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CTRL+CLICK CAST #4 Ladies in Tech with Jenn Lukas

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Lea Alcantara: You are listening to CTRL+CLICK CAST. We inspect the web for you. Today we're talking about ladies in tech with special guest, Jenn Lukas. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host.

Emily Lewis: Emily Lewis.

Lea Alcantara: This episode is sponsored by [Solspace](#). Solspace is a ten-year-old web development firm with experience in the most challenging of project settings. Solspace builds versatile tools that elegantly meet complex needs. Solspace happily serves mom and pop shops and Fortune 100, multinational organizations with equal ease, effectiveness, respect and craftsmanship. [Visit solspace.com to find out more.](#)

Emily Lewis: CTRL+CLICK would also like to thank [Pixel & Tonic](#) for being our major sponsor of the year. [Music ends] Hi Lea, how have you been?

Lea Alcantara: Pretty good. I went to this great Refresh Seattle Meetup last night.

Emily Lewis: Oh yeah?

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, and we had Matthew Anderson who's the design lead at Onehub, and he spoke about living style guides, so...

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: We were just talking about that for a project.



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Lea Alcantara: Yeah, exactly, so it was really very timely, and honestly, I think that might be a future topic maybe.

Emily Lewis: Hmm. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: It sounds good. I'm so glad that since you moved to Seattle, you've not only like explored the city and found great restaurants and stuff, but you've also made so many connections with local designers and devs.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I think, I mean, that's really one of the benefits about moving into a larger market city like Seattle.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Especially because it's such a tech city. You're really exposed to some of the best people in the industry that's willing to share their information, so it's very exciting.

Emily Lewis: Cool. Well, as much as I want to hear more about Seattle. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: We've got a great episode today, so I want to get to it as soon as possible, but at first, I wanted to mention, we have some news for CTRL+CLICK CAST. We moved our site to our partner, Arcustech's virtual SSD servers this weekend.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And you and I both noticed a significant improvement in page loading.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I mean, it almost feels like it's a local install.



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Emily Lewis: [Laughs] Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: You know?

Emily Lewis: Yeah, and we also used our content delivery network as well, and we moved a few more of our assets to that which I think also made some performance improvements.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So we also have some news in the world of content management systems.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, so mostly we'll be mentioning news that seems major based on our discretion, and only based on really CMSs that we're personally following. So if our listeners hear of anything interesting, or if there's anything major that we did miss, please contact us and just let us know and we'll make sure that in our next episode, we'll clarify or make sure that those updates are mentioned.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: So based on that, one of the bigger updates is for Craft. Craft Version 1.2 is now out, and Brandon and team has actually updated Version 1.2 a few times already with some build updates, and this includes some control panel interface changes as well as, and here's the big news, a new introduction of New Section types. It used to be one sort of like section type.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And it's just general repeating entries under different sections, but now there is Structures. There's Singles, and then the typical one that I just mentioned which is like the entry types, and then Craft 1.2 also comes with a new demo site and improved documentation.

Emily Lewis: That makes me happy. I think documentation can always be improved. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] Yeah, I know for sure.



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Emily Lewis: Not just for Craft, but for anybody, so I like that that was part of the focus of the update.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I agree. I agree.

Emily Lewis: One other thing to mention about Craft, I think it might be interesting for some of our listeners, but they're compiling a list of web host providers that work with Craft on the Google Groups. So we will post the link to that in our show notes. If you work with a host that's working with a Craft install, go ahead and add that to the list.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely, and in other version update news, Perch which was a sponsor of our last episode came out with Version 2.3. It includes interface changes to the login screen, and introduces something called repeaters which allows you to repeat sections of the template.

Emily Lewis: And ExpressionEngine 2.7.1 came out. It's a stability release and it's squashed over 30 bugs, which is pretty cool.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: That's about a month between the last release, and I hope that's an indication that we will see more rapid updates in the future.

Lea Alcantara: And the other major ExpressionEngine news which I think all developers should really pay attention to is that they'll be changing the PHP requirements for the upcoming Version 2.8.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: In the blog post that they mentioned this, they allude that approximately six months from now perhaps, basically they posted it saying that you've got six months to prepare for this PHP



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update, and the PHP update is to Version 5.3.10 and we'll have a link to all these updates on our show notes.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, cool. So I'm so excited about this episode. We've been wanting to do this topic for a really long time.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: So today we're talking about the culture of women in technology with special guest, Jenn Lukas. Jenn is a front-end developer, writer, educator and passionate advocate for women and girls interested in technology. Formerly Happy Cog's interactive development director, Jenn is now an independent front-end consultant. She's also a teacher for Philadelphia's Girls Develop It program and founded Ladies In Tech, a resource dedicated to supporting and celebrating female speakers in technology. Welcome to the show, Jenn. Thanks for joining us.

Jenn Lukas: Hi ladies. How is it going? [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Going well.

Emily Lewis: Great.

Jenn Lukas: I get all excited about your news updates right now, and it makes me like want to jump and start coding and trying all the new things.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, every time there's an update, it's like, "Oh, new shiny toy, a must play."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Totally.

Lea Alcantara: So before we move forward, Jenn, can you tell our listeners a little bit more about yourself?

Jenn Lukas: Sure. So recently, I've been doing some changes in my life as you mentioned. So more recently, I've been traveling a ton.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And I just got back from Sweden and Norway.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, fun.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, it was awesome and really cool. I never thought that I would have been in Scandinavia, but it turns out I got to go to Scandinavia, so that was really cool, and next week I am going to Maryland, Tennessee, and New York. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So it's a very eclectic travel schedule for me recently, which has been really awesome, and I like traveling and so that's been a lot of fun. I'm also trying to embrace the fall. That is my new goal this year.



Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I came back from Sweden to a quick, brisk Philadelphia weather.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And so I went pumpkin picking this weekend.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Jenn Lukas: And...

Lea Alcantara: Fun.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, I bought some apple cider. I'm trying to like do all the things that are good about fall and not miss summer too much, but...

Lea Alcantara: Oh yeah.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: But those are all really fun stuff, right?

Jenn Lukas: It is.

Lea Alcantara: I personally love fall, and all the squashes that come with that. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: Oh yeah, good fall.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, and when you go to Maryland, make sure you have some crabs. I miss it terribly. That's where I'm from, so...

Jenn Lukas: You know, actually, I have been a vegetarian for about just 11 years.



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Emily Lewis: Oh, I knew that about you. But still...

Jenn Lukas: Well, crazy enough...

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Two months ago, I had made the switch to pescatarian.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Emily Lewis: Oh, perfect. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Yeah. [Laughs] Oh, I actually...

Lea Alcantara: So crabs fit into that. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So crabs, here I am. Maryland, I will see what their crabs of. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: They're the best. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I actually miss them like physically crave them. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: My boyfriend is the same way. I have gone with them. As you know, like Maryland has those crab like picking things where they cover it and they bring you the trays of crabs.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, all-you-can eat.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, it's like the pistachios of the sea, right?

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



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Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And everyone is like going to town on them, and I'm just like, "It seems like a lot of effort for this."

Lea Alcantara: I love that, pistachios of the sea.

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs] Everyone's fingers are hurting, you know, and you're like sitting there and they're all sitting there and they're all have that look and I'm like, "Oh, I don't know, but..."

Emily Lewis: Yeah, you have to get into, I think, the social aspect of it as well because you do sit and pick crabs and drink beer and just talk for hours.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah. I liked two of those three things.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs] So we'll see. We'll see if I can get into all three, but I'm working my way into it. I tried to get like a new food a year. I find like a new food or drink every year. Last year it was eggs. This year it's seafood.

Lea Alcantara: Wow. How interesting.

Jenn Lukas: Next year it's going to be gin.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Work on it. There are a lot of different cocktails that use gin, you can really explore.
[Laughs]



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Jenn Lukas: [Laughs] It's important to diverse by your diet, I think. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] So before we go too deep into the topic of Ladies In Tech. I want to know more about your history as a tech lady. When did you first get the spark of interest for technology and coding?

Jenn Lukas: Totally, so I've always really been into math.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Jenn Lukas: And I love the math classes all through grade school through high school, and also in high school, I really liked the video editing, and so I had like a mix between like the number side and like the computer side. In college I did video production, and I got more and more into computers on that thing, and I was like, "Well, I really like the computer, but I'm not sure how much I love the video and I still really love the math." And so when you sort of combine them, you sort of get coding as this like offspring of the two of them, and I was like, "I really dig this." So once I like sort of figured out the ins and outs of HTML through like Geocities, I was like, "This is awesome."

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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Awesome, Geocities, I think everyone started there, and so did I. That was basically where my first website was, which was a Sailor Moon website.

Jenn Lukas: Nice.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Emily, how about you?

Emily Lewis: It always surprises me, people, but I was pretty late to the game in terms of technology, and in many ways to this day, I never get the newest devices. I don't ever upgrade my software. I'm just like a curmudgeon when it comes to this stuff.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: But I didn't even have a computer in my house until I was in my mid-20s.

Lea Alcantara: Oh wow.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I didn't use the computer in college other than for like it was like a word processor like for papers and stuff, but I was working in marketing for an accounting firm, and I was focused on the content of the website and I got tired of asking the IT department to make updates, so I started messing around in the HTML. The thing that it connected for me because I was really into yearbook when I was in college and high school was the instantaneous publishing, which you can't get with print. But when I was working on the web and learning HTML, I was like, "Oh my God, it's instant. It's there. It's live. This is amazing." And I was sold from that point forward.

Lea Alcantara: So Jenn, you mentioned that you started messing around in college. So then how did that develop into a career?

Jenn Lukas: So essentially, coding just sort of made sense to me like when things click, it's like that little light bulb.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.



Jenn Lukas: Like the guy in the Ikea catalog when you finally put together that piece of Ikea furniture and you're like, "Yes."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So that came to me easier than putting together furniture, and really I then started to seek that out and keep going, and I eventually switch to my major to a multimedia and web design, and when I graduated college, I went to a school with quarters, so you basically ended up in really small classes and you saw a lot of the same people. That was really neat for like networking and building up. It's like a system of friends and people you could work with on projects, and a lot of people that I went to school have ended up all going to work for Lockheed Martin after college.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So it ended up being like all the people you knew would be like, "Well, why don't you come work with us? It's like really awesome over here. We're like doing these training simulations." They were like Navy training simulations in JavaScript, and it was really fun, so I went and did that out of college. I worked with all the people I've been working with for like two years, and we were doing like some pretty neat stuff over there and working with really smart people, and so it was really neat to like see and sort of transition from being more design to being more code heavy and sort of clicking with this group of other people that were really code heavy.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And then sort of following with each other to see where our careers went, and it was neat to go to like sort of still feel that. Like leaving college can be kind of scary. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Sure.



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Jenn Lukas: I was like, “What am I going to do?”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And then it felt really good to go to like a first career job with people that I was already really familiar with and knew how they worked.

Emily Lewis: Now, I mentioned in my introduction for you that you are a teacher for the girl development program in Philadelphia. Can you talk a little bit about that program? And then I’m really curious, what’s different in terms of working with young girls versus your peers and adult women in terms of getting them excited and engaged with technology?

Jenn Lukas: Sure, totally. So Girl Develop It started in New York City by Sara Chipps and Vanessa Hurst, and basically, the goal of Girl Develop It is to offer these low-cost programming coding and development classes geared towards women, create an environment where if it’s the majority of women, people will feel more comfortable coming to the class, asking questions, and just basically a supportive environment. Sara and I had known each other. We know each other through the internet which is always like such a weird thing that we have.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: These relationships we have now with people, and Sara had reached out to me about bringing Girl Develop It to Philadelphia, and so we had like a phone chat and I was totally interested in this, so she came down to Philadelphia, and we met up in person and discussed sort of the plan for it, how they were going to expand because basically they’ve been expanding to different cities over the last few years. So I told her I was definitely interested in teaching. I sort of love that whole idea of sharing, and I love what they were doing, and so I was totally on board. I’m slightly intimidated because I never really taught a class of beginners before.



Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And these were people, the idea is that the class I was teaching or that I still teach the intro to HTML/CSS class is for people with absolutely no knowledge to very little knowledge, and I'm used to saying things like, "Oh, you know, you just want to move that thing over there. And yeah, just code that up like that."

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And not fully explaining it, so I was excited and intimidated to sort of teach a new group of people, and what I really liked about the students of Girl Develop It is like you sort of never know what you're going to get. So the classes range from about 20 to 30 people depending on the class size, the space that we have, and the last class I had, I had a high school science teacher and I also had a high school junior taking the class, and then...

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Oh wow.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, so it's like really, it's a wide variety, and another time I actually had a mother-daughter who took the class, so the mother brought her daughter who was interested in knowing codes, so her mom took the class too.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Jenn Lukas: And that was pretty cool, I know, and then a husband and wife took the class together, so it's been like this really wide variety, and what I do is on the first class is we go around the room



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and everyone is sort of introduces themselves and sort of describes why they're taking the class and what they hope to get out of it and what they're currently doing, and it's so neat to see all the different people in sort of every single aspect of life that is interested in learning code. That's been really neat for me to see.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: But also a little crazy because you're talking about having to appear too on very different audience. So I find that no matter how old, young or inexperienced, with professional careers or fully experienced, people really liked cats.

Lea Alcantara: Yes.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Oh, I like to include a lot of cats in my teaching, in general, in life, a lot of cats.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: But I think being enthusiastic is so important, and it's something that when you learn something new or it can be really intimidating, right?

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And that's anything. Whether it's HTML or if it's learning French or if it's learning how to make furniture or anything like that, it's always sort of scary to go into the unknown, like, will you be good at it? Will you suck at it? Is it something that you'll get right away, or it's really frustrating? And so I think it's so important to set up the class as like an open environment where no matter who you are, anyone can learn this and it can be really frustrating at times. But anything that I think we've



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learned usually is frustrating at one point or another, and you make it through, and the more and more exposure you get to what you're learning, the clearer and clearer it becomes, you know?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: I go back to the Ikea thing, but the second time you've put together that stupid EXPEDIT bookcase, it's way easier than the first time.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: But it's a matter of sticking with it. It usually works. I've had one person who said to me that cats is really their thing.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And I said, "Well, would you prefer another animal?" You know?

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: They did, so I used another few animals in some examples.

Lea Alcantara: Nice.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: Throughout your career journey, you started to speak at events. What prompted that decision? Because that's hugely intimidating.



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Jenn Lukas: Yeah, totally, you're right. I think that goes back to sort of this idea, the same reason I wanted to teach. I think something that the three of us have in common is we've always really embraced web standards and sort of the open source community and the idea of sharing all the knowledge we have.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Entering the web world, you see all these people sharing their ideas through like blog post or speaking, and you're like, "Well, you're just telling me about that?"

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I feel like some of the other things I've been interested in, people are really secretive, and I love the part of the web that's so open. That's so like, "Here's how you do things." It's because everyone wants it to be a better place. We don't want those old websites of the past, like people weren't like, "Yeah, you know what, you should really keep that class intro on your site. That's really good for you."

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: People would like explain why that could be. Maybe not the best decision, and I always really liked that, and so I wanted to share also, and I thought it's only right. I've learned so much from other people that I wanted to sort of share the knowledge I've learned and if it's of interest to anyone, put it out there and see how I could sort of give back. So that was something that was really sort of on my list of things to do.



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It's something at Happy Cog working there, they really embrace this well. Jeffrey Zeldman is like the king of web standards and sharing knowledge and so we are very encouraged to get involved and we are actually approached from PhillyCHI Group here about doing like a Happy Cog-related panel that sort of just walks through the process of Happy Cog. So we agreed to do it.

Basically we had about six of us went and we each talked about our aspect of the process, so like having someone talk about design, with someone talking about project management, and then I, myself, and Mark Huot basically presented together and to talk about development, front-end and back-end developments, since it's a closely tied and so basically we split up the hour into 10-minute segments and I did one 10-minute segment at the end with Mark, and it was definitely intimidating, but presenting with a friend and colleague made it a lot easier.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Because you sort of have that safety net where it's like if I forget what I'm saying, here's Mark Huot to save the day.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, take it away. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Yeah. It's so Mark, right? You know what I mean. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

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Jenn Lukas: But it was really good, and it made practicing a little more fun. When you're practicing for an event, sometimes sitting by yourself can be a little bit and also it's kind of weird to talk to yourself when you're rehearsing or singing.

Emily Lewis: Oh yeah.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So that's another part. That's nice about doing tandem presenting, and so I ended up presenting with Mark and it's funny, this talk, I felt really good after, and I was like, "Yeah, you know, I did it." I was really nervous. I didn't really remember it when I was done.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: Do you know that feeling when you're like done, you're like, "What did I just say?"

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: No clue, and they actually put a video up online and I dreaded watching it.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I was like, "I shouldn't watch it. I shouldn't watch it." And then finally one day like I clicked it and I was like, "Oh, boy."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And I was watching and I was like I'm cringing and I'm listening to myself and this was awful, and then you just sort of like I just have to remind myself like I am my own worst critic, and I made it through probably no one else noticed how many times I said that one word and no one like noticed that. Maybe that line didn't make any sense at all and you sort of I've watched it like a few



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minutes of it. I definitely didn't put myself through the pain of watching the entire thing, but it was good to sort of see yourself on video to sort of see the things that you're doing.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, it's definitely interesting to have that kind of disconnect when you present, and then your own perception of how it went and then how others view it and I remember one of my first presentations ever, and I was lucky, part of the audience were friends of mine, and they said, "Oh, it went really well, but you frowned a lot." [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Do you know what I mean? And it's just like, "No, that's my bitchy resting face, you know?" [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Like I'm not frowning. It's just how my face looks like. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Oh, it's so funny. A coworker of mine used to have it. We used to sit next to each other, and we used to have an agreement because sometimes when you're coding and you're really concentrating, it turns out that some of us make a face. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



Jenn Lukas: Like not a great face, and she used to be like, “Tell me if I’m making this face.” Because I’d sit there and I’ll be like, “It’s like you’re making that face. You look really mad right now.” [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And of course, we never mean to be, but it’s always funny to think like, “What do I look like when I’m not...”

Emily Lewis: Paying attention.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Yes.

Emily Lewis: It’s what you look like.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Emily Lewis: Lea, have you ever watched a video of your presentation?

Lea Alcantara: Oh yeah, just to just kind of see how I deal with it, but I never go through the entire thing. It’s just more, “Okay, did I sound like I knew what I was talking about?” [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: You know? Or just mostly like, did I make sure that I actually say what I wanted to say, or did I miss like a point? Right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: Because whenever you present something, there's a lot of things that you could talk about, and then you try to kind of condense that, but sometimes you actually miss it. You're like, "Oh man, I need to make sure I say this the next time I speak."

Emily Lewis: So Jenn, from your first speaking engagement until now, I imagine part of that prompted your founding of Ladies In Tech website.

Jenn Lukas: For sure. Essentially, I kept speaking, and the first few things I did were all panels, and being on a panel is really great. It's great because if you're on like a dual presentation with two or your panel of five, it's sort of have, again, that safety net, but also splits the amount of work you have to do. So that was really great, and then I was at a conference in 2009 in DC, and it was the first JSConf there. When I was there, I went down to the conference room, I was in a hotel, and I picked up my badge and I checked in. Everything seems normal. It's the morning though, and I'm not a morning person, let me through that out there.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And so I got my coffee and I sit down, I go into the room, and the room had like a bunch of round tables and it was like a long rectangular room. So basically, if you're on like the left side, you can't see the right side too well, and so I'm sitting over there on the left side, and everything seems completely normal. There's less women than men, but that's something I've gotten used to with more single-focused conferences as opposed to multi-disciplinary conferences, and the conference was about to start and the organizer got on stage and basically announced that things were starting. All of a sudden, most of the women in the room got up and left.

Lea Alcantara: What?



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Jenn Lukas: Yeah, totally right, and so I was sitting there and I have a very overactive imagination and I watch a lot of sci-fi movies.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And I'm like, "What is going on?"

Lea Alcantara: *The Twilight Zone*.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, exactly, you're right, and I was like, "What's happening?" But all of a sudden, I looked around and from where I'm sitting, I'm the only woman in this whole entire room.

Lea Alcantara: Wow! Only...

Jenn Lukas: At this point with that, I was what I had thought because I didn't see any other women, and the conference starts, and I'm like, "Am I supposed to be here?"

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Like...

Emily Lewis: Like, "Am I allowed?"

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, exactly. It felt so weird and it was the only time I've ever felt like this, that I felt completely out of place. A little bit like there was a few breaks where you could actually stand up, and once I stood up and could see the other half of the room, I saw there were two other women in the room, and I'm looking at them, I'm like, "This is so weird." And I asked. I like turned to the person sitting to me, I'm like, "Do you know what's going on?" And what I hadn't known was that JSConf has this really awesome thing, and it's called the Significant Other Track, and basically, it's Chris and Laura who run the conference.



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Emily Lewis: Oh.

Jenn Lukas: Chris stays with the conference, and Laura, they invite the significant others of all the attendees to come to the conference, and then Laura took them on a day trip with the tour of DC.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Jenn Lukas: And it's really cool for people that travel in like when it stinks to leave your family at home, and so basically they want you to invite your family to come with you. They do something else in the day and they join the parties at night.

Lea Alcantara: Oh great.

Jenn Lukas: Which is like it's totally awesome, but I didn't know that, and it turned out that all the significant others were women at this specific event, and so when most of them had left, that's why they were leaving. This sort of looks like one of those things where it's just like I can't believe there were so few people, but like to be fair with this, there were I think 150 people at the conference and it's sold out, and it sold out pretty fast, and so it was just one of those things and it was the first one and there wasn't that much knowledge of it. So it wasn't like the fault of anyone that this was happening or anything. It wasn't like no girls allowed or anything.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: It's just how the cookie crumbled, and so there I am being in this talk that went short, and what they did to fill the time was they had lightning talks, and during that, they basically invited anyone to come up from the audience and give, at most, a five-minute talk. The other thing besides being a three-woman attendee is there was no female speakers at this event, and so there were sitting there and someone goes up and starts giving a lightning talk, and I'm sitting there going, "You



should say something. You should say something.” This was in my head. I’m not saying this out loud. That would be weird.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And Chris was like, “Anyone else want to speak,” and it’s like my body fighting with my brain. My hand went up anyway, and I was like, “Me.”

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So I went up without exactly a plan of what I was going to say. I just knew that I felt like there was an elephant in the room that should be addressed.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And so sort of went up there and did some blabbering thing about like how cool the conference was, and how cooler it would be if there was more women.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So like maybe next year, tell your friends and maybe like making sure people register before, like females is registered before it sold out, and sort of just like, I don’t know, it was like word vomit coming out of my mouth, ladies.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I have no clue what I said again, but it was just like something, something, something with more women, yehey! And then I sat back down and people were like super awesome about it. It



was like, “Yeah, you know, thanks for saying something.” It just felt like a little weird because, again, no one’s fault, it was just like one of those, “Let’s try to get more women in the know so that they can sign up.”

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So the next year came and there was an email for open submissions to speak at JSConf 2010, and I was like, “Well, I would be a hypocrite if I do not submit to this conference being that I went up there and was like, ‘Get more women.’” I was like, “You know, lead by example.” Right?

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And I decided to submit something and I had never done a solo talk before, and so I just went for it and I submitted something. I sent it out and I said, “Even if it doesn’t get picked, I at least feel like I tried to do my part.” I was like, “Practice what you preach.”

Lea Alcantara: Sure.

Jenn Lukas: And I put it out there and it got accepted, and I was super pumped and so I spoke at JSConf 2010, and I was the only female speaker there, but there were eight attendees, so we had like 200 or something percent increase. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: If you’re playing the percentage game, it’s really good, and ever since then, I submitted more and more, and so I got started with people, and a lot of people have sort of similar experiences.



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I thought it was really neat when I would tell people the story how interesting it was to other people, and people were like, “Wow.” That’s such either unique situation or I totally relate to that situation.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And I was like, “Well, maybe there should be a place where we’re sharing more stories like this.”

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Because the idea of that, I really loved that I saw a problem and I was like, “Well, what’s one to do about this?” And I did all I could.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And so for Ladies In Tech, I sort of wanted to do the same thing. I just wanted to give women a place where they could share their story, and so people would realize that it’s never like a perfect situation. You’re never like sitting there and someone is like, “Hey, you. Do you want to come and talk at this conference?”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And you’re like, “I guess. I’ve got some free time.” And you’re like, “That would be a perfect way.” But that’s not how it works, so I wanted to make sure that people could sort of read the stories about how other women are speaking in our industry and how they got started and how it’s not always a perfect situation, but the payoff can be really big.

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Emily Lewis: So what’s the response then? Gosh, has it been almost a year since the site has been sort of up and regularly publishing?



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Jenn Lukas: Actually, it's February.

Emily Lewis: February.

Jenn Lukas: So yeah, was that seven months? Seven months. Oh, a little over half a year.

Emily Lewis: I don't do math well, so... [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Oh yeah, it's been almost seven months, and it's been really great. One of the interests in sharing stories, as you both know because you wrote fantastic articles for it, has been overwhelming for me, the idea that so many people were like, "Yeah, that's awesome. I want to share this story too," and it's been really neat. It's been neat that everyone wants to share their stories and then also people have written to me with the nicest feedback about how inspiring the stories has been.

One of the coolest things that happened to me is I was in Florida recently for a front-end conf, and while there, they basically had a two-day format, and the first day was scheduled speakers and the second day was sort of an open format where anyone could sign up for it, but you had to sign up in advance. There was one woman who signed for it, and she had run to me and said reading Ladies In Tech had prompted her to sign up for it and it will be her first time public speaking.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, my gosh.



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Jenn Lukas: I know, and I was like that. It's so awesome, and I went and I saw her speak and she was so good and so funny and like so charming like everything went well, and she was just so excited, and at the end she had a slide like a screenshot of Ladies In Tech.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Jenn Lukas: She was so funny, and she basically said, "I want to thank Jenn because Ladies In Tech prompted me to get up here and speak, so if I suck, blame Jenn." [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Nice.

Jenn Lukas: You didn't suck and you're so awesome, and it was so cool. It was so cool to be like here's something that we put out there like a collection of people sharing their stories that has influenced people to share their stories.

Emily Lewis: So Ladies In Tech definitely has a heavy focus on women speaking. Why did you choose that particular arena versus another tech initiative?

Jenn Lukas: For me speaking is sort of sometimes the easiest way to get you acknowledged out. I really also love writing and blogging and meet ups and things like that, but speaking is sort of a way for us to be in person with each other, and we have what can be a pretty antisocial profession that we've chosen for ourselves.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Jenn Lukas: In computers, it's really easy to sort of be like, "I'm just going to sit here in the corner with my laptop, you know, Blair Witch style." [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So I really love conferences for that reason. I love it that it gets us away from perhaps sort of where our comfort zone is, and then it gets us more exposed to each other, and I think that the more and more diverse our conferences are, just the more ideas will be shared and the more sort of different discussions will we have.

Lea Alcantara: So the primary thing you mentioned about Ladies in Tech is that women who decide to speak are sharing their stories over how that happened or why they did it, et cetera and so forth. Do you have any other plans for Ladies In Tech?

Jenn Lukas: So we do. I'm excited about a few different things coming up, and one is a local Meetup we're going to start with, which will give women a chance to in person come and sort of get the experience of talking in front of other people, and the plan is to start that in Philadelphia in the next couple of months, and then possibly expand it to other cities. Just keeping it small, but giving people a chance to get sort of that feeling of what it's like when you first step up on stage or just in front of people.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: It can either be really exciting or full of adrenaline or sort of like you want to throw up.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.



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Jenn Lukas: And I think that's something that until you've done it, it's hard to sort of imagine what that feels like.

Lea Alcantara: Sure.

Jenn Lukas: Getting up in front of a group of strangers or sometimes even getting up in front of a group of people you know, it just like feel really weird and it would make your heart race and sort of forget what you're going to say or your mouth goes dry, and I think setting up an environment or a Meetup where people can practice that in front of each other will be really beneficial to people.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So that's the goal for the meet up, and so we have some space that we're going to use so we're just trying to finalize some dates to get the first one up and scheduled, and that's the first part, and then also, we, Val Head and I, are going to be starting a Ladies In Tech podcast.

Emily Lewis: Awesome.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, awesome.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, so I might actually be bugging you guys about some advice for that.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: When you work with your Girl Develop It students, do you ever talk about public speaking to them as an opportunity, or is it really not something that comes up?

Jenn Lukas: It hasn't come up too much. Right now, besides people getting up sort of in front of the class and introducing each other or introducing themselves, that would be an awkward task and introduce someone else that you didn't know, you know? [Laughs]



Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: It's like being in Lea's presentation where she asks you to talk to a person next to you.

Lea Alcantara: Yes. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs] Totally. I suppose I could have them do that. Right now at that moment, I think they might be intimidated enough. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Fair enough.

Jenn Lukas: Right now, I think it's an interesting thing. For most of them, they're a little more focused on the code.

Emily Lewis: So when it comes to getting into public speaking, particularly for our industry, what would you say is the biggest mistake, men or women, make when they try to do their first talk?

Jenn Lukas: A couple of things. One would be giving up too easily. I mean, that seems kind of cliché, but the thing is when we think about conferences, especially if you're talking about a one-day conference but has like six spots with submissions, it means a lot of people are not going to be accepted to speak at that talk. Getting rejected can be a quite crappy feeling, I guess.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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Jenn Lukas: It's the most articulate way to describe that, and sometimes getting rejected at any parts of life is like, "Well, that's a bummer," and you do that little like sad Charlie Brown walk.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: But you know what, it's okay. [Laughs] These things happen. Steph Hay wrote a great post at Ladies In Tech, and she like listed off all the conferences she had been rejected from.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And I just thought it was so charming, but she shared that with everyone because the truth is, it happens. You're not going to get in or accepted to everything that you want to speak at, and like that's okay and we have a lot of conferences. So I think not giving up on something like that is really important. I also think it's important to really value your time.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: I recently have been made privy to this knowledge of there are some conferences that essentially ask you to pay just so you get them. I don't know if you guys have heard of that it's out there.

Emily Lewis: It's so wrong.

Jenn Lukas: And I don't know if you've ever experienced this, but...

Lea Alcantara: It's academia.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah. It's weird.



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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] Yes.

Jenn Lukas: So basically, I had a friend who submitted to speak at a conference, got in and then the conference said, “Okay, we’d love to have you speak. You have to pay for your conference ticket.”

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: And I was like, “Well, that’s really weird. Why would they do that?” So they essentially are asking you to pay to give your time and your knowledge and yet you still have to pay, and I think that’s really bogus.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. Actually, there’s a conference that they do here in Albuquerque every year. It’s the Southwest Conference on Disability, and in the past couple of years they’ve introduced a technology track that N Nobility has been trying to be involved with, and the conference itself requires anyone who’s accepted to speak to pay, and I’m like, “Screw that.” But Nobility kind of fronted the money for myself and another woman here in town, Virginia DeBolt, to speak so that we could talk about the topic too of accessibility in the web to an audience that it’s very relevant to, but it doesn’t make sense to me at all, at all.

Jenn Lukas: Like it’s so tough, and you’re just like, if you think about it, and you know it’s hard. Starting out like I’m not saying that you have to charge for speaking, but the idea of having to pay someone to talk is just so weird to me, and you’re giving up your time and you’re putting in a lot of effort to come up and talk.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: And so if you were like charging your regular hourly rate for something like that, like if you think about speaking as more like that as opposed to just like, “Oh, you know, you’re letting me



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get up on stage, you know,” like it’s really important to be humble, but it’s also a matter of respecting yourself and that won’t be your only opportunity. So I think it’s really important to sort of choose your opportunities wisely.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And remember that there are a lot of opportunities out there, and they don’t have to be huge conferences. They could be local Meetups as well or sort of Refresh groups or anything like that.

Lea Alcantara: So when a person actually does get on stage, what do you think is the biggest mistake people make when they’re actually speaking?

Jenn Lukas: Counting on internet connection at a conference.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Yeah. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Which is ironic, isn’t it?

Jenn Lukas: It really is, but oh, I mean, we’ve all seen it and it’s such a bummer. It’s such a bummer when someone goes up there and they wanted to demo something and they just can’t connect to the internet, and you’re like, “Oh, why?”

Emily Lewis: I’ve actually gotten in the habit where I avoid any web-based demos. I try and get everything I can onto my local system for that entire purpose because it would throw me off so much if I was counting on it.



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Jenn Lukas: Exactly. I mean, that's like sort of a bigger thing. I guess just be prepared for anything, but be prepared most for the internet.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So what I do is I use QuickTime. It has a built-in screen recording.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: I basically just record everything I would have done.

Emily Lewis: Nice.

Jenn Lukas: And then play it back live, so like you, Emily, I just keep everything there, and that way I have it. I think even if you do want to sort of live code or anything like that, totally go for it, but have sort of like those videos as a backup.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So just in case it does not work, you're able to do that. It would be such a bummer for you to get up there and be like, "Okay, now, I'm going to do this." And be like, "No, I'm not going to do this."

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And then totally like back away and not know what to do with your time, and I've heard the argument like, "You know, it's an internet conference, there should be internet." But it's also life, these things happen.

Emily Lewis: Yeah.



Jenn Lukas: It's also about being ready for those situations, so you don't ever have to want to apologize to your audience.

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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: They don't know what your plan is, so you can get up there and start typing away and go, "The live code is not working," and then you can just be like, "That's okay. I've got this."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Always remember that they don't know what's supposed to happen, so you don't have to say anything like, "Oh, well, this was supposed to happen right there." If something sort of fumbles or it's like something doesn't load, move on.

Emily Lewis: Don't draw attention to it.

Jenn Lukas: Exactly.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. That's very improv like, like this is very like actor-related kind of advice because when you do improv, it's meant to be off the cuff so even if you start a storyline during improv and it doesn't go the way you started or envisioned, you're just like whatever, just go with it.
[Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: I feel like it ties into, and this is something I think I've only started to achieve this year with the talks I've given, as being present. Like I may be prepared and in many ways, I memorized what I'm going to do, although it doesn't come across that way, but if I'm present and I'm paying



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attention to what's happening in the moment, not thinking about what I'm supposed to say next but just trusting on the memory that I have, being present let's me at least, not like, "Oh my God, I'm so sorry. I can't do this right now or whatever." I'm just paying attention to what's happening and being really aware.

Jenn Lukas: Well, that's totally.

Emily Lewis: So I have a question, not about speaking itself, but about the conferences and events, and I'm sure Lea has the same experiences of feeling like you're one of the few women attending and no female representation in the speaker list. What advice could you offer an event organizer to get better female representation, not only speakers but also attendees? Because you mentioned in the beginning that JSConference, it wasn't anyone's fault that there wasn't more diversity, but in my opinion, not doing anything to attract diversity is fault. There is some responsibility. What do you think?

Jenn Lukas: That's huge, I mean, this is such a tough question, and it's tough because as soon as you start sort of being like, well, if you start doing like quotas or being like, "Well, you should have at least 50% speakers of gender and 25% of different nationalities," you just start entering the sort of thing where people start getting upset.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And one of the things that JSConf EU does and maybe US does as well is they've now started doing blind submissions.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Jenn Lukas: And I think it's really neat, and a few other conferences do this too, but the blind submission is basically allow a completely nonbiased choices, and I think that's a good way to, as a conference organizer, protect yourself from sort of preventing attacks on that.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And also as a potential speaker, to feel like you're getting a fair shot based on your subject and not about anything else, and I think it's an interesting approach that won't necessarily change any numbers because this sort of just depends on the topics, but I think it's a really fair approach.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So I think that's one way to do it. Another way sort of I think people could do is sort of, Rachel Nabors wrote this great article in Ladies In Tech about how Lanyrd has a list of open calls for submissions, but I missed that stuff all the time, and so maybe ask some friends of yours to tweet that have a lot of followers. At Ladies In Tech, I always try to tweet about open calls so more people know. A lot of times it's just everything moves so fast on the internet. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Sometimes you can't keep up, so sort of just asking around and asking people to sort of spread the word more I think will get more submissions naturally.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I want to bring up Converge SE. We, all three of us, were there this spring, and I think I've said it easily a hundred times to you, Jenn, to you, Lea, to Gene, the organizer, just how diverse the conference itself felt, and I remember in the last day we were waiting to get the van to the airport and I just sat Gene down. I'm like, "How did you do this, because you have a fair representation of female speakers. There's a really nice mix of diversity in terms of the attendees as



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well.” And he just said, “It’s a ton of work. It’s really hard. You have to actively seek this stuff. It has to be something that’s important to you as the event organizer and important to your attendees and your speakers that you’re asking to be a part of it, and then you have to do the work to make it happen. You can’t passively sit back and hope that you’re going to achieve that.”

Jenn Lukas: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Emily Lewis: It’s not easy.

Jenn Lukas: It’s not easy. [Laughs] It certainly not easy. But the more we talk about it, I think the easier it’s becoming.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: It’s sort of like those things that we have to tackle this issue head on and not all areas that you see on the web with these sort of subjectives as nice as I think this one is going. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Once you get sort of get over that, that’s sort of how change happens, and then the more normal it will become, and we sort of it will hopefully become a nonissue eventually because it will just be so regulated.

Emily Lewis: I hope so. I don’t know. I’m skeptical. It’s been hard for me. I mean, I totally feel like this topic is extremely positive, but as you mentioned, there is some negativity associated with it, and I’m trying not to bring it up because it pisses me off and I kind of want to vent about it. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



Emily Lewis: But that's not the time for them. But it's one of those things that for me I set a limit to the number of talks I'll give in a year because as you mentioned it's a tremendous investment of time, not only in terms of travel and being on site, but all the prep work that you do for it. But if I get asked to present and I've already hit my limit or it's not really a good fit for me, I really try and go through my network to see if there's another woman that I know and I've seen their work and that they have some kind of interest in it and I try and get their names in front of the event organizers as like a replacement for me.

Jenn Lukas: That's great. That's a great idea because it's based on referral.

Emily Lewis: In terms of women entering the tech world, is there a single bit of advice you could offer?

Jenn Lukas: In general?

Emily Lewis: Yeah. I don't know. I have some friends of mine, they are like astounded at what I do, thinking that there's something special about it. I mean, I guess there's something special about it, but that it doesn't seem like who I am as the day-to-day person being involved in tech and coding. Like I had a friend watch me write some HTML, just basic HTML, and she's like, "That's incredible." Because it seems so intimidating, but I feel like our field has a lot of opportunity for women or people who are parents who need to have flexible schedules or flexible work lives and working from home, and it just has so much of that. What would you tell someone who's intimidated but intrigued?

Jenn Lukas: For sure, and I guess this advice would go for anyone, but it's really important to make friends.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



Jenn Lukas: This is probably in any walks of life, but especially this one, and again, that goes back to the fact that working in computers can be very antisocial. It's possible to spend a whole day by yourself without talking to anyone, you and your computer being friends, and it's important to remember that the more contacts that you make, the more it can help your career, both with like opportunities or referrals. The more like it gives you the support is very important. You can be like, "Hey, this situation happened to me. Is this weird? Or hey, I'm really stuck on this coding problem. Can you help me with this?" And I think the idea of treating it like any sort of other job we would have where if I worked in a typical office job. Like I love the idea of water cooler talk where you go and be like, "Yo, did you see that season finale last night, or how about them bears?"

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Right.

Jenn Lukas: And really, that's one of the things that for me is really important that I never want to lose in computers just sitting here with like sort of at this box. I still want to have that water cooler talk with people, and I still want to have that system that doesn't make it feel like it's such like a lonely profession.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So we're tackling a lot of tough topics. [Laughs] And I'm going to throw you another tough question. So...

Jenn Lukas: Okay... [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: So we were talking about helping people enter technology and what we can do to help encourage that or make it less intimidating, but for me, personally, I sometimes think it's as much or maybe even harder to keep women in technology or keep women speaking about technology as it is to entice them in the first place.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So how do you think we can keep them intact and how do we keep women to continue talking?

Jenn Lukas: Sure. Yeah, a tough one. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So...

Emily Lewis: Because you're THE expert. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: You know everything.

Jenn Lukas: Well, I am part of that target demographic so I do. I am coming from that aspect. Here's what I'll say, and this is what has worked for me and what I like, I like to see more sites like Ladies In Tech which the thing that I love about this site is that instead of sort of being, "This thing sucks, blah, blah, blah."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Jenn Lukas: Ladies In Tech is more about celebrating.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And so it's more about focusing on the positive, and it sounds like a little like hippie, hug everyone. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: But I'd rather focus on the positive in most aspects of my life and work.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And if we sit there too much, I think it's important to vet for sure. A lot of people I don't fault anyone, I want to make sure that's clear about venting or sharing the sort of terrible experiences that have happened to them. I think that's a really important aspect too. I think when people share their personal stories, which sometimes have been terrible, it's good because if anyone else has that, they know they're not alone.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Sometimes thinking you're alone with the story of like discrimination or anything can feel so awful. You sort of think like, "Am I making too big of a deal about this? Is this really weird? Am I the only one that's happened to? Maybe it's just me."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And when you hear those other stories, the first step is like, "Oh wow, that really sucks, but I'm sort of, like at least I'm not the only person that feels this way." And so I think that's one part. So one part is being open about everything that has happened and sort of bringing to light the fact that there is something to tackle.



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: There is a problem, and there is discrimination, and it is something that is it magically going to go away or doesn't exist?

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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So that's one, and I sort of leave that part to other people, and then where Ladies In Tech and other people I think needs to come in is in sharing all the good stories. Here are the benefits of what happened. For me the stories that we share, and like we're now doing a bunch of giveaways right now in Ladies In Tech also at the conferences because we're sort of embracing all the cool things. You get to go to conferences and talk to people. I just spoke at a conference in Norway. Like I never would have gone to Norway if I wasn't doing public speaking.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: I mean, it's possible. Of course, I could have taken vacation days and gone, but probably if I was never prompted, I probably would have been like, "Oh, I'm just going to go to Jersey Shore." [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So I think there's a lot of benefits. Travel, exposure, it helps your career. There are all these great things, and I really like to focus on the things like that, the things that make it really worthwhile and staying and pushing and being one of these women in tech and sharing your ideas



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and sort of staying in the tech field. It's a really cool job. As you mentioned, I'm sitting in my home right now. I have a cat bed and is very much wanting me to pay more attention to her.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I can work from my backyard. I can work from the beach. It's a really cool job. I can get paid to speak in Germany or Norway or Florida. It's like one of those things. It's like there's a lot of benefits, and you can meet a lot of people and make friends. I met you guys through going to conferences.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And that's awesome, and there are so many good parts, and that's the part that I think is really sort of important not to forget, and there are two equally important sort of parts. Like addressing the situation and bringing it to light and then also showing all the things that are good and why it's worth getting through those really crappy situations.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: I definitely think that all those things are really great, and one of the things that I love about Ladies In Tech in terms of the sharing the stories is that I feel like it gives meaning to what you're doing professionally because do you know how they talk about the Maslow's...

Emily Lewis: Hierarchy of needs.

Lea Alcantara: Hierarchy of needs and stuff. Like I think there's also like a hierarchy of needs in order to be fulfilled in your career, and I think this is true for everyone, but I feel personally it's very relevant for women is that when you communicate the meaning of why we're in technology and why we're doing this, and that will keep them there. I was speaking to a friend of mine who actually she left tech and came back to it. So her story was she has a Comp Sci degree and she said she first



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decided to quit programming or working in a technology firm partly because she felt like what's the point, like why am I doing this? Like she didn't feel like she was contributing as much as she could, so she quite computers and became a lawyer for international law because she thought that would help contribute, and she got her J degree and everything like that, then the irony was, because she ended up getting a government job.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: She wasn't actually contributing as much as she thought she could, and then she ended up working for this social tech company that has offices around the world, and she helps build infrastructure in developing countries, technology infrastructure in developing countries, so then that brought meaning back to her in technology.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So she was able to use all of her skills, but back in her tech skills, now she's in Africa and India and doing all these things and still working in tech.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So those types of things, figuring out how you can bring meaning or some sort of purpose, personally I think would help.

Emily Lewis: I have to say how much I agree with you, Lea, and I think that's one of the reasons why we do this podcast.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Emily Lewis: I feel like I love making websites. I really do. It makes me very, very happy. I don't know why, but it just does. The purpose is for me to make money and my clients to make money, but then that doesn't always satisfy me. But as terrifying as public speaking is for me and it really, really is, when it's over, I don't know, I feel like I've given something. It's the same with this podcast.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: Each time we do a podcast, I feel so proud of not just that we did it on time and blah, blah, blah, but I feel like we shared something of value.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: And even if it just matters to one person, like you said, Jenn, that Mina who presented and she just think it was the end, just one person being changed by some information you shared, I don't know, it's just incredible feeling.

Jenn Lukas: It really is, and I think this medium is so cool because it's sort of allows you to do that, and like you're saying how excited it is, like you've writing HTML and then there is it, it's instant and there's not as many roadblocks into getting your ideas out, getting people to read or listen to them so that can be a little tricky, but you can get it out there for people to read and that's really neat. I think it's so nice to share the content with each other.

Emily Lewis: So I have one more hard question for you, Jenn, and then we'll do some easy questions to finish. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



Emily Lewis: This one, I could just see it being a loaded question, but do you think your gender affects how you code, how you choose resources? Like do you think gender brings something different to the table, or is it just Jenn brings something different to the table just like Emily or Mark or whoever?

Jenn Lukas: You might think that this is avoiding your question, but I do think it's individual. There's a bunch of studies about this, studies and things like that, but I feel like it's all individual. I think you'll always come across people that do things differently, and sure, some people will do things similarly, but that doesn't really prove anything really. I don't think it depends on gender or race or anything like that.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: So I think it's sort of individual thing right now.

Lea Alcantara: All right, I think we should take a turn to like a little bit more easy questions.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] But it will be up to you whether or not these are easy. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Let's take a turn towards technical questions, CTRL+CLICK is a podcast about content management systems and the stuff that surround it, so Ladies In Tech runs on WordPress.

Emily Lewis: Why? [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Stop judging me. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So give us the story of that. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: So one of the things I was really crazy about Ladies In Tech and sort of your answers when you're like what's the response been is when I approach people about this, everyone was like super on board. Everyone is like, "Yeah, that's awesome. Yeah, I'd love to share. Yeah, I'd love to design. Yeah, I'd love to help like fill out these ideas." And you're like, "Oh, okay. Well, this is cool." And I ended up having a ton of content, but no design, and I feel like coming from like an agency-type background, and you see, usually I was having other problem. You've got to do designs. You've got this idea, so you never have real content, and I'm like, "Well, this is rude. I have all this content, but no place to put it."

For me, WordPress was the easiest thing to get up and running right away. I just sort of used one of the predefined themes. I'm using like 2012, like the default installed theme to get all that stuff in there right away, and then when I was setting that up and doing very limited customization on it, Yesenia Perez-Cruz who is a designer at Happy Cog, she was using Typecast app, which is an app where you can just design sort of type cells in the browser. So she designed a type system for Ladies In



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Tech. I took that type, applied it to the CSS of the 2012 theme in WordPress and like in an hour, you have a customized enough look to give you a unique website.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And it was just really fast, and that's sort of why we are on WordPress, plus anyone, authors are familiar with the back end of that, which is really helpful.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Jenn Lukas: Because I have a lot of people helping, so I trained my sister. Alexis has been helping with editing and she didn't use WordPress before, but I was able to show her like two minutes and she got it instantly, and so that was really awesome to be able to like do training in two minutes.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And otherwise, she's smart, but it was like really super simple to do, so that is why we chose WordPress.

Emily Lewis: Cool. I mean, it make sense. Your priority was to get the site up and the content out there.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, and there...

Emily Lewis: Not showcase how badass you are with the CMS.

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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Jenn Lukas: And there's like nothing too crazy going on. We have categories. We have RSS. We have a bit of an archive. There's nothing too much happening. The focus on the site is about the content and not, as you were saying, anything super fancy.

Emily Lewis: So what about your jennlukas.com site, because it was on ExpressionEngine, and I was reading on your site that you moved it to Tumblr.

Jenn Lukas: So let me go ahead and admit something to you guys. I might have a little bit of a Tumblr addiction. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I think Tumblr is the most amazing thing in like maybe the entire world. It's so good. My friend, Sequoia, loves Tumblr, and she totally like sold me on it, and you can get a blog up in like 30 seconds.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: She took one day and I was so hesitant against Tumblr, and are you guys *Games of Thrones* fans?

Lea Alcantara: Oh yeah. Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, totally.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



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Jenn Lukas: So when I started watching *Games of Thrones*, I basically started calling it Sex Hobbit.
[Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Because the *Games of Thrones* is like the Hobbit but with a ridiculous amount of sex.

Lea Alcantara: Oh my God.

Jenn Lukas: And so I called it Sex Hobbit, and I had to make fun of all my friends that watch Sex Hobbit, and so in like two minutes, I created sexhobbit.tumblr.com and started posting ridiculous things about how Jon Snow is a major wuss and cries on everything.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

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Jenn Lukas: And so it started as basically just grinding people's gears with this. It turned into my love affair with Tumblr which was like I can get any Tumblr up and running super fast, and it's amazing. So since I was already in the Tumblr interface all the time anyway, Kenny Meyers had moved the Nerderly over to the Tumblr a while back too. Basically, I've gotten so familiar with it, and when I'm there, I go in and I'm like, "Oh yeah, I haven't posted on this in a while, and so it will remind me to update one of about 20 to 30 Tumblrs that I may or may not have.

Emily Lewis: Wow.

Lea Alcantara: Oh wow. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Yeah. [Laughs]



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Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I might have a problem.

Emily Lewis: So you're a secret Tumblr too. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: I am. I find it all ridiculous.

Emily Lewis: Did you do like an export for me, and then an import or what?

Jenn Lukas: So I had talked to Kenny actually about how he did the Nerderly, but he had said it was quite complicated, and really, I didn't have that many post, so I manually did it.

Lea Alcantara: Oh wow.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, I had about five or seven. I think I have about 34 posts.

Lea Alcantara: Okay.

Jenn Lukas: It's all spread out.

Emily Lewis: Oh cute.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, and it was kind of funny to read through them again.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Because like they were talking about when I moved to EE, and this is really embarrassing, I had moved over my MySpace blog.

Lea Alcantara: Oh my God. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



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Jenn Lukas: Yeah, totally, and so I had all of my MySpace blog entries in that thing, and I was just like, “Whoa, yeah.” I like reviewed these, like it was out of this... My first post was about that show *Starcade*. I don’t know if y9ou guys used to watch that.

Lea Alcantara: Oh no.

Jenn Lukas: It was like this like 70’s game show where you played arcade games. It’s awesome. And then my second post was reviewing online zombie games, and so as I was like moving it over, I was reading the post, and I was like clicking on the link to see if they still worked, and some of them did. So then I got stuck playing like the Zombie like 2004.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: And I was terrible, but I can’t stop playing them. So that’s what took the migration the longest amount of time, the Zombie games.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: That’s fun.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah. [Laughs] So that’s why I ended up moving over for my love of Tumblr.

Emily Lewis: Well, and it seems like it fits better into your current workflow.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, for sure, and it’s really easy to tie everything up so you can like send your Instagram over and any like other tie-ins. It’s like super easy.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Jenn Lukas: Like one click.



Lea Alcantara: So this really kind of leads toward how you kind of choose a system for its specific use. How do you decide which CMS is the best fit for a professional project?

Jenn Lukas: It's been interesting. It was a little different at Happy Cog versus now as I freelance, but I feel like right now, clients are way more opinionated about what CMS they want to use versus like five years ago.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: I think people are way more knowledgeable now in sort of what's out there, and there's a lot of new things out there, so I have found recently there's been sort of requirements around what CMS is being used.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And that sort of has guided a lot of things that I've been working on recently, which is like sort of cool, but sort of hard because there are so many more things I want to try out.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: Because now it just feels like there are so many more options too.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: I still haven't tried Craft, which I would like to do, and I tried out Corby the other day.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Jenn Lukas: Which was like neat, and then I tried making like a Jekyll site the other day. But I'm doing this all, like this is what I was playing with when I was doing jennlukas.com.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Jenn Lukas: Just sort of see if I was going to use any of those and more just because I felt like it was just sort of fun to play with all the new things.

Lea Alcantara: So what do clients ask for?

Jenn Lukas: For right now, it's been a lot. I've been a lot of WordPress work. There was like a lot of Drupal work previous to that, but now it's been mostly back to WordPress.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: It's interesting. It's like jQuery. Sometimes I feel like, you know like when – I don't know if you guys used to like have a survey and you'd just be like, "What JavaScript framework, if any, would you like to use?" And you'd be like sort of examine all these other things, and then it just basically everyone has jQuery now.

Emily Lewis: It's like if you want a tissue, some people just say Kleenex because it's like the term that they use to describe a given thing.

Jenn Lukas: Yeah, totally, and that's how I feel. Like in the work I've been doing right now with WordPress, it's like basically the Kleenex. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I mean, now that you're doing independent consulting, that sounds like you're sort of going with what the client comes to you or asking for. Do you ever feel like, or have you pushed back



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and said, “You may think that’s what you want, but based on your requirements, that’s actually not a good fit, or do you try and manipulate the tool they want to use to meet their requirements?”

Jenn Lukas: I would push back if there was reason to push back, or if it were just sort of seeing like people were coming and they’re like, “Oh, no, the only CMS I know is WordPress.” But that hasn’t really been the case. It’s sort of the same way that like I look at it as that people are already familiar with it and it gets people up and running so fast.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: I do think WordPress for the site I’ve been doing is very easy to customize, and so it’s just worked. But I think if I did see a push back or if I felt like people were coming with that request without sort of anything to back it up, then yeah, I feel more than happy to be just like, “Here are some other options to consider.” And I think it’s always important to remember that business reasons are like strong reasons to drive a goal.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Jenn Lukas: And if stakeholders or anyone are really comfortable with something, whether that’s jQuery or whether that’s Kleenex or whether that’s CMS...

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: It’s nothing something to just like... Definitely some sort of education is important to let them know, but it is something that’s important like that is a valid reason for being like, “Yes, let me see if this will work for you.”

Emily Lewis: [Agrees] Wow, this was a great episode.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]



Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: I feel like we could continue talking.

Emily Lewis: I know. Well, we have a few questions we didn't actually ask, but... [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, and you know what...

Jenn Lukas: I think I'm so excited too. Like I feel like you guys I want to like have more podcasts too. I feel like we're in the same room. I like it. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Oh yay! Well, we'll be happy to have you back.

Emily Lewis: Absolutely.

Jenn Lukas: Let me come up with another Tumblr to talk about. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yes. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Perfect.

Emily Lewis: We'll call the episode, Jenn's Secret Tumblr. [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Jenn Lukas: Don't worry, I'll have like 50 about the time we do it. [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: So well, that's all the time we have for today. Thanks for joining us, Jenn.

Jenn Lukas: Thanks for having me.

Emily Lewis: In case our listeners want to follow up with you, where can they find you online?

Jenn Lukas: Well, I am on Twitter, [@jennlukas](#), and then also, one of my other favorite Tumblrs is my Tumblr where I celebrate my love of hovers, which is fuckyeahhovers.tumblr.com. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Amazing.

Jenn Lukas: Of course, at ladiesintech.com

Emily Lewis: Awesome. Thanks again, Jenn. [Music starts]

Jenn Lukas: Thank you.

Lea Alcantara: We'd now like to thank our sponsors for this podcast, [SolSPACE](#) and [Pixel & Tonic](#).

Emily Lewis: We also want to thank our partners, [Arcustech](#), [Devot:ee](#) and [EE Insider](#).

Lea Alcantara: And thanks to our listeners for tuning in. If you want to know more about CTRL+CLICK, make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ctrlclickcast](#) or visit our website, ctrlclickcast.com.



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Emily Lewis: Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when special guest, Brandon Kelly, is joining us to talk about Craft. Be sure to check out our schedule on our site, ctrlclickcast.com/schedule for more upcoming topics.

Lea Alcantara: This is Lea Alcantara.

Emily Lewis: And Emily Lewis.

Lea Alcantara: Signing off for CTRL+CLICK CAST. See you next time.

Emily Lewis: Cheers. [Music stops]

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