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## CTRL+CLICK CAST #092 –

### Disaster Planning Using the Cloud with Andrew McCormick

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#### Preview:

[Music]

**Andrew McCormick:** It was really a lot of planning and thinking about how does this work best for our workflow and so talking to the team, and I may be getting ahead of ourselves, but talking to the team about what do you need and how do you want to use it, that kind of stuff. So that's really where it all came for me. It didn't really stem from a "we need disaster recovery." It stemmed from what's best for the team and what's best for our workflow and then it became, "Well, if we do this, we can access our data anywhere we go."

**Emily Lewis:** Regardless of what the situation is.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, exactly.

**Lea Alcantara:** From [Bright Umbrella](#), this is CTRL+CLICK CAST! We inspect the web for you! Today Andy McCormick joins us to talk about disaster planning using the Cloud. I'm your host, Lea Alcantara, and I'm joined by my fab co-host:



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**Emily Lewis:** Emily Lewis!

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**Emily Lewis:** Our guest today is Andy McCormick, the director of development for DuBose Web Group out of Columbia, South Carolina. He runs operations and digs into front-end/back-end code, solving problems for his clients and making it easier for them to run their sites. Welcome to the show, Andy.

**Andrew McCormick:** Hello, how is it going?

**Emily Lewis:** Great.

**Lea Alcantara:** Very good. Can you tell our listeners a bit more about yourself?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah. So as you guys said, I'm Andy. I'm in Columbia, South Carolina. I currently just moved into director of operations for our company, DuBose Web. We're a team of eight



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now. We just got a new person on board today and hopefully nine by the end of the month, but I was director of development and responsible for all the code base there with all the sites that we do. We maintain about – I think right now, it's 75 to 80 active clients, most on ExpressionEngine.

**Lea Alcantara:** Wow.

**Andrew McCormick:** And so those are the ones that actively have support packages with us in some sort or some form and so we just constantly maintain those while doing new projects. So yeah, originally, I got hired on to do back-end development through different circumstances, they needed some help on the front-end and somehow I got suckered into doing that.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And it just took off from there.

**Emily Lewis:** So did I hear you right, so you were director of development, but now you're director of operations?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah. I mean, it's a company of eight people now.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So those titles are pretty menial in what they actually mean. We're just kind of restructuring a little bit and I'm extracting myself out from the weeds of writing ExpressionEngine plugins and doing front-end code and more towards looking at the systems of how we do things, the workflow of processes.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** The way I explain myself to my clients are, “Well, my job is to make sure everybody on the team has what they need to succeed.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So just like we’re talking about today with Cloud and how we use that in our workflow and how we make sure everybody is equipped and can do what they need to do; likewise, it’s my job to make sure their design, their workflow is going well for them. If they have any questions, anything that’s not working out, any communication issues with development or our account managers or anything is not being communicated well, they kind of come to me and I step in and start looking at like, “What are we doing, and how are we doing it, and are we doing it in the best way?”

**Emily Lewis:** Cool. So how did you first get into the web?

**Andrew McCormick:** So I think the first time I made a website was somewhere around 1995.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so back then, there was no CSS or anything like that, but just Notepad and it actually really didn’t click with me too well. I didn’t understand why I was writing these <h1> tags and <p> tags and stuff like that.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And then I got fortunate enough that I convinced my parents to buy me NetObjects Fusion, which I'll never forget that name. It was kind of an old WYSIWYG website builder from Netscape back in the day.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh, my goodness.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, I mean, I thought it was cool that I could draw circles on an image and hotlink it to spots.

**Emily Lewis:** Right. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** So I did like my church's youth group website and they thought it was amazing. I hosted it on Geocities.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** I love it.

**Andrew McCormick:** I think it was the Augusta Community or something. I probably could remember the URL if I thought about it.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** But yeah, and so I just kind of fiddled around with it for a long time like that. I went to college. I actually have a degree in History and a minor in Philosophy.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** All this time, I'm still fiddling with the web. I got into photography. I was a retoucher, I used to teach Photoshop, and then I started freelancing retouching and I actually started doing web development for some of my clients. So I started working with photographers on building their websites, that kind of stuff, and I said, "I like that a lot better than just swapping heads and getting boogers out of kid's nose in pictures and that kind of stuff."

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** So I hope I'm allowed to say "boogers" on this show. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so yeah, so I just took from there and I said, "You know, I really like this," and I realized I really liked the back-end. I liked the logic. I liked the thought process. I liked the database, the systems, more than just styling or making it pretty to each, and so I said back-end is what I want to do, and so that's when I reached out and found DuBose Web and it's just a great company to work for. It's really good for the family life. It's really good for being flexible in what we do and how we do it, and so that's pretty much where I've been.

**Emily Lewis:** Cool.



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**Lea Alcantara:** Very cool. Very cool. So let's dive into our topic, you actually reached out to us when South Carolina was hit with all those horrible floods, but your team was pretty much back to work the next day, so why don't you tell our listeners a bit more about that?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, just to reference it out a little bit, I feel like this topic is kind of – I don't know if you guys used to watch Rocky & Bullwinkle, but it used to have multiple titles for the same show.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yes.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so it's kind of disaster recovery.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Or working on the Cloud and not having to worry about disaster.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yes.

**Andrew McCormick:** Or being free to working wherever you want to, you know?

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** So this whole thing is really more than just how to recover from a disaster, and so what happened there was in 2015 in October, the weather guy said that it was going to rain, and



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on Saturday it kind of missed it and we never had floods like that in the Columbia area, and so he kind of missed it and we were all like, “Yeah, whatever.” But we woke up on Saturday morning to business was flooded out, cars going down the road.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** The roads were collapsing all over the place. We had a lot of little ponds and all the dams were collapsing, all that kind of stuff, and so for us, some places are a little bit more used to that. For us, it was like catastrophic.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And our offices, we’re actually a part of a family of five other companies, and one of those companies is a convention center, and our offices are kind of in the basement of that convention center.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** So we’re in this low-lying area where the boss traveled out. He got to the office, and of course, he called me right away and said, “We’ve got water.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so we had about 18 inches of water in our offices.

**Lea Alcantara:** Wow!

**Andrew McCormick:** The elevator shaft, I think, had ten feet of water in it or something like that.



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**Emily Lewis:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** And so luckily, he knew some people and got a company out there to start pumping water out and drying on Monday morning, but fortunately with us, just the way we're set up, and I guess we'll get into this more, is we were able to reach out over to everybody through phone calls and text messages and used HipChat as our internal system. I know it's not cool anymore, but that's what we like to use.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so first and foremost, obviously, "Is everybody okay? Are your families okay? Are you guys okay? What's going on?" Everyone was like, "Yeah, we're fine, we're good." We all talked it out and made sure everyone is okay. We got our bearings on what was going on and obviously, "Just stay home tomorrow, the roads are collapsing. Nobody could go out," that kind of stuff. But really, that next day, we were able to somewhat communicate through our tools and collaborate through HipChat and different tools, "Okay, what are we going to do for this week? How are you going to go about this? What do we need to take care of all of that kind of stuff?"

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So Tuesday we were able to get into our offices because the way everybody lives in the city, we were all away from the really deep stuff for the most part, so everyone was able to safely travel if they could and get to the office and we started cleaning up a little bit. We started examining. We've lost I think ten computers.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Lea Alcantara:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** All of us Windows people that had towers were on the floor and those are all gone.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** All the Mac people, they had these little Mac Minis on their desk and they were okay, but we lost all of our Windows computers, which the majority of us used, and so we cleaned that all up and we brought our laptops and we just moved what we could upstairs to the convention center, and literally in big storage closets, set up shop.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And the cool thing was, we were able to just open up our laptops, get on our Chrome browser and we were pretty much back to work as if it was another day.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** We were just cramped. We didn't have to worry about, "You know, what are we going to do about this? How are we going to do phones? How are we going to or where are our files at, or is our server okay?" We didn't have to reset-up any dev environments. We didn't have to worry about anything. It was just open our laptops and let's go, and then over the coming days, of course, we added, "Okay, well, let's get more screens up here. Let's get some better tables. Let's get some stuff up here so we're not just working at the closets."

**Lea Alcantara:** Sure.



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**Andrew McCormick:** And we just moved on, and so within that week, we were able to reach out to all of our clients to make sure they're okay. We're really big with our relationships with our clients. We're not about just building a website, money and go, obviously, with all these clients that we still actively maintain their site. So we reached out to a lot of clients, making sure they were okay. We were able to check on them first rather than clients having to call us and say, "Hey, when can we start on this project?"

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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** We were upstairs for probably about a month and a half, I think, in total, and again we were just able to work from normal. We had clients come in and meet with us. We were working on support tickets with clients' websites. If they had any issues that week, we were able to immediately work on them. We didn't have to delay working off for it.

**Lea Alcantara:** Very cool.

**Andrew McCormick:** So really, it was just like work any other day for us. We were just in a different space, so that's kind of the quick version of it, I guess.

**Emily Lewis:** And so with this, what you've described, I mean, aside from the logistics of the office space and your physical hardware, you were able to do this because you had moved all of your tools, your services to the Cloud. In the process of doing that, was that intentional because it offered this sort of disaster recovery option, or was it more made business or financial sense? What was the reasoning to start moving all of those internal and external services to the Cloud?



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**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah. So that was really interesting after all this happened. It was kind of in foresight that I saw, “Well, look at what we did here. Look at what we were able to accomplish.” Because when I came over, so originally our teams were really split up. The back-end team, when I got hired, was in one corner and the front-end team was in another corner. We kind of worked on different projects. I thought I was coming in to really build business intelligence solutions, stuff like that, not the website part of the business.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So at that time, we’re really separated. So when I came to the front-end, I kind of came into it, and the front-end really didn’t have a good workflow.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** They weren’t using a lot of the tools they had in place. They were using Dropbox, but it was, yeah, maybe share that with Dropbox. It was more of a sharing tool than anything else.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Yet, we were paying all this money for almost an unlimited plan of Dropbox at that time. I forgot what the most we could have, but it was pretty much unlimited that we could have in there, and being a systems guy, even when I was in the photography world, one of my main things with my own business I was doing was I was doing a retouching and studio consulting. So photographers would talk to me about their workflow and I’d help them set up how to work on their business, that kind of stuff, and so I immediately started seeing, “Well, we’re paying for Dropbox, but we’re not even really utilizing it. Well, we have ten licenses for Adobe Cloud, but we don’t even need that.”



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**Emily Lewis:** Wow!

**Andrew McCormick:** How are we doing support tickets with all these websites? Well, we kind of email back and forth.” You know?

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** We know these emails, and I’m sure we’ve all gotten just a thousand replies in one email chain and no clue who’s doing what, all that kind of stuff, and so it was working, if you want to say that. I don’t know want to discount anything, but it just wasn’t utilizing financial sense. It wasn’t making sense as far as speed and efficiency goes, and so I said, “Hey, let’s kind of compile what we’ve got as far as tools goes and start organizing.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so I started with Dropbox and said, “Okay, Dropbox is going to be our main server because with that…” and I was thinking back, I was thinking and I always say, “Hit by a bus,” is what I always say.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** If everybody is get hit by a bus, what are we going to do? Or if this person gets hit by a bus, how are we going to account for that? So it was a case of “If we lose this computer, what are we going to do with these files? How are we backing up these files? Well, let’s back them up with Dropbox.” And there was like, “Well, why not just move Dropbox to basically become our NAS (Network Access Server) or something like that, a local NAS, but it’s a NAS, it’s our central file storage.”



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So if we're going to do that, the big thing that I think people miss when they start moving tools to the Cloud is they don't plan enough.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** They don't think about repercussions. They don't think about accessing their data. They don't think about how are we going to do this to keep it from becoming spaghetti.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so that's really was for me, so I mean, I got together and said, "Okay, here's a plan. How about we organize our files like this? You always put stuff here. Each client will do this. This is what we organize this. This one goes in Dropbox. This is what doesn't go in Dropbox. This is where I want you to store all your personal stuff." So even for each individual user, everybody has what we call a scratch folder in Dropbox so they can just store their normal stuff.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So realistically, nobody should have on their computer anything that the rest of the team needs that's not in Dropbox.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** The machines we use are really dummy terminals for most of us.



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so it was kind of that. It was like this whole “Well, let’s organized. Let’s start planning this out. We’re paying for this, why aren’t we using it this way?” And so naturally for me, it was, well, everything is moving to this mysterious thing call the Cloud.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And I don’t like calling it the Cloud, but that’s really what you’d call it, so it’s this Cloud, you know? [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so really, it makes fun of me when I start talking about the Cloud, but it’s just what it’s called, and so we started using like JIRA, we bought on to the Atlassian. We started drinking the Atlassian Kool-Aid.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so we used HipChat and JIRA and Confluence and BitBucket and all that connects together, and that’s what I started looking at was how can we use services that connect together that are easiest for us that can establish a constant workflow, we can automate as much as we possibly can. They call me “Automation Andy” because anything I can automate, I’m going to automate.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** It's all those kinds of pieces rather than just saying, "Oh, wow, that looks pretty or wow, that looks cool, or oh, I saw this in Twitter yesterday, let me try this service." It was really a lot of planning and thinking about how does this work best for our workflow.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so talking to the team, and I may be getting ahead of ourselves, but talking to the team about what do you need and how do you want to use it, that kind of stuff. So that's really where it all came for me. I didn't really stem from a "we need disaster recovery." It stemmed from what's best for the team and what's best for our workflow and then it became, "Well, if we do this, we can access our data anywhere we go."

**Emily Lewis:** Regardless of what the situation is.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, exactly.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Emily Lewis:** So Andy, you sort of alluded to it in your response to our last question, but you said it yourself, the Cloud. Could you define that a little bit instead of using that catch-all term? One of the things that Lea and I are trying to do is kind of demystify techie terms, so how would you explain the Cloud to someone. Even maybe a front-end dev on your team who wasn't even using Cloud services in a really formal way, how did you explain that?



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**Andrew McCormick:** That's a better way of saying, "Can you define the Cloud?" Because I cannot define the Cloud. [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** I have no clue what the Cloud is. It's probably in some guy's computer in his mom's basement that I'm sending all my data to.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** It's too many things to me. It's either Software as a Service (SaaS) or Platform as a Service (PaaS).

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So you've got stuff like Dropbox where Dropbox is storing it on their servers and they're backing it up. They're doing all the stuff that they need to take care of it on their end. We're not doing it locally. And then you've got tools like JIRA or HipChat or those kinds of things that are actual applications that you're using that you go through a browser and you jump on, and again, it's not some internal server that you're running an instant messaging service so it's all handled remotely. So for me, the most rudimentary definition of it to me is it's external to our building, to our team. It's storing it somewhere else. It's maintained by other people. Yeah, do you know what I mean?

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.



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**Andrew McCormick:** There's not really super clear definition to it, but really it's external to our network and so it can be as big or small as you want, yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah. And I think that last point actually is a perfect point that I've also built upon when I used to have to do some writing for a client and they did a lot of Cloud stuff so they were always writing about the Cloud, and it's that "as big or as small as you want" aspect that I think is interesting. It's like you said, Software as a Service, Platform as a Service, so you're not just buying a piece of software and that's it. You're buying software for a period of time that suits what your needs are so you could, for example, with the Dropbox, you're paying, what? I guess, for me, I'm paying like an annual fee. I guess you could also go monthly, and you pick what level you want, how much you want. You can go down, you could go up at any point in time.

**Andrew McCormick:** Right, yes. Scalability is a big thing, too, with the Cloud, and so it's very scalable, and if you want to, like you said, increase our package with one of these, it's usually just paying more money and everything is done.

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** We don't have to get a bigger and faster server.

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** We don't have to install a new software. You just pay for it and boom, there it is.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right. So there's no physical limitations literally in front of you, like if your computer only has so much hard drive space, that's the end of it, but if you have certain things on the Cloud, you can just keep adding or removing as necessary.



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**Andrew McCormick:** Right. Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** So I'm curious about the process that got you to choose all those automations and integrations and the discussions, so can you tell us a little bit more about the discussions and how you chose what tools should be moved to the Cloud and what services you needed to use?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, sure. And this is actually what I talked about at the ExpressionEngine Conference last year. How would I say this? It really comes down to the same process I think people should use for any tool, and unfortunately, people don't, but I'm really big on planning and evaluating and again thinking about the consequences before I move on a tool.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.I

**Andrew McCormick:** Whether it's in the Cloud or whether it's something local, it's a fat client on my machine, it's a new workflow that we're talking about, it's anything, sometimes to a fault. So for me, it's all about evaluating, planning and then communicating and documenting. Those are kind of my four steps that I usually use. So first of all, it's evaluating the need, it's evaluating from your team what troubles are they having. You talk to your team and they're like, "Well, first and foremost, Andy, when I first came over, it was about that Dropbox. It was about we don't know where files are. This guy has files over here. He has files over there. We have files over here. Nobody is storing files in the same place."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And so then it was, “Okay, so we need to figure out something or some way to centralize our file storage. We’ve got Dropbox. We’ve got this NAS that’s sitting over there in the closet over here. We’ve got all these different pieces. What’s the best way to do this? Okay, so what do you guys need to do with the data?” “Well, we need to know where it’s at. We need to be able to share it with our clients. I’d like to be able to access the data on my phone. I’d like to be able to access these files from my mom’s house. I’d like to be able to do it here.” All these kinds of stuff like that start these conversations.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so then I said, “Well, what’s the best way to do that?” “Okay, well, this NAS, it’s one of those Synology NASs and it’s got sharing tools on it. It’s got this, but if the power goes out, we can’t access the data. If this happens, what are we going to do about that?”

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

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**Andrew McCormick:** “So that seems like okay, but it’s not the best. We pay for Google Apps. What about Google Drive?” “Well, it’s kind of don’t like the file structure. I don’t like how you access files, this and this.” “Well, what about Dropbox? We’re paying for this huge Dropbox plan. We’ve got terabytes of data we can put in there. We can share it with anybody. We can access it from almost any device anywhere we go. That seems like a really good solution.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And so it's evaluating that tool or that need. It's evaluating the tool itself, "Hey, what about this? What about recovery from Dropbox?" "Oh well, you know, at the time they just changed this unfortunately, but it used to be almost unlimited recoveries with our business plan."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so we could recover stuff that we deleted a year ago out of our Dropbox, and I mean, that's a ringer right there. That's awesome. And so really, Dropbox just fits all these pictures and so we started planning it out. So then it was once we evaluated it, then it was planning how we're going to use the tool. "Okay, well, to do this, we want to structure it. We want to make sure everybody knows where things are. We want to set rules." So we actually set rules and said, "You can do this with Dropbox, but you cannot do this with Dropbox."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** We didn't want people syncing their personal Dropboxes to our computers. It just eats up bandwidth. It eats up space. It introduces other scenarios that we don't want to deal with. So we said, "You can't sync your personal Dropbox with the machines."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so we started planning out how that's going to happen and so then once we did that, we communicated to the team and said, "All right, Team, this is what we're doing. This is how it's going to roll out. This is what it's going to look like. This is how we want you to use it. We're going to have accountability so we'll check your Dropbox every once in a while and make sure everyone is kind of structuring it correctly." It sounds a little police-ish and it's not like we're over your shoulder, "Submit your monthly audit of your Dropbox."



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**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** But every once in a while if somebody shares something or as the admin, I can look in at people's Dropbox and I see, "Wow, this is like spaghetti code for Dropbox," I could step in and say, "Guys, we really need to work on this. This is for the sake of everybody. This is our client's stuff. They trust us with their data. They trust us with what they send us. They trust us that we can respond to their questions quickly. We need to make sure this data is organized."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so once we do that, then the big part that nobody likes to do is the documenting.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** But I think it's really important. We use Confluence kind of for our internal wiki, but to document, "This is why the decision was made. This is how we're doing it. This is how we rolled it out, and this is kind of the guidelines for everybody to use the tool." And so it's not a quick overnight, "Let's just use Dropbox, yehey!" It really was several weeks, if not a month, for some of these tools to evaluate and plan, and so when it rolls out to the team, this is how we're going to do it.

**Emily Lewis:** And that kind of process, I think, applies. I've worked in organizations with really large teams and that's necessary, but even between Lea and myself, that's been really important.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Emily Lewis:** In fact, the point you said not policing, but checking in, like that keep showing up on my list and I keep delaying it, but I know I need to go back in.



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**Andrew McCormick:** Right. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** Because over time, we stop following the rules.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Emily Lewis:** We just do.

**Andrew McCormick:** Sure, sure.

**Emily Lewis:** And it does get messy, and you're absolutely right, it's important because us keeping everything documented according to the rules we already decided supports our clients. It supports our workflow, and it's just natural. Sometimes you're like, "Oh, I'll just quickly save this here real quick like this," instead of how it should be done.

**Andrew McCormick:** Right.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right, right. And I would have to say, too, like Emily said, we're a small team. It's just the two of us and we also have a digital assistant. Just taking the time, every time you do something new, you just document it. Just do that.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Yes, yes.



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**Lea Alcantara:** Because even if you do it like every day, for example, Emily and I are always pulling and pushing things into Beanstalk and doing and setting up new environments and all those kinds of things. At this point, I can do it in my sleep, but once in a while, you forget because you're human or you're tired or something and just having a document out there, it's like, "Oh, that's why this isn't working."

**Emily Lewis:** Right. I forgot that little step. [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Exactly, exactly, and because it's written down, then you know it's not a big deal and the other thing, too, is say someone is sick or someone is on vacation, then another person on the team can simply look it through the documentation and go through the steps.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah. And I think in your documenting, one, like you were saying, just get something on paper or electronically.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Just like when we develop, kind of the first thing I do when I start to write something out is I just pseudo code it out in comments.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** I'd say, "First, I'm going to do this, and then I'm going to check this." At least do something like that, but for me, it's also about documenting the why we're doing it, not just how we do it. So I don't know if you've ever read Simon Sinek's book, *Start With Why*, which is really about start with why as far as why are you doing stuff in your business, all that kind of stuff, because it really



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drives your decisions and that's a whole another topic, but a really good one. But for me, even in the tools and how we do stuff at work, even from an operations' point of view, it's why are we doing this? Why did we choose Dropbox?

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So that when I get hit by a bus or something happens and somebody else comes in and takes my spot, they don't just come in and say, "All right, Team, we're going to use Google Drive today. We can do the same stuff, it's fine."

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.

**Andrew McCormick:** But it's really going back and saying, "No, we're not because really the reason we did this was because of this."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And it also helps evaluate if you need to change your tools later on because it's saying, "Here's why." "Well, we don't really need that anymore. That's not the why of our business anymore. We're doing stuff differently."

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** So now we can clearly say, "Okay, let's go to this other tool because of XYZ or something."



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**Emily Lewis:** Right. Your why is almost your needs you've already documented.

**Andrew McCormick:** Right, right.

**Emily Lewis:** I think what's really nice about the process you're sharing that you went through for your team, it's so much like going through discovery with a client, you know?

**Andrew McCormick:** Sure.

**Emily Lewis:** Asking them and starting those conversations so that you discover, "Oh, someone wants to do something when they're at their mom's house and it's a totally different time zone and all this other stuff." It's just those little things that come up that really flush out the needs from a real perspective, from the people who are going to be using it.

**Andrew McCormick:** Right, yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, I really like the emphasis on the why even if you leave or someone else is added to the team, that it's really clear, because a lot of these Cloud services have overlapping features, right?

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, very much so.

**Lea Alcantara:** For example, with Dropbox, you can annotate documents, but you could also do that with Google Drive docs. So it's like, "Okay, then which one are you going to use? Are you going to annotate? Are you going to make "physical" documents?" I don't know if it's really even the term for digital things, but like, let's say, you'd save, does it make more sense to save a Word document and



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then you annotate stuff on Dropbox, or would it be better to use Atlassian or some other graphic design service to annotate a comp and on and on and on, so on and so forth?

And the problem I think with teams, even with Emily and I, we have to like really figure out, “Okay, if I’m going to give feedback on this thing, we’re going to use this particular way to explain why this decision was made or are we just going to use text?” It’s those types of things, but then we have to explain, “This is the reason why we did that so we’re not going to use the other feature that exists in this tool.”

**Andrew McCormick:** Yes, yes, that’s very important, especially with the Cloud, because like you said, so much stuff overlaps and it’s pretty daunting and then sometimes the team will get away or somebody says, “Oh, I’ve put that here,” and I’m like, “Why did you?” “Well, you said I could store this document along with this.” “But we store our documents in Dropbox, why did you do that?”

**Lea Alcantara:** Right, right, right, right.

**Andrew McCormick:** And so you’ve got to set those rules. One of these services, one day it will be your project management, then it’s going to say, “You can store all your files here as well, and by the way, you can also store all your secured credit cards in our database,” or something like that. They just keep on adding stuff, and you would really got to, again, plan and evaluate and make sure everybody knows why you’re using certain tools for certain reasons.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, and keeping that accountability in place is also so important for just security, too.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yes.



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**Emily Lewis:** Let's talk a little bit, we've talked about Dropbox as a really good example for how to apply it to your team, but do you mind sharing what some of the other tools and services you are using that are Cloud-based and what you're using them for?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah. So I mean, it's pretty much all things. Other than our designers, our designers have a few things, obviously with Photoshop and those kinds of programs that aren't Cloud-based, but everything else is pretty Cloud-based, so for, like I said, Atlassian, we love BitBucket, HipChat, JIRA, Confluence for our wiki. JIRA is our project management. We also use a tool called [Smartsheet](#). I don't know if you're familiar with that.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so Smartsheet we kind of use for a lot of things, but mainly for an overview of the project management so we kind of plan out our projects in Smartsheet, and then we use JIRA to execute them.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So I don't use JIRA, even though it advertises itself as a project management tool, I don't use it for reporting or for running the project. For me, JIRA is about getting things done. It's about creating the tickets, putting them through the workflow and when we push to BitBucket, it connects it to the JIRA ticket so we can easily go into a JIRA ticket. When a site breaks and I can say, "Okay, well, it broke, and we resolved this ticket, here is the commit that we pushed. Oh, yeah, I see the code that was changed. He thought he was changing this and it actually changed the other twenty things. Let's revert back and try that again."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And so really connecting those dots through there, and JIRA to me, it's all about getting things done. Smartsheet is about running the project. The [LastPass](#) is huge for us. I know there's a variety of different password storages out there, but LastPass we like for the enterprise part of it, too, that we can have groups and teams and limit permissions and work with external parties as well.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so LastPass is really key to us. I'd say two things we really need to execute our workflow is we need a browser, preferably Google Chrome, and LastPass.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** If you log into LastPass, those are the keys to the kingdom because then you can just log into all your other Cloud-based accounts and get into all the tools that you need.

**Timestamp:** 00:29:59

**Emily Lewis:** And so just to clarify for our listeners, LastPass is just like a password storage and sharing system. Is it similar to like [1Password](#)?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, exactly.

**Emily Lewis:** And you mentioned you use Smartsheet for the planning of your project management. Is that like high-level internal stuff or is that something you're also using with clients?



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**Andrew McCormick:** That's what we're currently using with clients as well. That's one thing that we haven't quite landed on as far as sharing I guess the project planning or the project execution with the client.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** It's still a little bit of a black box for them, which I don't like, but tools, I know some people would share [Basecamp](#) or other things and they actually share that with their client. For us, this hasn't been the best for the clients that we deal with.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Smartsheet has been really good because even though it's really just a glorified spreadsheet. You can also save attachments per row and comment on rows and that kind of stuff as well, and we can limit what they see in this, so we'll have a version of the project that we do share it with the client and we'll show them how to upload their content to each row to match the page or whatever that we need the content for.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so really, if we're needing to hear from the client, that's where we will do that if we share that. It allows us to share it with them. It allows us to turn features on and off. We can customize the project design as much as we needed to, but really in the end, it's just a glorified spreadsheet. Other than that, Dropbox, they share most of their content through Dropbox with us.

**Emily Lewis:** Okay.



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**Lea Alcantara:** So when we were at [Peers](#) in Seattle a couple of weeks ago, you were talking about how, not only are you managing people and documents through the Cloud, you're actually developing on the Cloud.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yes.

**Lea Alcantara:** You don't actually have any local systems, which is I think startling for a few developers. Why don't you tell us a little bit about that?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yes, how much time do we have left in the show? [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** This is the part of being a developer that I'm really excited about and I don't think a lot of people are utilizing this as much as I think they could. It's kind of confusing. It's kind of people don't really get it right off the bat. It's not really until you're in there doing it, but we use a service called [Cloud9](#). So Cloud 9 is kind of a Platform as a Service, but they're also a Software as a Service as well in a sense.

There are a couple of different parts to Cloud9, so a lot of people are really familiar with all these online editors that are popping up so you can go to [Codeanywhere](#), [CodePen](#), which is kind of growing into a bigger one, but really that's kind of the idea that a lot of people are familiar with. You can have a PIN. You can go in there and develop. You can import JavaScript. You can run everything and see it right there in your browser what's going to happen.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** You don't have to have any kind of development space, and so we're seeing a lot of those pop up across the space. So what happened with me was even when I was by myself developing before I started working at DuBose, when I first discovered WAMP because I was on a Windows machine, I wanted to know how could I put WAMP into Dropbox so that I could access it on multiple computers.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** I didn't want to have to constantly copy my settings from one to the other or do this or that, and so I've always been like that. Even when FileZilla and FTP a long time ago, I was trying to get my settings saved in Dropbox securely so that anytime I use FileZilla, I didn't have to reimport my settings.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** I've just always been like that, and so one other thing is, like I said, we do a lot of ExpressionEngine sites and I was doing WordPress at the time, but it's the whole database aspect of things. A lot of developers, it's easy with the code base, "Hey, let's just commit it to Git. All right, I'll put mine to the upstream, you can pull it down, merge it with yours, all that kind of stuff." That can be incredibly confusing for some. For some, it's just second nature, but that can be a pain in itself.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** But then also when you add the database in there, it's you've got a version of the database, I've got a version of the database, she's got a version of the database.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So when you're doing CMS development, "Well, I added these fields. I added this content. We will pull it down. Oh man, you know, well, the ExpressionEngine's database, it named my field with an ID of 35 and it also named yours, ID of 35, and so now we've got a database conflict."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh, right.

**Andrew McCormick:** So you can write scripts to kind of do database merges, but they can be painful. I just haven't seen one that's perfect yet. I've used tools like Toad for MySQL, which will allow you to line by line resolve conflicts, so you're going to take an hour just to merge databases. It's not worth it. There has to be a better way.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so what I started thinking about what was, "Well, what if we all develop in the same database? Okay, let's kind of all just point our own code bases to the database." Well, that kind of worked, but it's really slow and so you run into issues with people having different versions of the files, that kind of stuff. And so then I said, "Well, why don't we develop directly on the server?" And so I came across a couple of editors that you could actually install on your server. I think the first one I found was [ICEcoder](#) or something.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And so what you do is through [Node](#), you install this on your server and then you can go to a port, so you go to like your server port 80, 85 or something or whatever the port number is and you log in and it's actually an interface, it's a code editor for you to edit the files directly on your server.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So if you want to think about like a graphical interface for them or something like that almost where you're editing the files directly on your server. It's not a temp version and it's not anything like that.

**Emily Lewis:** And does it do like a check out, like if someone starts editing a file, it checks it out so someone else can't use it?

**Andrew McCormick:** No. And so that's the cool thing especially with Cloud9, and that's why we discovered Cloud9, which has really taken us to a new level where you can install their Cloud9 editor on your server and you go to the Cloud9 service to connect in, and if I'm in a file and you jump in the file, then your collaboratively editing the file together.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh, you can see the other person even?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** So it's just like Google Docs where you see the other person type. I can see the other person writing code right there.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Which is amazing, because we have contractors in other states that we use for extra horsepower and so they're on there and we're talking back and forth and we don't have to do a screen share or anything, but I just say, "We'll follow you." And they say, "Well, I'm in the main .scss file." I jump in there and I can tell Cloud9, "Show me exactly where they're at," it will take me to the line they're editing and I can see what they're typing and we can type back and forth and, "Oh, well, let me try this." "Oh, what about this? What about that?"

**Emily Lewis:** Cool.

**Andrew McCormick:** It's all that kind of stuff, and so I can see really easily. It just runs into some issue where you don't want to step on each other's toes, but that goes back to just making sure you have process and communication in place.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** And so if something went really funny with this where I load the site up and all the styling is broken and I'm like, "What's going on?" "Oh, well, Brock is one of our front-end developers. Oh, he's into Sass file and he's messing up some stuff." You know?

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.



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**Andrew McCormick:** And so I can go into there and see exactly what he's doing or working on and we can talk this, "Okay, well, let me know when you're done with this piece because I need to work on this or something."

**Emily Lewis:** Well, that's interesting.

**Andrew McCormick:** So a lot of times you have, you mentioned the local host, there are no....

**Lea Alcantara:** Yes.

**Andrew McCormick:** And I'm probably talking fast right now because I get excited about this, but ...

**Emily Lewis:** [Laugh]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** So we have no local host. I think it was ...

**Lea Alcantara:** That's blowing my mind.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, yeah, and it's great, too. I mean, there's no WAMP. There's no MAMP. There's XAMPP. There's no Vagrant.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** There's none of that. I was trying to think of Kim Crayton.

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah.



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**Andrew McCormick:** One thing that she talked about with mentoring junior devs is, in so many words, she said, “Stop lying to them telling them it’s easy to set up a development environment.”

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** Because it’s not.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.

**Andrew McCormick:** It never is and it doesn’t matter what tool you use, and maybe it’s great for you because you’re all knowing, but if you’re bringing somebody else into your team and sometimes we’ll have four developers working on a project, it’s not perfect for everybody.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And even the other day, somebody was using Vagrant to develop a site for us. I’m like, “That’s great. That’s wonderful.” And so I was like, “Hey, yeah, I’m ready to try Vagrant. Let me throw it up here. Oh, well, I don’t have this dependency. Okay, well, let me get that. Oh, I don’t have this. Oh, this setting has messed up all my computers. Oh, what’s going on here?”

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so it’s not that easy to set up dev environments. It’s just not, and so all these ones like Vagrant or different ways with virtual machines are trying to share, it’s still not as easy as I just fire up Chrome, go to Cloud9 and I’m in the server.



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**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** And so a lot of times you develop on local host and then you push to Git, and you guys have Beanstalk, you'll have some deployment hub that's going to push that to your development server so then you can see the client or other team members can see the site at dev.sitenamewhatever.com. Well, with us, we are automatic. We're always actually writing code on that domain. So when I press save, it's updating dev-whatever.com, so the dev site is automatically updated or is updated because we're editing those files directly. It's almost like FTP, the cowboy coding, except for we also have Git and we also have everything. Because you have a full command line, you just SSH it into the server.

**Emily Lewis:** Yes. So I was going to ask, is this tied to your BitBucket, your version control?

**Andrew McCormick:** Okay, yeah. So I mean, all we're doing is we have dev servers that are just Cloud9 droplet or [DigitalOcean droplets](#), and so it's a full machine. It's just like a machine you would host a website on, which is another cool thing is when we develop, we're actually developing on the exact stack where we would host sites.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Because our development environments are copies of the production environments so we don't have to worry about, "Oh, well, this is just the version of Apache or this is just a version of PHP."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** We're developing directly on the same stack, and so what was your question?



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**Emily Lewis:** Well, it's just about the version control.

**Andrew McCormick:** Oh yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** So you sort of have that when you guys are editing the files directly in your development server.

**Andrew McCormick:** Right. So these are Ubuntu machines, so they're Linux, and so it's just a headless server, so we don't have a browser, we don't have anything like that. We don't have a graphical interface. So just like you would SSH into a terminal, that's exactly what we're doing here, except Cloud9 provides us an interface to use. So the way Cloud9 is kind of set up on you left, you have your files and folders just like your normal directory tree, so rather than `cd home/dubose/development/thissite`, I just go over there and click on the folder I want to access and I can open the files in their editor or I can right click and say, "Hey, open terminal here," and I get my normal command line right there to do any command line stuff I want."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Timestamp:** 00:39:58

**Andrew McCormick:** So since we don't have a UI, we don't have stuff like if you're on a Mac, we can't use Tower or that kind of stuff, all the tools that we get are command line tools.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So our Git is all command line, Gulp is all command line, all that kind of stuff is all through the command line.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Which is really good because we actually get to learn what we're doing rather than just pressing a button and not really knowing the magic behind it.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah, absolutely.

**Andrew McCormick:** So yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** Cool.

**Lea Alcantara:** So we have been talking a lot about all the positive stuff in the Cloud and all the cool things that should be in the Cloud, that you believe should be in the Cloud, but are there any tools or processes or things that should never be in the Cloud?

**Andrew McCormick:** That's a tough one to answer, I think. Again, if you're planning, if you're thinking things out, I think pretty much everything could go into the Cloud. So again, I mean, secured stuff, if you have something that's super secured, then there are services out there that will host that and allow you to access that data from different locations using different methods. So security is always an issue, and that's why you want to evaluate the tools that you're using.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** You want to read reviews. You want to look as deep into them, find any issues you can find with it before you start putting secure data up there.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** So I think even secure data can go into Cloud, but of course, never put secured stuff just in Dropbox not secured, you know?

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** You've just got some security on it, but it's some nuclear codes to your office or something like that, then you don't want that to go in there.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** So just think about what you're doing before you do it.

**Emily Lewis:** When you do these evaluations, when you decide to roll them out, are you doing them to start small, like to sort of test out whether you find anything that may be problematic before it's everywhere and everyone is using it?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, of course. So you always want to go with the servers that has a trial hopefully.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Sometimes you have to go with the reviews. If it just seems like a magical tool, you just basically pay for your trial, but you always want to trial it out and you always want to push it to its limits. I always try to ask questions. So I try to find a community, if there's community, and I ask questions on there just to see how responsive is the community. I try to email the company to see how responsive support is, and even if I know the answer to it, sometimes I try to make up questions



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just to see how responsive they are and what kind of support I'm going to get from this company before I do it.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** I try to always ask for an extended trial so when my trial runs out, again, that just helps me understand how willing is this company to help us because if we're trusting them with our data, I want to know that they are there to help us. They want our business. They want to help our business, that kind of stuff. So I try to do as much as I can to explore all that before I even move on with the service.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right. So I'm a little bit curious about one of the things that you're thinking about when you started to move things to the Cloud was some of the way things were being used were not financially prudent, but the thing that I feel like when I talk to my other colleagues and even myself is I'm getting a little bit of service exhaustion in terms of, "Okay, that's another \$20 a months and another \$20 a month." On its face, like maybe 20 to \$50 a month, especially if it's a really necessary service, it isn't that big of a deal, but then it starts adding up. Can you explain how you help to evaluate whether this was actually going to help you make money or save you money, and additionally, would be comfortable sharing what DuBose Web generally spend on a monthly basis on these Cloud services?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, so as far as the financial aspect of it, essentially I look at we went through a 1,000-year flood and we're up and running in a few days, you know?



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right, right.

**Andrew McCormick:** I mean, for me, every time we look at it, we're like, "Man, is it worth it? Well, look at all the stuff we're getting from it."

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And it is, it's more expensive because we're not buying this software outright. I think, yeah, the lasting products, you can buy and host on your own server, but then we look at, "Okay, if we bought them, that's approximately three years at the Cloud, but we also had to develop ourselves. We have to host it on our server because we have to make sure they're up and running. Look at this, how much is that really going to cost us versus paying them?"

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** Oh, we also always have the latest version of it, if there are bug fixes. Bugs that are pushed to the Cloud versions a lot faster than they do for you to run an update on your server of your local hosted version on it.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** So cost does come into play, but we also want to make sure that everybody has the tools that they need, so we just kind of balance all of that. Just like everything else, I overly process everything as far as evaluating where the consequences, what's this, what's that, and of



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course, we look at our forecast; do we have the money? How is this going to impact our 3-year plan? How is it going to impact this year? How is it going to impact payroll? We have mouths to feed that are way more important than having the newest and coolest tool in the Cloud.

**Emily Lewis:** As a small business owner, a lot of those pros that you just described really resonate with me. Those are the reasons why I feel these services have value, but it also goes back to the scaling thing. A few years back, we had a rough year. It's very easy for us to scale back some of these services just to cut it expenses a little bit and just manage things a little tight, more tight, than we would need to.

**Andrew McCormick:** Sure.

**Emily Lewis:** And I think that is also really valuable. We're not letting go of something, we're just adjusting what we need from it for a period of time.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, that's huge, and like I said, we work with contractors that are outside of our team, and so with JIRA, you kind of pay for tier users.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so we might decide right now, "Hey, we're doing good. We really need this extra horsepower. Let's go and pay for some of our contractors to be on our JIRA team so they can access the tool directly.

**Emily Lewis:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** But then in times when we're saying, "Hey, we need to scale back," we can say, "Let's go down a tier," and we won't have that flexibility that they can access it and we need to get the



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data to them in some other ways so we'll export out of JIRA, put it into Smartsheet and then can see it in Smartsheet or there are tools that connect JIRA to Smartsheet, that kind of stuff as well. So you can constantly adjust and modify as you need.

**Emily Lewis:** I'm curious, have you had any concerns having so many Cloud-based, which essentially means your web-based services and then kind of these ransomware attacks or the rolling outages that affected what the East Coast like a couple of months back. Do you have any concerns about those compromising these critical services that your business relies on?

**Andrew McCormick:** I mean, I would be or I'm going to be stupid to say no, not at all, because, again, I want to think about the consequences of what we're doing. There are a couple of things, number one, I want to use, and that's why we'll pay more for certain tools if we need to, is I want to use a service that I can trust.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So I want to use a service that even if they go down, they have it backed up or they're using other services to back up my data, that kind of stuff.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** I want to have copies of my data. One of the things I go through when I evaluate is how easy is it to get my data out of this system and either have it as a backup or port it to another system.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.



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**Andrew McCormick:** So how do we export data out of here? What do we do with that? And so we try to also have local backup with stuff as well.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So for instance, Dropbox, we actually run scripts that download our most important Dropbox stuff to our local NAS, so rather than...

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** It's really funny because typically it's your NAS and then Dropbox backs up your NAS or you send it to AWS or something.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** We do it the opposite. Dropbox is our main storage and then we have scripts that actually pull down to our NAS to back that up.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Confluence, you can run. They have Confluence CLI so you can run scripts to the command line that will basically export PDFs of all of our wiki entries, and so we can have PDF backups and store the stuff in Confluence. It's not perfect. It's not ideal as just being able to say, "Hey, well, now I wanted to use Dropbox Paper," and it automatically moves things over. It's not that easy, but you can get your data out of there.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And as far as outages, outages are awesome. We have a game room with foosball and arcade basketball and dart boards.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And so if the internet goes out for a few minutes, it's play time, and that's why I try to tell everybody because they're like, "Man, what do you do if you don't have Wi-Fi?" I'm like, "I relax. I enjoy my life."

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** Typically, I have my phone.

**Lea Alcantara:** I love that attitude.

**Andrew McCormick:** Like I said right now, I'm waiting for my new phone to come in today, but typically I have Wi-Fi wherever I go with my phone. I mean, I have Wi-Fi at McDonalds. I went to get my oil changed and there's Wi-Fi in Meineke the other day.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And believe me, sometimes, but I went into Best Buy to fix server issues before.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** Because all I did was go into Best Buy, I got on Google Chrome. I logged into Cloud9 and I SSH-ed into the server and I'm working on the servers, and I don't have to worry about IP restrictions, all that kind of stuff, because our dev servers, if I access everything from the command line on our dev servers, it's always the same IP addresses.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** We don't have to worry about, "Oh, well, I'm not in the firewall or anything." Right now, I'm at my parents' house. My wife took off on a girls' trip to New York City so I came to my parents' house in Tennessee so they could help me take care of my boys, and I mean, I've been working from my laptop in the living room for the last week.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** I worked on their computer. It doesn't matter that they have an older computer. I just need a browser.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** And if I just don't have access, then I just relax. I just enjoy life. I go play catch with my kids or whatever I want to do because that's the cumber side of everything in the Cloud is you can access it anywhere and you can overwork yourself.

**Emily Lewis:** Good point.

**Andrew McCormick:** And you can forget that I need to check out a little bit.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So really outages, all that kind of stuff, that's awesome.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** They're awesome because I know we have our most important stuff that is crucial, that is important than disaster recovery, we have that stuff backed up in multiple locations.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** It's not a "If this service goes down, we're out of the water." Well, it might disrupt our workflow a little bit. It might not be as pretty as it was after the flood at that time, but we can survive and we can move on.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Lea Alcantara:** Very cool. So we're nearing the end here. What's your final advice for other agencies working off the Cloud?

**Andrew McCormick:** I mean, really, we've already said it, and that's planning and evaluating and especially documenting.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Don't get suckered into the latest, coolest tool on Twitter.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** And don't get suckered into because this service that you use says, now, they also make cookies for you, that you get cookies from there.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

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**Andrew McCormick:** Because developers aren't the best cooks. Do you know what I'm saying? But it's just don't get suckered into all the pretty, flashy stuff because a lot of these services are going to start offering the same thing.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.



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**Andrew McCormick:** And you've got to really evaluate, you've really got to take the time to say, "Why am I going to go with this service? What do I want out of it? What are we going to accomplish? How are we going to use it?" Document that down so you can constantly go through it. Just like you were saying with strategy of our websites, whenever we work with a client, we want to document the why of their website, why are you guys doing this? Why is this feature on your site? So that later on when somebody else comes into that company, they get a new marketing person and they say they want all these other stuff, we just go back to the document and say, "Well, I know that looks cool, but the reason that we did it like this was because of this and this and this."

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And they can say, "Oh, yeah, let's continue doing that instead. That's a much better idea."

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** And so the same thing with our tools, we can go back and say, "This is why we're doing this. I know that looks cool. I know it looks like it's \$5 cheaper a month. I know that they say they can do this, but can it do all these other stuff that was our needs, that was the why that we chose to go to this other service?"

**Emily Lewis:** Right.



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**Andrew McCormick:** So that's the biggest thing. It's just don't get attracted by all the shiny things out there.

**Emily Lewis:** And would you have any suggestions for someone who specifically wants to take this sort of approach of disaster planning, having an option for recovery. What do you think is the first step that they should take?

**Andrew McCormick:** So the first step for disaster recovery...

**Emily Lewis:** Or just like planning for disaster recovery? [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, and the funny thing is like I'm like, "I don't really have to plan for that so much anymore." But obviously, make sure that you backup, that you're backing up somewhere. The general disaster relief stuff, I think Andrew Welch responded on one of your things on Twitter with a great thing for backing up websites, and I think that goes for a lot of your tools as well and a lot of data that you have internally, which is kind of back up internally, kind of have a local backup that you have.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Don't let your local machine be the only record with it. Have a local NAS or something, but then also use an external service, and if you use something like Amazon, AWS, those things, you can have them backed up to multiple locations. So really, it's just having your data backed up to more than one location, so if there is an outage in your city and you can't access your office and you lost your local server and your desktop, then you still have it on AWS somewhere.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Or if the East Coast goes out, you still have it in Seattle data center or something like that.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** That's the biggest thing. It's just to distribute your data and document where it's at. Make sure you know what services you're using. I'm going to say that again, but make sure you know what services you're using and where your data is at, and a big key is to practice that recovery.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So it's to practice, "Oh, well, okay, we just lost Confluence. What data are we missing right now?"

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Nobody can access Confluence today. How are you going to get this data? Where is it at? What's going on?

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So the same thing with websites, it's typical with Disaster Recovery 101 is if you have something planned, if you have rollover servers, if you have whatever you have set up, then turn that other server off one night at midnight, probably get your clients' approval, but one night at



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midnight, just have a test and turn off that server and see if everything rolls over like it's supposed to happen.

**Lea Alcantara:** I'm curious, is this a part of like your maintenance contracts with these 75-plus sites? Do you guys go, "Okay, we're going to do a "fire alarm kind of test" situation"?

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah. So that gets into a little bit more of the backing up in the actual "how do we do maintenance on the sites." So, yes. So, different people pay for different levels of protection, if you will.

**Lea Alcantara:** Right.

**Andrew McCormick:** All of our clients, in general, just because it's our – that's one of the cool things about working with us, and clients, if you're listening, it's awesome to work with us because we do this naturally for you, we have all this stuff in the Cloud, so we're naturally thinking in that mindset. It's not another step we have to take, so your stuff is automatically Git, which to the world, I'm sorry to disappoint people, but Git is not a backup solution.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** They can't help out with that and be kind of a step in there, but it's not a backup solution. We have your stuff in Git and version control and we have your stuff on multiple servers. All of this stuff just comes naturally, but then we also have clients who pay extra for stuff like load balancing or marrying between different servers where they will send traffic to this server or that server or if one gets a DDoS attack, then it automatically switches all the traffic to this other service or



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shuts it down, that kind of stuff. It allows us, you know. With DigitalOcean, what we can do is we use what's called a floating IP. I don't know if you're familiar with that.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** But it gives us an IP address that we put in the DNS for our client, but then internally at DigitalOcean, we can point that to whatever DigitalOcean droplet we want to.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So what we do is if we're updating Ubuntu or we're updating Apache or PHP, we just spin up another server in DigitalOcean. We run all the tests. We run all the Apache updates. We run everything and make sure it went okay, and then what we do is just switch their floating IP to point to that server now and we turn off the old server and just destroy the old server.

**Emily Lewis:** Cool.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** And the client never has to change DNS. It's zero downtime. We get to test everything thoroughly before we ever move their site there, and so that kind of stuff, it's just going to what level they're paying for is going to how much of that we set up for them and how much we have on the ready, like it's kind of in the bullpen that we can do this for you or it's just constantly being load balanced or constantly having multiple servers running, that kind of stuff.

**Emily Lewis:** Interesting.

**Andrew McCormick:** So that was a long answer to a short question for you.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh, but it's so fascinating. Definitely, I'm sure we can continue talking about all of this on and on, but that is all the time we have for today.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah. [Laughs]

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

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, I'm very nervous about this. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, okay. All right, are you ready?

**Andrew McCormick:** I think so.

**Lea Alcantara:** All right, first question, introvert or extrovert?

**Andrew McCormick:** I'm pretty much an introvert until you get to know me.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** Or if you talk about the Cloud and then I become an extrovert.



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**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Emily Lewis:** Oh, this is a good question for this episode, so the power is going to be out for the next week....

**Andrew McCormick:** [Laughs] Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** What food from the fridge do you eat first?

**Andrew McCormick:** Oh, it's got to be the ice cream.

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** Nice.

**Andrew McCormick:** It's got to be the ice cream, yeah.

**Lea Alcantara:** What's your favorite website for fun?

**Andrew McCormick:** [Slickdeals](#).

**Emily Lewis:** Oh, what's that?

**Andrew McCormick:** What's Slickdeals?

**Emily Lewis:** Yeah.



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**Andrew McCormick:** It's like a website where you go and all these people from the internet close deals in different places.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** So it could be Wal-Mart, it could be whatever, Amazon, and so the other day, there was an item at Wal-Mart. I do camping with my boys a lot and they had those cots that you can camp on like for beds and they're typically \$75.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Wal-Mart had them for \$45, but then for some reason, they was an in-store discount that if you pick it up in store, you got \$35 off.

**Lea Alcantara:** Wow!

**Andrew McCormick:** And so I got this \$75 cot for \$6 a piece, which I don't know if that adds up, but that's about what it was. It was like \$6.50 or \$7 a piece.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Nice.

**Andrew McCormick:** And yeah, what it is, it's people just finding these deals online and they're browsing or some people, that's all they do and then they post it on there, so you get the hottest deals on the internet.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** So I get stuff that charges for a dollar or this place has this super rebate that you get for free, and I'm just a sucker for that. I'm a sucker for getting a really good deal.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs] Deals.

**Emily Lewis:** I love saving money, too.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah.

**Emily Lewis:** I'm going to have to check that out. [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, it's great. It's addicting.

**Emily Lewis:** All right. So what's the last thing you read?

**Andrew McCormick:** The last thing I read was probably a book on orphan care.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So I'm doing a lot of like small booklets and stuff on orphan and foster care and caring for the neglected children out there.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** I'm starting a ministry at my church on kind of changing the culture of being more towards adoptive and foster care and really wrapping around the members of our church that



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are currently doing that and supporting them first, and then moving towards encouraging people to adopt and foster care.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** So a lot of reading about that.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Lea Alcantara:** What's the best piece of professional advice you've received?

**Andrew McCormick:** Start with why.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]

**Andrew McCormick:** Yes.

**Emily Lewis:** What's the worst piece of professional advice you received?

**Andrew McCormick:** I want everybody here, this is under the worst piece of advice, and that really was, so don't get mad at me, but I got told once that you shouldn't hire women.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh.

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah.



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**Lea Alcantara:** Yeah, terrible.

**Andrew McCormick:** I'm not going to disclose anything, but they're just, "You know, they'll get married and they'll want to start a family and they won't stay with you and dah, dah, dah."

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh, worst.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** And well, yeah, it's absolutely horrible advice. And in fact, our company now, I think we have more women in our office than we do guys now for the first time because right now, there are only three of us guys, everybody else is a lady now.

**Lea Alcantara:** Very cool.

**Andrew McCormick:** So it's awesome, it's great. It's wonderful.

**Lea Alcantara:** What's your favorite color?

**Andrew McCormick:** Green.

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

**Andrew McCormick:** Probably to Groucho's. Yeah, it's just like a local sandwich shop.

**Emily Lewis:** [Agrees]



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**Andrew McCormick:** I'm really big into finding local sandwich shops in town. They've got some amazing 45-formula sauce, which is some thousand island-dill combination.

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh.

**Emily Lewis:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** I don't know, the ingredients are secret, they won't even tell you and nobody knows.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** But it's just really good. At least I think it's really good. It's probably just me. If you came, it will probably be horrible.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

**Andrew McCormick:** Enough of this brainwash. But for me, it's really good.

**Lea Alcantara:** What's your favorite board game?

**Andrew McCormick:** My favorite, I don't get a chance a lot, but well, I do get to play a lot of board games with my kids. So I'll probably say Candy Land right now.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]



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**Emily Lewis:** I love Candy Land.

**Andrew McCormick:** My kids, my boys, anytime they get a chance to play, “Will you play with me, Daddy?” And, “Sure, what do you want to play?” “Candy Land.” And they just get so excited when I say, yes, I’ll play Candy Land with them.

**Emily Lewis:** [Laughs]

**Lea Alcantara:** Oh.

**Andrew McCormick:** So got to be my favorite right now.

**Emily Lewis:** All right, last question, Hulu or Netflix?

**Andrew McCormick:** Netflix. Yeah, I don’t watch Hulu in a long time.

**Lea Alcantara:** Very cool. So that’s all the time we have for today. Thanks for joining the show.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, it was a pleasure. Thanks for having me on.

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

**Andrew McCormick:** I’m on Twitter [@buckeye\\_fan](https://twitter.com/buckeye_fan). I got that name a long time ago and I’m a Buckeye fan, but that’s about it. It’s not some cool development screen name.

**Lea Alcantara:** [Laughs]

[Music starts]



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**Andrew McCormick:** But I'm a Buckeye fan, and then really if you just want to talk, whatever, just reach out to me [andy@duboseweb.com](mailto:andy@duboseweb.com). I'm also big on the ExpressionEngine Slack community, so you can jump on the Slack there and ask me anything.

**Emily Lewis:** Awesome. Thanks, Andy. This was a really great conversation.

**Andrew McCormick:** Yeah, thanks a lot, guys.

**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 sponsors! Many thanks to [Foster Made](#) and [Jumpchart](#)!

**Emily Lewis:** We'd also like to thank our partner: [Arcustech](#).

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

**Emily Lewis:** Don't forget to tune in to our next episode when Denise Jacobs returns to the show to talk about banishing our inner critics. Be sure to check out [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!



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**Emily Lewis:** Cheers!

[Music stops]

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