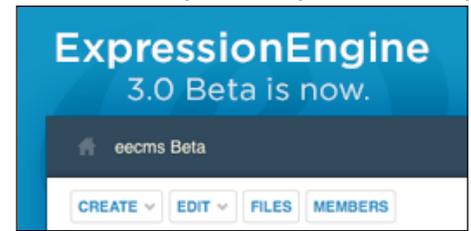




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CTRL+CLICK CAST #053

Designer-Developer Collaboration with Megan Zlock & Owen Shifflett

[Music]

Lea Alcantara: From [Bright Umbrella](#), this is CTRL+CLICK CAST! We inspect the web for you! Today we are talking about designer-developer collaboration with the designer-developer duo, Owen Shifflett and Megan Zlock. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:

Emily Lewis: Emily Lewis!

Lea Alcantara: This episode is brought to you by [EllisLab](#). The wait is over. The public beta of ExpressionEngine 3.0 has launched. You're invited to kick the tires and submit feedback to make the next release of the most flexible CMS even better. Go download it now at expressionengine.com/beta.

[Music ends]

Emily Lewis: Today we're talking about a subject near and dear to both Lea's and my heart, how designers and developers collaborate and work together. Joining us are Megan Zlock and Owen Shifflett from Viget Labs. Megan is a front-end developer of Viget while Owen is an art director and designer. Welcome to the show, Megan and Owen.

Owen Shifflett: Hello.

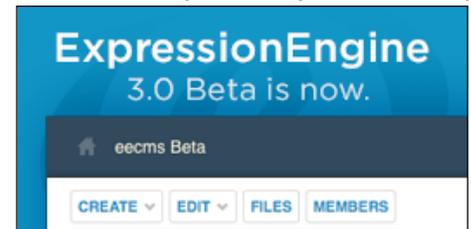
Megan Zlock: Hi.

Lea Alcantara: So Megan, can you tell a little bit more about yourself?

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The logo for Bright Umbrella features a stylized pink umbrella icon to the left of the text 'Bright UMBRELLA'. The word 'Bright' is in a large, bold, sans-serif font, and 'UMBRELLA' is in a smaller, all-caps, sans-serif font below it.



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Megan Zlock: Sure. So I'm a front-end developer and do very technical work during the day, but I kind of spend my night time doing more creative work and I like to do illustration. I'm also good of a gamer so that takes up a little bit of time too.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, fun.

Emily Lewis: So you like moonlight as a creative person, but you are technical during the day.
[Laughs]

Megan Zlock: Yes, which is a really nice balance I find because I'm kind of using two different sides of my brain during just different parts of the day.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, it probably makes you better at your job to have sort of a bigger, well-rounded perspective.

Megan Zlock: I like to think so.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] And how about you, Owen?

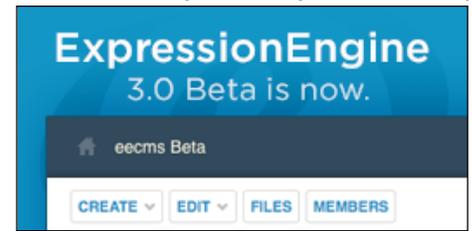
Owen Shifflett: Yes, I'm an art director and designer here at Viget. I focus on both the strategy and the production.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Owen Shifflett: I love both of them equally. I get my hands dirty with paper and pencil almost every day. I still get to work on the computer quite a bit. In my off time, I'm also a gamer. I feel very strongly that gaming has a lot to do with what we do on the web in terms of like interaction.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Owen Shifflett: So it's fun to incorporate some of these things into my process.



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Lea Alcantara: Cool.

Emily Lewis: So do you guys ever game with each other?

Owen Shifflett: We have not so far. I've been trying to get Megan to get a PlayStation 4.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: But we're still working on that.

Megan Zlock: Yeah, I think we have some platform differences at the moment.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: I'm still playing on my 3DS.

Lea Alcantara: Fun.

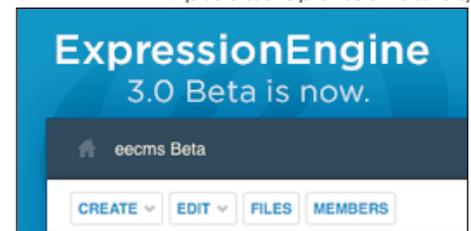
Owen Shifflett: Someday.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: Someday. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: So can you talk a little bit about your roles at Viget and how a project team is started? You know every agency is kind of different, so I'm just curious if you have the same thing for every kind of project or client or if it varies, and what that sort of structure turns out to be.



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Megan Zlock: Sure, I can answer that. Each of our teams at Viget usually has a designer, a front-end developer, which is a little different where we have front-end developers and then also developers who kind of specialize in more back-end code, particularly Rails.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: So we kind of have that divide in our developers, and then of course we have a project manager, a user experience designer, and those are our basic roles, but then we might have more than one of each of those roles depending on the project, but that's the typical breakdown.

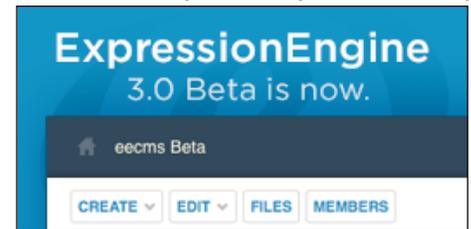
Emily Lewis: Do devs and designers work directly with the client, or is that something where you mentioned you have a project manager that there is one person who's like the main conduit?

Owen Shifflett: I'd say there is probably more interaction between the designers and our clients than front-end developers, but it's something that we're constantly working on and trying to change that. So we have more of a focus around project teams who are interacting at different times with the client.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Owen Shifflett: I feel really strongly that the allowing people to get more in front of the client, that produces better work.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. Is that something that, especially if you have like a new designer or particularly a developer on the team that may not have a lot of experience dealing with the client, that there's like a warming-up period getting them used to what that process is like, or is that something that you feel that the new people who come in are already embracing that concept of working with the client?



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Owen Shifflett: I'd say that we split that, kind of. So we have individual labs for front-end development, for example, development, project management and design, and we handle some of those things when new people start to kind of get them ramped up, but yeah, there's definitely a little bit of a safety net that we provide on project teams in order to get people ramped up and into the role that they're going to be performing.

I'd say just generally speaking, I'm a big fan of early collaboration on the team and early collaboration with the client so people have a better understanding of like the client needs. It's easier to hear it directly from the client than it is to be hearing it from someone else who has collected that information. So we'll do a pairing of both of those things really. We're going to have high level overview, but we'll also have a collection of those times to actually meet with the client to understand them and get to know them a little bit better.

Megan Zlock: And there are some cases where we'll have some level of mentorship, and those will be sometimes we might have two designers or two developers on a project, if you do need somebody more experienced to chip in now and then.

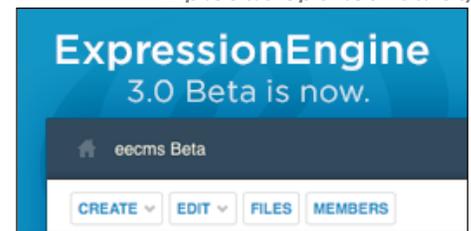
Lea Alcantara: Okay, so speaking of that, then do you and Owen work directly together, or do you tend to have, again like a project manager or something who helps facilitate?

Megan Zlock: Directly, definitely.

Owen Shifflett: Absolutely.

Megan Zlock: The project manager helps keep us on focus and on task in deadlines, of course.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Megan Zlock: But for the most part, we're meeting face to face. The project manager might help time some of those things, but it's really just us working together.

Owen Shifflett: Yeah, absolutely, because like nothing beats working together face to face.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I couldn't agree more. For me, it's a bit of a contrast to some of the early, early stuff I did in my career where actually, and this was before I was very skilled at actual front-end development or design, I was doing project management, and I was the conduit between the designer and the developer. It's almost like the developer couldn't understand what the designer was saying.

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

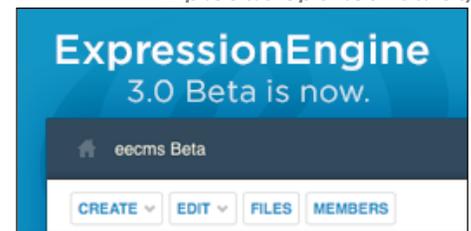
Emily Lewis: The designer couldn't relate to the developer and I was the person in the middle who had to translate.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: And in our own company, that doesn't happen. Lea and I always work directly together, but we wouldn't even want that because you do miss that opportunity. If you don't understand each other, then you take the time to understand what the other person is saying.
[Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: Because something was lost with that sort of older model that I had to follow. So do you guys have any overlap in your skill sets? I mean, Megan, you mentioned in the beginning that you explore your sort of creative side and illustrate and things like that in the evenings. But in terms



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of your skill sets, Owen, do you code at all. Megan, do you do any design work as part of your front-end responsibilities at Viget?

Owen Shifflett: So I'll update myself a little bit. When I actually started doing design, it was in 2003 I graduated from school and I actually started out as a Flash developer and designer.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

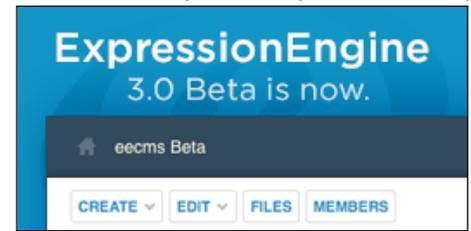
Lea Alcantara: Oh wow, yeah.

Owen Shifflett: So I learned ActionScript at the time. With that, I have a general understanding of coding and coding practices, but I really think it's important mostly to have a shared vocabulary and a certain level of empathy more importantly than it is to be able to dive in and do heavy JavaScript coding, for example. So for me, it's very much around like being able to speak the lingo even though I'm not necessarily able to execute upon it.

Emily Lewis: How about you, Megan, do you introduce any actual design or illustration or even collaboration with Owen on the design aspects when you two are working together?

Megan Zlock: As far as where my skills lie, I can do some design. I have some level of eye, but I certainly have some weaknesses. I am not great with typography just because I don't have the education there, so I will definitely lean on Owen for things like that, but I have been known in some projects if we're adding elements to an existing site, I can kind of take the work that's already there and kind of make some new elements in the same style, and some of the designers trust me to do that.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Megan Zlock: And so I have some skill there.

Owen Shifflett: Megan is a very talented illustrator. Don't let her throw you wrong.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: You know, Lea, I'm curious how you feel about our collaboration when it comes to design because you do the actual work, but there's a whole lot of you and me going back and forth, and me interjecting my opinions. [Laughs]

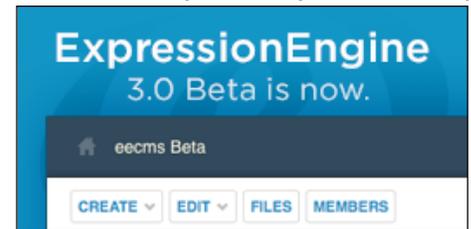
Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah. I absolutely think it's important, even though I'm the primary designer, to speak to someone who has a good eye to steer you properly, because even though I have the education, like I went to design school and all those kinds of things, the first thing I always put up isn't often the final product.

When you're stuck in your own head, it's hard to really be critical over what's going on until you get that second eye, so I think it's super important. The other thing too is Emily does have a really good eye. On top of that, because of that, especially with the responsive, I trust her a lot to fill in the blanks in between viewports.

Megan Zlock: Yeah, it kind of happens with me a lot too. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah.

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: Well, because it's just like I can't dictate thousands of variations in pixels. That's just going to be insane. I could establish standards and I could establish a system saying like, "Here's where the proportion should be, and here is where things should fall."

But at some point, especially when you hand it over to a front-end developer and there still all that in between, I need to be able to trust that developer to understand how to fill in the blanks, like without having to explicitly dictate that, "Okay, that box is now going to be 25% smaller because it's a different screen size." So definitely, I think it's super, super important to have a more collaborative mindset when you're speaking to a developer as a designer.

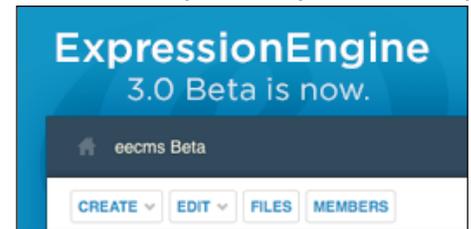
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Emily Lewis: Megan, you mentioned that you experienced that a bit. Can you talk a little bit about how that is one of the newer things in my repertoire? So how has that evolved for you now that there may be this sort of in-between stages that may not have been explicitly designed in a comp? Where have you found your input falling? Is it come sooner or is it when you're actually beginning the coding and can experience it in the browser, or are you making those decisions in your head earlier on when you're seeing the initial comps?

Megan Zlock: I really liked to be involved earlier on in the process, but I feel like we don't always have responsive conversations quite that soon.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: That sometimes when there's a very complicated UI element, that I'm like, "What is that going to look like on a phone?" So that conversation might come up pretty early. Later on when I do start to get PSDs or comps and all of that, that conversation starts happening a little bit more or it



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might not happen at all. Some designers trust me to kind of go with it. We have a policy at Viget that you usually you do get a phone size and mobile size comp, not always tablet.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: But sometimes I'll even tell a designer like, "Don't worry about that page. I got it. It's just going to stack."

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Megan Zlock: So I'm probably a little more flexible than some of other developers who do want that information. They want to know exactly what you want it to look like, whereas I'm more flexible like, "I think I got this."

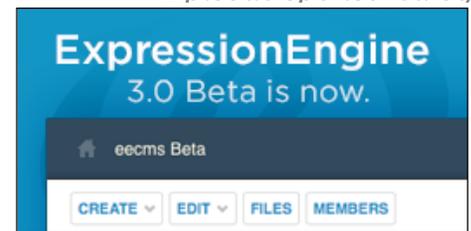
Emily Lewis: How about you, Owen? Where has that changed your process and your approach to collaboration with a front-end developer having to address something when you're dealing in a responsive project?

Owen Shifflett: Yeah, I think early on with responsive, it was incredibly difficult, like it was a point of contention when I first started working for them.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Owen Shifflett: Now, I see obviously. I'd see the value tenfold, a hundredfold, a million-fold, but for me a lot of it, I feel that we're starting to move into a trend where some of these things are being a little more standardized and we know what to expect now.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Owen Shifflett: So some of those things can get worked out during the design process, and some of those things can get worked out during build out, and I have leaned more and more in the direction of having those things, and just having conversations early on around what the expectations are from a strategic standpoint of like what are we trying to do. I mean, how many customers are looking at this on a mobile site so we can actually shift focus.

If there are a high number of mobile users, then maybe we should actually start with mobile and really kind of look more broadly at like where we should actually be starting the project to begin with. But as when it comes to Megan and I, I like working just directly with her to address problems as they arise and then we'll also work at the beginning of a project to make sure that we're just covering all our bases upfront.

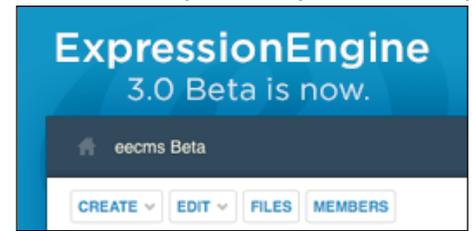
Emily Lewis: And if I could take a step back, I neglected to ask this, but do you guys work together on every project, or is it majority, or is it just ad hoc and you never really know in a given time period what you two will be working on together?

Megan Zlock: We don't always work together. We have very different sets of like designers, developers and everything. It all depends on availability who ends up on what project and skill set, not just availability, but we just happen to have worked together on a couple of projects recently. So we're very in sync at the moment.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]



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Emily Lewis: Oh, I would imagine that's probably something that makes it easier for every other project that you two get to do together because you sort of already worked out how you like to work together.

Owen Shifflett: Absolutely, absolutely. I think that's a huge benefit, and something that I'm interested in doing more of in the future. I mean, there are some companies that work on just definitive project teams.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Owen Shifflett: They're better set when they work from months and sometimes years together. That's not necessarily our model, and it's fun to be able to work with a bunch of different people to learn how different people work.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Owen Shifflett: But it's also fun to really sit down with someone and work for a long period of time until you get into a really good rhythm.

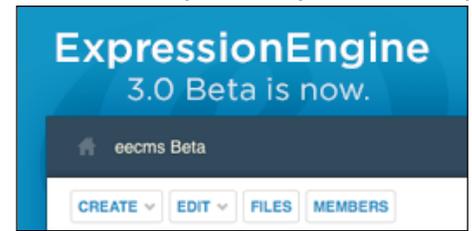
Megan Zlock: Viget also has a very good policy of whenever a project ends, we do like a retrospective when we kind of examine what worked in a project and what didn't.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: And communication comes into that as well.

Emily Lewis: I love that you called it a retrospective. It bugs me to know, and when call it post-mortem as if they died. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



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Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: [Laughs] They died.

Lea Alcantara: They died.

Emily Lewis: Do you know what I mean?

Lea Alcantara: Totally.

Emily Lewis: Like you've just created something, now let's talk about how it's dead. It doesn't make sense to me. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

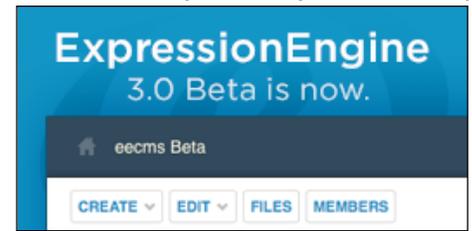
Lea Alcantara: Well, I'm curious in regards to this constant communication. Do you have any formalization of this process? For example, like every time you start a project, you always have like one specific meeting, or do you always go on Slack at certain points of the day? Like I'm just trying to figure out like how fluid and how rigid are the communication patterns when you work together.

Megan Zlock: I think we always start with the best intentions of having regular meetings or scheduled meetings.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] Okay, right.

Megan Zlock: But then they always just end up devolving into like, "Hey, can you look at this now?"

Emily Lewis: Right. [Laughs]



Lea Alcantara: Right.

Owen Shifflett: What Megan means is that I walk down the 80 steps from my desk at one of the room to her desk at the other.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: And then I stand next to her until she acknowledges that I'm standing there.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: One of these days I should just leave my headphones on. [Laughs]

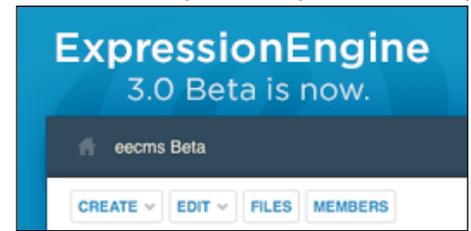
Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: I would deserve it.

Emily Lewis: You know, Lea and I find that true as well even though we're distributed. We aren't even in the same city, but we do keep to a regular schedule of checking in with each other on projects. But if Lea has something she wants my input, she's immediately jumping on chat and just, "I'd love your input now, or I was thinking this."



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Emily Lewis: I'll shoot her a quick message because when I was driving at the store, I got some ideas that I want her to incorporate.

Lea Alcantara: Right, right.

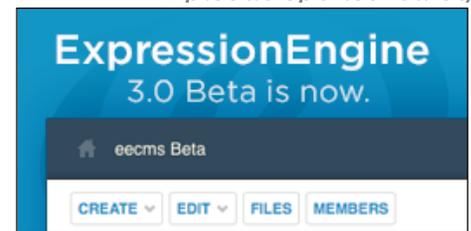
Emily Lewis: And I feel like for us, at least, as long as we have the foundation where we know we have key check-in points, particularly for the client's benefit, but that we can do that sort of as-needed, ad hoc collaboration.

Megan Zlock: I think the structure for meetings is less important as long as you are meeting.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Megan Zlock: And it's certainly important to meet at the beginning so the developer who's coming in later somewhere in the middle so he can get an idea of progress, and definitely at the end, I love making sure that I'm talking to the designer at the end and if they have an investment and a chance to speak about the developed design.

Owen Shifflett: Yeah, I think investment is really important. I also call it like mutual ownership, so I think especially during the beginning of the project, we're working very closely together to have a mutual stake in the outcome of the project because when things arise and problems arise, which they always will, whether it'd be client-driven or technology-driven or design-driven problems, if we both still have an understanding of what the overarching goal is and we're both really rooted in that concept, it's a lot easier to overcome hurdles.



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Lea Alcantara: So let's talk a little bit about those hurdles. All of four of us here, we've gotten into a rhythm. It seems like we're all in good teams. However, that isn't always true and there is almost that stereotype in our industry that designers and developers are butting heads and they're always disagreeing. Why do you think that is, Owen?

Owen Shifflett: I think there is some fairness in that stereotype, but I think mostly it's traditionally because I think we have different goals between development and design. So for example, like if the designer is focused on telling a story and the front-end developer's main focus is delivering that story as fast as possible to multiple devices across the world, I mean, those are still aiming towards the same end goal, but the way that we approach those in the rules that we're defining to solve those problems are very different. So even though we're trying to solve the same problem, we're coming at it from two different ends of the spectrum.

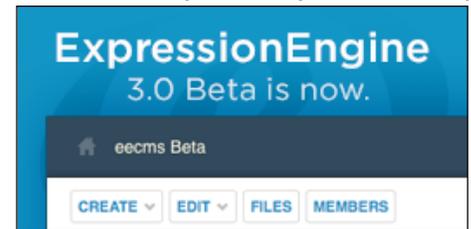
Megan Zlock: I agree with that. I think there's also, for designers, I feel like also have to like really trust your developer to execute your design.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: Because the end product is the website, and like no matter how great your Photoshop comps are, it's up to that developer to like make your vision into like a living thing.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: And I think that some tension can come there because you just have that loss of control as a designer and it's up to the developer, and the developer might not agree with some things and you can kind of like butt heads there, and yes, it comes down to look and feel versus performance in some cases.



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Emily Lewis: Right.

Megan Zlock: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: You know as a front-end developer myself working with designers through the course of my career, I also think another thing that can be part of that misperception or maybe reality for some of that butting of heads is actually ego. I feel like it enters the picture for both the designer and the developer, and it's like the designer was just really invested in what they have created, the vision they have, and the developer was really invested in performance or maybe some accessibility thing and they don't exactly align, and yet their egos prevent them from sort of accepting that that the compromise is how the goal is going to be achieved for both.

I think it was interesting, Owen, that you mentioned it's about investment, and I think that, for me, it's investment in the overall goal rather than your individual goals.

Owen Shifflett: Yeah. I agree with that. It's also investing in each other as well.

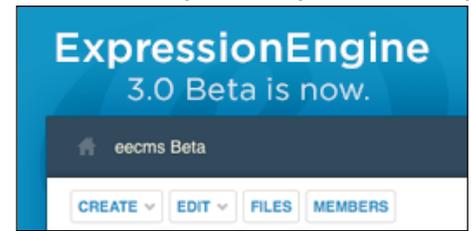
Lea Alcantara: Right.

Emily Lewis: Oh yeah.

Owen Shifflett: I want to make sure that it's important to me that I'm having fun. It's also really important to me that Megan is having fun, and it's very easy, from egotistical standpoint to get wrapped up in yourself or what you're doing to the point where you're making it so other people can't also have fun.

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Lea Alcantara: Right.



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Owen Shifflett: So just to have the empathy in place, which I think comes with practice, right?

Emily Lewis: Right.

Owen Shifflett: It's not inherently something that you're just going to be able to do right off the gate, and honestly, this may mean I have to work my entire career on, you know?

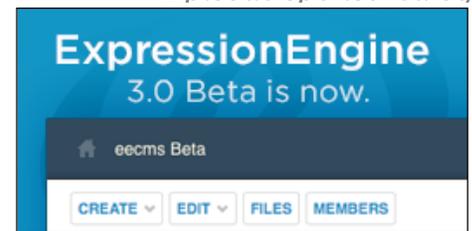
Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, that's one of those skills that while we're trying to fine tune our technical or even creative skills, we also needed to be fine tuning those softer skills that let us work better together.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I think I actually remember reading this article ([Empathy is Actually a Choice](#)) that said that empathy can be taught, even to sociopaths, like that it actually is something that you have to practice, and then when you practice it you actually start to understand and learn different perspectives, but that only happens when you actually work with other people.

I feel like maybe, and this is just me going off on a little like side tangent here, possible part of the issue with designer-developer conflicts is that when you're designing, it's just you and your computer at that point, and when you're developing, it's just you and that computer when you're actually doing the production work, and it's a very singular process and you do that for hours, and then you forget you need to talk to somebody else.

Then this is also an industry where lots of people work from home, lots of people also work for themselves, and so they might not have that regular practice that we talked about that you need to have in order to build that empathy muscle.



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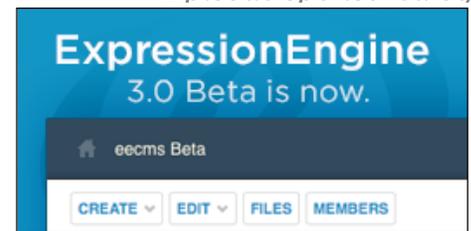
Emily Lewis: Or even you get the situation where maybe this might not be so much like an agency like Viget, but if you're working for yourself like a freelancer or even us, Lea, when we work as a subcontractor, we get a design that's already been designed. There was no chance to talk to the designer. It came to us to build it out, and that happens also and so you don't get to flex that muscle because you're working with a static deliverable at that point. You're not even working with a person.

Megan Zlock: We'll do that work occasionally. It's really not typical of Viget, but yeah, we prefer to collaborate. We just always feel that you get better results when you're working with the team.

So if we are working with an outside team, we've occasionally done larger integration projects where we'll have one of our front-end developers at Viget working with an outside team who is doing the dev work if it's not on Rails, if it's maybe on like Drupal or some larger service that we don't specialize in but we're still doing the front-end work, but we're still very collaborative with their team when we do that, and then we are kind of letting go some of the execution in that case, like we're handing over HTML files, JavaScript files, and it's kind of up to them to put all the pieces together.

We might have some typical templates and then they have to put some of the pieces together for the atypical template.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I think it's one of those things we say on or I swear on almost every episode, it all depends on the client and the project and what the situation is in terms of how the approach is going to be and how a team is going to be put together. So that's a good point of trying to get that collaboration in even if you aren't like an all-internal team all working together, but you're working with a third party.



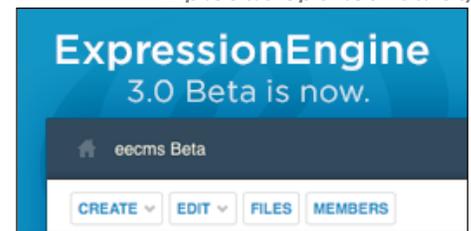
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Also, if you're not able to get that particular collaboration going, what works for us recently was for a client who was referred to us by the agency, but they had already done the design at that point and they were finished with their end and just needed implementation, and so while we had these designs that had already been approved by the client, we then collaborated with the client on those designs to be like, "Well, what would you think about making this adjustment here because of XYZ reason for the CMS or XYZ reason for a mobile experience?"

And so we were still able to make sure that we had some input on the design so that we could execute it in a way that we felt was reflective of the overall client goals. So there is always an opportunity to have more input, I think, or more collaboration on a design even if you can't get one on one with the designer. As long as you're building something, there is still a chance to tweak it and adjust it if it hits the goal better.

Lea Alcantara: So Owen, you work regularly with Megan and other developers and stuff, let's talk about advice. In what ways you do believe you can best convey how you want a design to unfold that they understand?

Owen Shifflett: Sure. I do a lot of storyboarding here, just traditional paper and pencil storyboarding. I don't like to do any unnecessary comps unless we really have to upfront, but we have been relying a lot more on prototyping now, but hand sketching prototyping is good also using other tools. I haven't used too many of them myself yet, but we've been playing around with a couple of those online prototyping tools. I mean, really for me, it's all goes back to this like involving people really early in the process, really early in my process, and being able to kind of talk through what I have going on in my head.



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I mean, I can just speak from the last project that Megan and I worked on where I actually came up with a lot of ways that we were going to kind of approach the build and even the CMS integration before I even stepped foot into Photoshop to design a comp, and a lot of that came from doing strategy documentation and going through a creative strategy phase with a client to figure out like what their core need was and how they should be seen on the web and through the digital experience, and a lot of that, Megan was very closely involved in.

We were all very involved in that, and we're able to come up with some things early on that really helped to, not only from a front-end development perspective, drive the work that she was doing, but also drive the work that I was working on. So it was just a very kind of "all hands on deck" kind of approach which I love.

Megan Zlock: I kind of like Owen's "no PSD that you don't need" approach.

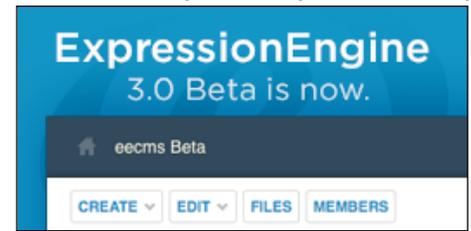
Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: Because I kind of like to fill in the gaps myself. Especially with animation stuff, like some designers like to go into After Effects and really prescribe what should happen, but I have a little bit of animation experience, a little bit of animation background, and so I kind of like to do that myself, so instead of them doing that, I'm like, "Hey, why don't you give me a shot, and then we can talk about it." [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: It's more fun that way. It's more fun. You're going to get more. There are more options on the table at that point if you have a couple of different people looking at it.



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Emily Lewis: Absolutely. Yeah, it sounds like just in general at Viget, it's just a very collaborative environment in general. It is fluid based on obviously the project's needs, but also individually how you like to work. Like Owen, you were saying that you do a lot of hand sketching, but other people are using prototyping. I like hearing things like that rather than a prescriptive everyone does it XYZ way, because like you said, you're going to get the best results with, what, people feel good working in.

Owen Shifflett: Absolutely, and we also do a lot of sharing here, so we actually have these micro classes during the middle of the day where someone would have worked with a new tool or have been exploring a new kind of way to execute, and they'll give lunchtime talks on what they learned and what they liked and didn't like, and so we all have an opportunity to kind of learn and improve and adopt whatever methods we think work best.

Megan Zlock: Yeah, and the micro classes are completely voluntary. It's not something prescribed.

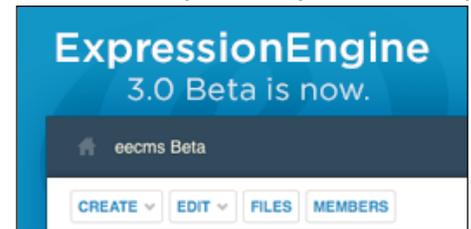
Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: Like if you want to run one, you're not told to run one. You're just like, "I learned something new, let me share this."

Emily Lewis: That's cool. Yeah, I think Lea and I are the two of us, but we're a little bit the same. Anytime I figured out how to do something and how the work flow is best for me, and even though Lea and I, she does the design and I do the front-end development, we still do use the same systems and tools. So we write it, we'd write up some documentation, and we send it to the person and say, "Next time you have to do this. Try this and let me know what you think." So it's our sort of own impromptu sharing because we do want to speak the same language. Even though we have to apply



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it in different areas, her knowing my processes and the tools that I'm using, even if she's not actively using them as much as I am, it means I can talk to her about them.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, absolutely. Speaking of tools, I'm interested in the tools Megan and Owen are using to communicate with each other. What are the primary ways you do that to share your work?

Megan Zlock: Our typical tools, I can't say we use anything fancy or unusual. We use Slack, regular email, Basecamp, those are all the typical tools we use every day. Owen and I personally like to meet in person a lot, but other designers I've worked with, it's easier to catch them on Slack, particularly because we have three different offices so we do have to do some inter-office communication.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Megan Zlock: So Slack is really helpful. I love sending screenshots back and forth and to be like, "Does this look right yet?" Or messing with the staging or integration environment to like put up what I'm working on and say, "What do you think?" I don't know if we've quite gotten annotations and like little kinds of notes right yet or how to share that feedback because none of our tools quite do that in a great way.

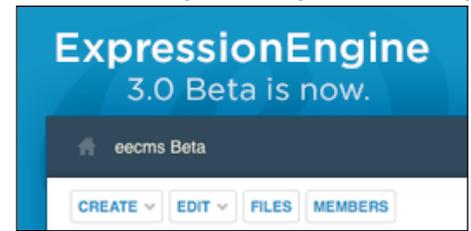
Owen Shifflett: Yeah, they never seem to provide the kind of back and forth that I'm looking. I'm extroverted to a fault.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: So like I feed off of the communication and in-person and being able to really kind of like even do a little sparring, like kicking around ideas.

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Emily Lewis: Right.

Owen Shifflett: So for me, I've never been able to recreate that, even if it's over Hangout, by the way.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Owen Shifflett: I mean, we use Hangout as well when we're working remotely. I've never been able to find a tool that really does it for me in the same way. I mean, Slack does it slightly because we can have silly animated GIFs to kind of talk about our feelings.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: But other than that, that face to face whether it'd be through Hangout or in-person really helps me stay engaged.

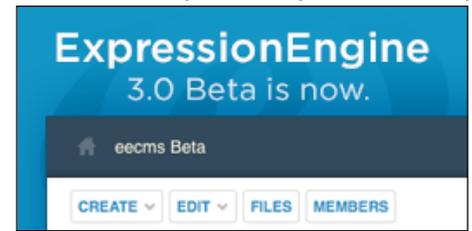
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Emily Lewis: Well, I was going to ask when you have those face to face, do you ever do like a follow-up email or note being like, "Here's what we talked about?"

Owen Shifflett: Do we, Megan?

Megan Zlock: I don't think we do those kinds of things because when we meet up in person, the changes and what we've decided goes directly into the work.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Lea Alcantara: Right.

Megan Zlock: I think we could actually get much better about that because Owen and I have had conversations where a month later, I'll come in and be like, "I think we've said this a month ago."

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: And he'll be like...

Owen Shifflett: That happens very rarely. I'm the one who has to write everything down. I will remind Megan about something and she was like, "I already handled that."

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: And it will have been a month, and I don't know how she remembers stuff, but I usually take notes while we're doing the meeting, even though it's in sloppy handwriting, I usually have something to remember, but she's got a fantastic memory. I don't know how she does it.

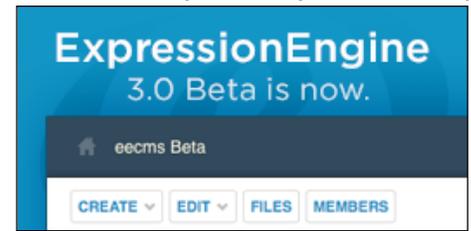
Emily Lewis: Yeah, I think with Lea and I, I think I'm the note taker. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I know, a 100%. If there's not a to-do list written somewhere, it's at my brain, and Emily is the to-do list queen, so I leave that to her capable hands. [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] But you know it's sort of worked out well because I like making lists. [Laughs]



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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: It actually helps me feel, you know. It's that silly thing of like if there's one thing you can control, it makes you feel like you have control over something. So if we're on a tight timeline, we've got a lot of stuff going, a to-do list really makes me feel grounded, and so Lea is not really caring about that stuff and lets me do it. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Which I like, but then she gets the benefit of being like, "Oh yeah, we did talk about that one little thing." I'd think how she'd tracked that. [Laughs]

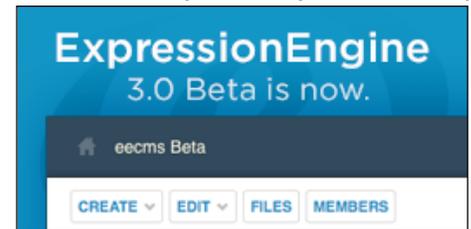
Lea Alcantara: Yeah, totally, totally.

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: My to-do lists usually take the form of GitHub issues.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Megan Zlock: I will occasionally write in pencil, like I've got a little pad next to my desk. I'll occasionally write a to-do list there, but that's usually when I'm feeling a little overwhelmed and I need to like break down the problem I'm solving in smaller bits.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: But I can't necessarily do any GitHub issue, which is like one big ticket essentially.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Megan Zlock: So that's where my notes are, and they make sense to no one else because they're like two words and I'd check them off, and Owen never sees those. [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: I do like writing GitHub issues for other people, not to myself.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

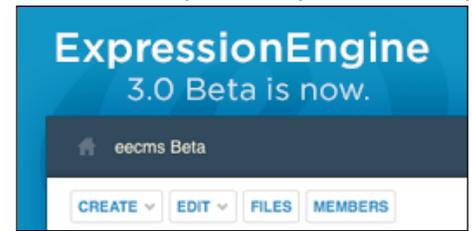
Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Do you guys use GitHub internally for your development?

Megan Zlock: Yes, pretty much all of our projects live on GitHub in different repos. Pretty much everything is private for all of our clients though.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: Although we do have some open source projects that are up there too.



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Emily Lewis: Yeah, we don't use GitHub very much at all. We instead use the Beanstalk as our central repository.

Megan Zlock: Okay.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I think it's just different tools, different people pick different things.

Megan Zlock: I don't think we have ever quite figured out ticketing either, like we use GitHub issues on some projects, but that was like what we happen to use on their last project. We keep jumping around on that a little bit. I think we're trying to find the perfect tool.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: And I think everyone is trying to find the perfect tool and nothing quite fits that.
[Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, yeah, totally.

Owen Shifflett: I mean, we have used Unfuddle as well in the past, but I've always felt that that was more of a development-focused tool. It doesn't translate well to design tasking.

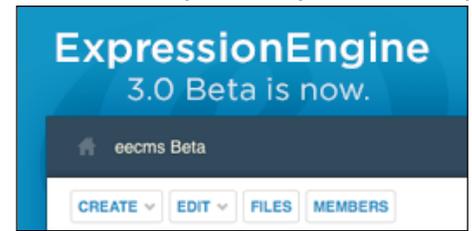
Lea Alcantara: Right.

Owen Shifflett: So yeah, Megan, we haven't found any that works perfectly.

Emily Lewis: Opportunity for someone somewhere to build that. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]



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Megan Zlock: Yeah, find a ticketing system that works for design and development.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: So in terms of you guys working together, when you work with a new developer, for example, Owen, do you ever see that they have misperceptions about you as a designer? And if so, like how you might educate them with how you work and what a designer does and how they should collaborate with a developer?

Owen Shifflett: I've gotten raps before for sure.

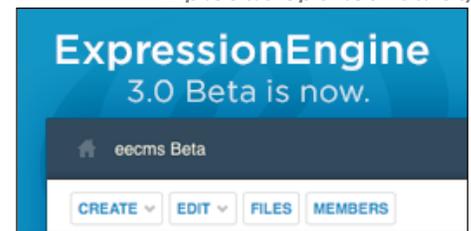
Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: I'm just so passionate, very passionate designer. Yeah, absolutely, I've ran into issues or situations, not even issues, it's just situations before where there was a perceived notion about how I should be working or how they want to work. I like to sit down at the beginning and it's part of that kind of like empathy time where you kind of like sit around and stare deeply into each other's eyes and look for the soul and kind of like talk about like how we want to work, and so I think I view projects on a couple of different levels.

One is, obviously, did you do a good job for the client? Is it solving the problems? But I also like to sit down at the beginning of projects and talk about like what do I want to get out of this personally and talk to other people around the room about what they want to get out of it personally and do a



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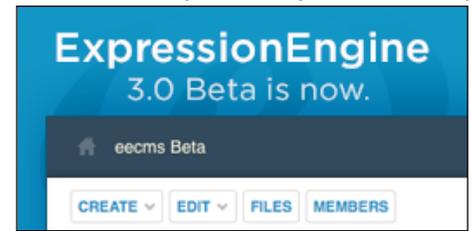
little bit of a therapist couch kind of scenario, and also talk about expectations in tiers like what do we think is going to go wrong with this project. It's kind of a pre-post mortem and talk a little bit about like what we think the struggles are going to be and try to outline those things.

Obviously, we're not going to be able to cover all the bases, but I mean, I do my best to play nice early and play nice often, and I also like to check in a lot with people. So Megan can attest to that, like I will just wander down just to see how she's doing that day, because I mean, when we're working very closely on a project, like I mean, 40 hours or 45 hours or 50 hours a weeks is tied up and working very closely with this other person to solve your client's problem, you guys got to be making sure that everything is going good, that everything is consistent and everybody is happy, because then the end products is going to be way better that way if everybody is on the same page.

Lea Alcantara: So Megan, what do you think is a common misconception designers have about coders or code?

Megan Zlock: I think it's a misconception that developers aren't interested in the design part. There are some developers who like to just get tickets, knock them out and be done, but not everybody works that way, especially a lot of the front-end developers that I know, because front-end development is kind of a fuzzy area where you get a lot of designers who kind of shift over and everything, so I think that's a misconception.

A lot of us do like to collaborate. We like to be involved early. There are some times where it's hard to be involved early because of time constraints. It's not a lack of interest. They can just be, "We have another project that's overlapping, and we can't," but the interest is certainly there to collaborate, to prototype, to get involved early and get messy and all that.



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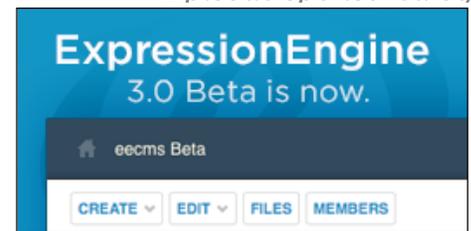
Emily Lewis: So sort of like the flip of that question, Owen, what do you wish more developers did to help you do your job better?

Owen Shifflett: I mean, really, it comes down to the getting involved earlier, asking more questions. Asking more questions is about like where you say, “What are you trying to achieve on the project,” but also start to ask questions earlier about like, okay, so if this is the best CMS, like I’d start asking some of the questions that are involved in like what will it require to set up that project, so we can start to incorporate those questions in as part of the actual concepting phase.

I think the big thing for me is also like I never mind hearing that something is not technically feasible. I mean, that’s the reality, especially if you’re trying to do innovative, interesting work, you’re going to bump against walls eventually. The thing that I love to hear though is that like, “We hit a roadblock, but here are two or three other options that we can go down.” I love hearing that someone is like not only saying like, “This is not possible,” but is providing insight and alternate options is like music to my ears.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I feel like one of the things that a skill that’s gotten better for me as Lea and I have worked together more is that when she hands over something for me to look at from a design perspective, I’m trying to think of it before I’m actually in the coding of it. If there’s something I’m concerned about execution, I’d push back on her, but I don’t just say, “No, we can’t do that,” I’d give her a reason on what the challenge will be, and then she may come back, “Well, what do you think about here?” So it’s never just, and she never takes offense to it.

She’s comfortable getting that feedback from me, and I think it’s because I make it practical. It’s not like, “Oh, I don’t like that.” It’s, “No, I can’t. I don’t think I can actually build that that way.”



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Lea Alcantara: Well, I think part of it too is that – you know I’m not a front-end whiz like you, but I understand front-end development, and I also do CMS development, so I also come from that perspective where there’s not everything is possible or if things are possible, it would be really expensive or time consuming to execute, so I’ve already got that built in empathy.

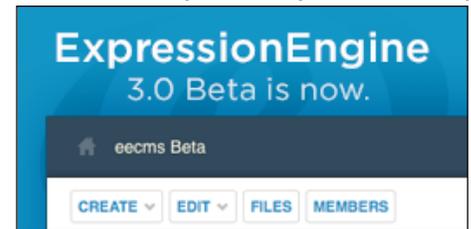
In fact, actually, with one of our recent projects, I designed something. After I sent it to you, I explained, “This is the reason why I decided to go with this type of design because in the CMS that we chose, it doesn’t have this particular feature yet. So in order to deliver what our client wants now, this is the decision I made for that particular filter option or something.” And that helps prevent a conversation saying, “Well, why don’t you do it this way instead, and that would have been the ‘obvious’ decision or better user experience.”

But sometimes, even if it’s a better user experience, if it’s not technically feasible because of the solution you chose or for whatever reason, feature-wise, or it would be too expensive at the time to do that, then I’ve already established that conversation because I basically explained, “Well, this is why I made the design decision because technically it’s not feasible at this time.”

Owen Shifflett: Absolutely. There’s a level of education that’s involved, which is just great.

Megan Zlock: And I think that’s pretty powerful for developers too if you’re always giving other options and giving reasons for why you can’t do something than when you do hit a wall and you really can’t do something, the designer completely understands. Like if you say no too many times, it’s just like, “Really, you’re saying no again?” But if you really hit a wall, like if I say no to Owen, he knows like it can’t be done.

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Owen Shifflett: Not to say that there isn't any moment. I mean, we've been painting this as a pretty picture. I think there are plenty of times where Megan and I have bumped heads and we had a good clean argument about things, and the actual final end result wasn't what either of us was expecting it to be, like it took a new direction. So I don't want it to seem like we're always like high fiving in the hallway.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: So I mean, there are moments where a good – I mean, I wouldn't say argument, but a very good, deliberate heated discussion will yield some great stuff, and that ability to do that and to do it professionally, I feel is like a really, really great thing to be able to have as part of the toolset, and just have a good argument sometimes just to work stuff out.

Emily Lewis: Is that something that you guys naturally fell into, or have you had to work on how to make a debate productive?

Owen Shifflett: Oh, absolutely. We had to work. [Laughs]

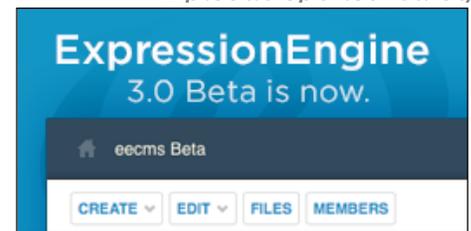
Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: Megan, do you want to take that?

Megan Zlock: I think Owen and I kind of have a good flow partially because we have complementing personalities. So Owen is very extroverted and I'm like very introverted, so he'll have like a lot of



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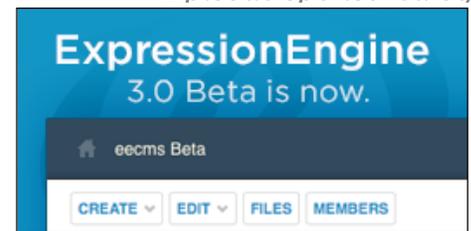
feedback and everything and I'll kind of internalize that, and we kind of go back and forth with that, and I kind of like reason with the info he's given me and everything, and so I think we kind of have a unique flow. We have good personalities to work with each other, but some of it, you do have to work it. Sorry, I'm not wording this very well.

Owen Shifflett: I come from an agency background where being a bully was more acceptable and actually championed, and we don't tolerate that at Viget. So I definitely learned over the years to be a better communicator. You can still have a heated good argument about something without being a bully, so I think that's a big thing for me over the years is learning how to, you know, and it's actually what you said, turns something from an argument into something that you're going to get something out of the end of it.

Lea Alcantara: Sure. Did you consult anybody or read any books or websites that helped fine tune arguments into an actual useful debate?

Owen Shifflett: Well, actually, as you had mentioned, soft skills area, we're really big on soft skills as well as our hard skills. So actually, a lot of the stuff I'd picked up while I've been here, my boss, Tom Osborne, is a fantastic soft skills kind of guy, and he knows how to talk. I've learned so much from him about how to talk to clients and interact on a daily basis with coworkers. It's been a huge thing for me since I've been here, but as for book-wise, I can't think anything on top of my head.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, for me, I feel like that's one of those things that you really can learn some of the most from just seeing it in others, like you mentioned, your boss, and I recall the conversation we had recently with Dan Mall and how he tries to carry himself in a certain way as a professional and that that is a powerful way for him to show others how they should act and how they should treat others. I think it all circles back ultimately to empathy.



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If you have that discussion like you've described, Owen, in the beginning where you're sort of not just figuring out what the client's goals, but what does the developer wants out of it, what does the designer wants out of it, and then all of a sudden you're thinking about this person as a person, not just this cog who's going to help you get something done.

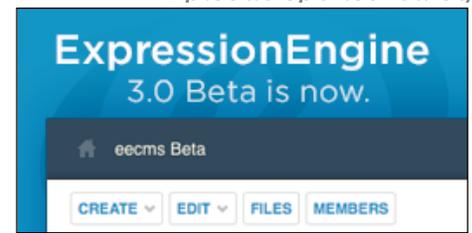
You care about how they feel. I know that Lea, because I care so much about how Lea feels in her satisfaction in a project, that I feel like I'm a better communicator just because I'm concerned with how anything I say back to her is going to be perceived not because she's thin skinned, she's the opposite, it's just that it's up to me to take the time to make sure I'm communicating clearly. It's not someone, whether they're thin skinned or thick skinned, it's up to me how I talk to them.

Owen Shifflett: I couldn't agree more.

Lea Alcantara: I actually have two books that I would recommend people read if they want to have more, let's say, useful conversations. The first book is called *Crucial Conversations: Tools for Talking When Stakes Are High*. I remember like skimming through the book. So sorry, I didn't read thoroughly, but still what I got out of it was like I found it just really useful.

Even if some things could seem obvious, sometimes you just need to have people outline an actual scenario and just alternate phrases and ways to like change the mood, so that it becomes a little bit more productive, and this one isn't necessary just for like business, although a lot of people buy this book for business. It just talks about like defusing tough personal conversations as well.

And then the other one which is an oldie, but a goodie, and I'm sure everyone has heard of it, but it's called *How to Win Friends & Influence People* by Dale Carnegie, which I think everyone should just read.



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Emily Lewis: Excellent. I want to ask Megan and Owen for some final pieces of advice, but before we do, I don't want to forget to ask Megan the same question we asked Owen. Megan, what do you wished more designers did to help you do your job better?

Megan Zlock: One thing I wished that designers did a little more is let go of your work a little bit earlier. I'll sometimes have a problem where I'd need to start a project for like the deadline is coming whatever else and I'd just have hours, whatever it is, and they'll be like, "Oh, the PSDs aren't quite ready yet. We've got another round of feedback. It's like, "No, just send them on. You don't have to go up to them. They don't have to be perfect. Just tell me what changed later."

Emily Lewis: Right, right.

Megan Zlock: So that's perfectly okay. You can let go a little bit.

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

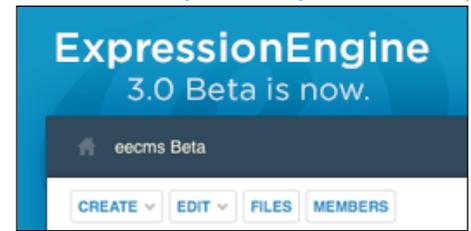
Megan Zlock: Feel free to hand it off and we can have conversations about the changes. In fact, it might be faster for me to make the changes than for you to go through all of the PSDs.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Megan Zlock: So I think that's one piece of advice. Also, I think it's good to communicate what's in your PSDs.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Megan Zlock: I've come across this a couple of times where some designers use layer comps, some people just have like groups of layers and things like that, and sometimes they miss things because I don't work in Photoshop every day. So I know this came up recently where it's like, "Oh yeah, there



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supposed to be Carousel in that one part of that one design,” and I was like, “Wait, I don’t remember seeing that. There is just an image there, right?”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

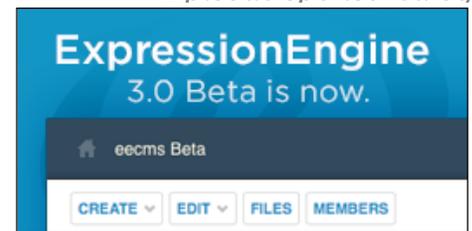
Megan Zlock: Then I looked back in the PSDs and sure enough, there is like a layer that was like hidden where it’s like the arrow buttons. So yeah, it’s good to communicate and go over the files I think.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, I think that’s a good point. One of my couple of things I hate the most, and Lea has never done this to me, but it’s that you get a PSD and nothing is organized in it, and half of the stuff is turned off. It’s just a series of layers and nothing is named in any semantic way that gives me any context, and then I have to go back and be like, “Well, what’s happening here, and what this is for? Is this a special state, or is this something that you’ve just forgot to remove from the whole file?”

But then another thing that I love Lea has started doing for me as a developer, and it saves me some time, is not only does she tell me what’s in the PSD, but she extracts out certain things in the PSD like colors and font sizes and things like that. So when I’m getting like my Sass variables and stuff set up, I don’t even have to open the PSD. I’m just going through her list of all the different typography choices and sizes and the colors that she has decided on. I don’t have to use the eye-dropper.

Lea Alcantara: Well, especially because I sometimes am lazy in my PSDs, and I started using the eye-dropper, even though it can be inaccurate, so I wanted to make sure that you use the right blue from my initial design choice than the lazy eye-dropper blue that I just shoved in.

Emily Lewis: Right.



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Owen Shifflett: I feel like it happens to me on every single project.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: I just provide Megan with a flattened file. Isn't that the way everyone else does it? It can never be changed, never be modified, isn't it?

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: I'm so glad you're kidding.

Owen Shifflett: I'm joking, of course.

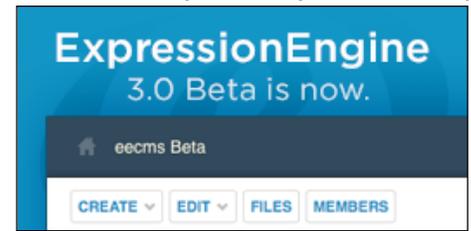
Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: All right, before we wrap up, Megan just offered some final pieces of advice to developers. Owen, do you have a final piece of advice for designers to help them work better with developers, something that you've learned along the way that's really crucial?

Owen Shifflett: Yeah, I'd say it's actually very similar. I'd say the big thing is inviting people into your process. I think as designers, we like to go off and really kind of like hone our idea and we don't



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want to share with anybody until it's fully baked because we're afraid it's going to break in half because it's just very incredibly fragile.

So I'd say the biggest thing is like to share more often and early, that some of the best ideas of that are not the initial ones we have, but the ones that come out of conversation, and then it kind of just the endpoint for me is like to be honest and be flexible and be willing and ready to educate everyone around you about the reasons why you're making the decisions you're making. If you can't sell your ideas to your coworkers and the people working with you on the project, there's no way you'll be able to sell them to clients.

Lea Alcantara: Totally.

Emily Lewis: It's so true.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

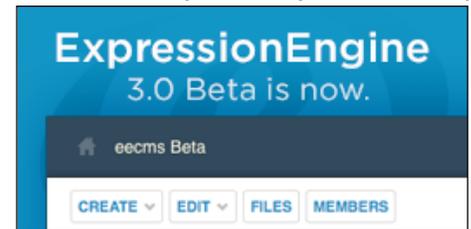
Emily Lewis: How about you, Megan, is there something you could say to fellow developers that you've learned that's been really important in helping you well with other designers?

Megan Zlock: Yeah, a few pieces of advice I guess would be that I think has helped me a lot is that I know a little bit of design language. So if Owen says like kerning or tracking, I know he's talking about like letter spacing or leading is like line heights.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Megan Zlock: So if we know some of the same words, it avoids some confusion, and also Owen says he likes it when developers give like alternatives, he totally got that because I do that. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

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Megan Zlock: I think it's really easy to say no and just stop there and it's a lot harder and a lot more valuable to say why you can't do it. So, a little bit of education, just like Owen said, is the other way. Providing a little bit of education and providing alternatives are so valuable, and you can come through a decision much quicker instead of fighting about it. It's like, "I can't do this, but I can do this or this," and that helps a lot.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Awesome. Thank you so much.

Megan Zlock: Thank you.

Lea Alcantara: All right, so before we finish up, we've got our Rapid Ten Questions so our listeners can get to know you a bit better. Let's start with Megan.

Megan Zlock: Okay. [Laughs]

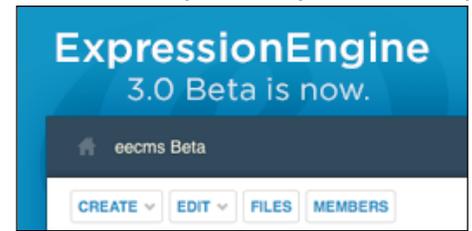
Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Are you ready?

Megan Zlock: I think so.

Lea Alcantara: Okay, question one, Android or iOS?

Megan Zlock: It's iOS.



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Emily Lewis: If you were stranded on a desert island and can only bring three things, what would you bring?

Megan Zlock: Oh, my sketch book. Because there's no power, any devices would be useless, unless I have a generator, that would be nice. Let's see, so definitely, my sketch book. I'm trying to think what else, like I'm a very practical person so I wanted to say like food and water as my other things.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: That works. What's your favorite TV show?

Megan Zlock: Oh, tough question. I don't watch a lot of TV. *Psych* was an old favorite, oddly enough.

Emily Lewis: Oh yeah.

Megan Zlock: I like kind of those like funny...

Owen Shifflett: I love that show.

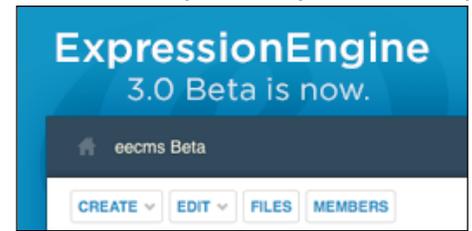
Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: I like those kinds of funny TV shows you can have on in the background and all that.

Emily Lewis: What's your favorite dessert?



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Megan Zlock: Oh, probably my aunt's bombe, which is like a chocolatey parfait kind of thing that's got like brownie and chocolate pudding and then like a quick cream on top.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, yum.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

Megan Zlock: Illustration, I guess. It's something I do on the side already. I don't know if I could do it professionally because that might suck the fun out of it, but there is that.

Emily Lewis: What profession would you not like to try?

Megan Zlock: Garbage collector.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

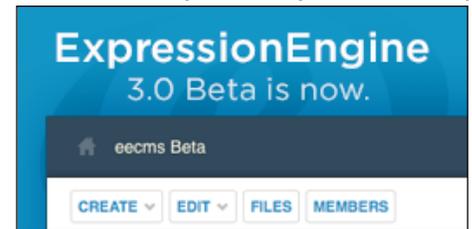
Owen Shifflett: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: What's the latest article or blog post you've read?

Megan Zlock: One of my coworker's actually. My coworker Curt [Arledge], a user experience designer, released a blog post I think this morning where they did some research on eye tracking and custom scroll elements.

Emily Lewis: If you could have a super power, what it would be?

Megan Zlock: Oh, there are so many.



Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: I think I would want to be like Iron Man.

Lea Alcantara: Nice.

Megan Zlock: Have the intelligence to build anything that I wanted.

Lea Alcantara: Nice. What music do you like to work to?

Megan Zlock: Kind of alternative rock kind of stuff. I've got kind of a mix of things that I have playing, but I often listen to this same stuff over and over. I feel like it's stuff I've gotten used to, so it's both soothing and not distracting, even though it's like not classical music, but like I'm trying to think of what I listen to, The Blue Van, Florence and the Machine, that kind of stuff.

Emily Lewis: All right, last question, cats or dogs?

Megan Zlock: Cats, but I want to get a dog. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

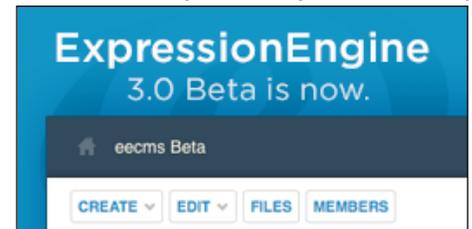
Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] Now, it's your turn, Owen.

Owen Shifflett: All right.

Lea Alcantara: All right, question one, Android or iOS?

Owen Shifflett: It's iOS.

Emily Lewis: If you were stranded on a desert island and can only bring three things, what would you bring?



Owen Shifflett: Peanut butter.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: Another jar of peanut butter.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: And probably some dark chocolate.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yum. What's your favorite TV show?

Owen Shifflett: I love *Psych*. Currently, I only have one right now, but *Psych* is definitely high on my list, oddly enough, but *The Sopranos* is probably my favorite TV show of all time.

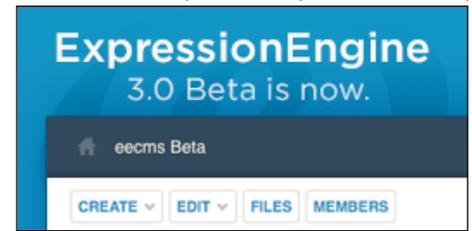
Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yes.

Emily Lewis: What's your favorite dessert?

Owen Shifflett: Brownies in any form, especially when it's made into sort of like a – I don't know – castle or stack on top of each other...

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: With peanut butter and dark chocolate? [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: Exactly. Exactly.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Owen Shifflett: What profession other than your own would you like to attempt?

Owen Shifflett: I'd like to work with woods, so like cabinet making I think would be a lot of fun.

Lea Alcantara: Cool.

Owen Shifflett: Or chair making, or something that will still require a lot of like thought process and pain.

Emily Lewis: What profession would you not like to try?

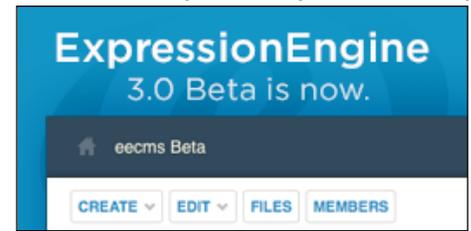
Owen Shifflett: Megan and I are the same, but I think they make a lot of money collecting trash though. Honestly, I wouldn't want to be a project manager. That looks like a really hard job.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: What's the latest article or blog post you've read?



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Owen Shifflett: I actually just read one by Rob Ford. He's the founder of FWA and it was an [article](#) on why we should appreciate Flash from a historical reference.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Owen Shifflett: So I thought it was an interesting read.

Emily Lewis: If you could have a super power, what would it be?

Owen Shifflett: The ability to rewind 30 seconds.

Megan Zlock: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

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

Owen Shifflett: I'm pretty eclectic. I listen to a lot of different stuff. It depends on my mood. If I'm tired, I usually listen to hiphop. If I'm already upbeat, I listen to the Beatles or some good rock and roll music. It's pretty much everything. Except for country music, I'm not a big country music fan.

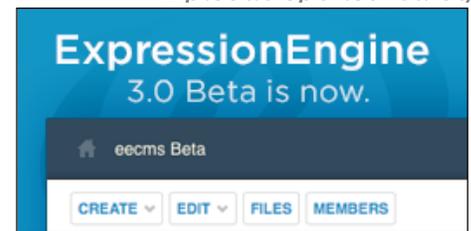
Emily Lewis: All right, lastly, cats or dogs?

Owen Shifflett: Dogs all the way.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Well, that's all the time we have for today. Thank you both for joining us.



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Owen Shifflett: Thank you.

Megan Zlock: Thank you.

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

Megan Zlock: Twitter is probably the best. I'm [@meganzlock](#), though I think I'm the only Megan Zlock in the world so it's probably not hard to find me also on LinkedIn and pretty much everything else.

Emily Lewis: How about you, Owen?

Owen Shifflett: I'm onto Twitter [@owenshifflett](#). I'm on the LinkedIn. I've got a website, check out my work, email me and let me know what you think. I love hearing from people.

Emily Lewis: Thanks again. This was a really fun conversation.

Owen Shifflett: Thank you. We really enjoyed it.

Megan Zlock: Thank you.

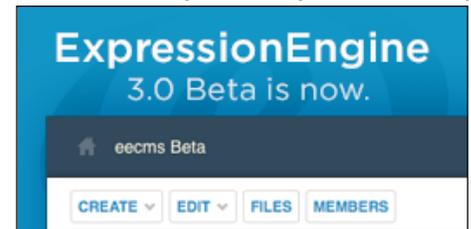
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Emily Lewis: We'd also like to thank our partners: [Arcustech](#), [Devot:ee](#) and [EE Insider](#).



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Emily Lewis: Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when we will talk about Craft e-commerce with Luke Holder. 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!

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