# Design for Developers/CM Tool/Competing visual design

With having a background in graphic design, I’ve developed a sense about a designer behind what they’ve designed. With this issue, I was giving a design created by a developer at Big Fish Games a visual overhaul.

During Q1 of 2017 an engineer approached the UX team that I am apart of and asked how we could approach their tool and give it a nice visual upgrade. It was explained that the tool was a location where code changes were requested, approved, and tracked. The tool also supported the notion of a critical update, which bypassed the approval process. Each request was accompanied with additional information and all this information was displayed on an HTML table.

[EXAMPLE]

At glance you can hardly tell what is going on, but this tool was fragile and the users weren’t completely open to change. So there were a few elements I wanted to preserve and carry over into a new design, those included the fun icons for the status of each request while trying to keep the entire front facing information accessible.

So I took the table design and applied the same style and convention guides used for other product tools by taking each table request and placing them within a bootstrap panel. I applied a visual attention to the different statuses to give the user an idea of the state of each request at a glance.

[EXAMPLE]

I was finished with my V1 design and ready to share with the engineers. They kindly pointed out a flaw and that flaw was that there wasn’t any ways to identify which requests were critical requests and bypassed the approval flow.

The initial thought was that a new visual queue was needed to identify the critical requests. Icons were thought of, but icons were also used by the status. Then a color identifier idea creeped in, but that was also taken by the status. Then I thought, what if we update the impact level to show the critical nature, except at a glance this was just a text update and the user would need to dive in to find that information. Back to the first two ideas I realized I gave the status a color identifier, icon, and priority in the panel header. This was a lot of information for the status.

[EXAMPLE]

I altered the status to show a color identifier and panel header text, and cut the icon. I then took the place of the icon for expand and collapse panel icon. This allowed the user to view more information that was hidden behind the fold. As for the critical requests, I gave them a new visual pattern, a vertical red bar found on the left of the panel. This vertical bar gave enough of a pattern break to bring attention to it. The color also contrasted well with all the status variations. The impact field was also updated to include “- EMERGENCY”. This really drove the combination of emergency and impact level of the request.

[EXAMPLE]

This became a fun visual challenge of showcasing multiple visual importance ques. Once I presented this final design to the engineers, they enjoyed how clean top-level information was presented before diving deep into the issue.