



By Daniel Bounds

FREEDOM FROM BUSINESS AS USUAL: INTRODUCING THE NEW DELL LATITUDE

Dell™ Latitude™ laptops have been completely reengineered to take on the demands of an increasingly mobile workforce. Designed with the core values of both IT managers and end users in mind, the new Latitude laptops make remote management and endpoint security a breeze—while providing a user experience mobile workers will want to write home about.

A myriad of computing devices will be connected to the Internet in the next five years—and most of these devices are expected to be mobile. Because a significant portion of mobile computing devices will travel well beyond the boundaries of the office, it is critical that enterprise IT departments address the concerns of mobile workforces.

As IT administrators are painfully aware, giving mobile employees the technology and support they need is not as easy as handing out laptops. Mobile users come in all shapes and sizes. Some mobile employees travel to the far reaches of the world, while others are working just around the corner in their neighborhood coffee shops. Some are willing to sacrifice features such as large screen size for a thin, light form factor, while others require a heavy-duty feature set that has traditionally been available only to desktop users. But several common threads unite them all—including simplified security, outstanding control and manageability, comprehensive mobile services, rock-solid durability, and top-notch usability to help meet the needs of both mobile users and the IT staff that supports them.¹

SUITABILITY TO TASK

During the process of developing its new line of Latitude laptops, Dell conducted over 3,900 interviews

with enterprise IT managers and end users. These interviews revealed that while both groups ultimately share the same goal—to maximize productivity in the most cost-effective way possible—each has very different requirements in mind to achieve this objective. For end users, maximizing productivity means having an easy-to-use laptop with excellent battery life and dependable network connections wherever they go. For IT staff, it is more about provisioning and managing systems that are secure, reliable, and robust, requiring a minimum of service and maintenance.

As a result of this extensive research, the new Latitude models offer a personalized design that is outfitted with advanced technologies that help keep busy mobile workers productive, including batteries that last up to 19 hours in select mainstream models and enhanced IT control (see the “Guided tour: Anytime, anywhere computing” sidebar in this article). The Latitude line offers a comprehensive range of devices, from ultra-portables to full-featured mainstream and rugged laptops (see the “Dell Latitude E6400 ATG: Semi-rugged, fully featured, and enterprise ready” sidebar in this article). Each model—the Latitude E4200, E4300, E5400, E5500, E6400, E6500, and E6400 ATG—is designed to deliver key benefits for enterprise IT staff as well as highly mobile end users.

Related Categories:

- Dell Latitude laptops
- Dell ProSupport Services
- Laptops
- Mobility
- Remote management
- Security

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¹ For more information, see “Mobility Redefined,” by Jeanne Feldkamp, Daniel Bounds, Terry Myers, and Tom Kolnowski, in *Dell Power Solutions*, August 2008, DELL.COM/Downloads/Global/Power/ps3q08-20080388-CoverStory.pdf.

GUIDED TOUR: ANYTIME, ANYWHERE COMPUTING

Beneath their sleek exterior, new Dell Latitude laptops offer enhanced thermal design for optimal power and cooling efficiency and long battery life. Support for wireless broadband, Global Positioning System (GPS), Bluetooth® 2.1, ultra-wideband (UWB), high-performance IEEE draft 802.11n, and WiMAX technologies enables cable-free operation with flexible connectivity options. In addition, the keyboard features increased surface area compared with previous-generation Latitude laptops, with comfort enhancements such as key curvature, tactile indicators, and backlighting for low-light environments. Which all goes to show that beauty is truly more than skin deep.



The new Dell Latitude family is designed with an eye to both enterprise IT and mobile worker requirements (shown: Latitude E6400)

SIMPLIFIED SECURITY

Worries about mobile security cause many sleepless nights for IT executives. In addition to constantly evolving and increasingly sophisticated threats to network security, administrators must contend with the stress of potential loss, theft, or damage.

Dell aims to simplify mobile security by offering secure platforms that are easy to deploy, use, and manage. The Latitude family offers a comprehensive suite of security options that enable administrators to deploy secure systems direct from the factory. For example, Dell ControlVault™ software provides a single firmware location for storing, processing, and managing end-user credentials such as passwords and biometric templates—thereby enabling Latitude products to perform security processing and matching outside the scope of malicious applications.

A contactless smart card reader can also help control laptop access using multi-technology cards that enterprises may already have invested in. And the integrated fingerprint reader in the Latitude E6500 is Federal Information Processing Standards (FIPS) 201 certified and designed to be less cumbersome than a peripheral fingerprint device. A standard fingerprint reader is available on the Latitude E6500 as well as all other new Latitude laptops.

OUTSTANDING CONTROL AND MANAGEABILITY

At the heart of the Latitude line, Intel® Centrino® 2 processors with Intel vPro™ technology are designed for enhanced wireless connectivity, energy efficiency, and processor performance. Together with additional support features from Intel, vPro technology helps organizations

manage, maintain, and secure mobile workforces by allowing IT administrators to remotely shut down, diagnose, repair, update, and deploy hardware-level security features wirelessly—even when laptops are outside the enterprise firewall.

In addition, Latitude products are designed to minimize total cost of ownership and protect investments while supporting future technologies. Through remote provisioning features, for example, IT administrators can deploy and configure laptops regardless of their physical location. Leading-edge connectivity options such as ultra-wideband (UWB) and WiMAX will allow users to connect from virtually anywhere and help organizations keep pace with technology advances.

Image and systems management tools also play a key role in helping simplify IT administration for a rapidly evolving

THE DELL LATITUDE E6400 ATG: SEMI-RUGGED, FULLY FEATURED, AND ENTERPRISE READY

Most mobile employees take their laptops only as far afield as a client's office in a distant city. But some users (such as manufacturing floor managers, field scientists, and military or emergency medical personnel) need mobile devices that will stand up to extreme conditions—particularly environments of heavy vibration, dust, humidity, potential drops, bright daylight, and liquid spills onto the keyboard. Designed to provide added protection

and usability in environments that push the limits of typical laptop users, the semi-rugged Dell Latitude E6400 ATG is designed to meet key military specifications (MIL-STD 810F) and enhanced Dell specifications.

Featuring a completely new design with high-durability textured paint, the Latitude E6400 ATG is designed to provide serious protection from scratches and physical wear. Available hard drive choices include removable shock-mounted hard drives and solid-state disk drives to help protect critical data. An Extreme Environment Port Cover for the rear, bottom, and side ports helps protect against dust, while a spill-resistant keyboard helps protect against liquid damage in a variety of field environments.

The Latitude E6400 ATG also offers a choice of two new shock-mounted Wide XGA (WXGA) LED backlit displays. A high brightness option makes it easy to use in sunlight with an unprecedented 750 nits, or a resistive touch display option can be used with gloves while offering a bright 650 nits.

Because the Latitude E6400 ATG shares its BIOS and hard drive images—including drivers, applications, and utilities—with the Latitude E6400, it is easy to manage from an enterprise standpoint. The Latitude E6400 ATG also uses peripherals and accessories common to other Latitude models, helping simplify deployment of multiple form factors within the client user base.



mobile workforce. For example, the Dell ImageDirect tool streamlines the creation, updating, management, and deployment of hardware images, while advanced systems management functions available through Altiris® Dell Client Manager™ software can provide significant improvement in first-call resolution. New Dell ControlPoint software lets IT staff customize user settings and profiles for batteries, wireless access, and security. Moreover, common management across the Dell Latitude laptop and Dell Precision mobile workstation families further enhances productivity and streamlines infrastructure support.

Small docks, stands, and peripherals allow true hot docking to promote fast movement between desktop and mobile modes. Commonality across the product family extends to peripherals, so compatible peripheral devices, adapters, and docking connections enable organizations to distribute the same accessories to employees using any system within the new Dell Latitude or Dell Precision families. In addition, global deployment and image update planning can help smooth transition management.

COMPREHENSIVE MOBILE SERVICES

In the past, IT administrators have constantly worried about downtime and loss

FLASH MEMORY STORAGE ENHANCES RELIABILITY ON SOLID-STATE DISKS

To help increase reliability and protect enterprise data, the Dell Latitude line offers leading-edge solid-state disk (SSD) technology. Because SSDs are based entirely on semiconductors and have no mechanical parts, they are designed to be more durable and less sensitive to shock and vibration than mechanical disks. This durability helps avoid downtime and speed data access for mobile workers—while helping reduce maintenance costs and service calls for IT personnel. In addition, SSDs characteristically consume less power than mechanical disks. Multiplied across thousands of mobile users, reduced power consumption can add up to significant energy savings.

The SSDs available in new Latitude laptops also enhance reliability and durability through advanced flash memory storage. Flash management controllers map flash memory to specific usage models and wear leveling that spreads write/erase cycles across physical addresses to help maximize chip life cycles and match performance with applications. As flash storage continues to evolve, the near-zero latency, nonvolatility, and durability of SSDs can provide flexible, durable alternatives to mechanical disks.

of data. As organizations continue to push the envelope way past business as usual, Dell is committed to taking the complexity out of securing the infrastructure that supports the mobile workforce.

To that end, Dell offers a comprehensive range of recovery services.² Mobile data protection services such as Remote Data Delete and Hard Drive Data Recovery can help prevent loss of valuable data (in the case of theft) and help recover data (if a hard drive fails). Certified Data

Destruction Services help preserve peace of mind by allowing administrators to destroy the data on a hard drive if the disk fails, while Hard Drive Data Recovery Services can help prevent the loss of valuable data by recovering information from failed hard drives.

ROCK-SOLID DURABILITY

Because laptops are frequently in motion, they are more prone to damage than desktops. They get bumped. They get dropped. They may get soaked by the occasional cup of coffee. These events are daily realities for mobile workers—so Dell designed the new Latitude family with a robust feature set and impeccable durability, investing thousands of hours in durability testing. Robust metal hinges and latches are designed to stand up to the toughest conditions, while StrikeZone shock absorbers help prevent accidental damage and optional free-fall sensor hard drives and solid-state disks help improve data protection (see the “Flash memory storage enhances reliability on solid-state disks” sidebar in this article).

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² Availability may vary by country. For more information, see “Connect and Protect Workers on the Go with Dell ProSupport Mobility Services,” in *Dell Power Solutions*, August 2008, DELL.COM/Downloads/Global/Power/ps3q08-20080374-Dell-ProSupport.pdf.



New Dell Latitude laptops provide outstanding control and manageability in a sleek, durable design
(from left: Latitude E4300 and Latitude E6400)

TOP-NOTCH USABILITY

Usability glitches in laptops are not just an issue for mobile workers. Because the IT department is responsible for fixing (and paying for) the problems caused by design gotchas, the Holy Grail of mobile computing is a family of hassle-free devices that let users work self-sufficiently—without compromising security or productivity. With the new generation of Latitude laptops, Dell invested heavily in design to create easy-to-use laptops that are bold, sleek, and durable.³

By offering a choice of standard and backlit LED LCD screen sizes in different models, Dell provides a range of options to suit virtually any mobile employee. Latitude E5500 and E6500 models provide the most screen area, with a 15.4-inch display. Latitude E5400 and E6400 models (including the Latitude E6400 ATG) have a 14.1-inch screen. The Latitude E4300 offers a 13-inch display, while the Latitude E4200 comes in at a compact 12.1 inches for users who are after a sleek, light laptop.

Dell ControlPoint software facilitates usability by providing a unified application framework that allows users to customize

their laptop according to their needs and usage style, helping to make them self-sufficient and to minimize IT support calls. This software is easy to install, use, and maintain, and offers a consolidated user interface. ControlPoint includes Dell Connection Manager, Digital ID Security Manager, and power management tools to help give end users control over their systems without sacrificing security or serviceability for the IT department.

In addition, one of the most common complaints IT professionals hear from mobile workers is that laptop batteries do not last long enough. Users need batteries that last as long as they do. The new optional nine-cell battery in the mainstream Latitude line is designed to support a full 8-hour workday—or even last up to 19 hours on mainstream systems with the addition of a new battery slice and Dell ControlPoint software. LED backlit displays and customized battery settings can also help users achieve a full-day charge.

INSPIRED DESIGN FOR SECURITY, MANAGEABILITY, AND INNOVATION ON THE MOVE

As their employees become increasingly mobile, organizations require increasingly

powerful, flexible tools that can meet the needs of both IT departments and mobile users—whether they are inside the office, in a neighborhood coffee shop, or halfway around the world. Mobile users need easy-to-use laptops with long battery life and the durability to withstand tough conditions on the road. IT departments, meanwhile, must be able to deploy and configure mobile systems regardless of their physical location and ensure the security of critical data against theft or loss.

New Dell Latitude laptops have been designed with these needs in mind. By combining the simplified security and manageability necessary for IT staff with the outstanding usability and durability demanded by end users, new Dell Latitude laptops help maximize productivity and offer a flexible platform for the anywhere, anytime computing of a truly global workforce. 

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Join the discussion on the new Dell Latitude family at the Dell TechCenter wiki:
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³For more information on design factors, see "Designing for the Road Ahead," in *Dell Power Solutions*, August 2008, DELL.COM/Downloads/Global/Power/ps3q08-20080410-Musgrave.pdf.