



Hanselminutes

Hanselminutes is a weekly audio talk show with noted web developer and technologist Scott Hanselman and hosted by Carl Franklin. Scott discusses utilities and tools, gives practical how-to advice, and discusses ASP.NET or Windows issues and workarounds.

## Text transcript of show #153

March 12, 2009

### Tables Turned - Mo Interviews Scott Hanselman

Scott's wife Mo turns the tables in this interview and talks to Web Developer Scott Hanselman. How does he fit it all into a day? What about work life balance? Is Scott bored with technology? When will the madness stop?

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**Lawrence Ryan:** From [hanselminutes.com](http://hanselminutes.com), it's Hanselminutes, a weekly discussion with web developer and technologist, Scott Hanselman, hosted by Carl Franklin. This is Lawrence Ryan, announcing show #153, recorded live Wednesday, March 11, 2009. Support for Hanselminutes is provided by Telerik RadControls, the most comprehensive suite of components for Windows Forms and ASP.NET web applications, online at [www.telerik.com](http://www.telerik.com), and by .NET Developers Journal, the world's leading .NET developer magazine, online at [www.sys-con.com](http://www.sys-con.com). In this episode, the tables are turned and Scott is interviewed by his wife, Mo.

**Mo:** Hi, everyone. I'm Ntombenhle Nkiwane. I'm Scott's wife and actually you can call me Mo. So this is another episode of Hanselminutes and Scott's asked me to step up because he got a cancellation and I jumped at the chance because I will be interviewing Scott Hanselman, web developer, and I get to do all the asking this time. So, Scott, how is it going?

**Scott Hanselman:** Yes, dear.

**Mo:** It's too soon to say "yes dear."

**Scott Hanselman:** Yes, dear.

**Mo:** Okay, all right. Probably I'm not the best person to be asking you these questions because I'm not an engineer or a techie, but I thought people kind of...

**Scott Hanselman:** No one is interested in tech.

**Mo:** Yeah, but I think people kind of want to know about the essence of the Hanselman so I thought we kind of dig deep into what makes you tick. Tell me a little bit about yourself.

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh, my goodness. Is this the direction that you really want to take this, dear?

**Mo:** Yes, run with it.

**Scott Hanselman:** Tell you about myself?

**Mo:** Yeah, just a little bit.

**Scott Hanselman:** You'll have to lead the interview more than that though.

**Mo:** Oh, man.

**Scott Hanselman:** Sorry, it's not going to be that easy.

**Mo:** All right, okay. Well, let's start at the beginning then I guess. What have you been working on these days? What's going on with you?

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, I just released that Nerd Dinner thing that I haven't had a chance to show you yet but you've been listening to me talk about it for how long?

**Mo:** Two weeks.

**Scott Hanselman:** How many nights did I stay up late this week?

**Mo:** Too many.

**Scott Hanselman:** Does that bug you when I stay up late? See how I turned that around?

**Mo:** Nice. Let's focus on you, dear. Okay. Let me try to turn it around again a little bit more. Really, I am interested in what you have been working on. I know that you're going to Vegas next week.

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, we've got MIX next week.

**Mo:** Yeah. Do you look forward to those kinds of things?

**Scott Hanselman:** It's kind of a love-hate relationship because I don't like being away from you and the kids, but I mean Vegas is Vegas, right? I mean Vegas is just horrific, a hellhole of a town, not Vegas like the incorporated town of Vegas but like the strip, I just hate it. There's just nothing to do there. I like meeting all the people though and that's cool. It's nice to meet people. It's nice to meet totally random people like some of the most fun I've had in conferences, I've told you about this before, will be like one time I was in an elevator in Vegas. I was by myself and these like Norwegian guys were in the elevator and they were like, "Hey, it's Scott Hanselman." I can't do a Norwegian accent, so I'll just make them surfer dudes. "Hey, it's Scott Hanselman. Hey, are you doing anything right now? Let's go have dinner. You look alone." I'm like, "Oh that was so nice," you know? Just like, "Oh man, that's so thoughtful." I wish everybody could do that, you know, just because you recognize one person, that's cool to ask them to dinner but at the same time random people should ask each other to dinner at technical events because nobody wants to be away from home so hence the nerd dinner I guess I kind of brought that around. I didn't even realize I was doing it.

**Mo:** Complete the loop, yes.

**Scott Hanselman:** I didn't know I was Completing a loop.

**Mo:** That's right, that's right and when people do that, when you're -- I was going to



say accosted but that's not really the essence behind it.

**Scott Hanselman:** No.

**Mo:** When you are approached that way and people are so sort of reverent about meeting this Scott Hanselman, what goes through your mind? I mean do you get that you're this big deal out there?

**Scott Hanselman:** No, no, no. I'm not a big deal. I'm only a big deal because of you, because I forward you the emails that people say to me, you know, saw your talk, it was cool. You have no idea about any of this stuff, right. You don't care. I mean I'm not even as "famous" just like a local news anchor, you know what I mean. If you see the weather check at Safeway, oh my God, dude, it's the lady from channel 2. I am not at that level yet. There are probably a few thousand people in the world that give a crap about what I do. That said, it's kind of like being a really, like a lifetime television character actor like it always had to do with a familiar face, but Phil Haack said something really interesting on his blog today where he said, "Authorship does not equal authority."

**Mo:** Everyone can write a book, right?

**Scott Hanselman:** Anybody can write a book, right. Anybody can write a book. Writing a book means that you are allowed, not that you're an authority. Jeff Atwood, who I think you've met or I've mentioned enough that you might as well have met him, has talked about...

**Mo:** Jay Money?

**Scott Hanselman:** Jay Money, yeah, you and Jay Money are really tight I'm sure. You never met him, have you? Yeah. Talks about the idea that we're all amateurs, right. Jeff is loud and I'm loudish, that doesn't mean that I'm a good programmer.

**Mo:** So do you struggle with that? If you're allowed, obviously people are listening to you. Do you struggle with trying to sort of not bring out your own opinion but speaking for the many minions out there who are not as loud as you are at the moment?

**Scott Hanselman:** Minions? The Hansel minions?

**Mo:** The many.

**Scott Hanselman:** I mean, I'm just a guy who sort of blogged six years ago. You remember when I started it. I just did it so I could Google myself later. I wasn't trying to do anything particularly impressive with it. I just wanted to be able to search for code later on so I'm not really sure why anyone applied... I'm skirting the issue here.

**Mo:** Clearly.

**Scott Hanselman:** I'm famous in a tiny, tiny group of people and sometimes when you put enough of them in a town, it's like I'm famous for a little bit like Bruce Campbell, the actor which you said once "who?" But now you watch Burn Notice so you think Bruce Campbell is awesome. You know what I'm saying? You don't know who Bruce Campbell is. You would see him at Safeway and you go, "Is that the guy from Burn Notice?" That's not famous, that's not like Tom Cruise famous. I'm looking at Twitter here and like Ashton Kutcher is on Twitter. Okay, so like I've got 8,000 people that follow me on Twitter. You know, like yeah, that's creepy stuff, twitting about the kid's poo. Ashton Kutcher has 150,000 or 220,000 people following him. There's like there's famous and then there's like another word that's not even -- Simon is on the same sport, it's not even the same ballpark. So what do I think about this? It is what it is. I don't think about it.

**Mo:** And are you really that humble or you're just sounding humble?

**Scott Hanselman:** No, it's not about being humble but what do you mean, man, how are you? What kind of questions are these?

**Mo:** Are you faking or is it real?

**Scott Hanselman:** Faking humility?

**Mo:** Yes.

**Scott Hanselman:** No. Most people who have any amount of fame at all, probably have a great deal of self loathing, I probably have that too. Everyone has got that what have they done for me lately thing. Ultimately, I'm a teacher. Like my buddy Gregg Jackson called me and said come down to Portland Community College and give a talk. This was last night. So I went over and I talk to his 202 level ASP.NET class and they're using a book that me and Bill Evjen and Davin Rader wrote, mostly Bill, and they're using that as their text and like the first thing out of their mouth was like wow, you're not as bad as you were on your book. Thanks. Oh, that guy...

**Mo:** Clearly they got the point of the book.

**Scott Hanselman:** They got the idea of the book, yeah. "Yeah, you're much younger in person." I talked to these guys for like two hours, three hours, but I was there until like 10, right, I mean they stayed way late at the community college and oh man, I forgot how good I was at that and I'm not saying good at speaking, but good at teaching. So all this Microsoft shill, Twitter, blog, blah, blah, blah, it's all BS, I'm a teacher and teachers doesn't necessarily



know what they're talking about which is another important thing to know about teachers and I've told you this before. There's a certain amount of hubris involved in being a teacher because you think you might possibly have a better idea than the students but you still maybe just a chapter or two ahead and you're not really awesome until you've taught the class a couple of times.

**Mo:** This is hard. You know, I listen to NPR and Neal Conan and all those guys and they're jumping in every 30 seconds. You've been going on for like five minutes here.

**Scott Hanselman:** Now the next question, dear, should be why do you talk so much.

**Mo:** That's right, how does one shut you up? No, I'm pretty interested in that because you're talking about teaching and connect that to ego, I mean we've talked about this a little bit.

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, what feeds you? My dad always says like what feeds your spirit? And he always said growing up if you -- and people could go and listen to the podcast, right, and they refute my dad. They always say like you know, if you want to dig ditches because that feed your spirit, do it. My brother always wanted to be a fireman so he's a fireman and that's what feeds his spirit, that's what he likes to do. I just really like to run down the hall with an open laptop going, dude, check this out. So everything that I do, whether it's hanging out at the local community college talking to 20 kids for three hours on a Tuesday night, or talking to you about what I worked on that day, or speaking at a conference in front of a thousand people, it's all the equivalent of running down the hall with a laptop going, dude, check this out.

**Mo:** So I've got to laugh, I have visions of like, you know, the nieces and the nephews who were like Uncle Scott, I have a good question and then they get this long 20-minute answer to their quick question and they say, oh man.

**Scott Hanselman:** What you're referring to was when one of our nieces came over from, I think they were coming from Tanzania and they said something very innocuous like why is it this time here, and it's like 2 in the morning in Tanzania, and I was like here, hold this, here, okay, you're the sun, all right, here...

**Mo:** Yeah, use the orange of the sun...

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, here's the orange of the sun and I'll be the moon. Okay, quick, turn this 23 degrees, okay, so the Earth is tilted like this.

**Mo:** That's right.

**Scott Hanselman:** All right, now move this. You're off of the sun. So then suddenly the question about what the -- it became a lesson on the solar system and like they groaned. How could they not find that awesome? How could these people not want to listen to Science Friday? Do you know what I'm saying?

**Mo:** Yeah, yeah.

**Scott Hanselman:** That's a teacher. Here you go, dear. Do you know how Zenzo was saying like why is the sky blue or whatever, and he is like -- our son, he is three. Well, here is how light -- okay, let's go to the science museum, Zenzo, let's talk about a prism. Here is the visible spectrum of light.

**Mo:** That's right because I in my infant wisdom, when I'm asked why is the sky blue, you know, half the time I'm thinking I've got to change to change the baby, I've got to do this and that, I've got to move on so my answer in its wisdom is because it's not red or something like that, and you, I mean you are going to really give it the respect that it deserves and sit there and dig into this. I think it says a lot about the kind of person that you are and into your desire to share this knowledge, but moving on just a little bit -- talk a little briefly about your path. I know you've talked about this with your dad, about how you're going to this point but I want to go back to my initial question of what it is that makes you tick, I mean what is it that makes you so passionate about this stuff that you do, why don't you get tired of it, you've gone to...

**Scott Hanselman:** Like this stuff, like programming?

**Mo:** Yeah. Programming, I mean web development, you know, .NET, this whole thing. How do you keep it fresh, frosty, exciting?

**Scott Hanselman:** How do you stay frosty? I taught you that, stay frosty and you never even...

**Mo:** I'm owning staying frosty that's all me.

**Scott Hanselman:** You never even saw the movie, you never finished the movie. And I love that you can watch Terminator, the TV show, without ever having watched or wanting to watch even a single Terminator movie.

**Mo:** Bringing us back to the issue at hand here.

**Scott Hanselman:** You bring it back to the issue at hand.

**Mo:** Root, Maybe wrong time to say root here.



**Scott Hanselman:** No, that's not an appropriate time for root. What was the question? What drives -- I don't know. It's empowerment like why do I keep a running tally of the groceries in my head and see if I can come up with a total within a dollar faster than the check out thing. Because it's interesting. I was going to say it's cool. It's not cool. I wasn't cool in high school.

**Mo:** Nobody wanted to be my friend...

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, okay. No, but I mean how can you not. One of the examples that I gave to the guys, the kids, the kids, the 30 to 40-year-old men and women that I met at the local community college yesterday.

**Mo:** Kids?

**Scott Hanselman:** Was, you know, if you took apart your toaster oven, if you took apart your clock radio, if you put it back together again, these are all the signs of wanting to be a computer minded-person. Not a computer-minded person but an engineer wondering why it works. Like I gave the example of teaching your sister how to drive a car. Her concept of the relationship between the steering wheel and the wheels when I was teaching her the parallel park was that the steering wheel disappears into the dashboard, there's just like a steering shaft that goes into the dashboard, turns into magic and then these wheels turn which is probably your perception of how to...

**Mo:** Nonsense.

**Scott Hanselman:** Do you know what I'm saying though?

**Mo:** Yes.

**Scott Hanselman:** You know it's attached to the dashboard.

**Mo:** Right.

**Scott Hanselman:** But then there's a cloud of smoke inside.

**Mo:** Magic happens under the hood, it moves.

**Scott Hanselman:** A miracle.

**Mo:** Exactly.

**Scott Hanselman:** If your mind goes farther into the dashboard and you want to rip the dashboard open and find out what's going on, then you're maybe a computer person. It's not a quality or judgment about being a good person.

**Mo:** Right, sure. You have the curiosity for this thing, you know.

**Scott Hanselman:** Right. I mean, you have an MBA. I don't. I couldn't really care less about that kind of thing.

**Mo:** But after what, 15 years, 16 years?

**Scott Hanselman:** What time is it? This is year 17, love.

**Mo:** So 17 years into it, I mean how do you still stay as passionate about it as you are? I mean, you're not -- I've met teachers who initially when they believed, you know, when they started teaching believe and were gung ho and the system kind of beats it out of them slowly. How have you stayed as passionate and as committed on top of anything that comes out? I mean, I caught this thing on NPR talking about Twitter, they were interviewing the two guys, Biz and Ev...

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh, Biz Stone and Ev Williams.

**Mo:** And they were talking about...

**Scott Hanselman:** Look at you all, "Biz and Ev..."

**Mo:** But I remembered you about two years ago saying you're going to tweet, you're talking about your blood sugar and remember looking, what is this, you know.

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh yeah, I tweeted my diabetes for a day, 24 hours...

**Mo:** You're always on top of it.

**Scott Hanselman:** You thought it was weird then.

**Mo:** Yeah and of course it's a little weird now but still, you know, how do you stay? So you clearly enjoy it, you enjoy what you do.

**Scott Hanselman:** There are two different things that you brought up there though. One is keeping up on technology which might mean getting a new cellphone or making sure you have the best DVD player like you know we don't have a Blue Player, we will soon, but we're up on technology in some sense, and then there's keeping up on pop culture and technology, what they call memes. Like Twitter is a fad, but compared to Facebook, Twitter can even be seen. There's like eight million people on Twitter and I think the only reason that it's fun to talk about Twitter is because it's fun to say the word tweet. That's my theory about why people think Twitter is cool. It's fun to say tweet and Twitter. There are 175 million



people on Facebook. Okay, like put that in your perspective.

**Mo:** Right.

**Scott Hanselman:** Twitter could grow the way it is growing for the next 200 years and it would never catch Facebook, ever. Facebook is mainstream, Twitter is a niche. So I'm trying to make the differentiation in that there's being top on stuff like having the newest computer and the newest iPod or whatever, and then there's being up on all the internet means. They kind of feed two different things. Twitter feeds an addiction to being connected and an addiction to being -- an urgency addiction.

**Mo:** Right.

**Scott Hanselman:** Right, the Stephen Covey's Quadrant is about urgent...

**Mo:** Important.

**Scott Hanselman:** Neither urgent nor important. Twitter is nice because it's neither urgent nor important for most of the time, then suddenly something very important or urgent happen like how the plane hits the Hudson and then Twitter finds out first, but for the most part Twitter is very low on the urgency stuff. So that's one thing. So Twitter means that all that kind of crap and funny video on YouTube are neither urgent nor important.

**Mo:** Right.

**Scott Hanselman:** But computers getting faster and more memory and the move from 32-bit to 64-bit processors and going from unmanaged code to managed code, those things are both urgent and important. Those things are interesting and that feeds a whole different part of me. So there's -- keeping up on memes I have less patience for. I don't really care what the new hot hip thing is. I'm never going to be like Robert Scoble. You know Robert Scoble? You have no idea who Robert Scoble is. Who is Robert Scoble?

**Mo:** I refuse to answer that. You know, really we don't have enough time in this interview for me to dig -- wait, this is about you, right?

**Scott Hanselman:** The way that you're dodging this question is -- you've heard about Robert Scoble. So Robert Scoble was like the quintessential up-to-date super connected meme person. I want to be more focused on the technology, on the programming and on the computer side of things, not on the social graph part of things. I don't really care to be connected to that many people. I mean the people that I don't know from high school, that're trying to know me from Facebook. I don't hang out with them for a reason.

**Mo:** No. So you hear that people out there that were hoping...

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, you can reconnect with people from high school. If I wanted to reconnect with them, we wouldn't have lost touch.

**Mo:** Right, fair enough.

**Scott Hanselman:** I hang out with the people I want to from high school.

**Mo:** Okay, fair enough.

**Scott Hanselman:** They were at our wedding.

**Mo:** All two of them.

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah.

**Mo:** But again, I mean though, I think you're answering the fluffier side of the question.

**Scott Hanselman:** You're a brutal interviewer.

**Mo:** How is it that you kept this attraction with what it is that you do? So many people search for so long. I mean, I know many people who are in their 40's and 50's that haven't found this one thing that really motivates them...

**Scott Hanselman:** Because it is empowering, because I am...

**Mo:** You're just a power freak because this is the third time you mentioned...

**Scott Hanselman:** No, no, not power in the greed, and power and money sense of the word, but empowered in the way that teenagers today are not, empowered like...

**Mo:** Say more please.

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh yes, dear. Empowered like I have no tolerance for like a 13 year old who are like it's summertime, yeah, I guess I'll hang out with my friends, there's not much I can do, I'm only 13, I'm only 14 or whatever. When I was 14 I got a job, I got a job permit and I went and I folded shirts. When I wanted to get a car, my dad said, "Good, get a car. I wish you all the best. Good luck with that, son." And I went and I bought it for \$300 and I paid in payments. Now, this is the part of my personality that was like get off my lawn, damn kids, you know, be empowered, get out there and do it and what's great about programming is that you can think something and then make it. Do you see what I'm saying?

**Mo:** Yeah.



**Scott Hanselman:** Like have you ever looked at an Excel, you do stuff in Excel because you're like a business person and then you look at those numbers and then you can envision the crazy pivot table, it hasn't been done yet and you say I can do this. Okay, imagine that feeling times a thousand, that's what programming is like.

**Mo:** And that's the way that you feel every day, I mean maybe not necessarily everyday but that's what's allowed you to keep staying with this.

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, yeah. It keeps you from feeling helpless. I mean, it's so sad to look at someone's -- this is horrible, have you ever got a resume from somebody for some technical job and then you turn like the paragraph marks things on and suddenly instead of seeing like nice tabs, stops, and stuff, you just see dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, dot, boom, chart delete, thrown away. I mean I don't really mean that but I kind of mean that. It's like if you couldn't master Word and the basics of the tab/stop, am I really going to hire you because, you know, I don't want to see a whole colorful array of tabs and spaces and chaos and I know when these line is 11 point and that line is 12 point, it shows attention to detail and empowerment. So the point I'm making is that to master a piece of software, even a comparatively simple one like Word or PowerPoint is this first step and this feeling that you had when you learned Word and when I moved you on to like Gmail and you hated it and then you got it and suddenly you're tagging and starring and searching, you're like oh yeah. There's a movement from a non-computer person to a computer person to a power person to a programmer to a really good programmer. Each level, each time you level up, oh, that's so sad, because I'm putting this in gaming parlance. Each time you level up like that, say as you reach level 70, you're getting more of a sense of I can do this, I can make things happen. Someone can send me a text file and I can sort it and I can split it and make everything up a case and send it back, boom, it spins magic, man. How can you not care about this stuff?

**Mo:** You know, I care.

**Scott Hanselman:** I know you do.

**Mo:** You know, I'm gripped. I mean, I'm right there with you.

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**Mo:** How do you mind to just fit all of this? This is a legitimate question that many people have asked me, how do this man do it?

**Scott Hanselman:** Many people asked you this?

**Mo:** Yes, all seven of them. I mean, what do you give up to have the kind of drive that you've got, the kind of ambition that you've got, the vision that you've got, and I don't tell people that it's because, you know, in the middle of the night, at 3:00 a.m. he is up solving.

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, I'm up solving.

**Mo:** You know, and that's how you cope.

**Scott Hanselman:** I want to compile.

**Mo:** That's right.

**Scott Hanselman:** I mean you're waking me, you're talking me up here, love. You mean how do I fit it all in a day? How do you think I fit it all in a day? When did I come to bed last night?

**Mo:** This is about you and...

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah but you're not just interested in with Neil Conan from NPR who doesn't know the interviewer. You're the wife.

**Mo:** I'm not interviewing as a wife, I'm just interviewing as an adult.

**Scott Hanselman:** I need you to interview as the wife because I can get all sorts of random interviewers.

**Mo:** Can we start over?

**Scott Hanselman:** No.

**Mo:** Okay.

**Scott Hanselman:** What time did I come to bed last night?

**Mo:** 4:00, was it 4:00?

**Scott Hanselman:** It's 4:30. Is that a good idea? Let's ask a three-year-old.



**Mo:** That's right, yeah.

**Scott Hanselman:** No, that's not a good idea but that was a sacrifice. Yeah, that you don't go to bed at 4:00 a.m. or 4:30 a.m. every night, but you have been very supportive in the sense that I can look you in the eye and say this is important or you know this really is important. There's some stuff I want to get done before MIX and the day after MIX is over we'll go on a vacation. So it's about balance. So there maybe days or even a week or two where I might work crazy, crazy out, but you've got to temper that with, like you know we went to Africa for a month, we exceed far out on vacation into the next year, a far out, more vacation than I actually have. So it's like play hard, work hard I guess. Don't you think that we do that?

**Mo:** I think so. I mean...

**Scott Hanselman:** There's always a balance, it's not always a struggle.

**Mo:** How do you think it impacts your family?

**Scott Hanselman:** It's one of the things. You could play with the boys for 10 hours a day, you know 10 solid hours to play with them, and then on the 11th hour say I'm going to go and do something else right now and they will make you feel like you did not spend enough time with them.

**Mo:** Yeah.

**Scott Hanselman:** Why won't you play...?

**Mo:** Yeah. Daddy...

**Scott Hanselman:** So I mean what do we do? We get up about 8:00, we get the boy ready for school, take him to school, then I like a nomad run from free wireless to free wireless, from Panera to Mo's to Chipotle and back, sometimes work at the house and I'll work until maybe, I don't know, 5:00 or 6:00, sometimes earlier, sometimes later, kind of depends on what's going on at the time, we eat, play with the boys, so pretty much I'm with the boys from like 5:00 to 8:00, 5:00 to 9:00, I try to squeeze as much of that as I can and put them to bed, then depending on whether or not we watch TV or we hang out or we read books or do the taxes or Yada, yada, yada. go to bed at like, I don't know, 1:00 or 2:00, get up 8:00 assuming we -- I spent three to four hours, the boys spent four to six hours with you plus 8 to 10 hours a day, there's a lot in a day, there's a lot of time. When you go to bed at 2:00 a.m. there's a lot of time, and then on the weekends I get to hang out with the boys all weekend long, which is cool when I'm not traveling; which I don't travel too much, and on those times when I get to sense that I maybe stealing an hour here or stealing an hour

there, I try to get that hour back. Would you agree with that?

**Mo:** I would, I would indeed.

**Scott Hanselman:** Okay, why are you smiling? Why are you teasing me, man?

**Mo:** You're very conscientious about giving back what you've taken and I think that's very often. So what inspires you? What's your source of inspiration as you try to cram so many things into one day?

**Scott Hanselman:** My source of inspiration?

**Mo:** Yeah.

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, I mean all of this work, and there's the work of creation, creating stuff, but the older I...

**Mo:** Is it making something out of nothing?

**Scott Hanselman:** It's in making something out of nothing, yeah, that's cool. Making a lot of stuff as I can, but not working anymore.

**Mo:** As in retirement or...

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh yeah, hell yeah. I mean, that's what I want to do. That was our plan, right. You are still my wife, not interviewer, that is the plan, right, dear?

**Mo:** Oh, okay.

**Scott Hanselman:** To stop doing this as soon as possible. I may...

**Mo:** Let me take a memo here, okay, that's the plan...

**Scott Hanselman:** You know what the plan is, right. The plan is to be done as soon as possible and the cool thing about the plan is we may not necessarily stop doing any of this stuff but at least then I wouldn't have to go to work. Do you know what I'm saying? But I think I'd probably go teach high school, that would be my retirement. What would you do if you retire?

**Mo:** I think so and that ties to what you're talking about before that you're a teacher at heart.

**Scott Hanselman:** That's right, yeah, I'm a teacher. So I work for Microsoft because it lets me work from home and then it lets me be a teacher.

**Mo:** That's pretty awesome.



**Scott Hanselman:** I'm not a professional fan boy although I think some people think I am. What is my job, dear? What do you think my job is?

**Mo:** Again you do such a nice job of turning...

**Scott Hanselman:** No, that's for real.

**Mo:** No, I mean...

**Scott Hanselman:** What do you think my job is?

**Mo:** People are not interested in my opinion and really I...

**Scott Hanselman:** People have emailed me personally and this is my podcast. What do you think my job is?

**Mo:** This is my podcast because I'm the one interviewing you and I'm going to own it and focus on that. Why don't we be a team...?

**Scott Hanselman:** What do you think my job is?

**Mo:** I think you're an educator and I think your job really does involve a lot of teaching and reaching out to people and that type of thing, community building, etc, etc, etc. It just happens to be...

**Scott Hanselman:** Community building? What's that?

**Mo:** Well, sure, I mean but you talk, you network with a lot of people, whether they're students, whether they're business leaders, I mean you do a lot of outreach, what I would call outreach, and you're shaking hands, not so much literal...

**Scott Hanselman:** Is that a job? I mean, everyone teased our president for being a community organizer. Is that what I'm doing?

**Mo:** Well, it's really a job, the way of being. I think even if you weren't working for necessarily Microsoft, it's who you are so that's -- you know, what was that Mandela says, talking about prison is a state of mind type of thing, this is whose hands are on the knees. This is what you do regardless of whatever...

**Scott Hanselman:** Whether you're getting paid or not.

**Mo:** Yeah, called whatever label or title you want, payment or no payment...

**Scott Hanselman:** That's a good answer. I didn't think you'd pull that off.

**Mo:** How would you answer...?

**Scott Hanselman:** I couldn't have answered it better. I mean, ultimately...

**Mo:** You see, I was listening.

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, I was just testing you. It's the back and forth that makes us a good team. Yeah, that's the deal, it's about -- I mean I'm excited about stuff. I'm often excited about Microsoft stuff and sometimes not. Took a lot of Ubuntu disks with us to South Africa but yeah, when I'm not excited anymore then I would quit and work somewhere else, move thing, because that would be sad to be not excited.

**Mo:** Yeah, yeah. I think it's wonderful that you have that philosophy. I find it really great. Okay, let me see. I did try to jot down a couple of questions and you've dodged all of them. Not of them have been answered but how much time do we have? Probably a couple more minutes.

**Scott Hanselman:** We can go as long as you want, dear.

**Mo:** Oh wow, I'm just now getting hot.

**Scott Hanselman:** At this point, there's like five people listening here at this point.

**Mo:** I started with seven and I've lost two in the process.

**Scott Hanselman:** I'm just saying.

**Mo:** Okay. What's next for the Hanselman?

**Scott Hanselman:** The Hanselman? You call me the Hanselman around the house.

**Mo:** Right.

**Scott Hanselman:** What's next? I don't know what to tell you. I'm going to keep doing this until it's boring and then I'll do something else. I will tell you before I quit to be clear.

**Mo:** A nice non answer.

**Scott Hanselman:** This is the thing though. I had my midyear review like when was it like? Last week? And I told my boss, I was like, yeah, this is pretty cool. Because at Microsoft they always want you to grow up and like become a manager, then a manager of managers, and then you know, a god amongst men and I'm enjoying what I'm doing. Where do you see yourself in five years? I have no plan at all. In five



years, everything I do in terms of how many years from now is in context with the kids. In five years, I see us taking the older boy to, what, third grade. Yeah, I know isn't that crazy. That's what I think about. What I'm doing as a job in five years doesn't really matter to me. I was already chief architect in a very nice publicly trading company and I've done my job, I've made my way, maybe I'll be the start up, I don't know. As long as I have good healthcare, it doesn't really matter. As long as I can get insulin and a T1 or some fiber optic, then it doesn't really matter what I'm doing, right. What was the first thing that we did when we built this house? Talk to me. What was the first thing we did when we built this house?

**Mo:** Drew us all on the ground and kick our heels and oh God, we made a mistake. No, no, nothing.

**Scott Hanselman:** No, not that part.

**Mo:** Okay.

**Scott Hanselman:** We put in internet.

**Mo:** Absolutely.

**Scott Hanselman:** We pulled the cable, that's what we did. Do you remember that?

**Mo:** I do remember that indeed.

**Scott Hanselman:** And it was worth it. It was absolutely worth it.

**Mo:** Okay. Anything that you think they should know about you? I mean your listeners? Parting thoughts.

**Scott Hanselman:** I don't know. They like listening to you talk about stuff. I think I've taken over this interview and talk about me and we didn't get a chance to talk about you.

**Mo:** It wasn't about me, it was about you and about the Scott Hanselman that people don't know.

**Scott Hanselman:** But in all seriousness, people are interested in hearing about you and your perspective. I mean since we met, we've been together for how many years now? How many years has this been? Eight years?

**Mo:** Yeah, nine years.

**Scott Hanselman:** Ten years? Nine years. Well, feels like 12.

**Mo:** Nice.

**Scott Hanselman:** No, it's been a very long time coming up on 10 years here, and when did you think that I was louder than the average programmer?

**Mo:** Well, I didn't know a whole lot of programmers to begin with so I've always rather thought that you were loud, yes, and opinionated and very, very eager to share that opinion with anybody who'd listen so from the beginning really.

**Scott Hanselman:** Isn't that the definition of pompous.

**Mo:** Well, you know, your word, not mine. No, it's a fine dance that you dance. It's a fine line too that you walk between saying this is what I think and I make no apology for having that opinion without wanting to offend and without wanting to put down people who disagree with you so it's always been a very interesting thing to observe for me and to see how you deal with people that whether it's on your blog that want to say, hey, you know, Scott, this is stupid, or, Scott, you know, this sucks. I think that when I've seen you delete a comment not related really to -- it's not germane to anything we're talking about but going to blog for a second, I think I want to see you delete one comment at one time where the guy was really offensive, I can't remember if it was races or something, but it was something that was that extreme.

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, I don't really read comments.

**Mo:** Yeah but otherwise everything else that says you know, you're an idiot, you're not a smart guy, why do you bother, please stop blogging, all those kinds of...

**Scott Hanselman:** Everybody has got an opinion. It doesn't mean it doesn't hurt. I mean, somebody twitted something about that I was a pompous asshole or something. So I re-twitted it. It was like it's a valid opinion. I don't want to be a pompous asshole so if somebody gives me feedback like that, I'm like okay, I should probably think about that. He might be right or might -- not to mention Jeff Atwood twice in a talk but he has this thing that he quotes people so I don't know if it's him or if somebody quoted but he said something, "Strong opinions weakly held." That's freaking awesome. You know what I'm saying?

**Mo:** Yeah.

**Scott Hanselman:** Because this is a thing that you hate about me because you and I will have a fight and when I say fight I mean lowercase f, not capital F, and our fights are pretty much like this. I'm going to reenact one of our fights.

**Mo:** Oh, goodness.



**Scott Hanselman:** Well, here is an example of a fight we had. That was about the interest rate on something. I thought it was zero percent, and he said it was one percent, and he was like no, it's one percent. No, it's zero percent. No, it's one percent. It's very sophisticated, the fighting. And I will just be fighting, fighting, fighting and like no, no, no, it's one percent, one percent, you're wrong, you're so full of crap, and I will just really pump it up, strong opinion, and then you'll bring out a piece of paper and then he'll prove that I was wrong, then I'll go, oh, yeah, I guess you're right.

**Mo:** And you move on, casually, you walk away. Meanwhile, he's left thinking wait a minute, we've been arguing for four hours, I need four hours of capitulation.

**Scott Hanselman:** I mean, it was a strong opinion but it was weakly held.

**Mo:** Weakly held, yes.

**Scott Hanselman:** So I will fight right up to the point where it's obvious that I'm wrong and I will be like, oh, okay, and I'm totally cool for that person to have the win. For the win, good job, more power to you. There's no reason to fight and be mean about it. There's no ego involved. That is the stupidest idea I've ever -- oh, I guess you are right, okay, my bad.

**Mo:** And we're back to ego. I mean I don't know if I'd agree that there's no ego involved.

**Scott Hanselman:** No, everyone has an ego.

**Mo:** At some point, you know...

**Scott Hanselman:** But to have an ego is to be able to take criticism and be okay with it but more importantly to have an ego it has to be able a healthy ego as oppose to just any ego, there's a difference between having an ego and having a healthy one. Just to be able to say, oh, I am wrong. I'd do that to the first guy who says I'm wrong. It's easier to fall on your sword than to try to lift up the sword and carry a heavy sword all the time.

**Mo:** Easier yet than to be pushed into it, right.

**Scott Hanselman:** You just let it fall, let it fall on the ground and just fall on top of it.

**Mo:** That's right. The Japanese model has served us well in the past as well it should again.

**Scott Hanselman:** That is the my bad kind of philosophy of life. You know what I mean?

**Mo:** Yeah.

**Scott Hanselman:** There's nothing wrong with being, you know, my bed. Have an opinion and then get over it, get over yourself.

**Mo:** Yeah, very cool.

**Scott Hanselman:** I know you don't like to kind of fix the heat out of the argument at that point but...

**Mo:** Well, the only thing that I'm looking for at that point is you argued for so long, you know, and I was wrong to take equally long. You argue for four hours on a point and then you give me thirtyseconds of oops, my bad, then you walk away and it's a wait a minute. For every four hours you're arguing, there should be six hours of I'm sorry, man...

**Scott Hanselman:** No, I'm just like, okay, my bed, what's for lunch.

**Mo:** That's right, time to move on. So anyway, speaking of moving on...

**Scott Hanselman:** Yeah, I apply that to all essence my life... I do, that's the same way I am on my blog. You know, I can't remember, there's kind of a piece of code a couple of weeks ago that I thought was really awesome. I was just playing, it doesn't matter what it was but everyone thought it sucked and I was like, well, I guess that was soundly trounced, no one thought that was a good idea. It's that trombone.

**Mo:** You don't worry about being maybe not sort of perceived as sort of weak and not sticking to your guns. Because there is something to be said, there's something admirable about a person who is of strong conviction, who really believes and gets behind something. I mean if you believe in the moment and then you let it go at a second when there's a disagreeing opinion...

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, there's stuff that you don't like, there are some opinions that you don't -- what's the other word for capitulate? You know, you don't back off on like being nice, opening doors for people, the stuff that you teach three-year-olds. You know what I mean? It's not like you tell the kid, yeah, believe this and then, well, you know, it doesn't work out, you can pick another thing. There's a certain basic...

**Mo:** Yeah.

**Scott Hanselman:** There's a difference between values and opinions.

**Mo:** A core value then.

**Scott Hanselman:** So I have values I won't -- like whether or not a piece of software is good or not, it



may be good today and then maybe it will be looked poorly upon in 10 years. History will decide if the pattern held.

**Mo:** Indeed.

**Scott Hanselman:** Indeed.

**Mo:** History will decide very, very true. Okay, one last quick question. Tell me a little bit about the book and your excitement about it.

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh, oh, the book.

**Mo:** Yeah, the book.

**Scott Hanselman:** Professional ASP.NET MVC. Weren't you excited when I told you we were writing another book? Tell me...

**Mo:** I was stoked, I was like, yes, this is awesome.

**Scott Hanselman:** Right and translation?

**Mo:** Over my dead body.

**Scott Hanselman:** Yes, You write another book. This is the address that you can find me at.

**Mo:** That's right. The boys and I will be -- and you wrote another book anyway. So tell me about the book.

**Scott Hanselman:** It's done. I mean, we're going through edits now. We're going to look for grammar, we're looking for spell check, we're fixing a couple of code bugs in little examples and we're making sure there are as many eyeballs to see it as possible.

**Mo:** But what makes this book so special? I mean, you know, there are a lot of books out there.

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, I did it with my buddies, I did it with Bill and with Rob, and Rob was over for dinner a little while back, and there's the GOO, the GOO helped with the first chapter which is pretty awesome.

**Mo:** But that doesn't really make it compelling.

**Scott Hanselman:** It's special, it's special though.

**Mo:** Special to you though but what makes it special to others out there?

**Scott Hanselman:** It's kind of technical but we've got this Model-View-Controller framework. It is fresh, clean, supported by Microsoft. You know, we've had Model-View-Controller frameworks before on the

.NET framework, but I don't know, this one is special, it kind of makes programming fun again. I mean, it's fun to program on Rails and it's fun to program in Jango but I have kind of a soft spot for Visual Studio and it's fun to program in Visual Studio. So, what have I got here, 101 tests, you know what I mean? I mean I'm going to write more tests. When you really can get off on writing a crap-load of tests and okay, can I hit 500 tests? You know, it's just I want to write tests for every possible piece of functionality. That is really exciting, and I don't expect you to understand why. There's a sense of confidence that you get when you've got a chunk of tests in a pretty well factored piece of code versus an application that you just know is going to kill you later. It's like it's a non-tested application. A kind of a standard web form app with no test at all, is just a time bomb that's going to kill you later.

**Mo:** So because this really is not my world at all I'm not going to be shy about asking my question for your listeners that are savvy. Well, they can sort of tune up for the next seven minutes or whatever, but what is it that these applications are supposed to be doing? I mean, walk me through this in layman's terms. I know that this is a...

**Scott Hanselman:** Layman's terms like wifely terms, I mean do you...

**Mo:** Come on.

**Scott Hanselman:** No, no.

**Mo:** Give me more credit that that.

**Scott Hanselman:** Are you a programmer? I'm not. I'm just saying.

**Mo:** Well, who is the audience? Accomplished programmers?

**Scott Hanselman:** Not you. Your level of programming goes to Excel...

**Mo:** My world? Do it in my world.

**Scott Hanselman:** This is not a qualitative value judgment. You can write some basic Excel Macros. Can you do for loops? Right about the edge of where you can.

**Mo:** No, I use to be able to do six but -- we're going to edit a whole bunch here. But yes, for loops...

**Scott Hanselman:** That's going to be twitted now.

**Mo:** Oh great.

**Scott Hanselman:** Scott's wife can do not just four loops, but six loops.



**Mo:** But six.

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh God.

**Mo:** Oh, geez, I love it when we're done.

**Scott Hanselman:** Let's not pull that down.

**Mo:** That's right.

**Scott Hanselman:** The audiences are developers, right? I mean, Visual Studio for the Microsoft person is the Microsoft Word. You live in Word and Excel, we live in Visual Studio. You do your work in there and you make stuff and we do our work in Visual Studio. This is a framework that let's people write websites faster and cleaner in a different way than the framework was before.

**Mo:** Okay. You see, I understand that.

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, that's one way to put it. I mean, not that faster is not the right way to put it but...

**Mo:** Oh boy, now the truth comes out...

**Scott Hanselman:** No, because it's complicated. We always use the example of car versus motorcycle. The stuff that we have before was a car, and now someone has introduced this concept of a motorcycle so some people might go, oh, wow, this is way better, it's faster. Okay, that's a value judgment. But someone else might say, well, it's faster that's why it got only two wheels, it's going to kill you on the curves.

**Mo:** Yeah, more dangerous.

**Scott Hanselman:** You can't put groceries in it. So then you get into this issue where there are choices where there weren't choices before, and with a car you can put lots of groceries in it and you can get where you want to go but you can't go very fast. With a motorcycle, you could kill yourself but neither is better than the other. They're simply different for what you wanted to do that day. So here's an example of a supported framework. Microsoft just let's us do stuff differently than we did before. We've just introduced a new kind of car so people have a choice now. It doesn't mean that there are only cars and motorcycles, there are still mini vans and hammers and unicycles, but we haven't written those yet.

**Mo:** Okay.

**Scott Hanselman:** So it's exciting because it's a new class of car, new class of application.

**Mo:** Is that innovative?

**Scott Hanselman:** No, it's not particularly innovative. In at the pattern is a 30-year-old, 33-year-old pattern, Model-View-Controller pattern of the 1970's.

**Mo:** Is it creative?

**Scott Hanselman:** The way that it fits in with .NET is cool, it's creative, but it builds on the things that came before it. There are others, the Ruby on Rails, and we got all sorts of Ruby on Rails books behind you in our bookshelf. It's a framework that did Model-View-Controller and is one of the better thought of ones but Model-View-Controller frameworks have been around for years, dozens if not more. This is just one that smells like .NET and is supported by Microsoft and it's the one worth to be excited about right now. It's the one we wrote the book on.

**Mo:** Literally...

**Scott Hanselman:** Well, I mean not the book. Again, I get back to authorship that doesn't need authority. We wrote a book on it. There's at least four or five good books by smarter people than I that are out at the same time but we wrote the book that we could make five or even six bucks an hour with...

**Mo:** All that.

**Scott Hanselman:** With the time that we put into this book. I think Scott Gu can make more money on Amazon than we're going to make on this book but I'm just excited to have worked with my buddies on it and I think it's an interesting good book.

**Mo:** I'm happy for you guys as I sort of seen...

**Scott Hanselman:** You're just happy it's done.

**Mo:** I am but I've seen the effort too that went into it. Tell me, is this a world that you'd want the boys to go into? As we wrap it up and I've been saying we're wrapping it up for the last 10 minutes but we're wrapping it up really.

**Scott Hanselman:** Oh, gosh. Do I want the boys to go into this? This is a good world because no matter what programming language you pick really, you can always get a job and you can work anywhere you want in the world. So that's the good thing about being a programmer. It's a hard skill, not hard and difficult, but hard in definable and discreet and complete. Oh, you're a programmer, I mean I could probably put up a cardboard thing and go stand on the corner with like a will code for food and I bet you I'd get some kind of a job, some day work within a



day. I would -- will code for food, it would happen.  
That is powerful.

**Mo:** Don't test me now, we're going to have to do this just to see and videotape the whole thing.

**Scott Hanselman:** We should try it. but the idea, it's probably been done so this is the other thing that's great about the internet. Any time we have an idea like we just did.

**Mo:** That's right.

**Scott Hanselman:** It's on YouTube, someone did it. So that's a good aspect of things but you still get laid off like in any job. I picked it because I never understood the soft skills and by the soft skills I mean marketing and sales and the kind of stuff that you were...

**Mo:** Basically people skills that you don't have.

**Scott Hanselman:** People's skills, yeah. EQ is it?

**Mo:** That's right.

**Scott Hanselman:** Emotional quotient.

**Mo:** Yes.

**Scott Hanselman:** That's the thing you have and the thing that I don't have. Would I want them to do this? Only if they want to do this. I see our kids running the United Nations. It's been something much more important than making software that will be put in place in three years.

**Mo:** And on that hopeful positive note, I'm going to sign off folks. This has been Mo, interviewing Scott Hanselman for yet another exciting episode of Hanselminutes. Take care everybody, catch you later.

**Scott Hanselman:** Good job.