



EE Podcast #94 Get to Know #ecms: Mitchell Kimbrough

[Music]

Lea Alcantara: You are listening to the unofficial ExpressionEngine Podcast, episode 94! Today we're continuing our "Get to Know #ecms" series with special guest, Mitchell Kimbrough of Solspace. 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 [Engine Summit](#). The fourth annual Engine Summit returns online and live on June 12th. Engine Summit brings the experts to your desktop for a full day of deep diving into EE, EE add-ons and much more. Sign up now with discount code EEPODCAST for 20% off. Visit enginesummit.com. See you at the summit!

Emily Lewis: The ExpressionEngine Podcast would also like to thank [Pixel & Tonic](#) for being our major sponsor of the year. [Music ends] Hi Lea, what's new with you?

Lea Alcantara: You know, I'm going to avoid complaining about the weather this week. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Because it's actually nice.

Emily Lewis: Oh, that's good.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, so what's new is I'm heading to Austin next week, so I'm excited about that because I'll be attending the ARTIFACT Conference, and so I'm really excited to see all that's going on with responsive web design.

Emily Lewis: Cool, and hopefully they'll be some good weather for you there.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, I think it's Austin, it's going to be nice.



Emily Lewis: Yeah, well, I've only visited Austin in the springtime when SXSW is going on, so I've heard it can get humid later on in the season, but I guess we're not that far out.

Lea Alcantara: If it's anything like South Carolina, I think it will be okay.

Emily Lewis: Oh right, we were just there.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: So the ExpressionEngine community or news has been pretty quiet since our last episode, but I did want to let our listeners know that EllisLab released 2.6.1 this past week or so. It addresses just a handful of bugs and it makes some changes to the interface for the new relationship functionality.

Lea Alcantara: Sounds good.

Emily Lewis: So like I said, it's a little quiet out there in the EE world so let's get straight to today's episode. Today we're joined by a special guest, Mitchell Kimbrough for our "Get to Know #eecms" series. Mitchell is the President and CEO of [Solspace](#), maker of some of the community's favorite EE add-ons. Welcome Mitchell, thanks for joining the show!

Mitchell Kimbrough: Hey, thanks for having me.

Lea Alcantara: So Mitchell, could you tell our listeners a little bit more about yourself?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Well, I am a web developer living in Santa Cruz, California. I've got a couple of little toddlers and I really don't have any sort of life other than looking at them and running a company.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: I'm afraid there's not much to report other than occasional hikes in the woods and trips to the beach and swimming at the pool.

Lea Alcantara: Those are pretty good things though.

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah, I'm not going to complain too much.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: So speaking of web development, what made you pursue this career?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I couldn't get a job as a philosopher.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Is that what your major was in university?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah, yeah, I studied philosophy and religious studies when I was...

Lea Alcantara: Oh wow!

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah. I was really quite certain that I'd become a professor, and I used to be a teacher and I write books and garbage like that, and then at some point, I realized after talking to some of the PhD students that in that field you have to wait for some old codger to die somewhere.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: And you hope that he dies at the town that's pretty cool to live in.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah, sure.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: Now, maybe not somewhere in the boonies. And, I don't know, that started to irk me and I didn't like the idea of having no control over my own destiny and no sense of freedom and no sense of being able to write my own ticket.

Simultaneously with all those realizations, one of my old professors at school asked me to build a website for him, and he didn't seem to be bothered by the fact that I had not done it at all, had no experience or knowledge whatsoever.

Somehow, I think through him, I still had access to the media lab at the university, so I was able to get access to stuff like Photoshop and a number of the other tools that you need to get something up and running. And immediately I really, really enjoyed the whole environment of web development in the sense that I made really massive mistakes, but I could fix them in just a couple of seconds and the entire world would see the correct version instead of the bad one. Whereas in the print media, everybody knows this, you make a mistake and it's on the side of every bus in New York City, so it's off.

So that was appealing. It was appealing that you could work anywhere anytime you wanted. It was appealing that it was a new medium that was largely unregulated. It was Wild West in a sense, and it still is, and I thought it gives a lot of growth opportunity.

I just really enjoy the nature of the work. I think that's the neat thing because I really enjoy the character of the work that you did, it's really intellectual and like in your head, which is really where I exist most of the time, so that was really good. It just felt right.

Emily Lewis: Was it that intellectual aspect that maybe appealed to you initially, especially coming from a background in religion and philosophy?

Mitchell Kimbrough: What was different about what I studied and, well, the track that I was on, there wasn't a lot of problem solving and puzzle solving and there was not a lot of building. But in the case of web development, you're solving problems by building something, and that spoke to the little boy in me who played with Legos forever, right? So that was appealing.

There is something interesting to note that there's a parallel between those two worlds in the sense that in the discipline of philosophy, you're continuing to refine your... whatever it is. You're like... you

try to understand a given philosophy, or you're continuing to refine that understanding and sort of refactor it and revisit it, tear it down and rebuild it. And that's very much a part of web development and web design in my experience too. So there's a parallel there that I like a lot where it's just okay to be wrong in the first second, third, fourth, fifth time, and you actually never get it right, you are just continually improving your own understanding of what the target you're trying to hit. So the training that I have back there continues to help me today I think.

Emily Lewis: Now, how long have you been working with ExpressionEngine?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Well, I've been working with ExpressionEngine since it was pMachine. There was a time when I had a client ... yeah, this was a wedding website. At some point I thought wedding websites would be a really good market to get into until I realized what brides were like and that they were the kind of client who even if they were a normal person under normal circumstances, the stress of the wedding would really bring out the hyper-critical version of the person and the really stressed-out, high-intensity version of a person. And that wasn't very good, so I got out of that market.

But when I was in there, it occurred to me my life would be a lot better if this poor lady and her groom, husband-to-be and their family could edit the website themselves instead of bugging me every hour of the day leading up to the wedding. And I thought, "Why wouldn't we try to find some way to let them control the website?"

Blogging was starting to be important back at that time and there were blogging tools on the market that you could use to let someone through a web interface manage the front end of a website.

So I started looking at those thinking, "Well, maybe we could apply that concept to just managing and treating it like a content management system generally." So I found a few things that I like. There were a couple of things that are free, and there was pMachine and I actually opened up the code not knowing anything about PHP's underlying code base. I just kind of looked around and thought, "Well, pMachine looks like it's put together with a lot more craft and care than these other platforms that

looked pretty sloppy and kind of confusing and difficult to understand. Even though I can't read a single line of this code, it looks better. It looks just more crafted to me."

So I chose pMachine for a couple of those first engagements and things really took off as soon as I did that. This need for low-cost content management solutions continues to speak to many, many types of clients, small businesses and individuals and startups. It's just a need that's constant out there. Of course, we have a lot of really good answers for it now, a decade plus later, but back then it was a pretty interesting prospect.

Lea Alcantara: So were you already SolSPACE back then?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah, with SolSPACE, the first couple of people who came to me asking me to do some design work, with the college where I went, there were a couple who heard about me, but some people in the athletic department found out that I can design T-shirts. So I was designing some T-shirts for some of the teams and that also kind of turned into some web design work. It's weird how that sort of stuff unfolds, and especially if you're young and dumb and kind of open to doing whatever.

So I got my first group of clients just from kind of the university community who needed some design stuff done or who need a quick website to announce an event or whatever. And then that content management capability became a selling point and the more people heard about my work by word of mouth, the more people came to me saying, "Hey, I understand that you can set it up so I can manage my own website. I don't have to know HTML and I don't have to bother you. I don't want to write you a check every time we make a change to the website. Can you set one of those up for me?" Then, yeah, the business began to define itself.

Lea Alcantara: So how did you choose the name SolSPACE? What does that even mean?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Well, that's from my philosophy background. Sol is the archaic name of the sun, and in a number of philosophical and theological traditions, it reference to the sun. It is akin to reference to sun, the ultimate reality or God or some whole sense of universe. It has all these multiple meanings, but certainly in the case of Plato, it's a reference point to absolute beauty,

absolute truth and ultimate form. So all those connotations were interesting, that they're packed in to just that three-letter word, that meaning.

I started the company also as I was coming out of the dot-com experience. There was a dot-com run by people who just had no regard for morals and ethics and they were willing to lie to anybody at anytime to get what they wanted or to get them another round of funding or whatever. It was really nasty. I wanted to try and experiment and starting my own endeavor for my own company where you told the truth and you were straight with people and you live above board. You existed within the space of the truth, honest, and I don't know, righteousness, I guess.

So SolSPACE was a combination of those two concepts and the idea was, "All right, if I name the company this, it will continually remind me to keep the initial mission in mind." So the experiment was, can you run a company by telling the truth to people? And the experiment has proven to be really effective. What I didn't know at that time because I was so new to the work world was most companies and most people operate honestly and they tell the truth and they are straight with each other and they're authentic. I just hadn't met them at that time.

Timestamp: 00:10:10

Lea Alcantara: Man, I love stories like these. Some people think that naming your company is just I just a random name. I just love the fact that your name constantly reminds you of your mission.

Mitchell Kimbrough: I think a company well named, or maybe your kids is similar to that in a sense that it's something ever present that can either in the forefront of your mind or somewhere in the back ... it can remind you of that initial impulse that you have, the initial idea that you have.

My kids' names do that for me. They remind me of how I felt about them with the first moments I saw them. I think that you can use language to do that in your life from time to time. It should do many other things to keep yourself on track or keep yourself doing the right thing or being a person that you really want to be, but naming things has a power, and I think you have to acknowledge it and do something about it.

Emily Lewis: Well said. I wish we had a video here because I'm just sitting here with the biggest grin. Do you think one of your most important responsibilities as President and CEO of SolSPACE is sort of keeping the business and your employees in line with that vision?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah, my first and foremost job is to protect the team. When I have that as my first mission, a lot of things cascade from that. A lot of good things. A lot of things that you want a business to do. I mean, just on a spreadsheet, that mission actually turns into the numbers that you want.

What I mean is if my mission is to protect my team, then it means I'm trying to create an environment where the people on my team can live the kinds of lives they want to live, that are good and healthy for them, that are fulfilling in a long term sense.

And that means that I need to bring clients in to the company that are compatible with that mission, and that means I need clients who are going to respect the people on the team and who are going to bring work that's interesting and fun, who are going to do simple stuff, like you need to pay your bill, otherwise, I'm not protecting my team. You need to stop demanding that someone do some work for you in the middle of the night or on their vacation, because that's not protecting my team.

So one thing I found with having that as the mission and having that as my central priority is the number of the other things important to business fall in to place after that. You can be profitable on the long term if that is your mission and something you focus on.

You have to be careful, of course. I mean, there have been times when I had erred on the side of protecting someone on the team and lost a client that, in retrospect, maybe the situation wasn't that bad. Maybe the client hadn't offended us that badly. Maybe I could have done more to glue the relationship back together or maybe put someone else on the job or whatever. But really it hasn't let me down very many times. So yeah, my mission is to protect the team.

Lea Alcantara: In terms of that mission, do you have it publicly available for your team in terms of, say, like, "Here's the list of what it's like to be at SolSPACE. Here are our priorities and values."

Mitchell Kimbrough: I've tried to do that, and I've tried to put up a mission statement, and ... One thing, it's a virtual team, so there's not a break room that we all go and sit down and smoke a bunch of cigarettes and look at the wall and see the mission statements.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: So we don't do that. We use Basecamp and everybody logs in there, but whenever I put the mission statement in front of the people on the team, these are all really smart people that see through the bullshit and they're like, "I know what the mission is. I get it. I know what Solspace is. You don't have to tell me what this silly mission statement is." So it's met with skepticism. That's not to say they don't buy into it and agree that that's an appropriate mission to have for a company, but it's just like, "Why are you telling us something we already know?"

So I think mission statements are good, especially ... they can be essential. I've even blogged about this. I said that it's the use of language again to continue to remind you what you initially wanted to do, or when you had a moment to meditate and think really clear thoughts about the shape of your company, for example, you can use a mission statement or some other language to capture that moment and help to remember what that was.

There have been times when we've been faced with really difficult problems in the company that needed to be solved and there didn't seem to be any good solution. Having a mission statement to refer back to that had language that was clear, helped me see the way through some of the difficult problems that we've dealt with. So I think there's value to them. I think that anytime I've been on the team and a boss had shown me a mission statement I thought was a joke. Maybe they're just mostly effective for the people trying to run them with the company.

Emily Lewis: What are some of the other key responsibilities you have at Solspace?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Well, I write a lot of code. I would be really unhappy if I was not writing code. That's not to say my code is any good. Usually the shape of the thing is I have an idea and I execute a prototype, or something that you might want to call a prototype if you count dental floss and



chewing gum holding the software together. But then if it has any legs and there's a response to the idea that's sufficient to let the thing have some more attention, then I hand it off to people who are smarter than me in their areas of domain expertise and they make it better and more stable or whatever.

That's been a pattern over time. It's not something I'm proud of. I think as a developer you ought to be able to go from start to finish in your code and achieve excellence. But the fact of the matter is that there's been times when my codes just falls short and it just has to be done by someone smarter than me.

But yeah, I still code a lot and I would be really bored if I didn't. I sometimes disappear for a week and the team barely hears from me because I'm trying to finish something, and that's really when I'm the happiest. Sometimes I think I should sell the company and just be a coder with somebody else, I'd be happy with that way, but I don't think I'm fit to be anybody's employee at this point.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] In terms of being able to spend time developing and managing the business, do you favor one over the other? I mean, you said you're really happy if you can go off for a week and work on something. Do you enjoy the management and leadership aspects?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Well, there are some parts of the management and leadership stuff that I enjoy. Let me see if I can put it in the right kind of language. Let's use an example, we did a really big job for a client who did not have a lot of experience being a client of web development. What I mean is we built a big software, kind of a big platform on top of ExpressionEngine to help them run their business processes, and they hadn't done that sort of thing before.

They hadn't played the role of client to a software development project, and as a consequence, I mean, there were just a lot of conflicts along the way because they didn't know how to do their role. They didn't know the importance of what they were supposed to do, "This doesn't work. We are getting bug reports like it's broken." And we come back and say, "Look, you need to do a lot more

than just ‘it’s broken.’ You need to tell me how, where, when, why, and we need to talk about the cost of making it the way you want it to be.”

They went through a number of my developers, a number of my best, most reliable, most easy to get along with people, and eventually it came to me. I had to be the one. It was either me or a lawsuit, so I took over the job and found some way to get the client into a happy place and get us back on track and launch the thing. But really, my team did all the work; everything was fine. There were a couple of bugs that had to be fixed, but mainly it was the human element that had to be dealt with.

When we get into a crisis, or there’s a problem on a job, or there’s a conflict with the client or someone on the team, I want to be the person with the ball, and that’s not to say that I enjoy doing that, it’s a drag. I’d rather be writing code, but on the other hand, when I’ve watched other people deal with problems like that, my skin crawls. I would much rather be the person in that position.

The other thing is I own the company, and it ultimately does come to me. So if I tried to punt on those moments, those times when I really need to show up, I just feel like I’m just one of those bosses that I found so repugnant back in the days. So I don’t know. It’s hard for me to describe. I feel like that’s an important role and responsibility that I have in the company. I’m not saying I enjoy it. I do like wading into it and fixing that kind of a problem, especially if there’s a bunch of human factors that need to be dealt with, personality conflicts and so forth. If I can get us through to the other side and avoid court, then that feels pretty good.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, it sounds like you’re describing a sense of satisfaction being the kind of leader that doesn’t represent some of the things you saw on your dot-com days.

Mitchell Kimbrough: That’s pretty well said. I should have said that in the first place.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: I get satisfaction from being the anti-leader of the people that were my role models when I was coming up.

Lea Alcantara: Basically, be the boss that you wish you had.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah, that's right. Be the boss that I wished I had, and they're out there. I hear stories of bosses that I would surely admire that they throw themselves in to the worst situations to sort of protect their team. "That's why I make the big bucks," that's what they say, and if you make the big bucks, freaking get in there and do it. Earn your damn money.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: So that's my edict, get in there and earn your money. The people that aren't making as much money as you, they shouldn't have to suffer.

Emily Lewis: Is that something ... I know as a developer myself, I'm always trying to teach myself new and better ways of doing my craft. Do you have to take training, or do you go to conferences that have focused not on code, but on leadership and management, or books or resources that you use?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I'm very skeptical of those. I'm a pessimist when it comes to those types of conferences. I'm sure there's good material out there and good conferences you can attend, just like there are really good people you can talk to that have really valuable things to say, but for the most part, you have to wade through oceans of self-help garbage and motivational speaker nonsense before you can get to something real. And I just forego the entire thing because I don't have time. I'd rather get Matt Weinberg on the phone and say, "Dude, this thing is going south. I don't know what happened. Let me tell you what happened and you give me some insight as to what you would do if you were me." I'd get much more out of something like that, call up someone who I know and trust, who I know has been there before, who is in a different state of mind, who is more sober and sane than I am at that moment, and get some good advice from another good leader.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, that's a great suggestion. So if we can focus a little bit on SolSPACE specifically, can you talk a little about the company in terms of the work you do? For example, I'm mostly familiar with SolSPACE for providing some add-ons that I love, but you guys do more than add-on development, correct?

Timestamp: 00:19:52

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah. I've noticed over the years that there has been a misperception that we only do add-ons, and probably our client side has suffered because of that, and hopefully we can change that with some marketing work. But we do some add-ons that are really quite useful for ExpressionEngine. A number of those we have seen competitors come on the market in the recent years, and so we've lost the market share on some stuff, but that was predictable and that was inevitable.

I always thought that it would be a good sign when some of my bestselling stuff started to lose ground to competitors, it would just validate the whole idea of using ExpressionEngine as a platform in the first place. So that's been the case. Definitely, the lion's share of revenue and the lion's share of our time and most of the staff is dedicated to client work.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Mitchell Kimbrough: So we're building new sites, we're maintaining sites, we're fixing sites, we're upgrading sites for our clients around the country. I guess there's a global footprint, but for the most part, we're serving the US and Canada and the UK.

Lea Alcantara: So technically, are your projects mostly Version 2, or do you still have a lot of Version 1 clients?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I guess maybe 20 or 30% of the clients out there are still Version 1. I think in the latter part of 2012 and certainly 2013, we're doing ExpressionEngine 2 conversion projects maybe every month. And those are people who have been with us a long time, and in some cases, people who are coming to us saying, "Over time on ExpressionEngine 1, we built up a lot of cruft and

complexity and we don't think we can sort it through. Can you guys untangle it and get us on to ExpressionEngine 2?" So we found that there is a market for that, and yeah, that has been a source of work and revenue.

Lea Alcantara: So is it all EE with Solspace's work?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Yeah, that's all EE. We do a little bit of Laravel work, which is to say if someone comes to us with a web problem and we are at liberty to choose what platform we want to use and if it's something that doesn't need everything that ExpressionEngine is, then maybe it's more simple, maybe you're trying to connect a couple of APIs together or something, we'll opt for Laravel.

I'm finishing up a project on that platform right now where, and shameless marketing here with promotion and so forth. But I find that we write a proposal for a client job, in some weeks we do two or three proposals, in some weeks we'd do zero. But really there's a lot of volume of proposals and I've just noticed over the years that there is an obvious correlation between the volume and velocity of your proposals and the amount of money you make.

So I built a web-based proposal tool that we're using internally and we're kind of refining right now that makes the proposal process a lot faster and web based, more streamlined. Eventually, we'd be able to have previous proposals and form the new ones that you're writing so that your numbers are actually mapped against history of types of work. And the thing is barely in alpha, but it's already making me money in the sense that I can so much more quickly and easily spin up a new proposal for a new client, get it in their hands, convert it to a contract, have them sign it online. And we're working in a matter of days as opposed to a matter of weeks which is the case previously.

It's not a new idea. There is a lot of tools like this for the web, but I built my own, and depending on how it takes shape and if there are people interested in it, I'll make it into a SaaS or I may turn it into a downloadable or something like that. Yeah, I'm excited about it, it's really fun.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, even just the project itself sounds fantastic. I do know how much time, and I'm constantly looking for efficiencies in my proposal and contract process. So when did you decide to

get into add-on development with SolSPACE? And then you did comment that there is now a little bit more competition in the marketplace. Do you continue to plan to do new add-on development in the future, or will you try and focus more on client work?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Well, there has been a couple of things in my own personal life that are requiring that I do less investment in SolSPACE, and do more client work, and my wife is a grad student, so she's broke. She's finishing up her PhD. There's no money coming in on her side, but pretty soon, it will be good. We have two little toddlers with nannies and daycares and all that nonsense, so I felt like I haven't been in the position for a couple of years to dump all the money back into the company. I've needed to extract some of it to just deal with this difficult time, and as a consequence, I've put more of an emphasis on client work.

We also did the numbers. We just kind of looked at the numbers historically and realized that add-on sales over time given the support burden and the need to version it and compete with other people in the marketplace, the profitability was much, much lower than I ever thought. And you have to have some historical data to really see that, which we finally did. We did an across the board price increase to kind of deal with some of that problem, and that helped a lot actually, but still, I don't know, it's just kind of grim.

If you want to be an add-on developer in the ExpressionEngine space, you need to do what Brandon Kelly did, which is only have a couple of things, make sure they're excellent, make them so good that people are scared to compete against them. Have a concept and an idea that makes that thing essential to every ExpressionEngine install. That's the sweet spot. That's when you can actually flourish as an ExpressionEngine add-on developer.

If you do what I did, which is basically release every major thing that we built for our client job as an ExpressionEngine add-on, you have this gigantic library that you have to maintain over time and you start dying a death of 1,000 cuts. All I need is one developer over here in Texas to release one competitor on one of my add-ons and then another one over in New York to release a competitor to



another of my add-ons, and all of a sudden I'm getting chipped away at and these little nips, little pecks and eventually I start to bleed a lot, and it's difficult to defend against that because the library is so big.

So yeah, I'm less interested in investing more in ExpressionEngine, I'm more interested in refining the products that we do have and try to defend that space. We are working on releasing something new probably in the next couple of months. It may be the last thing that we release that's fresh and new for ExpressionEngine. I'm more interested in developing some other things, not necessarily tied to that platform, but things that help the community that I have grown to know and love.

So yeah, there's going to be an emphasis on client work. There's going to be an emphasis on stuff like the proposal tool that I talked to you about, and we have some ideas for actual content-driven websites that we might like to develop.

Emily Lewis: So when it comes to ExpressionEngine, do you have a favorite thing and the thing you hate most about the platform?

Mitchell Kimbrough: A lot of developers including myself and my team complained about some of the code, but it's really well written. When you look at some of the other choices out there, it's really a well put together platform. It serves it's market well. It gets a lot of criticisms in a lot of different ways, but you can't deny the fact that we still choose it as developers and designers. It's still a go-to for us to solve a client problem. I still find it to be flexible.

This proposal thing I was telling you about, I could have built it on ExpressionEngine, but I wanted to learn Laravel and I wanted to do some stuff with my JavaScript knowledge. I just wanted to try different platform. I could have built the whole thing on ExpressionEngine and be done at half the time. So it's still a very flexible and useful tool.

Probably my criticism would be what people have heard me complain about before, which is the way that the thing is managed, the actual human beings behind the platform itself. Even though there has been some improvements over there and there has been sort of a sense of self-reflection on how that

company and how the product is managed, I think there are some improvements being made, and as someone who runs a product line myself, I know that's very difficult once you see some things you want to change to actually get them done. To turn the ship, it takes a long time so I certainly acknowledge that.

But I guess that's the thing I complain about most is how the thing is managed. I think it really could have captured much more market share had it been marketed better.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Mitchell Kimbrough: Had it been pushed along and had there been a more aggressive sense of, "Hey, let's compete with some of the other CMSes out there, and let's be a bigger deal than we are." We could all have been flourishing to a much greater sense had there been more of an emphasis on that, and it's too late for that to change, I think.

Lea Alcantara: I'm curious though what you think could or should have been done to market it a bit more.

Mitchell Kimbrough: Well, that's when I just admit to you that I can complain about the thing, but I don't necessarily have a solution.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: The absolute same thing could be said for a lot of my products. We have a lot of competitors in this space. When you have a certain type of problem and you need an add-on to solve that problem for you in ExpressionEngine, you think of some other products before you think of my stuff. Even though we've been around longer and our products are very high quality, very reliable with great support, there are just better marketers out there than what I have been. So if you want me to tell you how to fix ExpressionEngine and EllisLab marketing, then I'm the first to tell you that I can only complain about it, I can't necessarily tell you how to make it better.

I think that I was caught by surprise by the power of social networking and its importance, especially Twitter. I had to be cajoled into having a presence on Twitter. I was dragged into it. But you actually don't have a choice if you run a web development company or any web-based business, I don't know, any business these days really, you don't have a choice. People are talking about you on Twitter, you need to get on there and make your presence known, and you take some sort of control over it, or at the very least, listen to the criticism and let it change you if it needs to.

Lea Alcantara: Perfect. Well, we've been talking for a while, but before we let you go, Mitchell, we have our rapid-fire 10 Questions that we'd like to shoot your way. Are you ready?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I'm ready.

Lea Alcantara: All right. Mac OS or Windows?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Mac OS.

Emily Lewis: What is your favorite mobile app?

Mitchell Kimbrough: What's that Twitter app I use? It's on here somewhere. Not very rapid fire on my answer, I guess.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: What's that? Oh, Tweetbot. Yeah, that's the critter. I like that thing.

Lea Alcantara: All right, so what's your least favorite thing about social media?

Mitchell Kimbrough: The anonymity. You get to hide. You shouldn't be able to hide when you're going to criticize somebody.

Emily Lewis: What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

Mitchell Kimbrough: Teacher.

Lea Alcantara: What profession would you not like to do?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I don't want to be an HR director.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] Who's the web professional you admire the most?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I think Greg Ferrell on my team.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, that's sweet.

Emily Lewis: Awww.

Lea Alcantara: What music do you like to code to?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I like to code with the NPR actually, not music. I like to listen to the news.

Emily Lewis: What's your secret talent?

Mitchell Kimbrough: I play a pretty good blues harp.

Lea Alcantara: Wow! That's very random. [Laughs]

Mitchell Kimbrough: Which is a harmonica, right? So I don't have it with me, but...

Lea Alcantara: All right, what's the most recent book you've read?

Mitchell Kimbrough: That was a biography of Alexander the Great.

Emily Lewis: All right, lastly, *Star Wars* or *Star Trek*?

Mitchell Kimbrough: *Star Trek*.

Emily Lewis: Great.

Lea Alcantara: Perfect. So that's all the time we have today. Thank you for joining us, Mitchell.

Mitchell Kimbrough: Thanks for having me. I really enjoyed it.

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

Mitchell Kimbrough: At mitchell@solSPACE.com, at SolSPACE.com, and [@snoodly](https://twitter.com/snoodly) on Twitter.



Lea Alcantara: Perfect. [Music starts] Now, we'd like to thank our sponsors for this podcast, [Engine Summit](#) and [Pixel and Tonic](#).

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

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 [ee-podcast.com](#).

Emily Lewis: Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when we'll talk about EE development automation with Matt Fordham. Be sure to check out our schedule on our site, [ee-podcast.com/schedule](#) for more upcoming topics.

Lea Alcantara: This is Lea Alcantara.

Emily Lewis: And Emily Lewis.

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

Emily Lewis: Cheers.

[Music stops]