This is the Expand2Web podcast with Don Campbell, Session Number 12. With me today is special guest, Stephanie Lichtenstein. Stephanie is a friend of mine and she's also the president and founder of Micro Media Marketing. They provide social media services to clients both managing their services and also teach people how to do it themselves.

I'm really excited to have Stephanie here today because, as you may have heard - Facebook recently launched Facebook Graph Search. I've been working with Stephanie on a couple of projects and she's an expert at Facebook. I really want you to get her perspective on what this means.

Welcome Stephanie. It's great to have you on the Podcast.

Thank you so much for having me. I'm so excited about Facebook Graph Search. I just came back from ... Actually, we saw each other in Vegas at Affiliate Summit.

Yes, right. It’s nice to meet you in person for the first time down there.

Yes.

That's great.

That was great. It’s funny since we all work online. It’s always exciting to get to actually meet everyone ...

Right.

... in person at those shows. The session that we spoke on, we were actually ... I was covering with a couple of SEO experts, and I was covering the social media side. We were talking about how social is starting to affect search. Then the very next day, Facebook announced Graph Search.

I know that was funny ...
Stephanie: This is where it's headed.

Don: It's exactly what you are covering in that session, because I was in your session and you were talking about the same concepts of what they announce the next day. That was pretty cool.

Stephanie: Yes. What I was talking about before was how social is being integrated into Bing and Google. When you search on Bing, they integrate Facebook. I'm going to be interested to see to what happens now that Facebook has Graph Search. I don't know if they're going to continue to do that with Bing.

Bing was allowing you to search with your friends and Google was allowing you to search or really pulling up very highly results coming from Google Plus pages. Both of these platforms on their own, when you search, it's more ... When you search on Google, it's more based on certain keywords and locations and things like that.

Searching on Facebook, the kind of data that Facebook has is just completely changing the game.

Don: Yes, exactly. That's what's interesting for me is that ... People have been speculating for a long time, when does Facebook introduce search? They've had this partnership with Bing. That's gone both ways because when you do a search from within Facebook, if they don't find something within Facebook, then they basically call out to Bing for the search results.

Then if you're searching on Bing, it does integrate some of your Facebook stuff, and Google doesn't have access to everything. It can crawl certain things on pages but not ... Correct me if I'm wrong, but Google doesn't have access to all the data that's on Facebook, right?

Stephanie: Right.

Don: What was interesting is, all the sudden, everyone was like, "Okay, when is Facebook going to do search? When are they going to do search?" Now, they're doing it, but it's a lot different right? It's different than Google search in the ways that you describe. It's like ... the way I understand it anyway is you're searching for, not for web pages, but for representations of real world objects like people, or places, or things, and then they're connected by likes.
Stephanie: Absolutely. I was actually listening to one of your other podcasts that you did, recently done, and you were talking about how people ... Generally, they do ... when they give referrals, they like to do it based on sending business to their family members or to their friends.

They feel good about that and it's a great way to grow businesses especially even with some small local businesses. Even with websites, you want to check out who's connected to that. If Facebook is going to allow you to do that in a new way ... I just moved a month ago. I've always ... I'm born and raised in Miami, but now, I live in Miami beach and that's a different world.

You go over the bridge, it's ... I considered it touristy, but the area I'm in is not like that. It's not something I'm familiar with. Now, when Graph Search opens up, I can actually go in and find the things that I like whether it's where am I going to get my hair done.

I actually missed an eye doctor appointment twice because they were located near where my family lives which, now, to get to that appointment, it was like an hour away. I ended up saying, "You know what? It's just not going to happen. To me, I don't want to just go to anybody. I would totally use something like, Graph Search to see what my friends are recommending.

Even before Graph Search, I was already asking my friends on Facebook, do they know anything closer to me. Do they recommend anyone? I did find a business page that had a lot of my friends connected to it. I was considering going to this eye doctor. It's just really changing the way people find, not only dentists, but also activities, and you were saying places and things and all of that.

I'm looking at other things that Graph Search allows you to do. It also allows you to share interests. It's not only about businesses. It's also about interests. If someone is interested in running marathons and they want to find people that have that common interest in a specific location, they can do that.

Don: Yes, that's pretty amazing. You could say anyone who's into Frisbee golf that lives in Miami. You could do all these searches as long as that stuff's in the profile. For me, as you know, I cover a lot of local search topics for small businesses. That's what you hit on earlier about referrals is a really big deal.

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I think it’s pretty amazing that, now, I can be searching ... Okay, in the past, you said, you can ask people on Facebook, "Hey, do you know a good dentist?" like your friends. Now, you can search. When you're searching, it's ... you can say, "I want to find ... anything you search for searches the graph of your friends. It comes back and you can get recommendations on all kinds of stuff without even asking people.

Stephanie: That's great. It is a good incentive for local businesses, too, if they haven't already done it, to set up a Facebook business page, because I have seen a lot of small businesses that they might have a personal page for themselves or they might have even set up a business page through a personal account. What’s going to do better for business is a business page. It's something that is easy to set up. It doesn't cost anything to set up. I highly recommend brick-and-mortar stores to promote that in-house, so if someone’s paying at the register ... I even see it on restaurant receipts sometimes. They'll have their Facebook page. They might even offer a percentage off the next purchase for a recommendation or for a like or something like that.

They're promoting it all over their store or on their receipts. It doesn't take a ton, like you can have a sticker made to put on your window. Actually letting them know that you have a Facebook page is great and encouraging that interaction because it does turn customers into more long-term customers.

I always say this, but they're not really going to go to your website every single day, but they are going to log in to Facebook every day. They spend an average of 23 minutes on Facebook a day. It is pretty cool. It's cost effective. It doesn't take a lot of time. It’s a great thing to have, and something else that’s cool that you can do in search.

It will be interesting to see as it rolls out ... I’m sure they're going to add more and more to it. I saw one example that said you can actually search also companies. One person ... They showed an example of a search that was, "I'm looking for people that work at this company that are interested in skiing."

I guess this person wants to plan a ski trip with people that he worked with or another company. That's something else that you can interact with. That's also a good way to network, is finding connections with, which of
my friends work at Apple? Or which of my friends are connected in that kind of way?

Don: Yes, for sure, a lot of possibilities, right? I want to go back to what you said about small businesses with their Facebook pages. Let’s, from what we know, deconstruct how this would work with Facebook Graph Search.

I think the way that it works is, if I had a chiropractor or somebody that did my taxes, and they had a Facebook page and I liked it, and you were looking for a chiropractor, then because I’m in your … we’re friends on Facebook … Let’s say we both lived in Miami, which … I live in San Jose.

Let’s say you’re visiting or I was visiting or something. I was like, okay, I’m in Miami. I really need a chiropractor because I was just sitting on the plane for six hours. Who do I know that would recommend? I could do a search, and because you had liked that chiropractor’s Facebook page, that’s how I would find out.

Now, if he didn't have a page, you wouldn't have it. There would be no connection in Facebook Graph Search between you and that chiropractor. I think that’s how it's going to work.

Stephanie: Yes. That’s correct. What it’s looking right now is that you can … Well, it does say you can search for something … I can search for something in Miami or I can search for something in New York or in Seattle. I can search for any location, and my friends that maybe … I came in and say for my friends who live in that city or for my friends who visited or traveled to such and such city.

It’s funny that you said "chiropractor" because I was with my fiance in New York and he pulled his back. We had to find a chiropractor that morning. That’s a very sensitive thing to pick. He actually went on Yelp to read reviews and to find who is close by. He wanted to make sure the reviews were very good.

Luckily, it worked out for him. Even more so than reviews, I’d tell him I’m not going to … I don’t really trust … some of those are friends, but you can also read reviews from strangers. I don't really trust who's making those reviews. Now, Facebook Graph Search, that would have been easier for us to find.

Don: Yes. That is a great example this could potentially turn into something more valuable than a Yelper to you, because this isn't just good reviews by
other people. This would mean good reviews by friends, which count a lot more.

Stephanie: Yes. You can search by your friends and then you can also see ... and mind you, this is new so we're going to ... maybe we should do another update on it.

Don: Sure.

Stephanie: You tested it out. I've been playing around with it a little and you can sign up for beta and we'll tell you how a little later on. You can also meet new people through it. It's only your friends that's an option. That's pretty cool also, like if you just want to see something overall.

Also, something else that I thought that was cool was you can search for something by a date as well so you can see photos from 1995 or something like that and you can go in the past as well and look specifically during a specific time frame that you're looking for.

Don: Oh, I see. Yes. You can go looking for ... I also saw like in everything you can do is like I can search for photos that I've liked, and it would show me all the bunch that I've liked or photos that my friends have liked.

Stephanie: Yes.

Don: I didn't know about the date thing yet. That's pretty cool, too.

Stephanie: Yes, the date thing you can search with. You can say since 1995. Another thing that you can do is actually, not only search that ... I lost my train of thought. I'm looking at it right now and it's very interesting. Oh, what I was going to say is one thing that I saw was ... It's like the way that things work with search with links. That's how the likes are going to work.

It's not only liking the business page. It's also liking a photo. Like you were saying, it might come up. You can look at all the photos combined that you've liked or that your friends have liked specifically. As a business also, if you have a specific photo like ... Right now, I'm promoting a contest where we're doing a bedroom makeover.

I spent $5 to promote it and I got almost 90 likes on it. That might be something that comes up when someone searches bedroom or bedroom makeover. If they happen to look for something like that, since that photo was popular, and some of my friends have liked it, that's something that
could come up as well, not only the page, but also the photos, like you were saying.

Don: Yes. Right.

Stephanie: Right now, if you go to a page that's for a business, especially a brick and mortar, you can actually already see which of your friends like it. You can see who's recommended it if that's something that's set up on that kind of a page. You would have to go directly to that page to do that research.

Now, it's going to be easier to personalize your search and find what you want to look for directly in search. I don't think search has ever been so personalized before.

Don: Yes, exactly. People have been trying to do that, get more personal. The big question will be, will people on Facebook start using this? Because it's different than what people do today on Facebook, I think. It sounds like it could be compelling enough for people to start really trying to use it.

Now, what we've almost ... Facebook has almost opened up a whole other area of search engine optimization, but because it's a whole different animal though than what you're doing on Google.

Don: Yes. I think what I like about it is one of the things you were saying is it still is private, because sometimes I ... You know what? I didn't really want to say, "Oh, I need an eye doctor, because I'm getting old and I need to wear my glasses all the time."

Maybe I didn't want to ask everyone, but I did it anyways because I needed to know. Now, it's more private so I can do it in a way where I don't have to necessarily tell my friends I can see what they have to say about it. That's cool because also I'm planning my wedding and I'm asking a lot of questions.

I don't necessarily want an update. I don't want my whole newsfeed to be about that. I don't want to ask a restaurant, a photography, and a florist. Then it ends up being overboard. It's a little overkill. It's nice to have this option where you don't have to necessarily tell everyone, but you can find what it is that you're looking for.

Then, what I like to do is, when I get those kind of recommendations or if I see and it's like a close friend of mine that I don't feel bad bugging for
questions about the wedding, then I can say, oh, look. My friend Sarah knows this florist. Let me just ask her about that florist.

Don: Yes, exactly. You can just ask her instead of every one of your Facebook friends who may or may not even have a florist they can recommend to you.

Stephanie: Absolutely.

Don: Yes. Then it's ...

Stephanie: I don't think everyone cares.

Don: Yes, exactly. A little more private. I can see how that's what ... that's how I would use it. I would definitely spend time looking for recommendations. Then, I'll just follow up with somebody who'd say is it ... you like this page. That's the other thing. I think, a lot of times, we like people. Likes are easy to give out.

That's the one kind of downfall I see, that it's easy to like a bunch of stuff. I think people will like things that they like today, but maybe not tomorrow or something. Now, those likes are like you said. They're, in a way, like backlinks in the SEO world for webpages. Now, they mean something more than before.

Stephanie: Yes. When it comes to ... Let me give you an example of ... I did ask my friends for photographers in New York, and I got actually a ton of responses. I was picking ... I'm still looking at their portfolios and everything. I was looking ... I got maybe five or six photographers in that area.

Some of them were linked up to Facebook. Others were linked to their websites. I actually preferred to look at their Facebook pages to see what other people say about them and to also look at the photos and their portfolios. Whereas on their website, they can say whatever they want about themselves.

That's something that you were saying. It always ... it's better when referrals are coming from friends and family. When you see other people say something, it's a lot more positive.

I think it's a much easier sell for people I don't like to sell their services or for people on the buying end that aren't sure if they can trust whoever is selling it while it's way different for someone to share the beautiful photos...
or to say what a great experience it was for just someone to say, "Oh, yes. I'm a photographer in New York and I've been doing this for ten years." It's very different.

Don: Yes, it is. I think it's a really good point, because from my personal perspective, I've always told businesses that their website should really be the hub of their online presence. I think ... definitely been recommending Facebook pages as well for business owners.

Ultimately, they don't own that page. Facebook's changing things all the time. You definitely want to have one, but I still like the website being the hub. Now, I still believe that, however, I think it just got a lot more important to have a Facebook page for a business because ...

Stephanie: Absolutely.

Don: Yes, because like you said, I mean, here, this is your chance to get ad hoc referrals from all of your customers. If I'm a business owners at this point, I definitely ... If I don't have a Facebook page, I've got to get one. Then, I've got to be asking my best customers to like that page so that when their friends are doing searches down the road, assuming that people start to really adapt to this, then that just gives me a whole bunch of new chances at new business. It's really pretty cool.

Stephanie: Yes. You have to be interactive on it though.

Don: Yes, good point.

Stephanie: With the photographers, I had some reply to me. I sent them Facebook messages instead of emails. I had a couple. They replied to me right away. Those are the ones I talk to the most. Those are the ones I'm going to have conference calls with. Then I have other people that didn't answer me at all.

That, to me, is a red flag. I mean, a lot of times, maybe they don't have the time to manage their own pages. It's like answering an email. It is important to actually reply to the customers. That's something that I think it will evolve more. I think that search will help businesses to realize that it is just another great way for you to communicate with your customers and to get to know them on a more personal level.

Don: Yes, agreed. I think that's something I know you talked about before. I know you've given ... I've seen you give some advice to people on how to

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keep their pages updated and interactive on ... without a lot of effort. You
don't get as many likes if your Facebook page is really dead.

You're going to have to interact with people. You have to treat it as a new
inbound communication channel. You already have phone and you've got
people walking the door. You have emails and things like that. Now, you've
got people pinging you on Facebook, on your Facebook page. Some of
these has got to be set up to answer those. Otherwise, you could miss out.

Stephanie: Yes. Timing is important. People like answers as soon as possible.

Don: Right. For sure.

Stephanie: They don't want you to call them next week and they don't want to read a
Facebook post reply next week either.

Don: Right. Right. One thread has been running through my head with this that
I'd like to get your perspective on. I've spent a lot more time on Google
Plus. I've been fascinated by how Google is coming through with what
they're doing on Google Plus.

They're making it so that, even though it's not technically a ranking factor
yet, the fact is that if you do a good job with your Google Plus presence and
you look at Google authorship and all these other things. If I've got a lot of ...
If I'm in a lot of people's circles in Google Plus, then when their friends
are doing searches, the search results are influenced.

For example, if I'm in one of your circles in Google Plus and I publish a
new article or new podcast and you plus one that or you share or do a
comment on it, then everyone who is searching and are logged in to their
Google account, all your friends, they're going to see my results show up.

That's really powerful for me, Google search perspective. That's how
Google is trying to start to add social factors into search results. This is
what you're talking about as well at the affiliate summit at your talk. Now,
I'd love to get your perspective on that because, now, we've got Facebook's
approach. They're all different, but I think we need to think of them in the
same. Do you agree?

Don: Yes, absolutely. It's not just about Facebook. It also is definitely about
Google Plus. I don't think Google is going anywhere anytime soon, even
Twitter and other platforms. They are different but they work in similar
ways. You're saying someone can plus one and then that helps you in the search results.

In this case, likes are important for Facebook, but also there is that share button. If post something that someone likes and they want to share that with their friends, then now, that spreads and goes a little more viral. Their friends are seeing it. You also have the option to promote the post.

I was talking earlier about I'm doing a contest for a client. We can spend as little as $5. We can spend $200. We can spend as much as the budget is. Just to give it an extra little push and have it be out there more in the newsfeed, we actually will promote for just about $5 or more.

What's cool about it is, Don, you were saying, not only your connections, but also other people. It gives you the option where you're promoting a post to not only target your friends or fans on the page, but also their friends. You can open up that audience a little more and have people see your post more often.

That's done through a promoted post, but I imagine that since photos that are liked really often and pages that are liked are going to show up in the search results. If you do spend $5 to promote something, that might also show up if your friends like it.

We'll see how that influences once that goes live and everything. What I like about it is it does let you reach a broader audience as a business with a little cost. You can reach fans and their friends. I would do that though if the fans that you already have are targeted fans. You have to make sure you have the right kind of people on your page.

Don: Let me back up for a minute. I want to make sure I understand what you're saying. First of all, I'd love you to describe what a promoted post is for people.

Stephanie: Sure.

Don: I think what you were saying is, in connection with that ... Let's say you promoted a post and got some more exposure for that as a business. Then that's going to help with Graph Search. Is that it?

Stephanie: That's what I'm guessing is going to happen. It's like organic search which is SEO and then maybe PPC, which is paid search. I'm sure they might integrate that into a search graph. I'm going to be very interested to see
how that evolves. From what I'm seeing so far, it looks like they're going to count likes, and that's what they're going to be showing.

They can show photos with likes and they can show pages with likes. If you promote a post and it has likes, that's something that might show up as well if their friends are the ones that liked it. I wonder ...

Don: That would make sense for Facebook to do that, right?

Stephanie: Yes.

Don: Because then, they're going to get more people signing up for promoted posts.

Stephanie: Yes, but what I wonder is, are they going to show the results based on how many people like it?

Don: Oh, right.

Stephanie: That's something that I'm not sure of yet. I'm sure we're going to see and we're going to find out. It looks like, okay, it can just show me everyone that likes skiing. If everyone really, really likes skiing in Vail more than they do in another location and they like this particular ski resort.

That's very popular. I'm wondering if that's going to show up higher in the other results. I'm guessing it would. I'm not sure about that yet.

Don: Yes. That makes sense. Go back ... Can you just describe what a promoted post is?

Stephanie: Sure. A promoted post is something that happens on a business page. You can also sponsor something on your personal page as well. As a business that helps you to track things better, I don't do this every day for clients and I don't do it often. I only do it when it's something that is very important that I want to reach a bigger audience.

What happens is when you pull something up, you have to really think about your timing on posting. There has to be a strategy behind what you're doing. You don't want to just post something at seven o'clock at night when people are having dinner, and they're not home and they're spending time with their family.

Don: Give me an example of a post that you would do. Would it be like a picture with some text around it? What would a post be?
Stephanie: I don't want to go too much into too many details. I don't want to get off topic, but it's easy. For me, a post needs to have a few things in it. It shouldn’t only be content. It should also include an image or a video. It should include content, and it should actually include a link back to your blog. That’s what my ideal post looks like.

Don: That's a post. Now, what you're using is Facebook's promoted post capability, meaning you're going to pay some money so that that post will show up for more people. Is that right?

Stephanie: Yes. It reaches more people and it stays in the newsfeed for more time. You basically can say, okay, I'm going to pay $5. If you pay $5, it will tell you, if you pay this much, you're going to reach an estimated thousand people or 1,500 people. This is targeting fans and their friends.

Don: Got it. Okay.

Stephanie: I do it when it's something that I think is important that I really want people to see, because if they missed it for some reason, it's going to up there for a longer amount of time.

Don: It seems like it makes sense then, because if your audience is targeted, if this post is related to what they care about, and more people see it, you're going to get more likes on that post in Facebook. Then, that's going to influence the Facebook Graph Search.

Stephanie: I would imagine that, well ...

Don: That makes sense, right, given what we have seen about Facebook Graph Search so far.

Stephanie: Yes. I will say I've been using the promoted post and it does work well. Some people are upset about it, why do I have to monetize my post.

Don: Yes. I saw that controversy. There were some people saying, hey, now, you're making this page for people to see our stuff.

Stephanie: Right. In a way, yes, and in a way, no. It is different, but now that the search is here, I think it's going to change that and make it easier for your business to be seen without having to pay. I just recommend doing it when it's something that's an important announcement, say you're launching a new website or you have different store hours or it's something that you just want your customers to really know.

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That's when I would do the promoted posts. It's not something ... I mean, you can spend as little as $20 a month doing it. It's not ... I don't think a big deal, but I know some people think otherwise.

Don: It seems like a good way to highlight a certain ... like you said, a launch or something new that's happening. You could use that to highlight ... occasionally highlight certain things that are relevant to your fans.

Stephanie: Yes, absolutely. It worked well.

Don: Let's summarize here for a minute. I mean, in terms of takeaways for Facebook Graph Search, number one, it's super-important for people to go and check this out and try it. You said there is a link you gave to me before this session where people can go and get ... You can actually see a little bit about what it looks like in trial search and then sign up to be included in the beta.

Stephanie: Yes. You go to http://www.Facebook.com/GraphSearch. It actually has videos and examples and little visuals on how this is going to work. You can also click on a link that says "test out the Graph Search" so you can test it for yourself. If you scroll to the bottom, you can actually join a waiting list to test out the beta. It's going to start first in English and then it's going to open to other languages.

Don: Great. Then people can check it out for themselves a little bit. I think it's a smart idea if you're interested in this business at all to get on one of your early ... get into beta. The second thing that we talked about is you'd suggested getting a Facebook page for your business is super ... even more important now than ever, right?

Stephanie: Yes.

Don: To do that, where would somebody go to just claim a page for their business? I mean, we'll just ...

Stephanie: Yes. I'm going to put the exact link. Let's put the exact link in the show notes.

Don: Yes, perfect. We're going to have on http://www.Expand2Web.com/Session12. We'll have all the links to the ... of everything we've talked about. I've got a roundup of a few articles that I've read on this. We'll have the link to the beta and the link to where you go create a Facebook page.

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Yes, I'm just trying to summarize what else was the takeaway here? I think I'll experiment with promoted posts where appropriate.

Stephanie: Yes. You should also, once you set up your business page, promote it so that people know about it. Like I said, this could be a sticker on your business door, your window. This could be on your receipts. This could be on your website, on your email signatures to let people that they can connect with you more long term.

Don: Very good point. You want to get people liking this new business page so that you can claim your own URL and that you can start showing up in this graph search as people start to adopt it.

Stephanie: It's very exciting. I think it's going to change a lot of things for Facebook.

Don: This is cool stuff. I was reading John Vitale who does a lot of writing on this kind of stuff. He was saying that this is like a fresh blanket over the core topography of Facebook. It's a new way for people to access all that data that Facebook has been collecting basically.

Stephanie: Yes, absolutely.

Don: You know what? Steph, this was great. What we should do is in—I don't know—a few weeks or a month, however long before we get to spend a little more time in this trying it out. I know you're doing this stuff all the time with clients. It would be great to reconnect and just give people an update on how it's playing out in the real world if people are using it and how it's showing up.

Stephanie: Yes. I would love to do that. For anyone that's setting up the business page, I do want to do this. Maybe we can add it to the show notes. Don and I and some other instructors are working on the The School of Internet Marketing. I'll be showing students how to set up their Facebook pages and what they need to be doing for businesses on Facebook.

Don: Yes. Great point, Steph. The School of Internet Marketing is a project with James Martell on and some other instructors. Both Stephanie and I are instructors in there. I'm super-excited about that, starting here, launching as we speak, right?

Stephanie: Yes.

Don: Good stuff. Then you've got a series of courses in there on Facebook. I've got some on building your website. Then, we've got a bunch of other

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courses coming soon. That would be a good thing. We'll put links to that in the show notes as well. Then, yes, I think that's it.

The only other thing, Steph, I want to make sure people know how to get a hold of you. I'll have that in the notes, but if you want to just tell people the best way to reach you if they wanted to ask you any questions.

Stephanie: Yes, absolutely. If you have Facebook questions for your business or anything else related to that, feel free to email me at Steph@MicroMediaMarketing.com or tweet me @MicroSteph.

Don: Yes. Okay. Good. This was awesome. Thank you so much.

Stephanie: Thank you!

Don: I am really fired up about this and it's fun to talk through some of the possibilities. I'll be talking to you very soon. For everyone listening, thank you for being here. Once again, you'll get all the show notes and links to everything we talked about on the blog at http://www.Expand2Web.com/Session12. Thanks so much and have a great day.