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Title:

Update "Mail" of Kontact Touch to fit Plasma Active UI / UX

Motivation:

Kontact Touch is an important productivity application for Plasma Active. It provides the needed functionality but feels like it does not belong to PA. This year's GSOC theme is "KDE++ aka polish everything" and I'd like to give Kontact Touch Mail a visual/ux rework so that it not only works but also feels like a first class citizen of PA again.

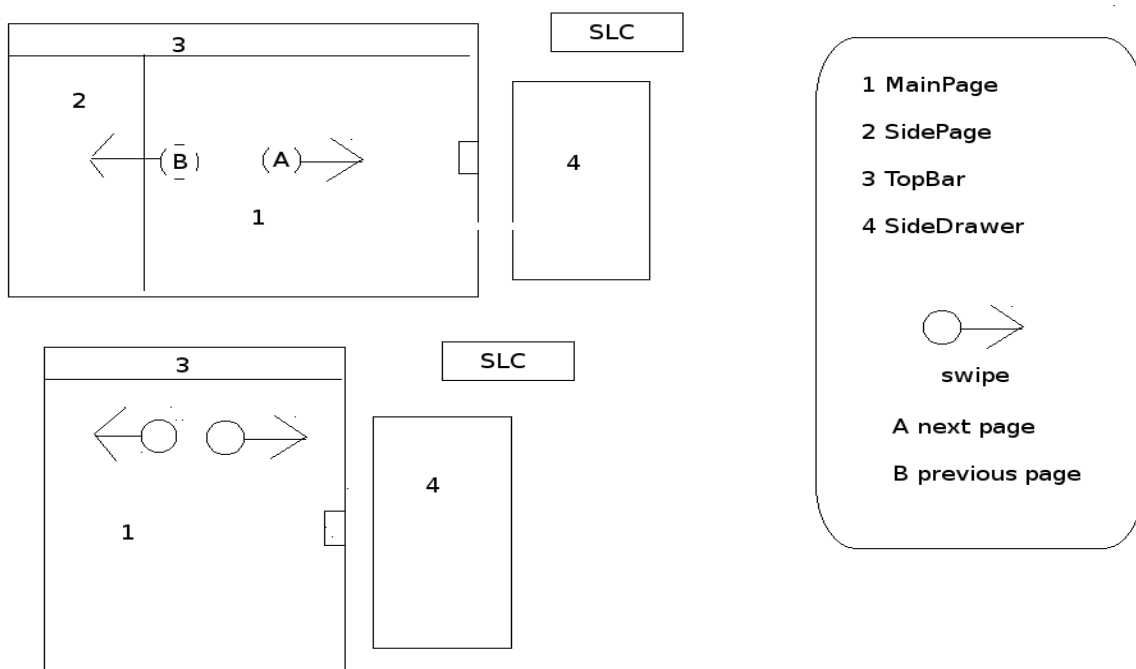
Design Proposal:

There are several outdated user paradigms in Kontact Mail Touch that need to be solved in another way to make it a "ture" Plasma Active Application.

Problems with the current design:

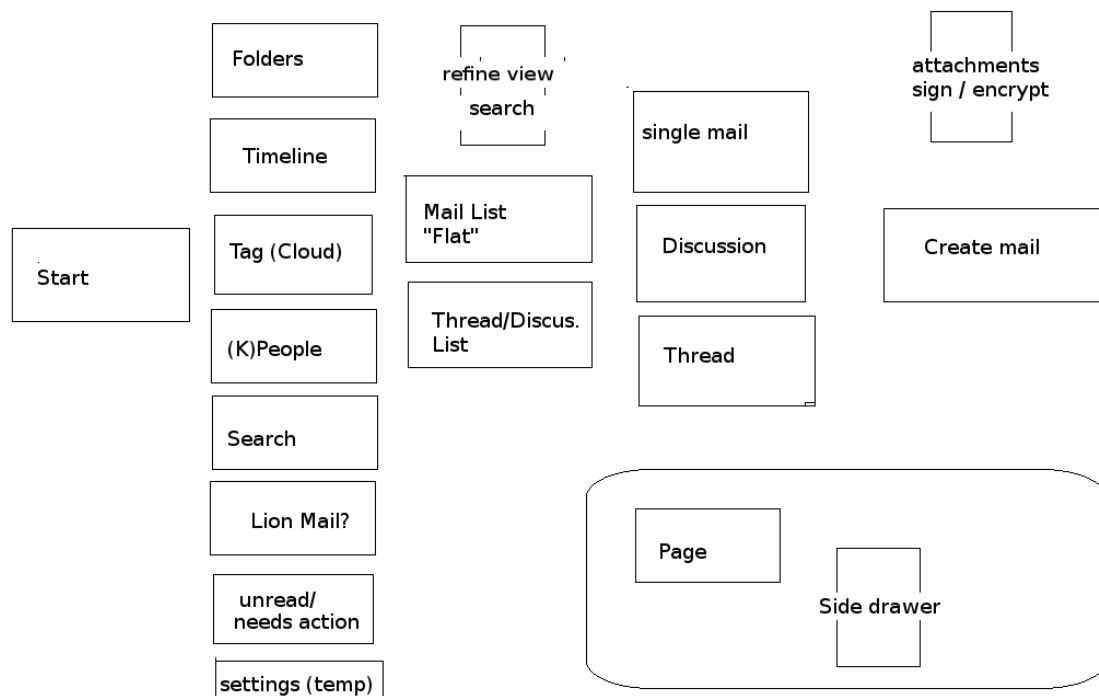
- multiple windows workflow
- "context menu" side drawer
- in app account setup

The design I propose is a combination of the PA "News" application and its use of a 2 pages / page row layout as well as PA "Files" and its use of a side drawer and the ability to browse by timeline or tags.



The application displays 2 pages at a time, has a TopBar for “actions” and “tools” and a side drawer to give additional options if needed.

Navigation through the pages happens by swipe right to left (back) and tap (create next page). Topbar “actions” will change according to what page is displayed but will always contain a “back” button. Exploration of a Page happens by swiping up or down. The use of gestures other than tapping/topbar to interact with the pages content will be explored during the mockup phase.



Page rows can be build from left to right.

e.g.: Start -> Folders -> Thread/Discussion List (side drawer: refine by tag “cat”) -> Discussion -> Create mail (reply)

Page row 2 - browse modes:

- Folder - “traditional mailfolder view” similar to how it is already possible
- Timeline - similar to the way it is done in PA Files
- Tags - same as timeline ?
- (K)People - browse mail by Contacts / People
- Search - “expert search”
- Lion Mail - Getting things done like it was supposed to be with [Lion Mail](#)

- unread / n... - displays everything thats urgent
- settings - temporary solution only, same for “export”

(these are just examples. Not every browse mode will be implemented. see -> Scope)

Page row 3 - list mails:

- Flat list - displays mails ungrouped by incoming date
- Thread/Dis.. - display mails grouped by topic

side drawer: can be used to refine the displayed mails similar to how the side drawer in PA “Files”

Page row 4

- Discussion - linear by time
- Thread - threaded

Page row 5

- Create mail - reply to email, can also be used to compose a new mail (or from “share” of SLC)

Implementation Details:

The UI will be implemented as a Plasma Package in QML using PlasmaComponents. The layout will be based on a modified PlasmaExtraComponents.PageRow with single pages implemented as a PlasmaCompomemnts.Page. Every Page will at least have two states (mainPage and sidePage) that change how content is displayed.

Prototyping can be done by using dummy QML models.

Scope:

This project will produce a landscape mode UI. Its design considers a portrait mode but it will not be implemented. Also not part of this project is the implementation of SLC related things and Account setup UI (need to go into active.settings app). Both are enough work for a single project.

The goal for this project is to implement the “traditional” folderview way through the app including the composition of new mails and at least one of the other browse modes. This project will also explore the possibilities of current PA UI patterns and the eventual need for new ones.

Mentor(s):

Thomas Pfeiffer offered his mentorship for this project and Björn Balazs, who defined most of the initial UI concepts in Kontact Touch also offered his support. I am looking forward to working with Usability / UX professionals but will also require help regarding technical questions. I have experienced both mailing list and IRC channel of PA and KDE Pim to be very responsive and I am sure I will get help from there in case I get stuck. It might be nice to have a single “responsible” contact though.

## About Me:

I study Information Systems, worked as a tutor for software engineering at my university and since last semester as a private tutor for Java. I am a frequent reader of [planet.kde.org](http://planet.kde.org) for some years now and wanted to contribute something but never really managed to get started (besides one `jj` for `telepathy-kde`). That changed this year. I started contributing to Plasma Active in January with a qml mockup because I was annoyed by how `ksnapshot` works for touch devices and got into updating some outdated qml code a little later. Right now I am working on a new date and time picker for `PlasmaMobileComponents`. My contributions got me a KDE contributor account which I am very proud of. Given my work on PA, I feel confident that my QML knowledge is sufficient for this particular proposal. This is probably the only year that my university schedule allows me to apply for GSoC and I am willing to put my heart into this project.

Tentative Timeline (in weekly intervals until 2 weeks after the end of GSoC):

## Before GSoC:

- do as much QML programming as university schedule allows
- try to improve `PlasmaExtraComponents.PageRow` so that it already suits my needs

Preparation Period (~3 weeks) 28.05 - 16.06

## Week 1

- socialise with Mentors (online kickoff meeting)
- communication channels + schedules
- workflow that enables short feedback cycles with the UX experts during the mock up phase(s)
- coding + code review workflow
- working dev environment
- research: Kontact Touch codebase, `PlasmaComponents`, `PA-HIG`, ~~Task-centric UI stuff~~ (strikethrough = done)

## Week 2

- research `akonadi`
- create stub data for prototyping
- initial mockup ( in QML)

## Week 3

- research
- mockups, mockups, mockups + discussion

Coding Phase 1 "Mail Browser" ( 6 Weeks) 17.06 - 29.07

## Week 1

- mockups + discussion
- agree on basic UI concept
- Week 2
  - more mockups + discussion
  - start implementation
- Week 3
  - implementation
- Week 4
  - implementation
  - KDE Academy (13.07 - 19.07)
- Week 5
  - implementation
  - goal: usable UI “mail browser”
- Week 6
  - BUFFER
  - midterm evaluation (29.07)
  - Goal: working mail browser

#### Coding Phase 2 “Mail Client” (6 Weeks) 02.08 - 16.09

- Week 0
  - code cleanup
- Week 1
  - mockups + discussion
- Week 2
  - reply / create / send mail
- Week 3
  - reply / create / send mail
- Week 4
  - search + sorting
- Week 5
  - search + sorting
- Week 6
  - BUFFER
  - “pencils down”
  - Goal: browse and compose mails

#### Polish Phase (1 Week) 17.09 - 23.09

- code cleanup

Firm “pencils down” date / endterm evaluation 23.09

“Future” Phase 25.09 -

- evaluate the code. what can be merged, what needs work?
- get things merged that are ready
- plans for future development
- continue contributing

Do you have other obligations from late May to early August ? :

I will be able to put in 40 h / week. There are about 4 days that I will need to compensate by working on the weekend. This includes one exam that should not interfere with my ability to work on the project. Also I want to attend KDE Academy in Bilbao but I do not think that will hinder my progress.

Proof of Contribution:

plasma-mobile (git branches)

- mbohlender/active.powerbutton (merged into master)
- mbohlender/active.welcome (merged into master)
- mbohlender/flat\_time\_date\_picker (WIP)