

Standing on the Shoulders of Giants : How Community Shapes Development in EllisLab

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Feature to Function

- Look at a new feature in EE2 - File Management
- See how the idea came about
- Planning the feature
- Implementing the Feature
- Judge its success, and ongoing improvement

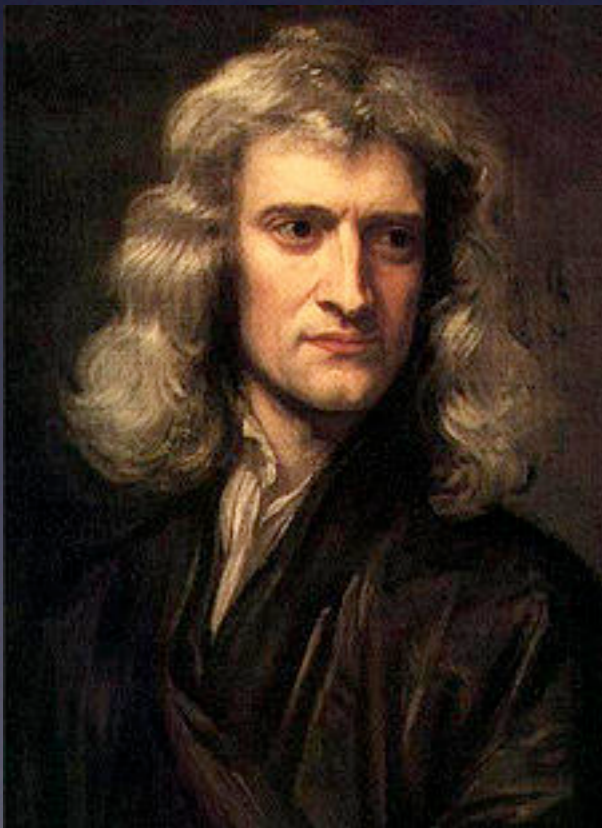
About Allard

(I promise this relates to my talk)

- 1999 I graduated with an Honours Degree in Environmental Studies.
- Fell into teaching about web technology almost by accident
- For 10 years I spent half my time freelance building sites and web apps, and half my time teaching.

If I have seen further it
is by standing on the
shoulders of Giants.

- *Isaac Newton, 1676*



Feature to Function

- Acquiring the Feature Idea
- The Planning Stage
- The Build Process
- Release and Review

Where do features come from?

- Development team
- Other staff
- A website or blog entry about EE
- *Usually, from the forums*

Interlude while I Gripe

- “I can haz YouTube?” (What?!?)
- “\$other_CMS has it!”
- “Are you not smart enough to build it?”
- “I would request you add more innovative features too”
- Logical, well reasoned ideas that fill a niche.

So we have an idea. Now what?

- Ideas need to fit into our vision for ExpressionEngine
- Ideas need to fit into our development process (features don't just emerge, they need to be *planned and built*)

How We Plan and Build

- We are a remote company - major obstacle
- Subversion, experimenting with Git
- IM (jabber), skype, email
- Technology is *not* the problem, its social

The “Scrum”

- We develop using a process called Scrum, that we’ve adapted a little bit for our needs.
- Scrum is an agile development methodology that breaks complex tasks (ie: building EE2), into smaller, manageable, groups of tasks.
- How do you eat an elephant?

The Scrum Team

- Product Owner - ultimately responsible for project direction and release.
- Development Team
- The Scrum-Master

Scrum in 5 bullets

- Product Owner decides what will get built
- Work in 1-3 week “sprints”, 2 most common
- Each sprint is preceded by a planning session
- Daily “scrum meetings”, 15 minutes run by scrum master
- Each sprint ends with a wrap-up meeting

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Estimating Hours

- We can only work so many hours in a day.
- Building stuff takes time.
- We need a way to gauge staff time/productivity

Add a file management tool to the "Tools" section of the site. This should allow uploading, deleting, and some basic image management such as resize and rotate.



- Assign it to a team member

Planning Stage

- Look at other implementations, particularly non-web
- We aimed to bridge the gap between desktop and web application
- OSX was a big influence for us in EE2

File Name	File Size	Kind	Date
adam.jpg	4.3 KB	image/jpeg	Oct 18 2009 - 11:30am
allard.jpg	2.2 KB	image/jpeg	Oct 18 2009 - 11:30am
greg.jpg	18.6 KB	image/jpeg	Oct 18 2009 - 11:31am
greg_salt.jpg	14.3 KB	image/jpeg	Oct 18 2009 - 11:30am
ingmar.jpg	22.1 KB	image/jpeg	Oct 18 2009 - 11:31am
john.jpg	9.4 KB	image/jpeg	Oct 18 2009 - 11:31am

/Users/derekallard/Sites/ExpressionEngine_svn/images/staff

Name	Size	Kind	Date Modified
adam.jpg	8 KB	JPEG image	Yesterday, 11:30 AM
allard.jpg	4 KB	JPEG image	Yesterday, 11:30 AM
greg_salt.jpg	16 KB	JPEG image	Yesterday, 11:30 AM
greg.jpg	20 KB	JPEG image	Yesterday, 11:31 AM
ingmar.jpg	25 KB	JPEG image	Yesterday, 11:31 AM
john.jpg	12 KB	JPEG image	Yesterday, 11:31 AM

File Information

ingmar.jpg

Size: 22.1KB
 Kind: image/jpeg
 Where: images/staff/
 Permissions: -rw-r--r--

General:

Kind: JPEG image
 Size: 25 KB on disk (22,142 bytes)
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 Modified: Yesterday 11:31 AM
 Label:

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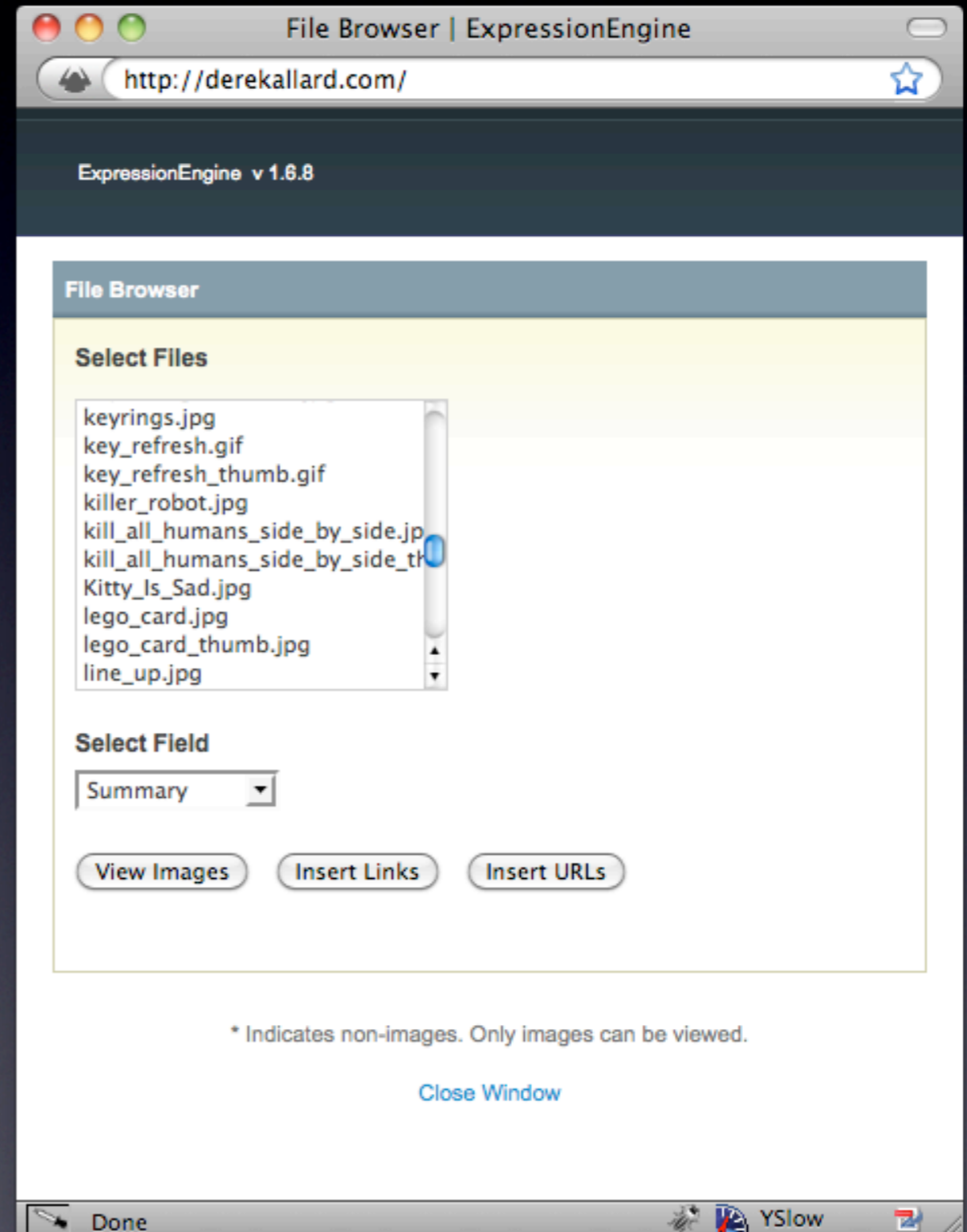
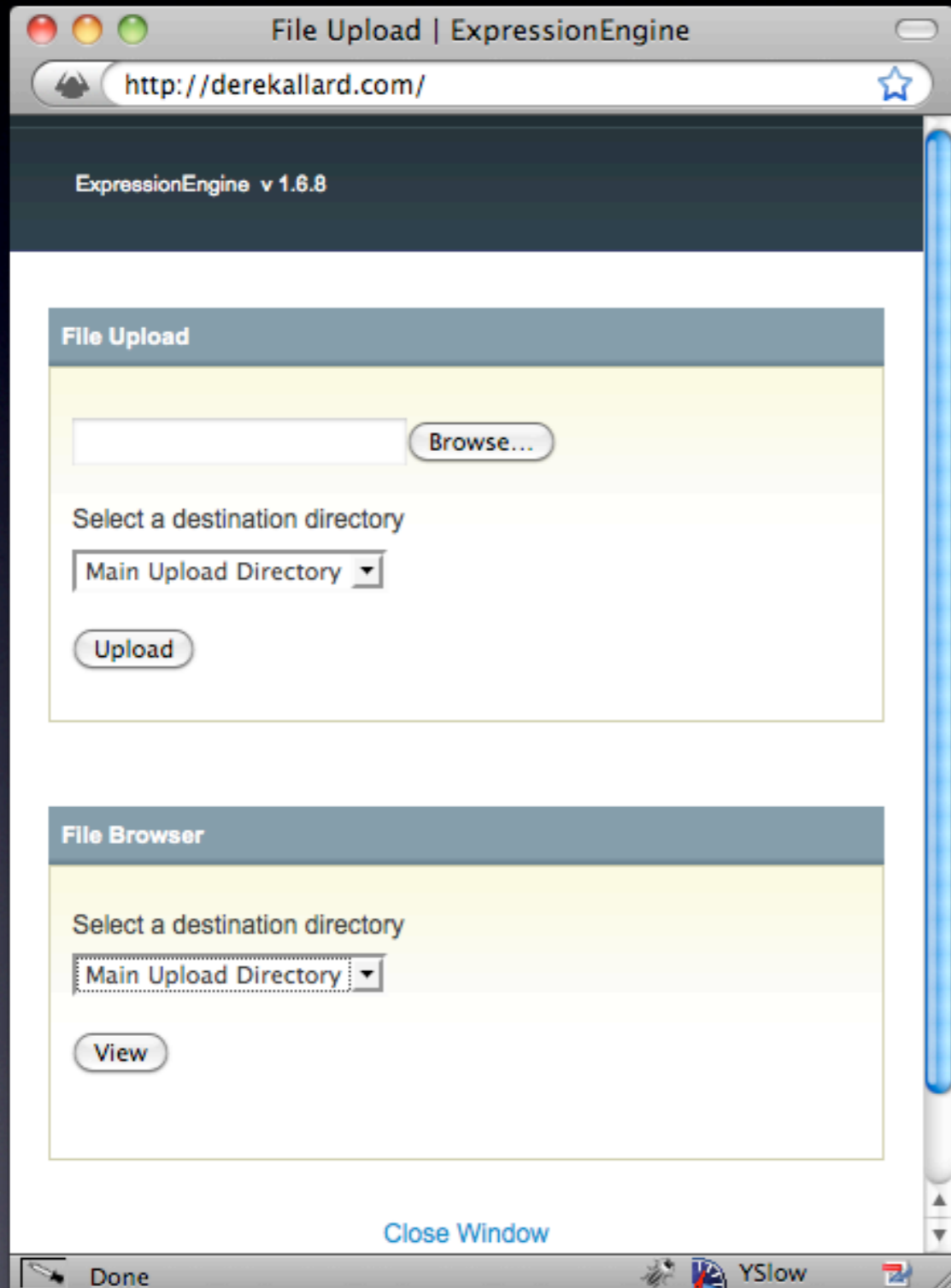
Image Editing

- Demo of the EE2 File Manager
- In EE 1.6, you could only resize and only from a form field (no graphical interface).
- You could only resize at the time of upload, meaning EE didn't work for the way some people thought of their content.

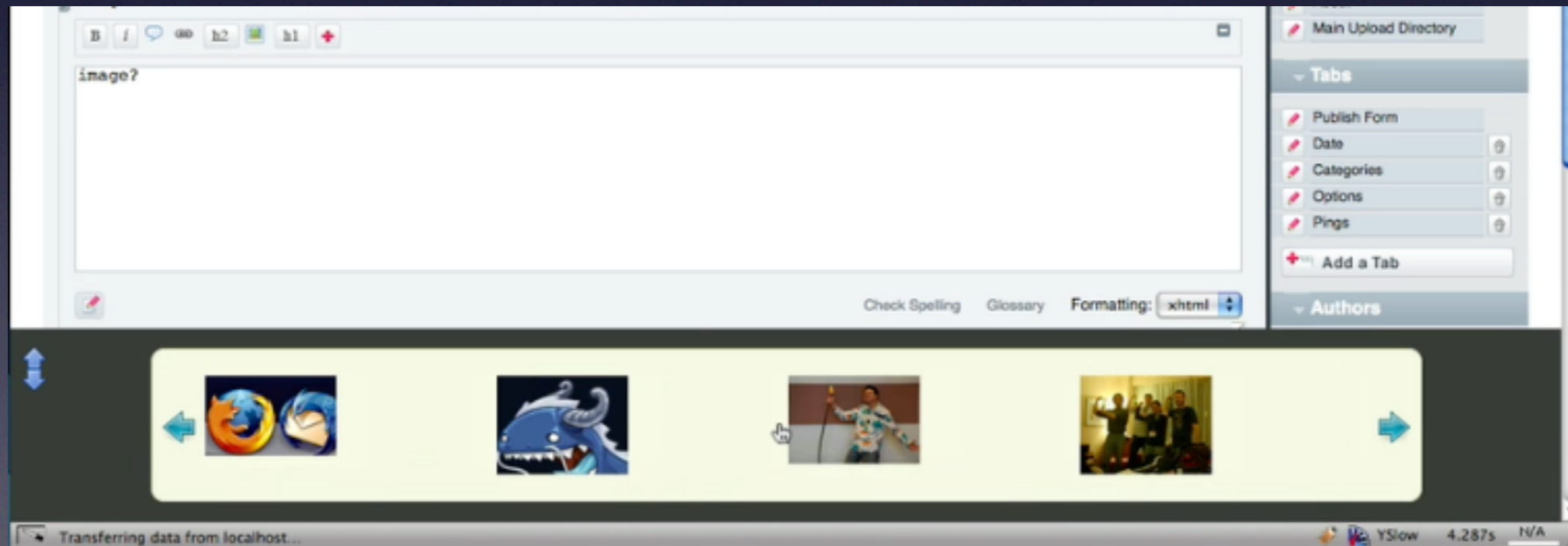
Showing off: The missing component

- Question: Feature is built, now what?
- Answer: Show off!
- (real answer: share, collaborate, and feed off each other's energy)

EE 1.6 File Manager



Publish File Management

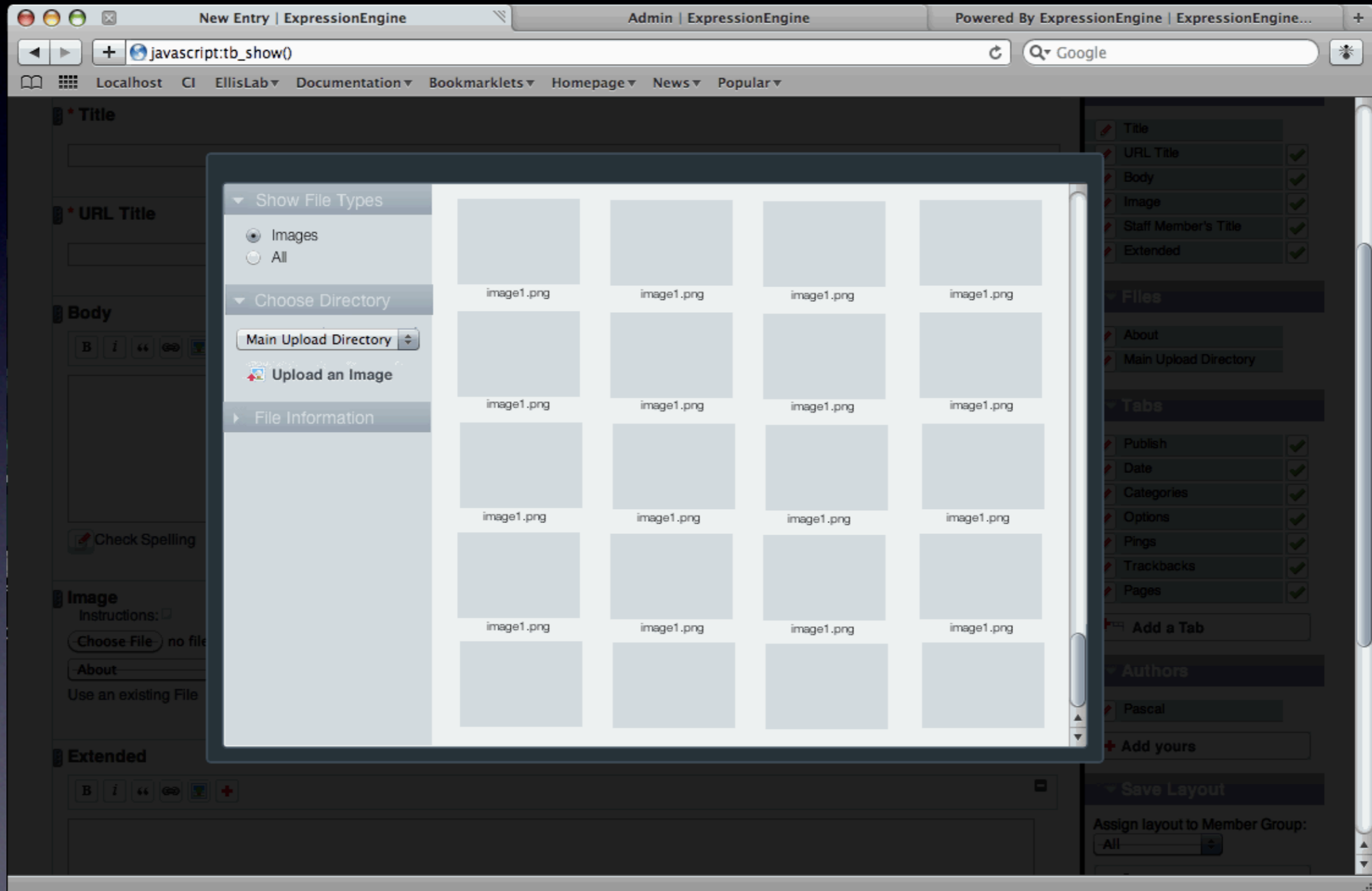


Experiments in overflow

- It was a comfortable, known interface
- It was proven
- Keyboard navigation
- Looked “sexy”
- Handles large volumes of information well

Experiments in overflow

- EPIC FAIL!
- Flipping between directories sucked
- It was just enough like overflow to set unrealistic expectations
- No logical way to tie uploading to it
- Was unintuitive, and most people needed to have the interface explained.



File Management













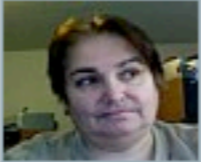
File Manager ✕

Upload File

Main Upload Directory

Non Images

So Sexy It Hurts

				
adam.jpg	allard.jpg	greg.jpg	greg_salt.jpg	Ingmar.jpg
				
John.jpg	jones.jpg	leslie.jpg	lisa.jpg	pascal.jpg
				
rick.jpg	robin.jpg	sue.jpg		

Publish Files Reconsidered

- Bandwidth stingy
- Previews (ie: thumbnails)
- More natural “flow” between upload locations. Integrated file upload
- Keyboard navigation

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Release and Review

- Are we happy?
- Is the community happy?
- Does it help solve problems?
- How can we improve it?

- ***All aspects of EE are under this scrutiny.***

Questions?