



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 #177

August 28, 2009

Hanselminutiae-seven with Richard Campbell

Too much? Too soon? We like Richard so darn much that we had to keep talking on this show. Scott and Richard talk about personal PBXs, multi-core PDAs, iPads and more.

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Lawrence Ryan: From hanselminutes.com, it's Hanselminutes, a weekly discussion with web developer and technologist, Scott Hanselman. This is Lawrence Ryan, announcing show #177, recorded live Thursday, August 27, 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. In this episode, Scott talks with Richard Campbell.

Scott Hanselman: Hi, this is Scott Hanselman and this is another episode of Hanselminutes and you know, I talked with Richard Campbell last week and it was just too much darn fun and we kept talking after we recorded. So who knows, maybe it's a regular thing, maybe it's not, I'll talk to Richard as long as he'll talk to me. So he's back, he's back, it's Richard, hi Richard!

Richard Campbell: You started it, that's not me. Where were we? I think we were still up at Wisconsin where we ended up doing that whole discussion about our horror stories of dealing with scaling websites.

Scott Hanselman: Oh, yeah, that's when it started.

Richard Campbell: That's when it started.

Scott Hanselman: You are absolutely right. We were sitting, where was it in Wisconsin?

Richard Campbell: I think it was...

Scott Hanselman: I think it was at the corner of the conference, though, somewhere and said, "Oh, that's a good idea. Let's start recording." Wisconsin? Ohio? Somewhere in the Midwest.

Richard Campbell: Somewhere in the Midwest, yeah.

Scott Hanselman: So I tried to call you a minute ago and...

Richard Campbell: You succeeded in calling me.

Scott Hanselman: Well, I did call you, we're talking now but I couldn't find your cell so I dialed what I thought was your cell...

Richard Campbell: You did but my cell automatically -- when I'm in my office I shut my cell off because it interferes with the audio stuff -- it automatically forwards to the office number.

Scott Hanselman: So the office phone says, "Hi, you've reached the Campbell residence, please say the name of who you want to talk to." I'm like, "Who did I call? Did I call a house? Is this his family?" So I

just said, "Richard" and then it said, "Calling Richard Campbell." And then I got you.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: That's hardcore, that's your freaking house.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, well, for starters, no phone actually rang until you said Richard and it went to my phone.

Scott Hanselman: No.

Richard Campbell: So that's....

Scott Hanselman: Okay, what rang? Something must have...

Richard Campbell: The point is, when you just call me until you say my name, no phone rang anywhere in the house. The nice thing is, when you're staying at my place, for example, Scott, you can have your kids call the house and just say "Guest" and it will ring only in the guest room.

Scott Hanselman: Wow.

Richard Campbell: And it totally does in the telemarketer because they don't know who they're calling.

Scott Hanselman: Right. This was interesting, I waited for the list.

Richard Campbell: That's right, there is no list.

Scott Hanselman: I never got a list.

Richard Campbell: I turned the list off for exactly that reason.

Scott Hanselman: Okay, so is this Google Voice or what is happening here?

Richard Campbell: This product is made by Microsoft and it's called...

Scott Hanselman: No, Microsoft did something?

Richard Campbell: It's called Response Point.

Scott Hanselman: Response Point?

Richard Campbell: Yes.

Scott Hanselman: I'm going to Google that with Bing right now.

Richard Campbell: Well, you can go to microsoft.com/responsepoint/, there's a whole site there.



Scott Hanselman: Okay.

Richard Campbell: It came out a couple of years ago, there's three different hardware manufacturers making stuff for it. It's a company called Syspine

Scott Hanselman: Small business phone system.

Richard Campbell: That's right.

Scott Hanselman: Buy online.

Richard Campbell: So I picked up a Syspine system which was the base unit with 4 phone lines going into it and 6 handsets for about \$1,200 bucks.

Scott Hanselman: Okay, whoops they have it at Costco.

Richard Campbell: Here you go.

Scott Hanselman: All right, this is insane, I've never heard of this. Oh wow, look at that, VoIP Phone system with four phones. It's like a box powered by Microsoft Response Point and there's the whole thing, eight different analog phone lines, 50 extensions.

Richard Campbell: Plus it also supports all the SIP lines, so if you want to bring in VoIP lines, that's fine, it works with that just fine but also stuff like. Well, I've got it configured with Auto Attendant or you can have it go to a particular phone line. In the Auto Attendant mode you can ask questions like, what is your fax number, what are your hours and so forth and you can pre-record responses to all of those things. So it's very clever for an inexpensive phone system.

Scott Hanselman: Wow. It's a Syspine six pack.

Richard Campbell: Yeah. The reason that I put it in the house was, I've got teenage daughters so I don't want to take their messages, I want to just forward to their phones.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, don't want to hear the phone ring.

Richard Campbell: Don't want to hear the phone ring, unless it's for me. There's a blue button on all these phones, when you push that, say that were on a call and I pick up the call and it's for one of my daughters, I push the blue button and say, "Transfer to daughter." It takes the call over there.

Scott Hanselman: Wow.

Richard Campbell: Intercom system to the whole house, so you can hit a button and say, "Intercom to the phone you want to go to and just sends you there.

Scott Hanselman: That's insane..

Richard Campbell: It's an amazing little product, I'm just stunned by it and nobody seems to know about it.

Scott Hanselman: But who does your phone system? How does that work because there's the thing, there's the box and all the software but...

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: Do you use Vonage or who's doing the phoning part?

Richard Campbell: So I have analog lines from the local telco...

Scott Hanselman: Who was that? I think one of my sons just picked up the phone.

Richard Campbell: Yup.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, hang on for a second. Hey Moe, hang on one second, I'm going to put the phone down, this would be an edit point.

Richard Campbell: No problem.

Moe: Hi!

Scott Hanselman: Hi.

Richard Campbell: Hi.

Scott Hanselman: Can you hand the phone to Mommy please? Give the phone to mommy.

Moe: Hi!

Scott Hanselman: Hey, Moe!

Richard Campbell: Wow.

Scott Hanselman: Give the phone. Can you tell Mommy to keep [Child's Name] off the phone please.

You hear that?

Richard Campbell: That was awesome, we've got to leave that in.

Scott Hanselman: Oh, we're going to leave it in?

Richard Campbell: Hi!

Scott Hanselman: So speaking of phone systems, would it have prevented that?

Richard Campbell: Yes, actually because it's a PBX so there's no way to pick up a line.



Scott Hanselman: PBX.

Richard Campbell: Like I had to dial nine for an outside line, the whole concept of being able to pickup an existing phone line is foreign, you actually have to call.

Scott Hanselman: Oh, it's like an, so PBX is an internal phone system?

Richard Campbell: Yeah, right.

Scott Hanselman: A phone system that doesn't leave the house unless you let it leave the house?

Richard Campbell: Private exchange, right, that's the whole idea. So if I want somebody else to be able to listen to this call, I would have to press the conference line and tell it what phone, the phone that I wanted to pull into the call and then we'd both be on.

Scott Hanselman: What's the difference between Response Point and Asterix, or that open source PBX thing?

Richard Campbell: There's really not a lot of difference to them, they're more or less the same thing. The only thing about Asterix, being open source is that you've got to pick a vendor, there's lots of different products or try to assemble it yourself and I really looked hard at, I was very close to buying an Asterix system before I found Response Point, very, very close because I wanted those kinds of features. I wanted my email to go, my voice mail to go directly to email, I wanted all that intercom stuff, I wanted all those things and Asterix offered the whole thing but you're largely to build it all by yourself and this was in a box, set it up, had it up running in an hour, it's got a Windows interface, I dial the phone now by literally selecting from a list of my numbers from Outlook and saying, dial that number and off it goes.

Scott Hanselman: Wow. Well, this isn't the topic that I thought we were going to talk about at all.

Richard Campbell: No, no, it only happened because you phoned me, right?

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, that was cool. Now, I'm never going to phone you again, you scared me away from your crazy phone. Madness, that's pretty cool, I don't know if my 18 month old baby requires a PBX at the house here but I know where to get one now, at Costco.

Richard Campbell: Apparently.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, that's pretty slick, cool. So, gosh, you've thrown me for a loop.

Richard Campbell: Totally.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, a buddy of mine loaned me his Kindle DX, the Kindle.

Richard Campbell: That's the big one, right?

Scott Hanselman: Oh, yeah, it's massive.

Richard Campbell: Yeah?

Scott Hanselman: It's huge, bigger than your head and that's a big thing to say.

Richard Campbell: Dude, there's nothing bigger than my head.

Scott Hanselman: I've got a Kindle myself.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: And I love it, love it, love it, love it, love it, love it, love it. Cannot say enough nice things about it and I apologize to people who live internationally...

Richard Campbell: Like me.

Scott Hanselman: That you do not have the Kindle, you'd have to hold it up and point it towards the US.

Richard Campbell: Yeah. Well, I've seriously considered a Kindle DX because it just had the USB interface so I should be able to load books and stuff that way because I obviously am outside the Sprint's coverage.

Scott Hanselman: Right and you can also email stuff directly to the Kindle. So each Kindle has its own email address.

Richard Campbell: Which I think is very cool.

Scott Hanselman: It's deeply cool. So if you have a pdf or a Word document or whatever, you just forward it and with the Kindle DX, it's got native pdf support.

Richard Campbell: But the only way I'd be able to email it is to be on that 3G network because that's how it gets its mail, yeah?

Scott Hanselman: No, yeah, you're right, you're right, that's a good point.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, if it had Wifi, I just need Wifi but didn't, Sony just announced a new reader that's got Wifi in it.

Scott Hanselman: Really?

Richard Campbell: I'm pretty sure.



Scott Hanselman: The Sony Reader, I don't know, is this the Sony, I had the original Sony Reader back in the day and I ended up sending it back, it was just, it wasn't right, it wasn't set up to read, it was set up to be a cool Star Trek pad but it was not, I did not find it that useful.

Richard Campbell: I too had one of the original readers and I still have mine if I could make it work outside the US.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah. Do you think wireless is really necessary?

Richard Campbell: You know what, I'm wrong, Sony does not have Wi-Fi in it but there's another one planned called Plastic that has Wi-Fi.

Scott Hanselman: Oh yeah, what's that called, Real Plastic, Plastic Logic?

Richard Campbell: Yeah, something like that.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, yeah. Well, the new ones, the new Sony's are Touch, so no wireless but you can touch it.

Richard Campbell: Yeah. It does have the 3G network in it with this deal with the libraries, right, like the New York Library signed up so you get this sort of DRM book for three weeks.

Scott Hanselman: Right.

Richard Campbell: When you're really starting to see a picture of where this is going to go, we're making these first stumbling steps but give it a little more time and we're going to have this device, I really think this is going to be one device, this PDA type of device that is my phone, that is my reader, that is, all of those things in one.

Scott Hanselman: Do you think that an iPad is going to come up from Apple?

Richard Campbell: Absolutely.

Scott Hanselman: And you think that it's going to be something that is, is it going to be a big iPhone or is it going to be a color touchy Kindle or?

Richard Campbell: I think it's going to be a big iPhone.

Scott Hanselman: So you think it's just a big swollen iPhone?

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: I think a six or seven inch iPhone.

Richard Campbell: It would be a large screen type iPhone, thinner.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah?

Richard Campbell: Whether or not it should be an iTouch or an iPhone is a good question but I think they've got the touch thing down, they've figured out how to make the screen bigger and they're trying to sort of cross that line into the tablet space. Apple never got over the Newton, you know?

Scott Hanselman: No, they, I mean, I haven't got over the Newton, I'm looking at one right now, it's sitting on my little IKEA shelves behind me here, so yeah, definitely.

Richard Campbell: Batteries are fully discharged on it too, right?

Scott Hanselman: Oh, actually, it's funny that you mentioned that, the great thing about the Newton was that the AAA batteries would last for two weeks, so I just had to visit my Newton for twice a month and kind of keep it going and I've got some massive, massive memory expansion on it, I've got the 4 megabyte card there.

Richard Campbell: Megabyte?

Scott Hanselman: Megabyte card which is nice and the 2 megabyte expansion card because the Newton 2000 had two slots. That was such a great device.

Richard Campbell: It was so far ahead of its time.

Scott Hanselman: Even the battery life, it was glorious, it would last for weeks and weeks and weeks, it sipped the battery. So you're saying that I get all the benefits of the iPhone and all the benefits of the iPhone's battery life? So do I have to have a tether to plug this thing on the mains?

Richard Campbell: You know, as long as it's plugged into the wall, it will work just fine.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, that's going to be a giant remote control, with the tether.

Richard Campbell: You're going to need the iBackpack, I think.

Scott Hanselman: I've done that. Have you seen those pictures of me? Actually, I have a picture of me at PDC with a laptop tethered to an iPhone, talking on it because it's the only thing that would get the iPhone past the noon mark. That's like all the technology on the planet right now is focused on getting iPhones to last beyond noon.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.



Scott Hanselman: For their battery.

Richard Campbell: I've been looking at some of the military gear they've been playing with now that uses physical motion to charge batteries and they've got one in 150 watt range that fits into a backpack. So as you walk with your backpack on, it would be charging your batteries.

Scott Hanselman: That's cool, didn't they promise to do this with our shoes? I mean I think it's kind of ironic that you can get the Nike shoe iPod thing but they couldn't just throw a rattle in there to make some power while I'm running to my power song.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, they're still figuring that stuff out. That power's becoming the problem, more and more and more, how do we package our power in a good package?

Scott Hanselman: Right and also in a way that isn't completely toxic to the environment. My son has this Thomas the tank engine ride along train like a mini 3 year old sized train and it uses this beast of a lead acid battery. I mean, it's like this disgusting ecological nightmare in a box that makes me feel like I'm changing the battery on like an old Dodge Charger...

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: And then I put the little plastic Thomas seat on it and then suddenly, like I've hidden it...

Richard Campbell: It's all fun.

Scott Hanselman: The whole Thomas train is really just a metaphor for everything that we're doing right now.

Richard Campbell: Everything that's wrong in this world?

Scott Hanselman: Right and I have to tell my son, "Don't open the seat, don't open the seat." Battery acid leaking out of Thomas and it's just a horrible, horrible thing and of course the run time on the battery is like 12 minutes.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: And then I was just over at Goodwill recently, do you guys have Goodwill in Canada?

Richard Campbell: Yeah, we have a version of that, yes.

Scott Hanselman: Okay, so I was at Goodwill which is the local second hand shop and don't you

love it when you find something that just shouldn't be at Goodwill? What's the story here? How did this get here?

Richard Campbell: How did this get here?

Scott Hanselman: Why did it come to me? I found a Dyson, you know the Dyson vacuum cleaner?

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: The Dyson handheld vac, brand new, in the box, got it for half price.

Richard Campbell: At Goodwill?

Scott Hanselman: At Goodwill. Some corporation didn't want a freaking awesome vacuum cleaner.

Richard Campbell: Maybe.

Scott Hanselman: Battery life on the vacuum is actually capped. I don't know whether it's an expectation thing but somehow Dyson put a timer on it, it'll run for 6 minutes.

Richard Campbell: Nice.

Scott Hanselman: Which is funny because my wife says, she can make it about three quarters on the way up the stairs and then it stops and then now she's mad at the, she's like this is a useless, useless device, it has a weak battery and I think what the guy did because Dyson is obsessed with sucking, I mean suction, he has, I think, I'm putting words in his mouth, that he's basically controlling expectations of power and suction by capping the amount of time.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: So it'll never just fade away.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, no, it needs to be full power and it shuts off the moment it's not full power.

Scott Hanselman: Exactly.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: Well, that would be interesting, if laptops and phones did that. "Sorry, I can't give you an awesome experience so no one will have it!"

Richard Campbell: I don't hate lead acid batteries like you do because I know they're fully recyclable. The chemicals in them, the lead, everything can be regenerated into a new battery.

Scott Hanselman: I have to go find the place.



Richard Campbell: Yeah but at least you can recycle it. Many of these alkaline batteries and stuff, they're much tougher to recycle.

Scott Hanselman: Really?

Richard Campbell: Yeah, the technology for recycling lead acid, I know it's not a pretty battery and if you're putting it in the garbage, you're committing a serious evil but I'm telling you, virtually everything in a lead acid battery can be recycled.

Scott Hanselman: Oh well then that's good. So I just need to find my local battery recycling place?

Richard Campbell: That's right.

Scott Hanselman: Which really, you need to be doing on all of your batteries, batteries need to have a separate place in your house.

Richard Campbell: I have a garbage, a plastic garbage can full of batteries.

Scott Hanselman: And do I just call to your house and say, "Battery recycling center" and I'll be transferred to them?

Richard Campbell: Well, there in lies the real problem which is the recycling center is only one, it's a total pain in the ass to get to, so I literally have 2 or 3 years worth of batteries piling up in this bin and I don't even want to know what's growing at the bottom of that can.

Scott Hanselman: Nice. Well, now you know what you need to do today?

Richard Campbell: Take my batteries in for recycling.

Scott Hanselman: I can hear the public service announcement music now on the Hanselminutes show, "The more you know..."

Richard Campbell: "The more you know..."

Scott Hanselman: Yeah,

Richard Campbell: So I got really bent up the other day looking at how far behind Windows Mobile had gotten with 6.5 and thinking about Win7 and it suddenly hit me that, I don't know if it's even relevant anymore.

Scott Hanselman: Mobile operating systems at all?

Richard Campbell: Yeah, I don't think you need mobile because I'm looking at the next two generations of PDA hardware coming out, have got the horsepower of an average desktop.

Scott Hanselman: Or at least, doesn't the average Windows Mobile device have 600 megahertz, iPhone 600 megahertz.

Richard Campbell: Well, then ARM announced they're going to start making multi-core processors for PDA's.

Scott Hanselman: Wow.

Richard Campbell: So, we're not just not that far away from having four gigs of ram and two or four cores in our PDA, what do I need a mobile OS for? I can run Windows on that.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah. I mean I'd love to have tiny Windows 7.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: That would be cool.

Richard Campbell: Plus a cradle can just plug it in to a regular screen and keyboard and off you go.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, yeah.

Richard Campbell: So suddenly you get this idea of, I'm no longer carrying a USB key around with my essential documents, I'm just carrying my machine.

Scott Hanselman: Hmmn, okay, you think that it's going to happen? You think that we're secretly working on some tiny Windows 7 thing?

Richard Campbell: I don't want to think anybody is particularly planning it but I think it's utterly inevitable. You know I've got my portable server rig, the bag with the little servers in it?

Scott Hanselman: Yeah.

Richard Campbell: I mean those are dual core, there's a new board out now same form factor, it's a 6 inch x 6 inch board that'll run quad core and 16 gigs of RAM. So tell me how this can't happen? I think we're struggling so much with these variations of OS's and platforms and things, it's just easier to make the horsepower come to the machine. Remember that, who was the one that came up, the guy who came up with the line that said, "It was easier to put internet everywhere than it was to make a good disconnected client." And I think the same thing is happening where it's, rather than trying to make a mobile OS that's efficient and all that sort of thing, we're just going to bring the horsepower everywhere.

Scott Hanselman: I don't know but then again the power?



Richard Campbell: Well, power consumption is always going to be a challenge but that's still in the hands of the hardware guys. ARM is winning these days, beating out everybody's processors because while they're giving us multi-cores and all of these cool things, they're consuming power really efficiently.

Scott Hanselman: Hey everybody, this is Scott coming at you from another place in time. No doubt you've probably bumped into testing tasks now and then in your work and you know writing functional tests is probably not your favorite thing, it's kind of difficult, it takes time and the results can be dubious. Well, get ready to start liking tests, thanks to Telerik with the new WebAii Testing Framework, building web automation tests is a breeze. We've got code animation with advanced ASP.NET Ajax and Silverlight applications. You can write a single test, have it executed against multiple browsers at once. You benefit from a rich API and there's LINQ support, integration with Visual Studio Unit Testing also NUnit, xUnit and MbUnit, not to mention the free wrappers for Telerik RADControls for ASP.NET Ajax and Silverlight all shipping with Telerik's new testing tool. One of the best features, the WebAii Testing Framework, which was developed by ArtofTest and it's absolutely free. Before they got hooked on WebAii testing framework, start using it right away, go to telerik.com for more info, thanks a lot.

Why does the iPhone or devices like it automatically shut things on and off? The joke about the iPhone is that it's a great phone and it'll last for a long time as long as it's off.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: You have to shut everything off and they haven't even, in the latest version, come up with a nice single dashboard. It's like 22 clicks to get things shut off.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, I think developers treat power consumption like they treat security, "That's somebody else's problem, I'll do it later, whatever." Because when they were working on it, it's plugged in.

Scott Hanselman: It's true, it's true. There's actually a lot of documentation on how to write a good Microsoft application that is a smart power consumer.

Richard Campbell: Yep.

Scott Hanselman: It can shut off pieces of itself, you can turn off background threads. I think that the only app that does that is Outlook that knows that you're on battery and thinks about what it can do...

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: To make the battery life last longer.

Richard Campbell: And be less aggressive but heck, this is the big claim to fame of the Macbook, right, is you close the screen, you open the screen, you still have the computer. I defy you to find virtually any Windows laptop that works correctly on it.

Scott Hanselman: Well I would actually push back and say, anyone not running Windows 7 because that's when I finally can, I mean seriously, it's a really great example of the amount of confidence one can have in an OS is that if I can close it and not like do that, is the light in the refrigerator off, thing.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: Then that's the sense of confidence. I totally close my Lenovo happily, running Windows 7 without any concern at all for what's going on, it will shut off, it will shut off correctly and I will be able to turn it back on and it will work just fine.

Richard Campbell: So my problem is I'm carrying a motion computing LE17 Slate tablet and there is no limit.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, you're still carrying that around.

Richard Campbell: I am. The battery life on it is absolutely epic, I can't resist the thing, it's wonderful but I did that, it was going into shutdown, I still got Windows 7, oh no, I've put Win7 RC on it, it went into a shutdown cycle as it's shutting down so I stuffed it in my bag, pulled it out on the airplane two hours later and it was still shutting down.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah?

Richard Campbell: And I'm like, "Oh well, I guess I don't have quite as much battery." And it was just a bit tiny toasty being stuffed in the bag while it was still shutting down

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, you know I heard things about laptops waking up for midnight bits of work or backups or whatever, midnight defrag and then bursting into flame inside a backpack.

Richard Campbell: I've never had a machine bursting into flame since like the Apple 2+. I burned up a floppy drive by plugging the thing in wrong.

Scott Hanselman: Yikes, that's not good at all.

Richard Campbell: It's a long time ago.

Scott Hanselman: Okay. Hey, one of the things that you wanted to talk about and you sent me a note of that was the idea of some of the big shows, some of the big conferences are dying.



Richard Campbell: You know, the downturn impacted conferences across the board, everybody took a hit, right?

Scott Hanselman: Yeah.

Richard Campbell: It's not easy, I don't envy anybody in the conference business and goodness knows we go to lots of conferences but you and I were together at NDC in Norway...

Scott Hanselman: Uh-huh, I remember this.

Richard Campbell: What a scream of a conference, just a great show.

Scott Hanselman: That was amazing, they held the conference inside a soccer stadium because it was too big to be anywhere else and even now they're still struggling to keep the torrents up so people can download the video of the talks and this has been, what, 4 months?

Richard Campbell: Yeah, huge demand. So I just got back about a couple of weeks back now, I spent the weekend in Nashville at a conference called DevLink. A guy runs this, he volunteers, his name's John Keller, a totally user group centric kind of show, 700 people there and it had that buzz of a really happening, excited conference. People sitting in the hallways chatting with each other, there was an open spaces section that was really busy, I did a couple of talks that were full. Carl was there with me, we did a .Net Rocks! style closing with the panel discussion and that kind of thing.

Scott Hanselman: Nice.

Richard Campbell: It felt like the big tier one shows of old.

Scott Hanselman: Right. Back when you could have 15,000 people and have that same feeling.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: And now you're saying it's a big show with 700 people.

Richard Campbell: 700 people who paid \$100 a piece to be there.

Scott Hanselman: Why, what was the formula? Was it the \$100? Was the right 700 people? What made it awesome?

Richard Campbell: I think you have a local draw so that it was really a sense of everybody knew everybody like I was sort of the foreigner there but people drove, it's the Midwest right, so people drive a fair distance. There was lots of folks in from Ohio,

Michigan, coming all the way down to Tennessee. I think that's part of it, it had a serious community feel. It was on a university campus so there was a great hub of activity coming and going from there but I think you're drawing the people that are really excited to be there and really, their expectations are set well. I've been reading a book called The Paradox of Choice, you heard of this book?

Scott Hanselman: I have heard of the book, I think it's in my queue, my Amazon queue. I'm reading Free right now, which is that book about Freemiums.

Richard Campbell: Interesting. One of the things that Paradox of Choice really gets into is this whole idea that your expectation significantly affects your actual experience and the scenario they sort of paint is, supposed you're going to go to one of the best restaurants in town and your friends have told you it's the best meal you've ever had in your life and you had a really great day and on and on and on, so it's almost like, you feel sorry for the chef because there's almost no way he could meet your expectations, even if he knocks out of the park and hits everything perfectly, it's only going to meet your expectations, never going to exceed.

Scott Hanselman: It's true.

Richard Campbell: Where you walk into a restaurant after a terrible day with no idea what the place is like and the guy just treats you right and serves you something half decent so then you're happy. I wonder if the tier one shows got so big and so expensive and so extravagant, we could never meet your expectations anymore.

Scott Hanselman: Well, plus there's the fog of war aspect of things and the sense of I remember that the conferences were like this...

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: I don't know if they were, I remember 15,000 people descending on Orlando and everyone being awesome and the parties being amazing and Counting Crows was hired and they did the show party...

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: But did I remember it correctly?

Richard Campbell: It wasn't actually that big, it wasn't actually that good

Scott Hanselman: Yeah?

Richard Campbell: Because you sort of edit out the, how long did we wait for food? We couldn't get in.



Scott Hanselman: Yeah, yeah but I think your point is really interesting, it's actually made me think of I always get teased when I go overseas that even though I will try crazy food I always try to eat at Subway or some chain before a talk.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: I'm not going to go, if I'm in Sweden, I'm not going to try Swedish food for the very first time 2 hours before I speak, it's just a bad idea. So people will say, "Oh my goodness, you went to Morocco and you found a Subway, what are you doing?" Subway sandwiches?

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: But it's my expectation which is that Subway is Subway pretty much everywhere in the world. When I was in Toronto I went to Subway and it was fantastic.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: And it was predictable opulence, it was exactly what I needed at the time and I had my expectations set appropriately and I had my Subway sandwich and it was comfort food. Had my expectation been such in any other, in up or down or if I had no expectation at all, the psychic weight of the stress it would have put on me would have made my talk a lesser talk.

Richard Campbell: And I think one of the things we're seeing with these lightweight, low-cost shows is when you're only in for \$100, even if you get a decent lunch you're probably pretty happy and if you get a couple of good sessions and granted, they can't pay the speakers so this gets back to that whole, you remember your video with Ted about the death of the speaker...

Scott Hanselman: The Death of the Professional Speaker, that's a video up on Channel 9 on msdn.com that Tim, that Ted Neward...

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: Lamented the death of the professional speaker.

Richard Campbell: But when people's expectations are such that I didn't have a huge commitment here when I don't give a great talk I'm like, "You know, that's fine." Where I think one of the concerns you see this, I certainly see this online is folks are saying, "Hey, I spent \$3000 to go to this top tier show, flew all this way, expensive hotel room, tadah, tadah, tadah, and the show still sucked." So I think one of the reasons that these little shows are doing so well is expectations are reasonable and they're getting sufficient results for their money.

Scott Hanselman: Well, does that mean it's over for the big conferences? I mean is it all about CodeMash and these smaller regional conferences now?

Richard Campbell: Well, what worries me about the regional conferences is that I don't feel that they're sustainable because there is no profit motive there, those guys aren't making any money off the show.

Scott Hanselman: They're doing it for the love of it.

Richard Campbell: But love runs down my friend, they also find out it's really hard work.

Scott Hanselman: Love runs down?

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: Well that sounds like a country music song, what does that mean? Love runs down.

Richard Campbell: Eventually you're going to get, it's very hard work to put on a show like that, like if you would go to one of these conferences, you've got to pat those guys at the back but after a couple of three, four years of doing this, they're going to be tired and wondering why they're still doing it and people do get critical of these shows and it's very hard to do. So to me it feels like it's not sustainable, that eventually these things will unravel unless they migrate into a model that is more less individually centric right? I mean obviously John Keller was the center of DevLink and you've got guys like Bill Wagner and Diane Marsh and there's a bunch of folks who work on CodeMash and every show has got a couple -- one, two, three, people, when those people move on, they're ready to do something else can that show sustain itself and that's my concern is that we may see this wave coming of this style of show that then collapses under the weight of its dependence on volunteerism to function.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah. That's one of the things that I think people can do when they say, "What do I do to get involved in the community?" There is often a personality or an individual or a group of individuals a brain trust that keeps these things running whether they'd be your local .NET user's group or your local NerdDinner or your local regional conference and if you don't step up as a member of the community and help out, those things would just fade away.

Richard Campbell: Absolutely.

Scott Hanselman: Fred, whatever, Fred Fredrickson will decide, "Well, I'm tired, I've been doing this for 5 years, let's hand it over to the community" and then it just falls away.



Richard Campbell: And then it comes apart. Well then I wonder if we're interested in a cycle that the big shows got a little too expensive and too opulent and if they lighten up a little and get a little less expensive and get a little less ostentatious, as the cycle comes around of these essentially volunteer shows spinning down again, those people go, "Hey, let's put on a big show. I'm willing to spend a \$1,000 to get involved in something like that." We'll see a resurgence of that but there's another root and I've had this experience in Europe where folks turn a user group into almost a more formal organization. The dues go up, there's a paid employee that operates that group and they do a conference every year and again it's not necessarily, it's a not for profit, they spend all the money they bring in but there are people paid to operate it so that it's sustainable long term and not dependent on an individual or a few individual volunteers to keep it running. It becomes a much more formal not for profit organization.

Scott Hanselman: I wonder if, should Microsoft start doing MIX West and MIX East and TechEd Southwest?

Richard Campbell: You know, it's an interesting question, the real question you've got to ask is, should Microsoft be in the conference business at all?

Scott Hanselman: Well, that's a really good question.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: But if they're not, then they have to count on the local conferences, the regional conferences to exist.

Richard Campbell: Right. Well, you look at a conference like DevLink and DevLink had some sponsorship and I don't necessarily know who all of them were but they were vendors out there who want to reach that audience that are willing to contribute some money to make the conference function, why shouldn't Microsoft just be another vendor in this scenario?

Scott Hanselman: Hmm, it's a good question.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, support the small shows and you can support them in so many ways because you do have a community connection and you can provide some financial support as well as organizational support.

Scott Hanselman: Hmm, I'll take that feedback to the people.

Richard Campbell: Very nice, thank you.

Scott Hanselman: Richard Campbell. "Richard Campbell says..." No, I think you've got a good point, I think that smaller community-run sustainable conferences might energize people more than, I think that there should be probably one big conference.

Richard Campbell: Well and again you get back to, what is the motivation here?

Scott Hanselman: Yeah.

Richard Campbell: I remember hearing TechEd described to me as the opportunity for Microsoft employees to get close to their customers and to me that's a good idea for Microsoft and it's a good idea for their customers. I don't know that it actually works that way...

Scott Hanselman: No, it doesn't work that way at all.

Richard Campbell: But that to me seems like a good idea and I also don't have a problem...

Scott Hanselman: You think so? Well hang on though, you're saying that, that someone described to you that TechEd was Microsoft's opportunity to get closer to the customers, we should be getting close to our customers all the time and certainly not just the ones who can afford to fly somewhere and pay \$2,000 to do it.

Richard Campbell: I don't disagree with you there, yes, you always need to be in contact with your customers but this sort of marquis event that is the big opportunity, all of these folks inside of Microsoft that normally don't get outside get to get out there and you have these presentations, to me when I go to a TechEd and admittedly, I present at TechEd, you present at TechEd, so we've got our own biases anyway but when I go to a session, I go to a session of a guy who is inside of Microsoft who built that technology and it's going to tell you why it works the way it works. You won't get that information anywhere else and that to me is valuable right, without a doubt but...

Scott Hanselman: Oh, I agree.

Richard Campbell: What I worry about when Microsoft puts on conferences, is that it's suppressive of the community-based conference, that it overrides that conference because they do have more money to spend and they are larger and they are "Microsoft" especially when those things tend not to be sustainable. Often, Microsoft gets into these ideas, the local sub get this idea of doing this particular tour, doing these particular kinds of events and that only goes on as long as that guy is there, eventually he gets his promotion or moves on to a different job and so forth and it falls apart but in the 2, 3 years that he did this thing, the domestic stuff, the local stuff can't



survive, it gets stepped on and so suddenly we're left with nothing...

Scott Hanselman: Right.

Richard Campbell: And that's very frustrating to me that we get into those circumstances.

Scott Hanselman: Right and everybody loses.

Richard Campbell: In the end, yeah, what we really want is that sort of consistent, I like the idea that I can get together with my peers on a routine basis in a venue where we have a deep insight of the different lines of products that we care about and I can talk to my peers about what's going on and where we're going with it.

Scott Hanselman: I think you're on to something.

Richard Campbell: I'm trying to be but you know...

Scott Hanselman: How can we call it, can make it happen, we can call it Campbell Con.

Richard Campbell: Oh, God. Yeah and I want to, I have a lot of respect for people who organize conferences. I've worked with them enough to know it's really hard. I've done tons of content planning over the years, I mean in the end, .NET Rocks! is really a content planning exercise more than anything else.

Scott Hanselman: Totally.

Richard Campbell: But I would never want to be that guy, to be honest.

Scott Hanselman: Oh, yeah. I mean Gnomedex, that's Chris Pirillo's thing.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: Just happened last weekend and every once in a while when I'm kind of sitting on my couch, rubbing my fat belly, watching TV, I think to myself, "Why don't I have a conference?"

Richard Campbell: Why don't you?

Scott Hanselman: Let's make HanselCon.

Richard Campbell: HanselCon.

Scott Hanselman: And then I realize that Chris Pirillo has boundless energy and the organizational skills, neither of which I possess, but then, "Oh, look, TV's on." So yeah, so the conference never actually happens.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, Dancing with the Stars came on and the whole thing went away.

Scott Hanselman: See you've got to give people respect, if they have that kind of energy to pull something together.

Richard Campbell: Absolutely. It is a very special talent and it's fun to be a contributor to stuff like that but I've never had an urge to own it myself.

Scott Hanselman: Right, to own it involves a special kind of insanity.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, well and a level of maturity and reliability that I have a tough time with.

Scott Hanselman: I'm glad that you agree.

Richard Campbell: I'm self self-actualizing.

Scott Hanselman: You have no business having a conference.

Richard Campbell: I'm totally with you, I've certainly learned to embrace my character defects for the forces of good.

Scott Hanselman: Excellent, excellent. Oh, it's so funny to talk to you Richard.

Richard Campbell: Where do we go next my friend?

Scott Hanselman: Where do I want to go next? I'm just learning how to be a boss right now.

Richard Campbell: Oh, yeah. Tell me about this because that was a heck of an announcement and then...

Scott Hanselman: Small office.

Richard Campbell: And now you're trying to feel these roles, I mean congratulations for first and foremost.

Scott Hanselman: I don't know if that's big of a deal but the difference is that, before when I lead teams, it was more being in charge of people implicitly.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: So it's like I'm running a team of 3 to 10 or whatever but I wasn't doing their HR stuff.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: So there's the "administrivia" of being a boss and then there's the leadership part. Leadership is an on-going learning process and that's



just suddenly that you do. The part I'm having trouble with is the administrivia.

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: It's just the HR stuff and the expense reports and all that kind of crap. Someone should outsource that, there's got to be a way to have somebody else do that.

Richard Campbell: Just a better way to go about that stuff and so...

Scott Hanselman: Because you don't get that until you're a really, really bossy boss right, when you're like a VP of something.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: Then suddenly, other than, what do you call it, the yearly reviews, you have to provide leadership and do one on ones but I don't know, I don't want to fill out forms for expenses and stuff like that. If guys spent \$5 on a Subway sandwich, more power to you.

Richard Campbell: Isn't it your job just to simply sign off, that yeah that's a legitimate business expense?

Scott Hanselman: Oh yeah, but even that is boring to me, I mean it's just like, add those thing up you get four, five guys working for you and then when I hire these other guys I'll have like seven and it's going to mean half an hour a week where I have to go through that click, click, click, approve, approve.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: I find that tedious, not value added time because remember I'm the kind of guy that really tries to keep track of what I'm doing and is it valuable and is it time well spent?

Richard Campbell: Interesting problem. Isn't the hiring part of this one of the hardest, most difficult thing to do?

Scott Hanselman: Well, so it's funny that you mentioned that, I think I blogged like nine or ten times this week and it's a, not this week rather, excuse me, this month and it's really stressing me out because I'm not doing what I want to be doing because I'm so busy trying to hire somebody.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: I mean I've got hundreds of resumes to sift through and I've got some people who are supporting me in HR but they said they gave me a thing to fill out that says, give me the list of keywords so that I can screen these resumes for you.

Richard Campbell: Ouch!

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, right, you know the kinds of community jobs that I am hiring for, this is not the way that we're going to do this. The person for this job is not going to be found by looking for keywords.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, no, this is a community thing, it's a very personal kind of task.

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, so I've got to go through it and ask myself. So I've been spending all this time doing this and not the time I want to be spending working, I want to be working, which is ironically, exactly what Chris Sells said was going to happen, it's over for you and all productivity for the public.

Richard Campbell: Yeah I remember that was back earlier in the month there on Hanselminutes on 9, I just said, "Yeah, your job now is to make everybody else productive, don't worry you're not going to have any productive thing to yourself."

Scott Hanselman: Yeah, I'm still in denial, I refuse to. No it's just nonsense, I have no interest in being a manager. I would like to...

Richard Campbell: You're in the role.

Scott Hanselman: I'd like to be an enabler, I want to be "empowerer," is that a word?

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: Those are the things that I'm interested in doing. So the idea of taking on the role is to empower these other guys, that doesn't mean I want to stop doing the stuff that I think I'm pretty decent at doing. So the trick is to find a balance. Fortunately, these are senior guys, it's not like I'm babysitting here.

Richard Campbell: Yeah, I looked at your lineup there.

Scott Hanselman: It's a whole team full of senior guys. So that's not a huge deal, it's just the administrivia, it's just the, now I have the regular weekly one on one with different people and I've got to fill out some forms and that's tedious. Plus when you're a team they want to know, there are all sorts of monthly status reporting to other bosses higher up. Again, it all adds up to a couple of hours of administrivia. The problem with that is it can add up to a day if you're not paying attention.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: And I just can't accept a day of admin work.



Richard Campbell: Oh yeah, I used to measure my productivity in interruptions per hour, recognizing that the higher that number was, the less productive I was.

Scott Hanselman: Interruptions per hour?

Richard Campbell: Yeah.

Scott Hanselman: That's good.

Richard Campbell: So well, I found that software development worked best at an interruption per hour rate of 0.25 or lower.

Scott Hanselman: So that means an interruption every 4 hours, maximum.

Richard Campbell: No more, any more than that and my productivity as a developer substantially goes down and I got so frustrated with dealing with this in an office that I used to hang my interruption per hour # on the wall out side my office and each time you phoned me I add it to another interruption. It started when I had a boss who would ask me to do a task and I would say, "That's going to take me 2 hours." And then phone me every 15 minutes on it.

Scott Hanselman: Uh-huh.

Richard Campbell: So I started adding 15 minutes to the time each time he called. "Yeah, I'll have that done by 2:00" and then he'd call back at 11:30 and say, "How's that coming?" I'll say, "Oh, I'll have it done in 2:30." "You said 2:00?" "You phoned again."

Scott Hanselman: Yeah.

Richard Campbell: And if you phone again, it'll be 3:00 because interruptions are, my point really being that, as a manager, you suddenly, interruptions become a key part of your day, that you sort of commit to interruption heavy days in exchange for, with any luck, getting a low interruption day.

Scott Hanselman: You see that would be, that's nice. Is it about controlling the people who could potentially interrupt you or is it about just hiding?

Richard Campbell: I think there's a hiding element to it, there's an effort to go into your office and eliminate interruptions like turning off email and setting DND on the phone like those kinds of things so that it's not easy to interrupt you. My whole point about hanging that sign of my interruption rate was to make people stop and think, "Do I want to interrupt him?"

Scott Hanselman: That's interesting. The last time when was I talking about this, I think it was a show recently, I was talking about getting a big on-air sign.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: Like an old style radio on-air sign.

Richard Campbell: Yes.

Scott Hanselman: And a bunch of people said you can get them on eBay. I was thinking about building one, I don't want to spend too much money but the boys, as they interrupted earlier on the show here, tend to kind of launch themselves at the door. Nothing is scarier if you have any kind of zombie issues two toddlers throwing their shoulder on the door, except that they're not looking for brains, "Dadddy!"

Richard Campbell: "Daddy!"

Scott Hanselman: So I'm thinking of a blinking light that says on-air.

Richard Campbell: Right.

Scott Hanselman: Will clearly get the children off of me.

Richard Campbell: Not, go away because that's really what it says anyway, isn't it?

Scott Hanselman: Do I really want a blinking sign that says go away flashing over my door? Maybe I do, actually..

Richard Campbell: I was just thinking, in the whole zombie scenario thing, the good news is you can aim a shotgun at the mid door so if it is a zombie, you'd get them in the head but if it's a toddler it's going to go below him anyway but the explosion is going to be enough to make him think, "Should I really hit that door again?"

Scott Hanselman: Wow, I think that we should stop the talking because that was perfect, that was the perfect ending. "Bothered at work? Get a home office, try a shotgun just higher than a toddlers head."

Richard Campbell: There you go.

Scott Hanselman: "Wire that up to a phone system." You are very likely to be prototyping this later today.

Richard Campbell: Yes, just push the blue button and say, reduce my interruptions per hour, shotguns deploy automatically.

Scott Hanselman: Pointing over the head of the children.

Richard Campbell: There you go.



Scott Hanselman: All right, well, Richard, thank you so much for hanging out with me.

Richard Campbell: Always a pleasure sir, we'll do it again some time.

Scott Hanselman: All this has been another episode of Hanselminutes and we'll see you again next week.