Mobile Design Pattern: Application tray

Description

The application tray is generally a desktop component that acts as a container for application shortcuts. In MAC terms, this is also called as Dock. In most cases the Dock is placed at the bottom of the screen, with the application shortcuts placed horizontally.

Shows the Application tray in action

Advantage

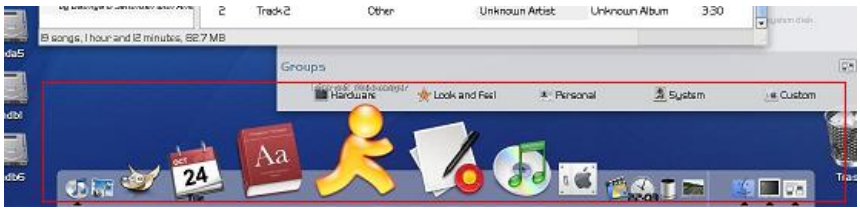
Quick access to frequent applications. And better usage of screen real estate with enhanced legibility.

Use when

Use when many icons and items need to be displayed along a straight line, in a simple and fancy fashion.

Use how

The Dock essentially needs to be a transparent/translucent container (panel) for icons, for a better visual experience.



This image shows the Dock in action on a Ubuntu PC.

Adaptations

Depending on whether it was a touch or keying mobile, the dock's settings can be changed.

On a keying device, it would be more allusive to have a small tween involving a scaling. Like in the image shown below.the item under focus can be magnified and moved to the center of the panel. Others should be smaller in size.

On a touch phone, its simple and straightforward to keep them on the same size.

All items are of same size. Ideal for a touch-enabled phone

Design Tips

1. Accommodate a maximum of 4-5 icons on the mobile's dock. More icons can be added by having a LEFT / RIGHT button. The component can be flexible in the arrangement of icons. Most used icons, can be placed on the screen while others appear as

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LEFT/RIGHT is pressed.

2. Make the tray movable(drag-enabled) on the screen.

Ideal for

Devices such as N97 or 5800 or any display with a landscape mode. More landscape means, more icons can be placed.Not suitable for Series 40 devices which possess a small screen and lack landscape orientation support.

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