

Case Study: Dell Technologies Events and Webinars Redesign

Dell Technologies and Me

Founded in 1984 in Michael Dell's college dorm room, Dell Technologies has grown into one of the world's leading technology companies. In addition to shipping millions of personal computers and monitors worldwide, Dell has become a prominent innovator and broker of network servers, data storage and cloud solutions, and software—technologies poised to improve people's lives and drive human progress.

For two and a half years I worked for Dell Technologies as a Senior Product Designer to iteratively improve customers' online experience, specifically in the B2B marketplace. We called it the *"learn layer,"* where IT decision-makers (ITDMs) came to immerse themselves in our products and services portfolio. The online learn layer worked in tandem with Dell Technologies events, where these same customers could experience our offerings in person, including hands-on learning labs, live demos, and expert presentations.

The Task at Hand

In 2020, when the entire world shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic, so too did Dell Technologies' events circuit. Experiencing products and services in person became an impossibility, resulting in a seismic shift in focus to delivering to customers a best-in-class digital experience. And this was not unique to Dell. In 2020, Forrester Research found the *webinar* to be the most sought-after piece of content by our primary customer, the ITDM.

At the heart of this new, digital reality was the Dell Technologies Events and Webinars page, one long in the tooth and lacking any capacity to foster an intimate relationship between our brand and our customer. Figure 1. Leadership in brand, design, and experiential marketing converged on this page as crucial to our ability to nurture trust and drive engagement with customers at the height of the pandemic, and into the future.

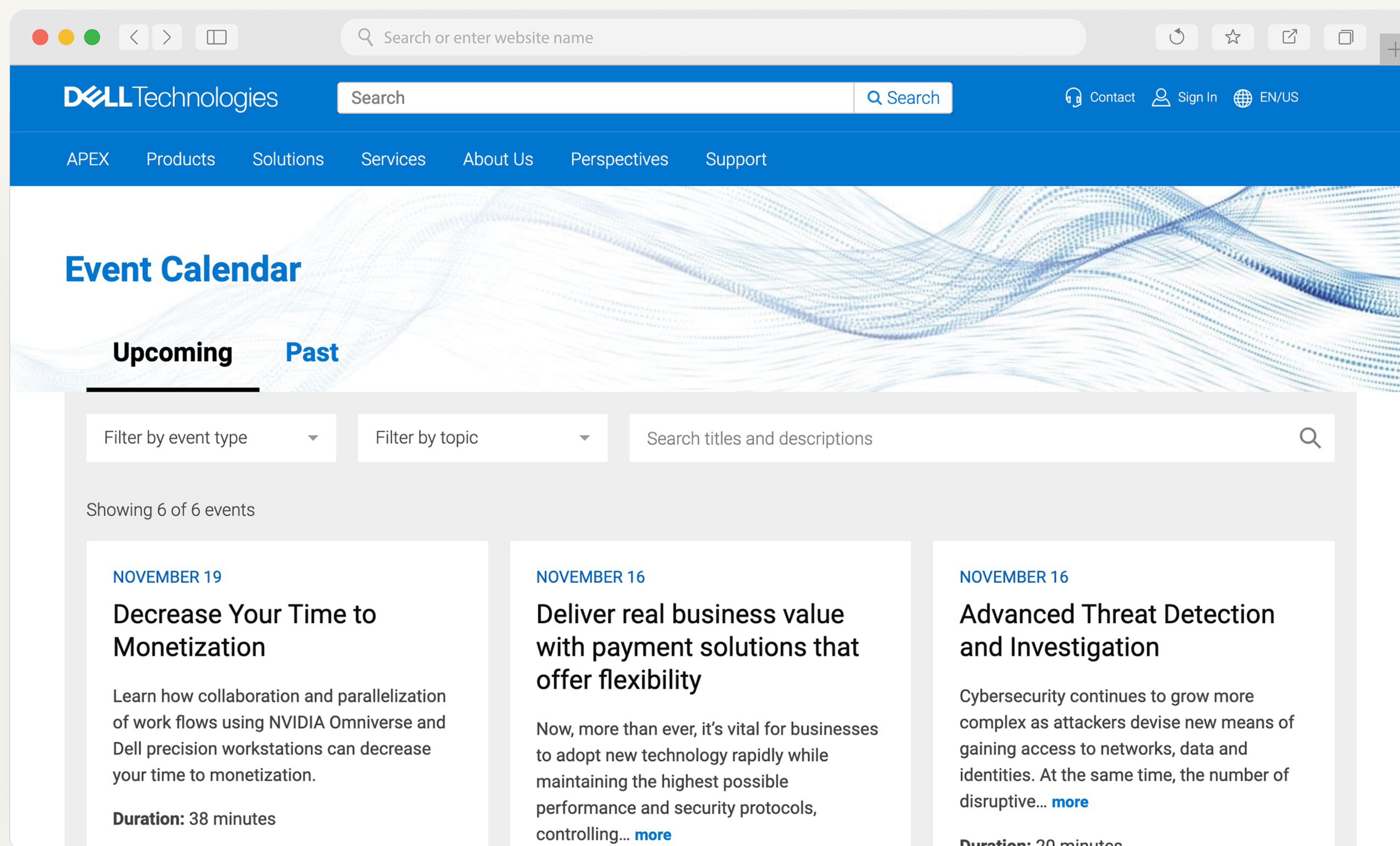


Figure 1. Legacy Events and Webinars experience

I led the phase-one redesign of the events and webinars experience, serving as the sole UX and visual designer on the project. Over the course of four months I worked alongside a talented product owner in experiential marketing to dissect the problem, define a solution, and deliver an exceptional product.

Research and Planning

We worked backward from an end-of-year launch goal to establish a timeline. We penciled-in milestones for research, requirements gathering, design, and development, with added consideration for validating our work with users and leadership along the way.

Up-front research was compiled in two, parallel paths. Our research team conducted qualitative usability testing on the existing experience, revealing several inadequacies in both the interface and content design. Most notably, the webinars, of new-found fame, were buried behind a tab, entirely overlooked by many of the test-takers. I, along with the product owner, gathered our own research in the form of competitive analysis, examining both industry standards and best-in-class experiences with which we could benchmark our end product.

By way of stakeholder interviews we gathered internal requirements that would define success. We spoke with event marketers that helped further define our target audience and their content needs. They also shed light on improvements we could make to the content authoring experience. We spoke with engineering to better understand the technical landscape, including backend limitations, Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) integration, and how to lay the groundwork for future iteration and product improvement over time. We also spoke with design leadership to explore the possibility of designing the new experience with DDS 2.0, Dell's new design system (that at the time was in the late stages of its development).

Design and Development

In the design phase, I made my impression on the project in three distinct ways. First, I stepped in as design lead from the outset, saving experiential marketing an estimated six-figure, *up-front* investment in an external agency, one to be tasked with initial design concepts. Secondly, I accelerated the delivery of the product by designing in high-fidelity throughout. This is in the makeup of my design process in general, but coupled with the immediacy with which we were working to fill a need, I felt compelled to move. Lastly, I designed with shipped components within the new design system and otherwise invented. For example, I introduced a fresh UI pattern for filtering and sorting content that in the end, was sent back to the design systems team for incorporation in DDS 2.0.

Three initial, high-fidelity design concepts gave way to one, on which we agreed to as a small team and then sold to leadership. Once aligned, we worked iteratively to hone the visual design, user experience, and content strategy. On the last few design iterations we conducted both qualitative and quantitative usability tests, making necessary changes and ultimately validating the finished design.

Our team of two grew to three in the development stage, as we met frequently with the lead engineer to ensure the build. This process was a give and take, as it always is. Conversations on topics like responsive behavior, interaction design, and the end-to-end user journey sparked debate, alignment, and sometimes compromise on how to best serve the end user and set the product up for long-term success.

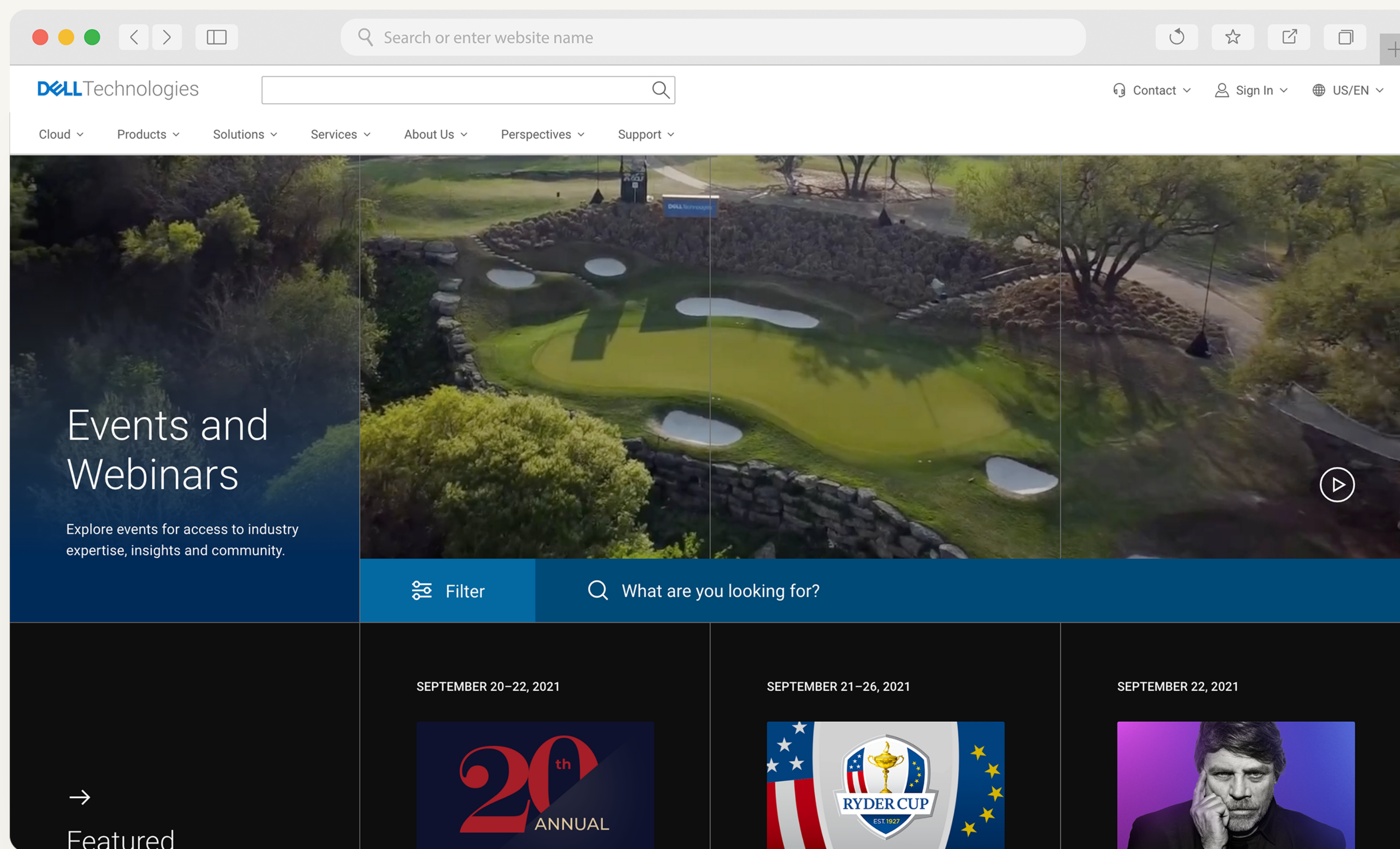


Figure 2. Redesigned Events and Webinars experience

Phase one of the redesigned Dell Technologies Events and Webinars experience launched in Q4 of 2020. [Figure 2.](#) The page was the first to market designed with DDS 2.0, a goal of mine accomplished. In just a few weeks time, analytics suggested a 30% increase in time-on-page, and a 22% decrease in bounce rate. The redesign was met with great feedback from leadership company wide.

“Awesome job! SO much strategic thinking and time went into making this happen (and I know you’ve still got even more planned!!!) Thank you.”

Nicole Rex, VP, Global Events and Sponsorships

“Looks great and super easy to find. Go team!!!!”

JJ Davis, SVP, Corporate Affairs

In Retrospective

All the positive responses aside, we know that nothing is perfect. In retrospect, I'd have done some things differently. Personally, I should have been quicker to abandon initial design concepts I knew weren't right. This is, in part, the reason why sketching and wireframing is widely considered a best practice for early stages of the design process. But in this case, I didn't feel wireframes would live up to the exuberance and urgency the organization had for this redesign.

As a team, we should have had in place an individual to manage the page beyond its launch. The design depended, and still depends, on careful consideration of content, including event/webinar titles, descriptions, and thumbnail imagery. Without attention paid to these details, the page does not meet its potential as a best-in-class online experience.

In Conclusion

I'm incredibly proud of the work I contributed to this project and its noteworthy success. It's held great significance to Dell Technologies in an unprecedented time, and continues to be the face of its events and webinars offerings. Experience it yourself at [here](#). The project pushed me to grow as a professional—as a product designer, a cross-functional collaborator, and as an advocate for a brand and its customer.