to make it to EECon. We always have great speakers and tutorials during Engine Summit. So I would, like I would encourage people to buy a ticket.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. You save money on travel. You don't have to even go. I mean, I work from home so I don't go out of my pajamas, and pretty much all the speakers stay on all day and they are in the chat room talking with you. You can ask questions. You can win prizes. It's for an online conference. You would feel very connected.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. For sure, for sure, and if you even feel lazy and don't want to attend and you just want to hear the presentations, they do give you the videos after attending.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. So what else happened in June.

Emily Lewis: Oh, so well, I guess the biggest news in June for us is we relaunched this podcast.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, yes.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: It's big news. Yes, that is right. June was the official relaunch of the EE Podcast and I welcomed my lovely co-host.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] It's been so much fun. I've learned so much. I must tell anyone. If you want to learn anything, get yourself involve in something where you have to teach other people about it.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. I agree. I agree. I think that one of my favorite aspects of hosting the EE Podcast is the fact that I feel like I've got a front seat in learning more and more about ExpressionEngine and the community, and I'm just so blown away and amazed at how willing our guests and our listeners are to contributing to the podcast and to ExpressionEngine information, et cetera and so forth.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: I always feel I learn something new with each podcast.

Emily Lewis: Me, too. It's been a fantastic experience for me.

Lea Alcantara: And in terms of ExpressionEngine news, this is sort of minor and major at the same time.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: ExpressionEngine officially supports removing index.php.

Emily Lewis: I wish I had read that two years ago. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I mean I'm totally psyched they did this because I think it needed to happen.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: But I think anyone who has been using EE for at least a few years has already found their favorite work around, and it sort of like, “Yeah, well.” But I think the point is that anyone taking EE as a newbie and starting from scratch, they are not even going to have to worry about it and I think that’s going to help with adoption.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely, and I think the specific one that they chose is the most popular one as well.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So yeah, if you want to remove index.php, ExpressionEngine now officially supports it, which is great.

Emily Lewis: Oh, another thing from EllisLab in June was they formally announced their add-on developer preview program.

Lea Alcantara: Oh yeah, it’s big, too.

Emily Lewis: Right, which was, I guess, “a clear path to getting preview copies of ExpressionEngine so that add-on developers could test their add-ons prior to a release.”

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: I think that’s a big deal for developers.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: I’m not one, but I think that’s something that is probably a huge benefit to developers.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely, and again this is another step in formalizing their processes again.

Emily Lewis: Exactly.

Lea Alcantara: So I mean, great. Kudos.

Emily Lewis: So that brings us to July.

Lea Alcantara: July, yes. So what happened in July?

Emily Lewis: Let’s see, EllisLab made an update to their paid upgrade policy.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, awesome.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. All point releases are free. Major releases will be paid, and the changes were retroactive.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. I think that’s been one of the major customer requests throughout the years.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: For my clients, I guess it wasn’t too big of a deal that they had to pay a yearly upgrade fee, but with this, this just makes things so much easier for everyone involved to be able to get the benefits, not just of functionality, but there are security-related reasons to upgrade as well.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And having these point releases being free makes a huge difference, I think.

Emily Lewis: Oh, I couldn't agree more. Another big thing that I think happened in July, and I think this was big news because it was the first major site that was public about upgrading from EE1 to EE2. Devot:ee did their upgrade that month.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, in July, yeah.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, so I think we talked to Ryan about the process in one of our recent episodes, Episode 58, which I encourage our listeners to tune into if they haven't already, but Ryan tweeted regularly and documented it. He also talked to EE1 in a little interview about the process, and I think it was the first very transparent and open sort of upgrade process for a lot of people, paying attention on Twitter and online.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure, for sure. And in July, our own podcast got a little bit of buzz.

Emily Lewis: Oh yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Thanks to James Mathias who is the chief creative officer at EllisLab. It was Episode 48, and James made a little bit of a comment about the file manager. Again, the file manager is a big deal this year in comparison to Pixel & Tonic's Assets.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, he was sort of, I think, expressing more of a personal opinion and maybe more of the impressions that EllisLab had about the UX that Assets was using and why they chose to build file manager the way they did.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And the community responded as it always does, and I think this is great about our community, we are open and transparent and we are open to criticism and feedback.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: My favorite post, and I will make sure to have it in the show notes, is Low commented on the James' feelings about the UX, and he said that he thinks it's wrong to dismiss an interface just because it's unfamiliar to you. It's not inherently wrong. And so I think he just pointed out that they are the conversations to be had. People make statements and then you respond, and that's how we come to understanding.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure. And in the vein of upgrading to EE2, the EE Wiki in July also gets a great update/upgrade errors guide.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I think that's useful. I always find upgrading to be a stressful process. I avoid it. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I avoid it just because I get nervous. I always make some sort of mistake. It's always my mistake, too.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure, for sure. I think the worst thing is getting complacent and cocky.

Emily Lewis: Right. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Whenever you upgrade, you are like, “Oh, who needs to do a backup?” [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Right. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: It’s like, “Yeah.” Now, the moment you decide, “Oh, I don’t really need to back this up,” you need to back up.

Emily Lewis: Right. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yes, yeah.

Emily Lewis: So that brings us to August where we had two major events. This year was the first ever conference in the UK dedicated to ExpressionEngine, the EE UK Conference.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And EE Insider has a fantastic wrap up on the website. If that’s where you live or you live near that area, I’m hoping they will be doing it again. It looks like it’s a great event.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure. And then for those in the major developing side, then August also had the CodeIgniter Conference.

Emily Lewis: Right. Let’s see, August, I haven’t used this myself, but in August, EllisLab launched their Connect page, which is kind of like a repository of all of their online presence.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: As you know, their latest tweets, where they are in social networks and things like that. So do you visit this site? Do you utilize it at all?

Lea Alcantara: No, not really because I follow EllisLab on Twitter.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: And so I just get the information via Twitter, but what’s interesting about that page, too, is that I think it gives you a little bit of a sneak preview of how EllisLab’s look and feel for the website.

Emily Lewis: Do you think so?

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: Do you think that’s coming? Yeah, I hope so.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: It’s pretty.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, exactly. I think the blue and the grids and things like that, they are already kind of using that style guide in their forum, their forum signatures.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So I think it's kind of like a really nice preview of what may come for their website in look and feel and things like that.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. I think the addition of James Mathias is probably a big part of making that happen.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure. And I'm looking forward to seeing more changes.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, me, too. Let's see, this brings us to September where our podcast had another big month. We were nominated as one of .Net Magazine's top ten podcasts of the year.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. That was pretty awesome. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I think it's just fantastic. I have to say I can't take any of the credit for the nomination because at that point, I had only been involved in the podcast once. But it's just a testament to the kind of work that you, Ryan and Dan Benjamin over at 5by5 put into getting this podcast started and going for... how long has it been so far, Lea?

Lea Alcantara: Oh, I think they started, like Dan and Ryan started in 2009, like way back, [Laughs], for when EE2 was released

Emily Lewis: It's incredible that it's still going.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: It's great. We also just have to thank... of course, we did not win. I guess I shouldn't say, of course.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: We did not win sadly.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: But thank you to everyone who did vote for us and EllisLab for supporting us and helping us get votes and same to EE Insider who made sure to encourage readers to vote for us. So just a lot of love out there to our community for supporting this podcast.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely. Thank you so much. On the same topic of growth again, with continued growth for this year.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: In September, EllisLab addressed those concerns about ExpressionEngine growth.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees] Yeah, I mean, it seemed to be that there was a bit of griping in some forums and just people expressing how they would rather hear about things and find out about things and be communicated to, and Leslie Camacho took some time in the forums to once again continue his trend of being transparent and just expressing like what EllisLab is doing, what they are trying to do, where their goals are, and the reality is EllisLab is growing, EE is growing and business is good for all of us. There is going to naturally be some things that are uncomfortable.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, and that leads us to October, a big month for ExpressionEngine.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, so in October EllisLab opened its Pro Network back up to new applicants, which it hasn't been open in quite a while.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. Well, I mean, I think it was kind of unofficially opened. I think it was kind of again one of those things where the stuff was not formalized.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Things just were not formalized. It just was there and I think there were applicants and then they closed it down, but then some people would still email them. So I think there was still an informal way you could get in.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: But now, they've formalized it again.

Emily Lewis: And they added a new feature to the Network where folks can edit their own listings.

Lea Alcantara: Yes. That when I think has been a request since the beginning of ExpressionEngine Pro Network.

[Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. And what else happened in October?

Emily Lewis: Well, the big news in October was EECI.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, yes.

Emily Lewis: I wasn't there, you were there, so tell me.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] So EECI 2011 was the biggest EECI yet, and it had I think, and I don't have the numbers in front of me, but I remember there were about 300 people that attended in Brooklyn, New York.

Emily Lewis: Wow.

Lea Alcantara: And just like the other EEICs, I think it just got better and better. We had a lot more presentations and tutorials. We also had a Dev Day where we had a chance to develop an ExpressionEngine website with a small team and chat and get to know the community a little bit better. So yeah, if you are an ExpressionEngine designer or developer or hybrid, I really highly, highly, highly recommend attending EECI because the type of information that you can glean from attending is just immense.

Emily Lewis: And having attended one in previous years, the people that you meet is it's so important for your network. You meet people who you can then go to if you need support, if you need help, if you want to hire someone to do some small thing. It's absolutely fantastic the people that you meet.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. And concurrently, with EECI, another big thing for ExpressionEngine was Version 2.3 was released with an improved user guide.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And with better pagination offerings.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I actually have yet to look into this because I haven't done this update yet with the pagination.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I'm very curious because I personally haven't been a big fan of it in the past.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. The old versions of pagination were very, very limited.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And I think it was almost anti-ExpressionEngine because one of the benefits of ExpressionEngine is the ability to have your code first.

Emily Lewis: Exactly.

Lea Alcantara: And then each ExpressionEngine loop or whatever or variable has a way for you to granularly design your site.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And have the dynamic content show up. However, with pagination, there was automatic code that was outputted which still happens.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: If you want that option, it will still automatically output. But now, if you decide to just do something else or you want to style something specifically with a specific ID or class as opposed to the auto-generated ID or class, the better pagination that comes with 2.3 now allows that.

Emily Lewis: I'm really excited. I'm spending the last part of this year, the last two weeks of this year working on a new site, and that means I'm going to be able to utilize this. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure. And that gets us to...

Emily Lewis: November.

Lea Alcantara: November.

Emily Lewis: So what, this is continuing to show that things are going well for EllisLab. They opened up a new position for a customer focus designer.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I haven't seen news if it's been filled so if it hasn't and you are listening and you are interested, go to their website. We will make sure to have a link in the show notes. Oh, this is interesting. So there is this thing called the EE Reactor, and a formal team for the EE Reactor has been announced by EllisLab.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. So for those that are listening that don't know what EE Reactor means, I'm sure some of you who follow EllisLab on Twitter have heard little snippets here and there, but really EE Reactor is like a group of third-party developers, high-profile third-party developers who get a chance to actually contribute to the ExpressionEngine core code. So it allows this team to push edits or changes and things that they've noticed with maybe bugs or whatever that stopped them from developing the right ExpressionEngine site working properly or whatever. They are able to do it.

Emily Lewis: I think this is pretty exciting. I know that there were some initial concerns in the community before people I think fully understood what the plan was that this was like a call for spec work or something like that.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Emily Lewis: And it's not that, it's people who are volunteering their energy and time to making ExpressionEngine better. These are people that have been working with EE for a long, long time who have come up with creative solutions for making it be efficient and effective. I think this is only going to benefit ExpressionEngine.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I totally agree, and it's one of those things where if they've already fixed something, why shouldn't they be able to add this to the main core if the issue was the core code.

Emily Lewis: A couple of other things in November that I found out about it. Oh actually, I didn't find out in November. I just found out about the other day that in November, EllisLab started posting how-to videos on Vimeo. Have you seen these?

Lea Alcantara: No, but I read the announcements. I just hadn't had a chance to take a look at the how-tos.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, again, I'm just a big fan of information and education online, so I thought that was a great resource. I hope they continue to post them. And then a new site launch, it's not affiliated with EllisLab, but I think it's interesting. I haven't used it yet, but I'm going to explore it. It's called EE Snippets, and it's kind of like Forge, I think. It's where you can just share snippets of code, not snippets with capital S.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: But little bits of code for how you've done different things in ExpressionEngine.

Lea Alcantara: So again, this would be a great learning resource for those who are new to ExpressionEngine.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: The EE Snippets site shows you like again, by snippets, it means, how do I place a copyright.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: How do I add a page, a dynamic page title? What's the best way to list entries by author, right? So certain things that might be a little bit harder to find or it's one of those things that sometimes as seasoned EE devs, we take for granted that we already know.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And maybe even a way to show how differently people do certain things, right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So...

Emily Lewis: Yeah, and I just have to say I love the look of the site.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] To me this hits all my aesthetic points here. I love it.

Lea Alcantara: Cool, cool.

Emily Lewis: So that brings us to now, December, the last month of the year.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, yes. And December, I think the biggest news, which has been a long time coming, it's been boiling to this.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: End of public support for EE1 goes into effect.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: With that being said, that doesn't mean that public support is done now in December. It just means that they've announced that it's going to end public support, and I believe that they are aiming for April of next year as the official... yeah, I'm looking at the site, it says, "April 23rd, 2012 is the official end date."

Emily Lewis: And as of the 5th of this month, December, you can't even buy a license for ExpressionEngine anymore.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, it won't be...

Emily Lewis: ExpressionEngine 1 rather.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah, it won't be included in any new purchases and the option to purchase it is no longer there.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: But I think that's a good thing. All new project sites start with EE2 with me.

Emily Lewis: Me, too.

Lea Alcantara: Every time I look in an older client site on EE1, I kind of cringe, and I forget how things work. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Because I got so used to all the advances EE2 has brought.

Emily Lewis: Exactly. I think we touched on this in our last episode, Episode 58 with Ryan Masuga when we talked about upgrading to Version 2.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: It was a challenging process for him and he feels that at the end it was worth it because there were just so much more you can do with EE2 and there are so many more add-ons you can utilize with EE2.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, and the user experience is just far superior.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: If you've got a client who is complaining about the user interface of EE1, I'm not saying that EE2's user interface is perfect by any means, but the customization options for EE2, especially with specific add-ons that change the control panel completely is worth the price of upgrading that in it of itself.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I agree. And the last bit of news for the year, EllisLab continues to tweak and change how they are organized and what their goals are. So Marcus Neto has announced recently. He is now focused exclusively on product evangelism, which it was something he talked about product evangelism a lot when we had him on the podcast earlier this year.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So this wasn't a surprise to me because he seemed really passionate when he was talking about that.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely.

Emily Lewis: And then Kevin Smith is going to then assume Marcus' former role as director of services.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, so it will be interesting now that they've got someone focused specifically on the evangelism.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Which I think is really great. I think that it would really help enterprise services and address one of the major issues that has been brought up this year about how to sell ExpressionEngine and trying to get a higher profile for the software. So when ExpressionEngine devs and designers try to bid for bigger projects, the client understands that ExpressionEngine is ready and perfect for that project.

Emily Lewis: Exactly. So that sort of ties up the year in the EE news with a nice flow, it think.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah. And even though this is going to be released really almost just a couple of days before Christmas, if you are okay with sending belated gifts...

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Or if you are in Canada, right, there is Boxing Day Specials on the 26th.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: And you've still got a geeky need to fulfill for a friend or for yourself, Emily, you found a couple of geek gifts that you think would be good.

Emily Lewis: So I'm a little less geeky than most web devs.

Lea Alcantara: Sure.

Emily Lewis: But there are a number of items that caught my eye this year. One thing, I gave up cable TV this year, which is something I know a lot of my friends have done because there are so many online streaming options.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: But it sort of a pain because I can watch the Netflix on my computer or on my Wii and then Hulu on my computer and none of them on my television, so I'd really love one of those Roku systems or one of those thingamajigs that let you have all of it in one place from your television.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely. I think that's the way the future really is. Like it's hard to know anyone who has cable TV when they have the web and streaming and things like that.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: I mean, I have cable TV, but that's mostly because my provider has bundled it with the internet.

Emily Lewis: The internet.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, the internet and it was actually cheaper than just buying the internet by itself, so why not? [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: But otherwise, when this promo ends, I'm canceling my cable TV. So for those who do want cable TV, I know this isn't really much a tech thing, well, I guess, it's sort is. But if you do like cable TV, just keep canceling it because the cable TV provider will keep phoning you to give these deals and you just need to wait.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: You just need to wait until they give you the killer deal and then you say, "Okay, it sounds good."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]. Well, speaking of that, when I quit my job to go freelance, I cut back on everything because I was nervous.

Lea Alcantara: Sure.

Emily Lewis: And the cable company, I called them and I basically said, "Like yeah, I don't have my job anymore." And they are like, "Well, why don't we do this for you..." All you have to do is ask them. You don't even have to wait for them to call. You can call them and say, "What can you do for me?"

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely.

Emily Lewis: It works. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Loyalty and retentions.

Emily Lewis: Exactly.

Lea Alcantara: Those are the two words that you need to always say whenever you phone your cellphone provider, your cable provider, et cetera. Just ask.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. So that would be a gift that it would definitely be delayed if you are listening to this on the 23rd when I think we are releasing. But there are a number of gifts you still have time to get which are digital gifts. For me, I would love more digital storage. I don't know if you use Dropbox, Lea. Do you?

Lea Alcantara: Yes, I do.

Emily Lewis: So upgrade. If someone wanted to upgrade you or me or anyone to a Pro account. It's only \$9.95 a month. I think that would be a great gift. You can make a little gift certificate and give them to that. I don't know any geek who wouldn't want an upgrade.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I agree, like that would make me very happy. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] Happy

Lea Alcantara: For sure, for sure. And on my end here, in terms of geek gifts, maybe if you've got a geek lady that likes to show off her geekiness, I was looking through etsy.com.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: And there are so many geek-related handmade gifts that are just amazing.

Emily Lewis: I love that site.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. And so I'm going to send the links to these on the show notes, but I was eyeing this @-sign ring, so it's like a sterling silver ring, but it's an @ sign.

Emily Lewis: Oh, that's cute.

Lea Alcantara: And you can also get @ sign earrings. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Which is amazing. And for those who like to decorate their home office with geekery, I also love the geek signs made of handmade wood. There are like many different shops that do this on Etsy where essentially it says, "Geek or nerd or whatever."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: And it's all done in wood and you could place that on your office probably.

Emily Lewis: That would be a cute gift.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: And that would be a really good office gift, too.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure, for sure.

Emily Lewis: The other things I had on my list that would make good gifts for a geek, particularly a web geek are books. This year, I have to say, A Book Apart started releasing the shorter format check books starting with Jeremy Keith's *HTML 5 for Designers*.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I bought it and it's fantastic.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: And each one of these titles, in fact, I have four of the titles, are short. They are short, but still packed with so much useful information. It's like they are able to trim all the stuff that you don't really need to know to get started in into the topic.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And all of them are available in paperback, but also in digital versions and I have to recommend to people that I happen to love having a desk-side reference.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I like being able to quickly look up in the index when I need to find something.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: But then I really having the electronic version for it. That's usually what I read the whole thing on and make notes and highlights and things like that. So you can get the digital version now and give that as a gift and then when the hard bound or paperback version arrives, that looks like a reminder of how awesome a gift giver you are.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: For sure, for sure. And are there any ExpressionEngine really gifts we can give?

Emily Lewis: Absolutely. So I did a review on my blog. We will make sure to have a link on the website of Mijingo's *Securing EE* booklet. This is another short format bunch of goodness. I mean, I love this idea of just packing in what you essentially need to know and not filling pages with stuff that's just crap.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So the booklet is fantastic. I had it in electronic form. I used it. It took me like 15 minutes to apply all of the techniques. It's a great resource, and when you purchase it, the digital pack comes with a screencast that Ryan does for a part of the book. So you not only get the booklet, but also a screencast.

Lea Alcantara: Perfect, yeah.

Emily Lewis: And then Mijingo also has two of its publications available for digital purchase. Ryan's *ExpressionEngine 2 Quick Start Guide*.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: which is it's exactly what it says. If you are getting started with ExpressionEngine 2 or even just EE and it's the first time you've built a site, it's a great place to start. He walks you through building a site that I think is really relatable to what most people do in terms of medium-sized site. And then Mijingo also has screencast and I think what you could probably do with that is give like the personal little gift certificate to the screencast you bought from, and in case anyone is listening, I'd really like Relationships with Playa.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: It sounds good. It sounds good. So how about our favorite add-ons of 2011?

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I think I mentioned this to you before. I've never been a big add-on user.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: This year was an exception. I think it's because I'm now freelancing and I now have greater needs for what's required of me to build in ExpressionEngine.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So this was my first year, and Pixel & Tonic, one of our sponsors of the podcast and they are a great sponsor, but they are also a great developer of add-ons and it's not just because they are a sponsor that I can say that. I've used Wigwam, Matrix and Playa in a project recently, and they were the difference for me being able to create and really create user experience for my clients when they are working in ExpressionEngine.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And I've known Brandon for a few years. He's the guy behind Pixel & Tonic. I completely trust his development. I completely trust his support because I've talked to him. He's completely committed to his add-on and on his business. I've no problem spending the money on it.

Lea Alcantara: For sure, for sure.

Emily Lewis: What about you?

Lea Alcantara: For me, I think the game changers for me have been control panel functionality.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: One of them, my favorite add-on for this year was Zenbu from Nicolas Bottari.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Basically, you know an add-on is good when you wish this came automatically with the ExpressionEngine.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: It basically customizes the edit tab or the edit section of the ExpressionEngine control panel and it gives you way more features on how to search and customize that search for different member groups and things like that. Because the current way to search the different entries in ExpressionEngine is fine if you've got a basic site.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Let's say you've got a cart throughout the site and you need to find all the purchases from one person, then you need to specifically highlight certain thing from a certain date and things like that and Zenbu just does it. It does it really easily, out of the box, and then perfect for user experience. You can change that experience depending on the member group. So for example, someone like me, I'm an admin, I can see all the custom fields if I wanted to write on the edit screen. But that's not necessarily needed or wanted by your clients. So Zenbu allows you to show and hide specific custom fields right on the edit screen. Currently, the way ExpressionEngine works is it's just got a set amount of information in the edit screen which is the title, the author and the date.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Whether the status is open or close, but as you and I know, sometimes we get really complicated ExpressionEngine installs with God knows how many custom fields.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And sometimes we just want to filter over one specific custom field, and Zenbu allows that.

Emily Lewis: Oh, I'm going to have to try that because that sounds fantastic.

Lea Alcantara: It is. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: And I believe it's one of Ryan Masuga's favorite ones because he mentions it every time we have him on the show.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, well, it doesn't surprise me. We had Nicolas on the show and he's obviously very experienced with working with ExpressionEngine and committed also to his plugins or add-ons.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, for sure.

Emily Lewis: Do you do that? Do you mix plugin and add-on?

Lea Alcantara: You know what, I do. Yeah, I do, too with plugin, add-on, module, like it's...

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Even though I know that functionally they all sort of serve slightly different things, it doesn't matter to me. To me, it's just an add-on, I guess, or plugin or whatever.

Emily Lewis: Right. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: So those were our favorite add-ons of the year. I'm just curious, Lea, what was your favorite episode of the podcasts?

Lea Alcantara: My favorite episode of the podcast hand down was Episode 51.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Which is the ExpressionEngine Gypsies where we interviewed a bunch of ExpressionEngine designers and developers traveling and working across Canada and the United States.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. That was also one of my favorites. I love that we can share information about ExpressionEngine, but I think there are something really worthwhile and useful in hearing the human side of doing what we do for a living just in general, and hearing about all these people had decided to do like change their lives and how they live their lives, but still do their jobs and have a better quality of life. It was just inspiring.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely, absolutely.

Emily Lewis: In fact, you shortly after that episode sold your house, right?

Lea Alcantara: Well, I put it as the economy is not that great.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: It's up for sale, but hasn't sold yet... wah wah...

Emily Lewis: So you are just open.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I'm open.

Emily Lewis: But that's good though. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah.

Emily Lewis: I did have a tie for my favorite episode though. Episode 57 where we talked about variables. Saying that it sounds like it's like a really boring episode, but for me, I learned so much in that episode.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: You did some fantastic research for that episode in terms of things that I had never heard about, never considered doing for an EE install, and I just thought it was just so informative, and so for me, I can't help but consider it a favorite because I walked away being like, "Oh my gosh, my mind has blown."

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, and I think it's one of those things where, again, variables are integral to our ExpressionEngine work flow.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And it's crazy how many options there are out right now on how to just deal with them.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]. So those are my favorites. Tied for favorite. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: So wow, this has been a super long episode. I think that's all the time we have for today.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Thanks for sticking with us if you are still listening. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: All right. [Music starts] So before we sign off, we want to thank all our listeners and all our sponsors now and into the future. We have episode sponsors booked well into August, 2012.

Emily Lewis: Whoohoo!

Lea Alcantara: Emily and I make the show for you, our listeners, so if you have any questions or topic suggestions for our show, please contact us on our website, ee-podcast.com/contact. Now, we would like to thank our sponsors for this podcast, EE Coder and Pixel & Tonic.

Emily Lewis: We would also like to thank our partners, EllisLab, EngineHosting and Devot:ee.

Lea Alcantara: And thanks to our listeners for tuning in. If you want to know more about the podcast, make sure you follow us on Twitter @eepodcast or visit our website at ee-podcast.com.

Emily Lewis: This is our last episode for 2011, but we hope you tune in next year as we talk about our first EE websites on Thursday, January 12th. We will be skipping a week in between.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So make sure you update your calendars. Our schedule is on ee-podcast.com/schedule. We're always looking for interesting EE topics and are adding more as you suggest and we think of them.

Lea Alcantara: So this is Lea Alcantara.

Emily Lewis: And Emily Lewis.

Lea Alcantara: Signing off for the ExpressionEngine Podcast. See you next year.

Emily Lewis: Cheers.

[Music stops]