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CTRL+CLICK CAST #78 - Overhauling Epicurious with Eric Gillin

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[Music]

Lea Alcantara: From [Bright Umbrella](#), this is CTRL+CLICK CAST! We inspect the web for you! Today, Eric Gillin joins the show to talk about overhauling the Epicurious brand and website. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:

Emily Lewis: Emily Lewis!

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Emily Lewis: Today we are really excited to have Eric Gillin on the show. Eric is the executive director of [Epicurious](#). He oversees digital and content strategy and he's also the head of product for the food innovation group running digital product strategy across those Epicurious and Bon Appétit.

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Welcome to the show, Eric!

[Music ends]

Eric Gillin: Hey, thanks for having me.

Lea Alcantara: So Eric, can you tell our listeners a bit more about yourself?

Eric Gillin: Man, I have worked in digital media for as long as there was digital media.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: So I got my start in '99 during the first dotcom bubble.

Lea Alcantara: Nice.

Eric Gillin: I worked for TheStreet.com. Remember that?

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Eric Gillin: I started three days after their IPO and the rest of my time in digital has been building websites out of my living room, writing for websites out of my living room, and eventually going to Esquire where I was their first fulltime web editor.

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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And I kind of rebuilt that site from scratch and spent six years at Hearst, and then I came over and crossed into product. So I'm one of those people that sort of was a writer who became an editor, who became a manager, who kind of teach himself out of code to be able to make the stuff that I needed to make to become a writer.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And so the last twenty years have been really about digital media and wrestling CMSs to the ground with my bare hands.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Well, I love hearing that someone at such a high decision-making level has hands-on experience working with code and content, and so it's not just that you're bringing management and leadership, you're bringing knowledge of how the web works, which I always feel like, in my experience, leads to better products.

Eric Gillin: Yeah, I mean, it's funny, it's knowledge, but it was hard won. I remember when – God, I'm going to date myself for this whole thing, I'm so excited.



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Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: But like in 2006-2007 and obviously, everyone is like, “Hey, slide shows are great with great page views!”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: And as you know, at that point, the web was just a set of articles. So people were like, “How do we do it?” And they made it a side show, and the side show was a multi-page article, and I remember it was Fashion Week at Esquire and we had to cover one of the shows, and there were a hundred books, which meant that we had to create a hundred-page article.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Eric Gillin: And it took the poor kid named Eric Gillin additional glamor in 2007.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

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Eric Gillin: It took me forever to make one of these things.

Emily Lewis: Wow!

Eric Gillin: And I turned to my left, and there was another kid, and he was making them all day. It would take us like a half day to make one of these things, and we have like 30 to do in a day, and that was the moment where I realized that I crossed over in product because I went downstairs to talk to the developer, and I was like, “What did you build us?” And he’s like, “Well, every page needs to have SEO on it and the only way to do that is blah, blah, blah.” And he’s like, “Our kernel is built with...” And I was like, “What’s a kernel?”

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And I just kept asking questions and kept pushing back as to why things were built this way.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: And you start to understand that developers are not going to sit back, and should not sit back, and parse everything you say to protect you from yourself. If you say you want a side show, they’re going to build you a side show. If you say that every SEO slide and every site needs SEO, then that’s exactly what they’re going to do. In some level, there is no one sort of between the original ask and the actual operation of these things.



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: And I got sucked into that so fast because I wanted these tools to work and as soon as the tools started to work, we were doing great, you know?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: That was one of those times I realized it wasn't necessary the content, it was that other thing, and there was nobody on it. There was nobody in the organization that was asking that question.

Emily Lewis: And so that's kind of what your role is today, to be the translator between the business goals and how that's built out and designed?

Eric Gillin: Yeah, I think a big part of my job now is I'm the guy that knows what's easy and what's hard.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: And I know what's easy and hard for you, and so I just sit there and will go, "Hey, are you aware that it's going to be really hard for her or him to do this?"

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: Or that like, "Hey, we can do this easier." One of my favorite things is when everyone wants to either build a migration script or do an algorithm, and I'm like, "Hey, why don't we just have human beings do this?"

Emily Lewis: Right. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Right. [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Because I know that two interns can build 60 package pages in a day and a half as opposed to a team of high-priced developers trying to like fix old codes.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So I just feel like my whole thing is to just be sensible and be pragmatic, do what's good for the business and all the groups in the business. So yeah, it's really about that and having just like a global perspective because everyone does their jobs and they do their jobs well, but it doesn't mean you're going to have a great outcome.



Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: And I would say that type of process gets a lot more complicated when it's such a big site like Epicurious, there are so many moving parts. So I guess the first question is, when you got into Epicurious, were you brought in for the rehaul or did that just happen organically over time?

Eric Gillin: I was brought in four years ago to be their first real head of product.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: And I have friends that work at Google and other places that are known for great tech, and I love that with Google, you just see a white screen and a big box and you think Google works, but behind the scenes are all these different systems. It was the same thing with Epicurious. It had a historical reputation as being just fantastic at doing innovative things, and then I got there, and I was like, "This is how you were doing it?"

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] Band-Aid.

Eric Gillin: And that's when I was like, "Whoa, we need to fix this." [Laughs] They have four different CMSs.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, wow!



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Eric Gillin: Yeah, they had a custom recipe database CMS that was built from like a proto-Java, right?

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Eric Gillin: It was the original thing that they had built, the first version of Java in '95 or '96, so they have custom rolled that, and I remember talking to the developer and I'm like, "Hey, we kind of need to fix that because there's no hooks or RSS feeds or anything. We hardly do anything with it. It's not an API."

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: Wow!

Eric Gillin: And he looks at me and he said, "I'm not touching that."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: It was sort of like that room in your house that's filled with everything and you just like don't want to clean.

Emily Lewis: Right, right, right. [Laughs]



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Eric Gillin: And like that was their recipe database, and I was like, “Wow!” And then they had like TypePad for the blog, and then they used an old version of (OpenText) TeamSite for something else that was like custom rolled.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Eric Gillin: And yeah, you can kind of see that it’s like they had the island of misfit toys, you know?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And images were like saved straight to a server, and that’s it.

Lea Alcantara: Wow.

Eric Gillin: So it was one of those things where I love cooking. I love food. I grew up cooking. I love technology, and there was just that moment about three months into the job where I was like, “Am I really going to do this? Like am I really going to just like fix everything?”

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Which sounds like a Jonathan Hickman plot.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: But I was just like, “I’m going to fix everything.” And so that’s what we’ve been doing, and two years ago, the user-facing part of it finally started to get fixed. We started to unify the CMSs and then we could start to show people what Epi and editorially we stood for, which was a really, really exciting moment.

Emily Lewis: I’m curious, was there a struggle getting buy in for this idea of rebuilding everything?

Eric Gillin: No, I don’t think there was much struggle. I don’t think that people knew what I was talking about, you know?

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, right, right, right.

Eric Gillin: I could have said it and what they’re going to hear is like how it’s going to take, but I did need to get buy-ins from the developers.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And how I went about that was that I’m not a fan of waterfall development at all.



Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: I'm a fan of what I'd like to call "Wagile."

Lea Alcantara: "Wagile." Interesting.

Eric Gillin: It's part waterfall, part agile, because I think you can't be through with the agile because you can kind of agile yourself straight into a brick wall, assuming you work in a giant corporation where it's like you do need to hit dates.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: But what we did was we started to do it system by system, so the last system that we actually replaced was the recipe database. The first thing that we did was we replaced the TypePad with an internal CMS called Copilot, and then we didn't migrate the content. We kind of left it in place for a while on a Java stack.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And we slowly over time as opposed to saying, "Hey, for the next year, this business is not going to get any new features. We're not going to learn anything. We're just going to go off into a black room and come back with like a new website."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: What we did was we said, “Well, listen, an article is an article. Let’s replace articles.” So we went kind of house by house and system by system and block by block and we slowly unplugged things, which was a much safer way because if we unplug something and everything blew up and broke, we could plug it back in really quickly as opposed to like switching everything at once, you kind of don’t know where the broken bit is.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: So the buy in for the developer was pretty simple where it was like, “Hey, we’re going to do all of these things, but we’re going to do them one at a time.”

Emily Lewis: Oh, I think anybody works in this field can appreciate that kind of approach and how sound it is.

Eric Gillin: Thanks. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I mean...



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Eric Gillin: I'm sure our dev was happy about it.

Emily Lewis: Well, I feel like that's one of the biggest challenges whenever you're doing any kind of web project that doesn't get talked about enough is the project management of it, which starts at the beginning with identifying like what's possible, when can we do this, how many people will be affected by this, how can we mitigate that, and starting out with the good plan that's really informed makes a huge difference in the success of a project.

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Eric Gillin: Yeah, I also told everyone. I said, "This is going to be a lot like trying to fix a moving car while you're driving it." Right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: We can't pull over, so like you have to change the tires one at a time and everyone has got to be pretty careful because at the same time we did this, traffic pretty much doubled and then tripled.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: Right.



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Eric Gillin: Social media happened. We couldn't afford to go off, and this is why I'm so excited, and we'll talk about it later probably about the new app that's coming out on November 1st.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: Because that's another component, and that's like the last of the technical old code components that we're replacing from scratch. So as the primary consumer of some of our APIs, that app is sort of the last piece of the puzzle.

Emily Lewis: Well, let's just talk about some specifics to give people a sense of the scope of this. You mentioned earlier that one of the first things to change was to put blog articles off of TypePad into – I think you said something that was internal.

Eric Gillin: It's called Copilot, yeah.

Emily Lewis: Copilot. And then one of the last things you did was the recipe database, but what's been done overall, or is there like a laundry list of things that you've been able to sort of tick off over time?

Eric Gillin: Yeah, I mean, it's kind of nerdy.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]



Eric Gillin: I mean...

Lea Alcantara: We're nerds here.

Emily Lewis: Well, yeah. [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Perfect. [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Oh, right, right, right. I'm home. At the end of the day, what you're talking about is a move from Java-based sort of very relational SQL-style database to a no SQL kind of database that's made of Node.js.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So all of our stuff is Node.js. So Copilot is basically JavaScript front, JavaScript back, which gave us a ton of flexibility. So I think the first thing we did was – and one of the things I always tell people is I value tomorrow more than yesterday when it comes to who you're building a website. So we didn't really migrate over any of the content from TypePad.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: We just built the tomorrow that we needed, so we just had people make new articles in Copilot that were in Node.js that could populate our site. So that started the content part of it, and then we were able to easily use that framework to spin out new content types like our packaged pages or galleries or the galleries that we used to make.

Emily Lewis: And you were also using the Copilot for that?

Eric Gillin: Yeah, we were using Copilot for that as well, so Copilot was something that's a really amazing thing that Condé Nast developed, and the thing that's really cool is that there are real relationships between these data types. So when we add an article to a recipe or add a recipe to an article, that connection is real, so when you're on a recipe, that's automatically populated, and some other systems like WordPress, you might have to use tagging to make that relationship real.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So there's a one-to-one relationship where you can kind of call the Copilot API and say like, "Show me what the image looks like on this."

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And you can kind of redesign the front end of pages because what comes back is just data, so it gives us a lot of flexibility to just start over, and so a lot of where the work went was, what's your model for images, right?



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So Copilot. And we didn't roll this, but they rolled it and they started [WebReaper](#) and [Vulcan](#) (Framework), so those things cropped and resized images on the fly so that you can have responsive templates that pull in the right size and then were performant, so you're not loading a 2,000-pixel image into a 300-pixel wide mobile experience.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: So we started to get all these new tools and just started to recombine them to build a much faster, more performant thing, and then the last thing we just tackled in July was site search, which we knew that 40 to 50% of the people at your home page search.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: It's a huge path, it's a huge thing, and so how can we make the best search experience possible, and that really involved us ripping up logic and rewriting algorithms and using Copilot to return that data faster than, say, going through like other databases.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Interesting. What I'm really fascinated by with all the stuff you're saying so far is that you had decided not to just do like a migration script because I feel like a lot of people moving into like a newer or more modern systems, their first thing is like, "Let's just migrate the entire thing. Let's



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just do one giant script or whatever.” And you’re saying, it’s like, “No, let’s just build something new and start from there and add to what that new thing is.”

Eric Gillin: Yeah, well, with the rest of these we wrote a migration script.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, okay.

Eric Gillin: I think the other content, we realized, wasn’t getting a ton of traffic, you know?

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: And so recipe is where the money was, so we spent a lot of time mapping the images and making sure that those were fine and that the relationships were there.

Lea Alcantara: Make sense.

Eric Gillin: That’s why we did it last.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: Right.



Eric Gillin: But I think...

Emily Lewis: It's a good project management. I love this. [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: [Laughs] You do something though, there is something that is you're pointing out that's pretty smart, which is I think there's an OCD tendency when you're re-platforming or when you're migrating that it's like we got to get everything, and I wanted to get 80%, I want to get 75%, I want to get as much as the Epicurious that people knew and loved and was driving our business forward and would continue to, and then all of the stuff we left off to the side was like you can rebuild it.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: We can park it in place. I did some stuff where I was like, "Our mobile site isn't particularly great in the past. It's going to be better in the future, so we're going to flatten the pages."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So we scraped the pages, we flattened them, and if you look at old websites, and Epi is 21 years old this year, which is crazy.

Lea Alcantara: Wow! Yeah.

Eric Gillin: Go look at the old New York Times stories with flat HTML.



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: It's what you had, and it still works, it still renders, it's fast and performant.

Lea Alcantara: Really fast, yeah.

Eric Gillin: We're not getting a lot of ad calls on those things anyways, and if anything in there was super, super, super important, it's not hard for us to rebuild and redirect, and so we focus on the haystack and not the needles, and I think that sometimes people do focus on the needles because they're sharp and their shiny, and we were just like, "I was not going to do that. I was not going to spend my whole life migrating content from like 1998."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, and then by the time you're all done, maybe a new technology has already come out and you're like, "Okay, we need to like break all of this again." [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: Yeah.

Emily Lewis: Right.

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Eric Gillin: Right. Like natural language processing too, like instead of writing a script, by the time you got done with the migration, we could use some really great parsing to make it easy to get recipes up and out.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: If we had to write that two years ago, that was really challenging.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So we ended up saving ourselves scope too just by focusing on where the biggest opportunity was in first.

Emily Lewis: I think one of the things that stood out to me about the search when I was poking around on the site a week or two ago was how fast it was for search, and is that tied to what you were describing about how Copilot works with the data and the relationships and how it outputs the data?

Eric Gillin: Yeah, credits to Copilot for that, and credit to also our front-end and back-end teams, you know?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: They're able to sort of cache certain things so that they're quite fast, lazy loads certain things so they're really, really fast. If you notice the ad integration, the ads are kind of in a performant way put in there. So knowing that we're going to be loading that many images, we started there.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And that's been a really new thing for me, starting from a place of performance. In my career, you'd never thought about that.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah.

Eric Gillin: You'd kind of assume that if you're on dialup, that was your fault, and everyone else is on the T3.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Like you're at work with like a big screen, and like that's how it is. So performance has become this thing over the last year that I'm learning even more about the whole time.



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Emily Lewis: Absolutely, we are too. We see it more and more with our client sites and what they're coming to us for, and speed and how quickly their pages are running is becoming a higher and higher priority.

Eric Gillin: Yeah. I mean, if you think about these products like [AMP](#) from Google.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: Or [Instant Articles](#), right? Like yeah, I think we're going to look back on those things and sort of smile.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Because those things are just a way to disambiguate slow sites.

Emily Lewis: Yeah, exactly.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: If sites are fast, I don't think either of those two companies will feel a pressing need for them, but the only way out is to do that.



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: I remember we used to have a company called [Mobify](#). Have you ever heard of them?

Lea Alcantara: Yes, yeah.

Eric Gillin: Yeah, so we used Mobify for years to make mobile versions of our sites until responsive design became practical enough or frameworked enough or known enough that it was easier to do than the other one, but Mobify was a nice thing for a couple of years.

Lea Alcantara: So I want to take a step back and just ask a little bit more about the details of the scope of this project and like what it really takes, and that means your team. So, how large was the team for this type of rehaul effort, and how much was within Epicurious themselves and how much did you need to contract out for?

Eric Gillin: Our team was not large. We had one tech lead and four developers.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, wow! Yeah, it's pretty small.

Eric Gillin: And there's a central Condé Nast team that supports Copilot and the tools that they knew, and they're probably similar sized. I would say that at that time there were probably about six people, but they were working on sort of the central tools, so they built the highway and we built the



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cars, and we have great developers, and I work really hard. I guess a lot of my job is diplomacy at this point.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So a lot of what I'm trying to do is to make sure that they understand why we're doing what we're doing and that they get free cookies and brownies whenever those are out of our test kitchen.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: And that has worked really well.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Our velocity is quite high when cookies come out.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: So it's a benefit to working with Epi, I think, for sure.

Emily Lewis: That actually reminds me, my boyfriend and I have hosted a thing out for calling for questions this morning, and he actually had a question that said, "How do you not gain 50 pounds working at Epicurious?"



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Eric Gillin: So like “The Epi 15” is a real thing.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

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Eric Gillin: We had a social media manager, Star, and she is like, “Yo, I’ve got to tell you this, like it’s real. It’s a real thing.”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: I’m like, “Well, of course, it is.” I think yesterday, I mean, it’s like carb city, and like it’s August and we’re prepping our Thanksgiving stuff and we’re doing three-ingredient Thanksgiving recipe for our Thanksgiving.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: And it’s like you’ve got two to three turkeys kicking around because you don’t know which one is going to be the best.

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Lea Alcantara: Nice.

Eric Gillin: So I have the hardest job on the internet to look for.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Going back to Lea's question, did you contract anything out or was it all internal?

Eric Gillin: Design, we contracted out a little bit to just kick us off.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: But I think Epi, as we were getting ready to rebrand and relaunch it, we took a lot of that outside vendor work, which was quite good but intended for different purpose, and we kind of had to tweak it and get our hands on it.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So we did use an outside vendor for a little bit of logo and color work, but once that came inside, you have a picture of it and then you start to code it and you realize that all the pictures are starting to change. Another big thing that changed is about I'll say seven months before we relaunched, I always have been in charge of the content as well.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: So originally, I was just product and then I think people remembered, they were like, “Oh, well, like this guy know how to write and edit.”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: So it’s great. I mean, I get to like buy the groceries and make the meal and so it’s really helpful when you know how to make content and you know what’s going to be important there, but you also know how technology works.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So we’re able to be really solid state about the things that we need to do, and I can sit in a meeting with developers and designers and say, “Yeah, you know, 40-character word count is no problem.” Right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: I don’t have to talk to seven people and get consent to this or buy in. It’s like, “Yeah, we can do that.” And then little things that tend to hang up projects like, “Where’s our contributor page?” And I’m like, “We don’t need that for the good of the business.” You know?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: Whereas I think some editorial ad places, that's a really nice thing to have, but from a business prospective, it might be a little vanity project.

Lea Alcantara: So I'm really curious, this entire conversation thus far, it sounds like you're a very practical, very realistic-minded with where the priorities lie on how you develop, but I heard that the launch occurred within 10 to 13 weeks. That sounds a little crazy. [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: So how do you go from outsider observer? That sounds really fast for such a huge undertaking. First of all, why was there such a timeline for that launch, and like how did you meet that?

Eric Gillin: Why, I mean, I think whoever has sent you this that deals in like an ad sales-led organization, it's sales, right?

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: Like they sold it and that was the date that was mentioned in the past in a sort of vague like, "This is when it's going to happen," and you kind of signed up for it maybe eight months earlier, but the work hadn't really started in earnest yet and we had all these blockers.



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Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: And so you've got about 10 to 13 weeks out and it was like, "Oh, cool, like that's a real date? Okay."

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: And here's how we did it. We didn't migrate the recipe database.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: So that's most per site. We created clean templates for articles. I hired seven people to go start to ramp up on the content, and we made sure that what you could see, it's a little bit like a movie set that like when we launched, anywhere you turn, it looked like a real city.

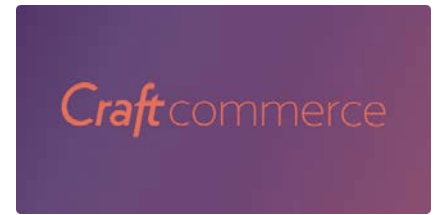
Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: But if you were to like go behind the scenes and look at the code, you would be like, "That's not real."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

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Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: But we were able to sell it like a launch and then like our search, right? Our search was the old search, but we just kind of reskinned it enough that it looked new.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: And it wasn't as responsive as it could be. The secret to meeting launch date like that is to cut scope and hold your nose and that the bread crumbs that you're leading around the site don't go to the bad stuff that you're hiding.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: And we were able to do a really good job. We knew that people wanted the recipes, so we made sure that those were like dope. We knew that we were going to put out a lot of articles; we made sure that those worked and were easy to do, and we made sure that a lot of the archival stuff went into a section called Archive that wasn't linked from the nav, and if you came in from search, that's fine. Also, perspective helps, the site was not good.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: It was an aggressively bad site that hadn't had love since 2006.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: So we relaunched in 2014. It's been a long time, so I knew that anything that we did was going to be a special thing. So I made sure that we just focus on the special stuff and the stuff that wasn't working, we had a plan to get through at some point.

Emily Lewis: And I hate to put you on ... or no, I totally want to put you on the spot here just to get more specifics. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: Because as you're talking, I really feel like this is the kind of episode that I want to send to all of our clients and be like, "These are the things you should be thinking about with us when we're working on projects together." And I'm curious, what did you use to identify what parts of the site weren't driving the business forward. Were you using something as simple as like Google Analytics? Do you have some sort of other tracking installed on the system that gave you some actual data?

Eric Gillin: We use [Adobe Omniture](#) here, which I like a lot, and so I pulled an Omniture report of the last twelve months against content type in terms of inbound visits, and I circled that, and then I took a look at content types, and what became really clear was that recipes were 70% of what people were seeing.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



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Eric Gillin: And okay, you start there, and then what are the next set of pages that I think people are using, and we realized that it was home page. That's your face, so we had to get home page and channel pages out, and then what we're going to link it to, and that was articles, and then that was aligned.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Interesting.

Eric Gillin: And it was like, that's it, we didn't do search. We did as much as we could do from a front-end perspective, but we didn't touch the back end until this year honestly even though that's a core feature.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

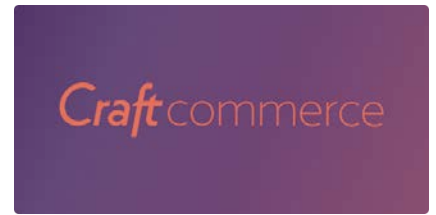
Eric Gillin: It still works. You could still get to content. It just wasn't ideal, and the same thing with a lot of the templates that we were looking at.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So it's really obvious, I think, in most sites what the most important place is, you know?



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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: It's the obvious thing. So it's the same thing with content. We should do and be great at doing what people expect from us.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: People expect us to have great recipes.

Emily Lewis: Recipes.

Eric Gillin: They expect us to have great advice for home cooks, and they expect us to have great food videos. So that's what we're great at. Do you know what I mean?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: They don't expect us to have restaurant recommendations or like a map of where to eat in your area.

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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So a lot of the secret of great success in the last few years is just kind of like focus on the innovations that you would expect us to have and not the ones you wouldn't, right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: So we've thought about VR, but it's really hard to shoot a cooking video in VR without getting nauseous.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Everything feels like *Honey I Shrank the Kids*. You know, the big knife coming at you and you're like, "Aaahhh!" Like you just can't shoot it like that.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

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Eric Gillin: So some of this is also letting the technology come to you as a brand.

Lea Alcantara: So when you were looking through the analytics, and I know you said, obviously, recipes are the priority, did you do any in-person interviews to corroborate the analytics that the Adobe software did?

Eric Gillin: Here's where I want to say yes, and here's where I'll just so you know, we didn't.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: No, not at all. We had 10 to 13 weeks, so we didn't do any of those.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Fair enough.

Eric Gillin: But the cool thing is that like Epi is pretty well known, so...

Emily Lewis: You've got feedback, I'm sure. [Laughs]

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Eric Gillin: So I would go out and people would be like, “Where do you work for?” I’m like, “Oh, I work for Epi now.” And they’re like, “Oh, I love Epicurious, but let me tell you everything that’s wrong with Epicurious.”

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: And so I would get that feedback all the time. Also, I was the person – God bless me for this – I was the person who was answering the customer support emails.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Oh, wow!

Eric Gillin: So I hooked it up to my regular like email account, then I had a folder and it was just filled with like emails, so I would call people and so then there will be someone who just had general computer issues, and I’d be like tech support and I would pick one once a week to just call and stay grounded.

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]



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Eric Gillin: So it would be someone you just like did not know how to log in or was on like IE4, which would happen more than you would think, and so we would have this conversations. So I would stay grounded to the user. I wish we had the ability to kind of sit down and do that kind of testing.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: We did a lot more of that when we did search.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: And we've done a lot of that on the app now, but sometimes when you don't have time, you dispense of the testing and you go with sort of what you know is going to work.

Emily Lewis: Well, that introduces the idea of launching something, seeing how it goes on what the feedback is and maybe adjusting. Has that been your approach? Have you received feedback since launching initially as well as the new search that you've adjusted to?

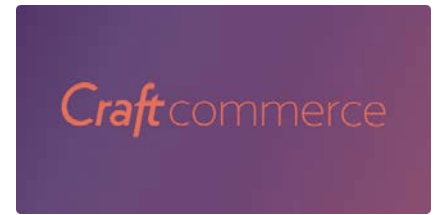
Eric Gillin: Yeah, we have. I was just joking about it. Today if you go to our home page, it says, "Find a recipe," and before, it just said, "Cook this now."

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So we use Optimizely all the time, and "cook this now" performed terribly, but "find a recipe" had an increase of 50% in engagement.



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Lea Alcantara: Wow!

Eric Gillin: Because we were clear with what you wanted to do, right?

Emily Lewis: Yeah, and you weren't trying to be too obscure.

Lea Alcantara: Clever, yeah.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: Right, don't be cute. So I think we do a lot of that, and we do a lot more of that I think than upfront testing just because we're selling stuff that wear new features and we're rolling things out all the time, so we don't really have time or really the stuff to even test for that many people and take advantage of all that insights.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: But it really is helpful once we go out to the marketplace. We definitely spend a lot of time on that.

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Lea Alcantara: So do you check, I mean, there is a huge redesign and launch, there is always a bunch of criticism, usually like Chowhound or other user forums and all those kinds of things. Do you ever look at any of those? And if so, how do you decide what's actually useful?

Eric Gillin: Are you asking if I have a Google Alert for Epicurious?

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

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Eric Gillin: I do. Yeah, I mean, I pay attention to it. I think what your peers think is important, but I don't let it define me.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And maybe this is me being a little Pollyanna-ish, but I do generally think that in the food space, people are rooting for each other.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: It's not that cutthroat, like people want Epicurious to be a good-looking website that helps home cooks cook because of its recipes, and so I like to imagine that people are sort of rooting for us



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and they saw the redesign and gave us some respect for like, “Yeah, I’m glad you guys did that.” I mean, that’s the vast majority of the feedback we got. There’s a lot of “who move my cheese” people who just like it the old way, but I think that people hate two things when it comes to product development; they hate change and they hate surprises.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And this is a change and it was a surprise for a lot of people that those little deer paths that they beat down to that one feature that only they used, that might be gone now, and I feel bad about that, but we can’t defend everything.

Emily Lewis: Yeah. So you mentioned it a little bit earlier, an app you’re building. Is that what’s next for Epicurious?

Eric Gillin: Yeah, that’s next. November 1st, it’s a new Epicurious app basically. We tossed the entire old one and just started over from scratch.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So unlike your traditional relaunch or redesign, there’s not a single screen that’s the same, and a lot of that has to do with the fact that you get to a point where you kind of have to knock down the house, and I like to be pragmatic, and I wish I could have kept some of what was before there, but given the way that Apple have been pushing operating systems and devices and hardware,



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and the original app was built not only before the invention of the Cloud, but it was before the invention of modern UX.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So if you look at the original app, it's skeuomorphic. It's a little leather binder with tabs, you know?

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: It's cute, and we needed to play catch up in a really big way and then move beyond, and so we have to start over, and so we did.

Lea Alcantara: So how is the app different from the website?

Eric Gillin: I think of them as two different use cases. So much of the product is determined by how you get there, and I think that with an app, it's a tool.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And it's our most engaged to audience. They consume four times more content than the web user and they come back once a week every week. So they're demanding something from us in



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that case, whereas I think when you look at the website, we're getting people from Facebook or from a newsletter or from search, and so those people – I don't want to say they happen to find us because we do have a lot of direct traffic, but they're looking for us getting new recipe and then they're gone, whereas with the app, they're really deeply, deeply, deeply engaged.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And so we wanted to make sure that our most deeply engaging content was in there, which is why we put in our videos, which were never in the app before, and why we've put in a lot of the new content we've been doing, and we use Copilot, again, to program the app, which we were never able to do before. The old app, actually, I would hand code an XML feed at the beginning of the year, and that's how things shifted around in programming up the app.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, wow!

Eric Gillin: So we're able to move to a really modern place.

Emily Lewis: And you mentioned the kind of constantly changing OS environment from Apple, is this something you feel gives you a platform so you don't have to knock down all the walls next time there's some new requirement, or is that just the reality you have to face when you're dealing with apps?

Eric Gillin: The answer is like yes, this gives us definitely a platform, and the app is far more stable, and we were talking Apple all the time and I think when they come out with WatchKit 5 and 7, like we



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will be able to more easily adapt to that reality. I think that what you've seen with iOS app development is some pretty incredible shifts with how you build these things and how you deploy these things.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And I think that the tools are finally getting to like a more stable place, so we are using a lot of [React Native](#), which has implications to the website too. So I think we're in a more stable place where it's just easier for us to develop on the app, whereas I think before, these things are one-offs. I also think that people's common misconception is iOS development is software development.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: Web development is web development.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: They're very, very different things with very, very different applications on terms of what's easy and what's hard. On some level, it's opposite day. So we wanted to make sure that with this software, that it was using the most flexible frameworks for the future that we could get.

Emily Lewis: And are there any plans to develop for Android devices?



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Eric Gillin: Yeah, we definitely have a plan for Android. For us the iOS app relaunch on November 1st is really about resetting the table, so what an Epicurious app product needs to be.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And then once we get that right, I think certain UX will have to change and stuff like that, but a good chunk of the code is reusable because it's in React and we have the APIs so the guts of it are going to be fine too. So yeah, we're definitely interested in it, and I think that that ecosystem as an app ecosystem is maturing, so when we do go into that system, people will know to look for us and be able to find us.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: So is the app for free, or will there be some sort of subscription sort of thing, or downloads?

Eric Gillin: The app is free, so it's a free ad-supported app, and it's been free since we started, so we have a lot of people on it. No plans at this time to offer a subscription or premium content. I think I really am interested when the new app comes out, what does the engagement look like, what are our people saying to us.

Lea Alcantara: Right.



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Eric Gillin: And then based on what they're saying, maybe there is a great subscription path for there, and we'll see what they want.

Emily Lewis: All right, so the last question I have for you is what are your thoughts on the future of food and digital?

Eric Gillin: I think that, and I did a [panel at Southby](#) about this, I think recipes are being replaced. I think that this rise of web video that we're seeing, I definitely think that web video is a way that whole generations of people are learning to cook.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: But I think that it's really, really critical for food brands who wanted text recipes, who've got great images of the recipes, you have to make sure that you are evolving around that continuum, and I think that people really shouldn't sleep on how important it is that people are watching people cook this often in their social feed.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: Especially a generation of people that had two people working in the home, might have been pretty busy, might have been a little bit more fast food than prior generations, maybe a little bit more of like the dump-and-stir-convenient-food-type things.



Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: And they're able to kind of see food cooking without having to actually like learn it the way that it was learned before, or go through cookbooks.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: So for me, the future of food and digital really is about video and really about sights, sound, motion and how putting a video on the internet of things, right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: If you have a refrigerator, you don't want to read a recipe on your refrigerator, but if you watch a 60-second clip, I think that that would be something you want and that would be a great use case for it.

Lea Alcantara: Absolutely.

Emily Lewis: Do you think that that shift to sight, sound, motion might also come with a corresponding focus and a need for making that content accessible?



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Eric Gillin: Yeah, it depends on what you mean by accessible, but whether you mean easy, hard recipes, that kind of thing, when I hear...

Emily Lewis: I'm talking more like, especially if we're going to, you know, because I agree with your thoughts about moving towards video, but I feel like moving towards video introduces a need to provide non-video-based sources of that same content to reach audiences that can't access video. Or it's the same kind of challenge you have today with images, it's just not as deep of a challenge. And I'm just curious if you think that a move towards video in the food industry or I guess any industry, if you think accessibility will sort of come along with it as like the technological component that goes with the branding whizbang.

Eric Gillin: Sure. The way we do it is we develop a recipe and then we shoot a video of that recipe.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So we start with a text.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: And when I said that it's replacing one, it depends on which door you're going through. For some segment of our audience, they want the text recipe, and then the video is the reminder of how to make that thing that they already have seen before.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]



Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: For other people, that video is like a commercial, and then the text is sort of the more detailed instruction guide if they want to follow it.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: So I don't see us divorcing those two things because I think your max utility is when you can see that thing being made and then read it and there's like a much deeper cognitive load there and learning how to do it as opposed to if you've ever seen a sourdough bread recipe without any pictures, it's like four pages.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: And it's like grab the mother yeast starter and roll it and then wait and then do this and that, and you can give up in the middle of that. So I think we get the best of both worlds in that case.

Lea Alcantara: Do you think then that would assure in the rise of – and you kind of mentioned to being in the show – like three-ingredient recipes because if you're going to be ushering in video, then maybe my assumption is wrong, but would that mean less than five minutes, kind of like a really quick



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– and even though it will take you an hour to actually cook, but it’s less than five minutes to show you from Step A to Step Z.

Eric Gillin: Yeah, I think the mistake that people make sometimes is that there’s no such thing as like a single home cook generality of the statement that you could make.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right, right.

Eric Gillin: So we’re really about big tent home cooking, and for some people that know what they’re doing, a 60-second reminder of how to do something is more than enough, but for other people, they’re going to want more information.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: I think in the environment that we are right now, have you guys ever tried to peel a mango?

Emily Lewis: Yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, I’m Filipino. [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Yeah, okay.



Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: If you've never done it, it can be a little intimidating and a little hard if you've only done it once in a while. Sometimes all you need is like a 20-second video where you're like, "Oh, right, that's how you do that thing again."

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Emily Lewis: Right, right.

Eric Gillin: And I think that that's what I mean when I say information. The old way of doing that video would have been five minutes where someone will go, "Hi, I'm Eric Gillin. Welcome to my house today. Today, the mango is a magical blah, blah, blah."

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: You're kind of want to like jog ahead.

Lea Alcantara: Just like get to the point, yeah. [Laughs]



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Eric Gillin: Right. And I think that where we are right now with video on mobile and social especially is like get to the point, show me the good stuff.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: And I think that has changed how these videos are produced, and I also think that I don't necessarily think that people want a 7-minute video.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: So we're able to kind of get to the good stuff and show you the parts that are important.

Lea Alcantara: So like almost Snapchat-ish kind of thing, like how much would you say with the ushering of this video is going to be amateurish in the way that, say, just like a regular home cook like me just shows you how to do something in 60 seconds versus an edited 60-second video?

Eric Gillin: I don't know. I think that there are different tastes for different people. Our approach is that we make everything really approachable and feel really real.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: But we don't dumb it down and it's not sloppy.



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Emily Lewis: Right.

Lea Alcantara: Right.

Eric Gillin: So it looks very professional, but it's very approachable and very clear and very utility and very clean and very fun.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: Our food is kind of cute, and then I think so much of this become with how your brand applies itself to cooking.

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: Some people might want lots of sloppiness in it because like – I don't know – that's funny or something.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Right, right, right.

Eric Gillin: With our brand, we're not doing the food videos that way, but we are doing them in 60 seconds.

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Lea Alcantara: Right, right. I'm just always fascinated because I'm a huge foodie, so I see a ton of different types of like YouTube videos that are both span that spectrum of a little bit more amateurish and more less edited versus like really, really crisply edited and I guess I'm just curious over like I guess for Epicurious, you say you guys are going to err on the side of more polished because that's your brand, but as a person who consumes videos and information about food, do you have a personal preference over which way, or do you like them both?

Eric Gillin: I do not look at cooking as entertainment, right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Ah!

Eric Gillin: So I'm not sitting here like, "Oh my god, like unicorn, ice cream burrito, taco adventure, like whohoo!"

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: That's not me, right?

Emily Lewis: Okay.



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Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: When I look at that and I'm kind of like, "Oh, that's funny." Well, like I'm not actually like there's no feels there, right?

Emily Lewis: Right, right, right.

Eric Gillin: So for me, I want that clever, "Wow! That's awesome. I want to do that." Right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: With some of the stuff I'm seeing, I don't want to do, but I will watch it. So I think where we come in is kind of finding that cool moment.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: So a good example of what I'm talking about is we did a [beer-can cabbage](#), right?

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

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Eric Gillin: Like how many times do you have vegetarian friends? And it's a cookout, well, we hauled out a cabbage, stuck a beer can in it and basted it with a lot of barbecue sauce, and it makes an amazing faux pulled pork sandwich.

Lea Alcantara: Oh, interesting.

Eric Gillin: And that thing went viral in the internet and it did really great and it's because there's a real solution there, you know?

Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: I'm sick of being a vegetarian or not, but like a vegetarian at a party who gets like the sad soy dog and was like, "wah wah."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs] "wah wah"

Eric Gillin: Right, now, everyone, and I made this when I was at a house in LA, and like everyone wanted the vegetarian dish and no one was eating the real hotdogs, and that's the thing that I think great content and a great package can do, it can kind of change your cookout, and I think that's what we are interested in doing and not the other type of stuff.

Lea Alcantara: Very cool.

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Emily Lewis: I love this.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, this episode was made for us because Emily and I just love the intersection of eating and coding and design development. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: It's a big nerd food fest, I love it.

Lea Alcantara: Yes, totally, totally. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: I think like me. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: But before we finish up, we've got our Rapid Fire Ten Questions so our listeners can get to know you a bit better.

Eric Gillin: Okay, let me stretch out. Ooh!

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: All right.

Eric Gillin: Okay, I'm ready.

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Lea Alcantara: All right, first question, morning person or night owl?

Eric Gillin: I am a morning person. I wake up every day at 5:30.

Emily Lewis: Wow! What's one of your guilty pleasures?

Eric Gillin: I really like a fried chicken sandwich.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: Sorry, wife. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: What software could you not live without?

Eric Gillin: Honestly, iOS 10.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: Like I live in my phone in that software.



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Emily Lewis: Right.

Eric Gillin: So that counts.

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

Eric Gillin: I wouldn't mind going back into writing. I have all these ideas, but I just never have time to sit down to write them, so at some point.

Lea Alcantara: What profession would you *not* like to try?

Eric Gillin: Oh man, I don't know. Maybe sales.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Those guys have such a tough job. I couldn't. I don't know that I could deal with rejection.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs] I think that's a back-to-back guests who said something like, "I don't want to deal with the rejection part of a job." [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Yeah. [Laughs]

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Eric Gillin: [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: If you could take us to one restaurant in your town, where will we go?

Eric Gillin: I would take you to Momofuku Ssäm Bar for the large format meal.

Emily Lewis: Oh, yeah.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Eric Gillin: I'm probably leaning duck, but like the Bo Ssäm is a pretty bar.

Emily Lewis: Oh.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Emily Lewis: That's on my bucket list.

Lea Alcantara: Yeah, I know. Me too, I love David Chang.

Eric Gillin: It's so worth it.

Lea Alcantara: If you can meet someone famous, living or dead, who would it be?

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Eric Gillin: I would meet Kurt Vonnegut.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: Oh, the author.

Eric Gillin: I have a letter from him on my wall, and I know that's like a humblebrag.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: But it's me writing him a letter where it's like, "Yo, I want to interview you," when I was in college. And he wrote back this like amazing diss that's like, "I do not have the time to amuse you."

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: And I just love that. I love his strength. I love the way that he viewed the world. So it would be great to have like a cup of coffee with that guy.

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

Eric Gillin: Oh man, superpower, I kind of wish I could talk to technology.

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Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Lea Alcantara: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: It would make it much easier to figure out what to do for the next five years.

Emily Lewis: Technopath, right?

Eric Gillin: Yeah, yeah.

Emily Lewis: Isn't that what that's called?

Eric Gillin: I'll be that, that one.

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: Cool. What is your favorite band or musician?

Eric Gillin: Oh, wow! Probably The Beastie Boys.

Emily Lewis: [Agrees]

Eric Gillin: I grew up in this like crazy punk rock, kind of punk rock skull, like old school hip hop thing in Boston, so they sort of combined two of those three things in a really, really informative way with

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like the clothing to, you know, they had a grand royal magazine. So they're just like influential in like four different levels for me.

Emily Lewis: All right, last question, pancakes or waffles?

Eric Gillin: Pancakes.

Emily Lewis: Right on.

Lea Alcantara: Awesome. [Laughs]

Emily Lewis: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Did you say waffles? I think waffles are like – I can't make waffles at home, so I'm going pancakes every time.

Lea Alcantara: I love it. I love it. So that's all the time we have for today. Thanks for joining the show, Eric.

Eric Gillin: Thank you so much. I can't wait to listen to myself awkwardly.

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

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Eric Gillin: You can find me at Epicurious and my email is eric@epicurious.com, and if you email me, maybe we'll invite you to be a beta test for the new app.

Lea Alcantara: Oh.

Emily Lewis: Oh, very cool. [Laughs]

Lea Alcantara: [Laughs]

Eric Gillin: Hmm, special out there.

[Music starts]

Emily Lewis: We have no sound effects, we'd make our own. [Laughs] Thanks again, Eric. I really think this was a great show, and like I said earlier, this is what I'm going to send to a couple of our clients.

Eric Gillin: Great. I'm happy to help.

Lea Alcantara: CTRL+CLICK is produced by [Bright Umbrella](#), a web services agency obsessed with happy clients. Today's podcast would not be possible without the support of this episode's sponsor! Thank you, [Craft Commerce](#)!

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

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Lea Alcantara: And thanks to our listeners for tuning in! If you want to know more about CTRL+CLICK, make sure you follow us on Twitter [@ctrlclickcast](https://twitter.com/ctrlclickcast) or visit our website, ctrlclickcast.com. And if you liked this episode, please give us a review on [iTunes](#), [Stitcher](#) or both! And if you really liked this episode, consider donating to the show. Links are in our show notes and on our site.

Emily Lewis: Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when we'll talk to Rachel Andrew about securing site content. Be sure to check out our schedule on ctrlclickcast.com/schedule for more upcoming topics.

Lea Alcantara: This is Lea Alcantara ...

Emily Lewis: And Emily Lewis ...

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

Emily Lewis: Cheers!

[Music stops]

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