



RE: Dell Latitude™ ON™

OVERVIEW:

Voltage Creative was challenged to develop a new application to be used with an innovative functionality on Dell Latitude™ laptop computers. This functionality allows users to launch much-needed business and personal applications (email, internet, calendar and contacts) in a matter of seconds without having to launch the computer's primary operating system.

Voltage Creative was contracted to offer the following services to the Dell for the Dell Latitude™ ON™ project:

- Wire framing
- Application architecture
- Identity and branding
- Usability and UX design
- Flash prototyping
- Project management
- Asset management and style / development guide

CHALLENGE:

Voltage Creative was provided with client hand-sketches and verbal communication to initiate the project. From the client-provided high-level guidance, our team developed project requirements in conjunction with the client and proceeded with application architecture and design. All aspects of this project were developed under an extremely tight deadline.

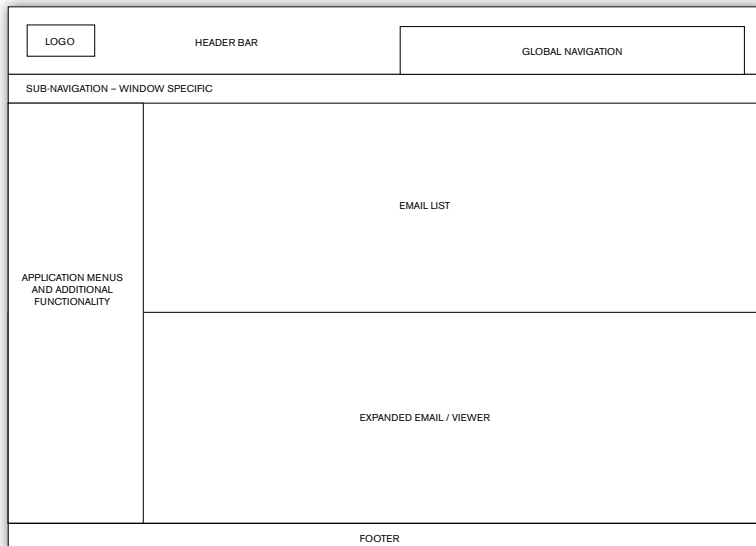
PROJECT COMPONENTS:

Our team tackled this project via the following segments:

1) Wire-framing:

To ensure proper functionality, a high-degree of usability and the desired user experience our team first created wire-frames which depicted the application as simple black and white boxes with titles identifying the subject matter or functionality of that particular area of the application. This technique allowed our team and the client to spatially review the applications major buckets of information and functional aspects before addressing look and feel.

Below is a wire frame sample:



Wire Frame

This wire frame depicts the Dall Latitude™ ON™ email UI. Seen in the wire frame are placements for global navigation, graphics and key functional areas such as email list view, global navigation and window-specific functionality.

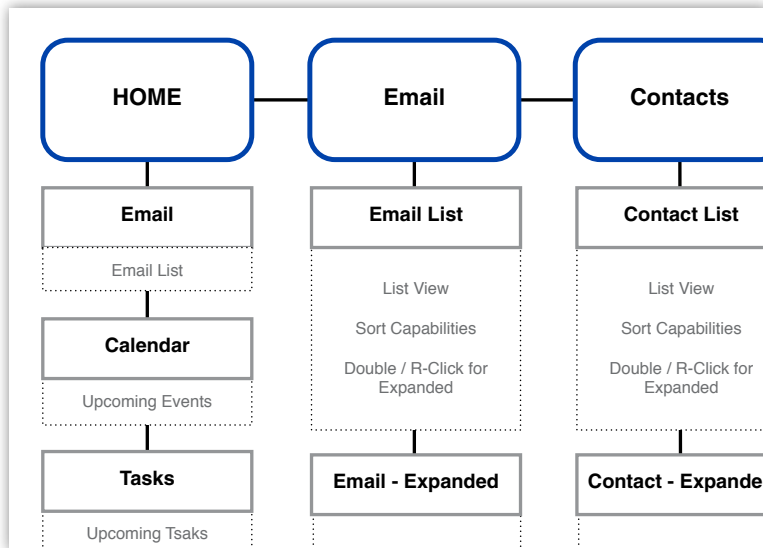
As the application developed, many aspects of this original window changed, however many of the UIs original layout remained in-tact and this exercise was invaluable to the efficiency of the application's development.

2) Architecture:

In conjunction with the wire frame exercise, we mapped the application's functionality to visually interpret the paths users would take to accomplish certain tasks. This exercise allowed our team and the client to predict any challenges, such as dead-ends, loops or confusing / non-intuitive functionality.

Reducing the amount of clicks a user must make to accomplish key tasks and ensure those key application functionalities are featured prominently and easily accessible are primary goals of this exercise.

Below is an architecture sample:



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Application Architecture

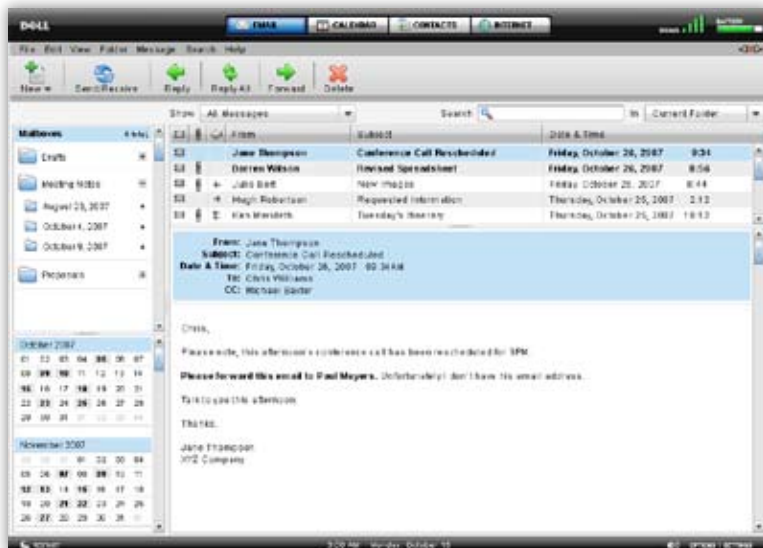
Link studies allow our team to visualize the patterns users will follow to execute key tasks. This image is a close-up of the diagrams we use internally to ensure our development remains in-line with how real-life users will actually interact with the UI.

3) Design:

Utilizing the wire frames, architecture and usability best practices as a guide our team embarked on developing the look and feel of the application. Multiple concepts presented to the client followed by rounds of revisions lead our team to a design the sets well with the Dell identity and incorporates a contemporary and clean user interface.

Ultimately the Voltage team creative 20+ windows incorporating all aspects of the application's functionality.

Below is a sample application page:



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Email UI

This fully-developed UI is indicative of the other UIs designed for the applications other main screens: internet, calendar and contacts.

The blue and black used within the applications look and feel tie into Dell brand standards. In some instances polished graphics were used to highlight key functional areas while in many cases the layout is supported by more flat and understated graphics which convey the business-focused purpose of this application.

4) Flash Prototype:

Upon the completion and approval of the applications look and feel, architecture and usability concept, the client requested our team create a Flash prototype that would allow internal Dell users to further usability test and vet the applications viability. Senior management staff and Dell software and hardware engineers and developers utilized the prototype application to sell the application to key stakeholders. In addition, the prototype was used in focus group testing along with eye-tracking technology to further refine the design and user experience.

A screen capture of the Flash Prototype in use may be seen at: voltagecreative.com/latitude

5) Asset Management and Style / Development Guide:

After final revisions and UI refinement based on findings from the Flash prototype, the Voltage team provided Dell software engineers the assets and a style / development guide that would ensure the project would stay on-task and on-brand throughout the application build.

Application icons, colors, type styles and sizes were all specified in a 150 page document.

Below is sample icons and assets provided for development:



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Style / Development Guide

At left is a page from the 150-page Style / Development guide the Voltage team produced for Dell.

This guide details all aspects of the application from the name, size and web-safe colors of graphics and icons used within the application, to pixel heights / widths of windows, fonts, type sizes and much more.

This style guide was a key element in the development of the application.

NOTEWORTHY RESULTS:

In 2009 the application launched and is now offered as a native application on Dell Latitude™ laptops. The Voltage Creative team continues to enjoy a positive client-agency relationship with Dell. Since the creation of the Latitude ON™ application prototype, Voltage Creative has tackled additional application development projects with similar project components.

More information regarding the Dell Latitude™ ON™ application may be viewed at: dell.com/latitude