Reffell Design Case study: Plaxo first-time experience

> *James worked with us to reshape our on-boarding flow at Plaxo to reflect the pivot in the business. His design leadership was instrumental in developing a more effective framework which, in its first phase, saw a 30% increase in our conversion rate. I also found the foundation that he laid during his engagement something that we continued to build upon over the years—compounding the initial ROI.*
>
> – Preston Smalley, Plaxo GM & Head of Product

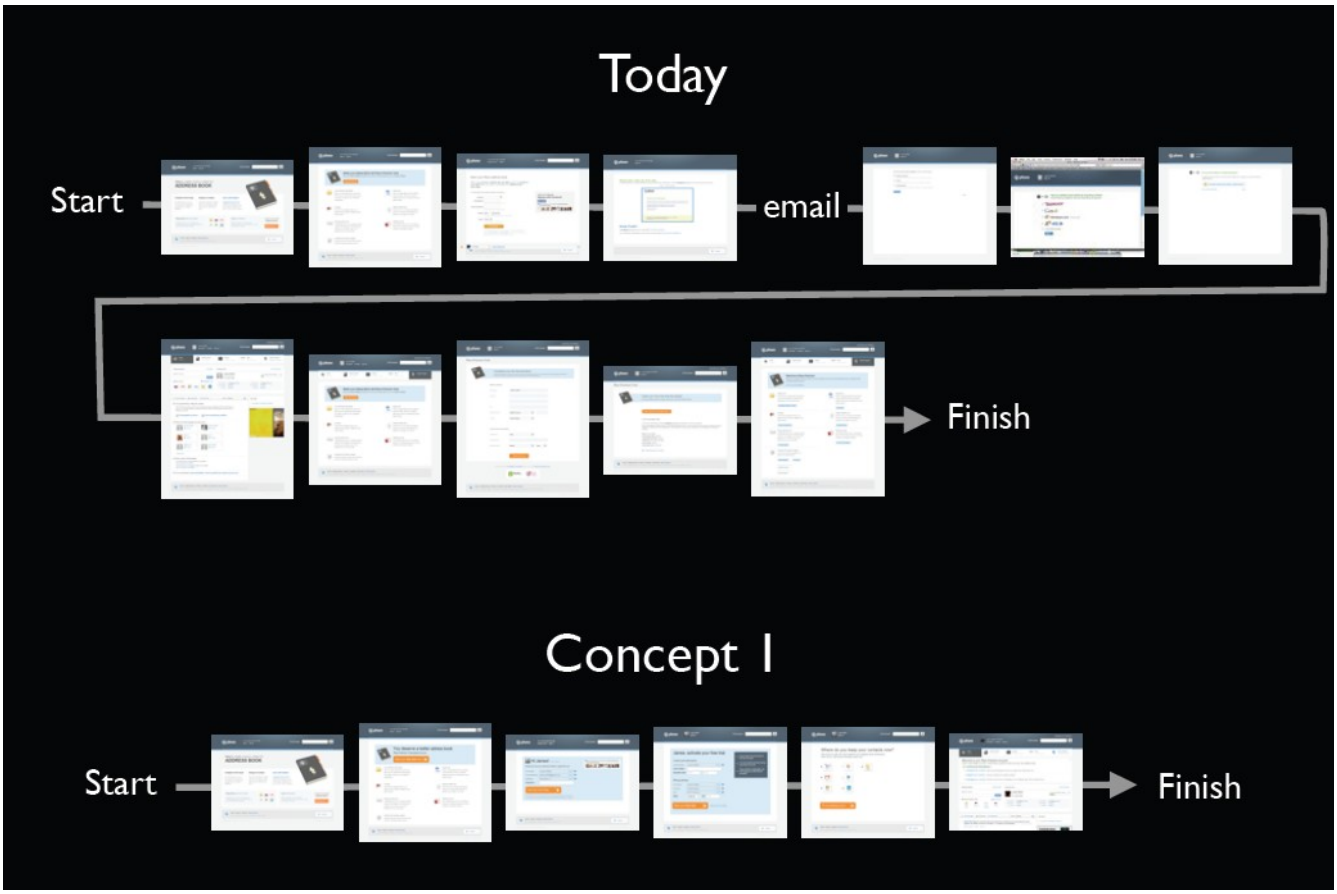
Project summary

In 2010, Plaxo (plaxo.com) brought me on for a short project to analyze and help redesign their first-time experience.

Plaxo knew that users who imported two or more address books (from Google, Yahoo, mobile phones, etc.) during their first-time experience were considerably more likely to stick around and be active, and even paying, customers. The goal of the redesign was to increase the number of successful signups in general and (more importantly) the number of successful signups with 2 or more imported address books. My role in the project included analyzing the existing experience, creating concept designs for a new experience, and creating flows and mid-fidelity wireframes for key screens.

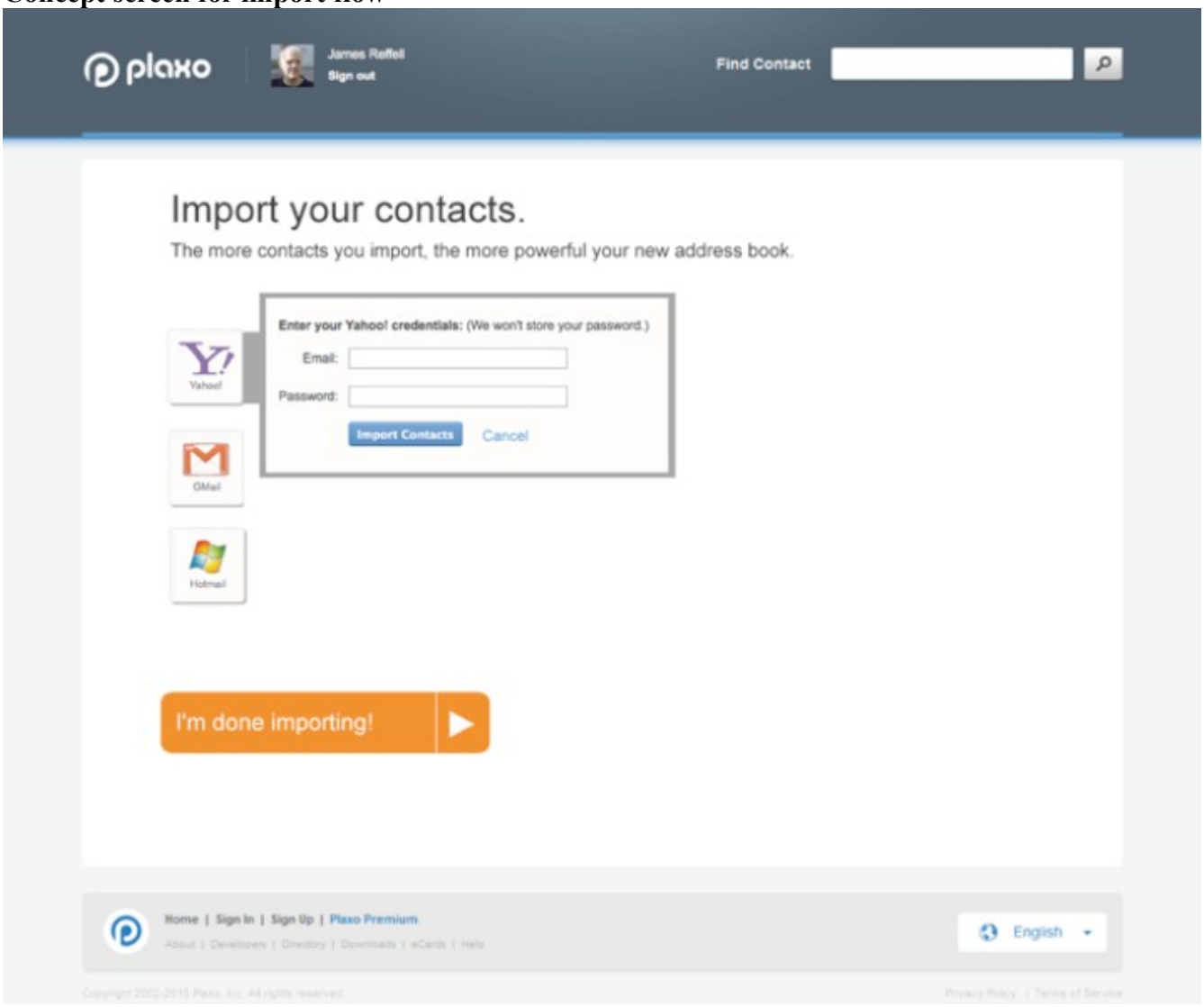
Existing flow & concept design
Major issues with the existing flows included:

- length & complexity
- failure to fully communicate the value of a Plaxo account
- lack of emphasis & enjoyment in the importing process
- Failure to explain “what now?” to users who completed signup



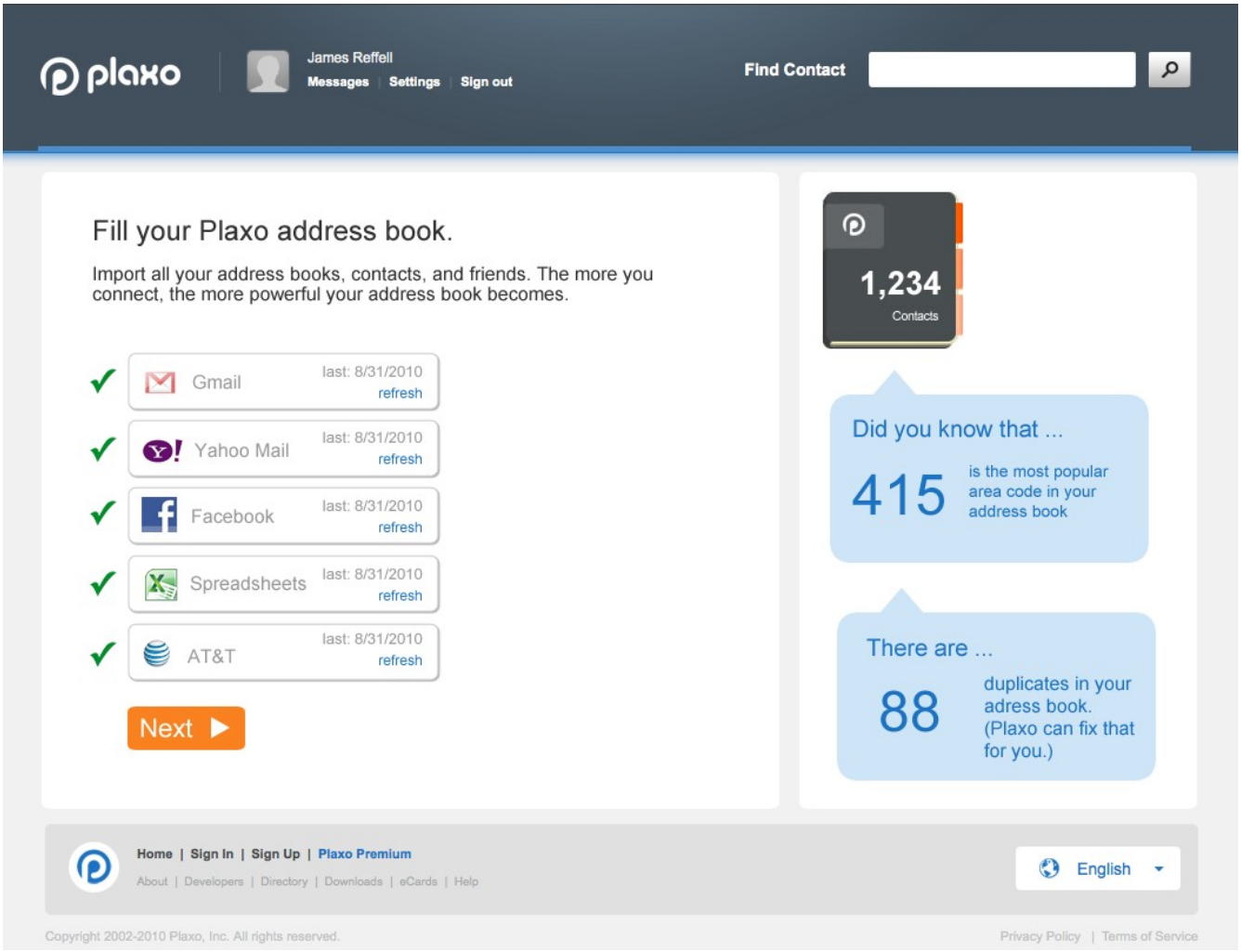
The design concepts radically simplified & shortened the flow by removing fields & compressing steps. It promoted the value of address book consolidation and made the importing of address books simple, consistent, and fun through visual cues and game-like attributes.

Concept screen for import flow

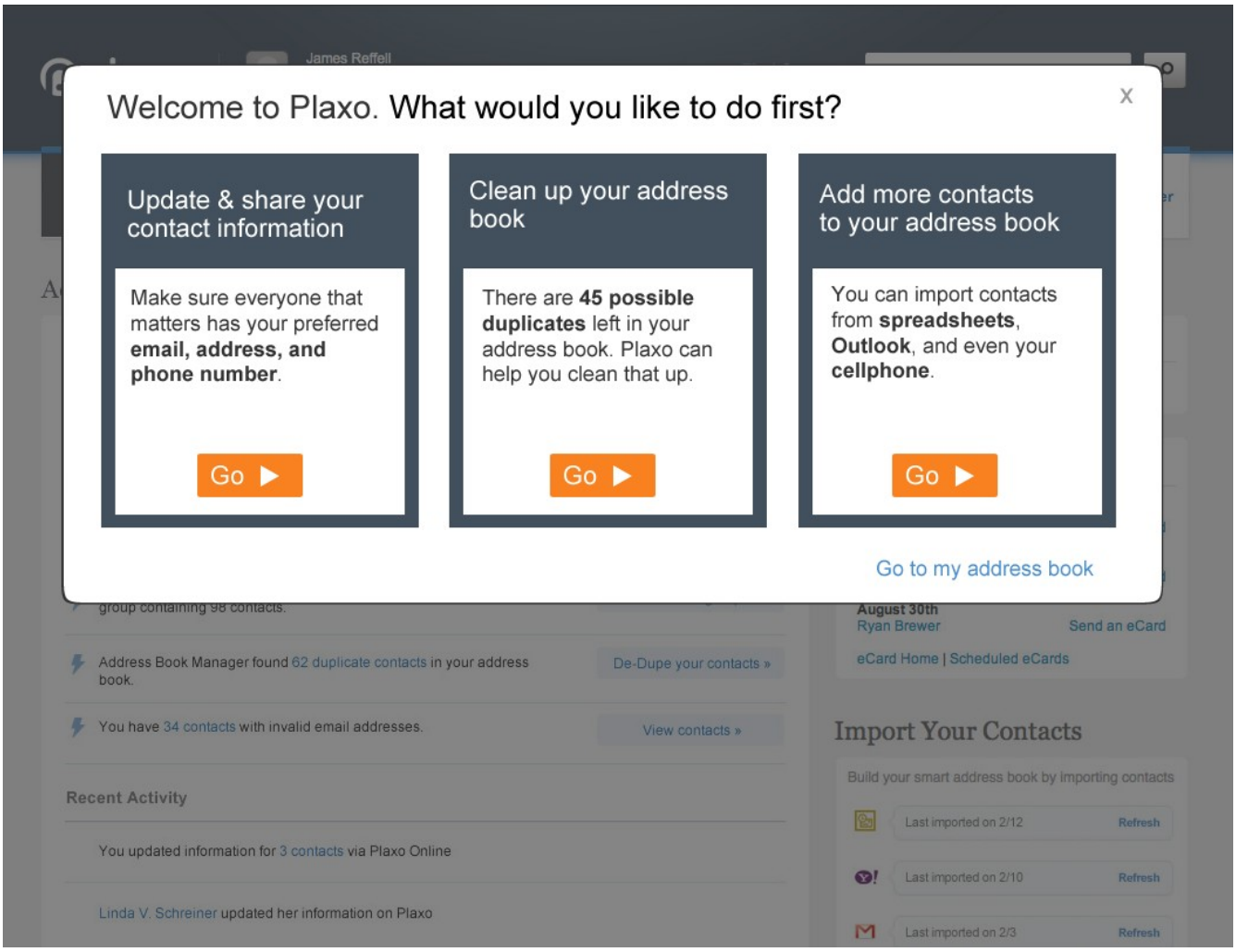


After several iterations the import concept designs had been refined & fleshed out to cover multiple uses cases, as well as the post-signup task of letting the users know what they should do next to get value from the system.

Final screen example:



What now? screen

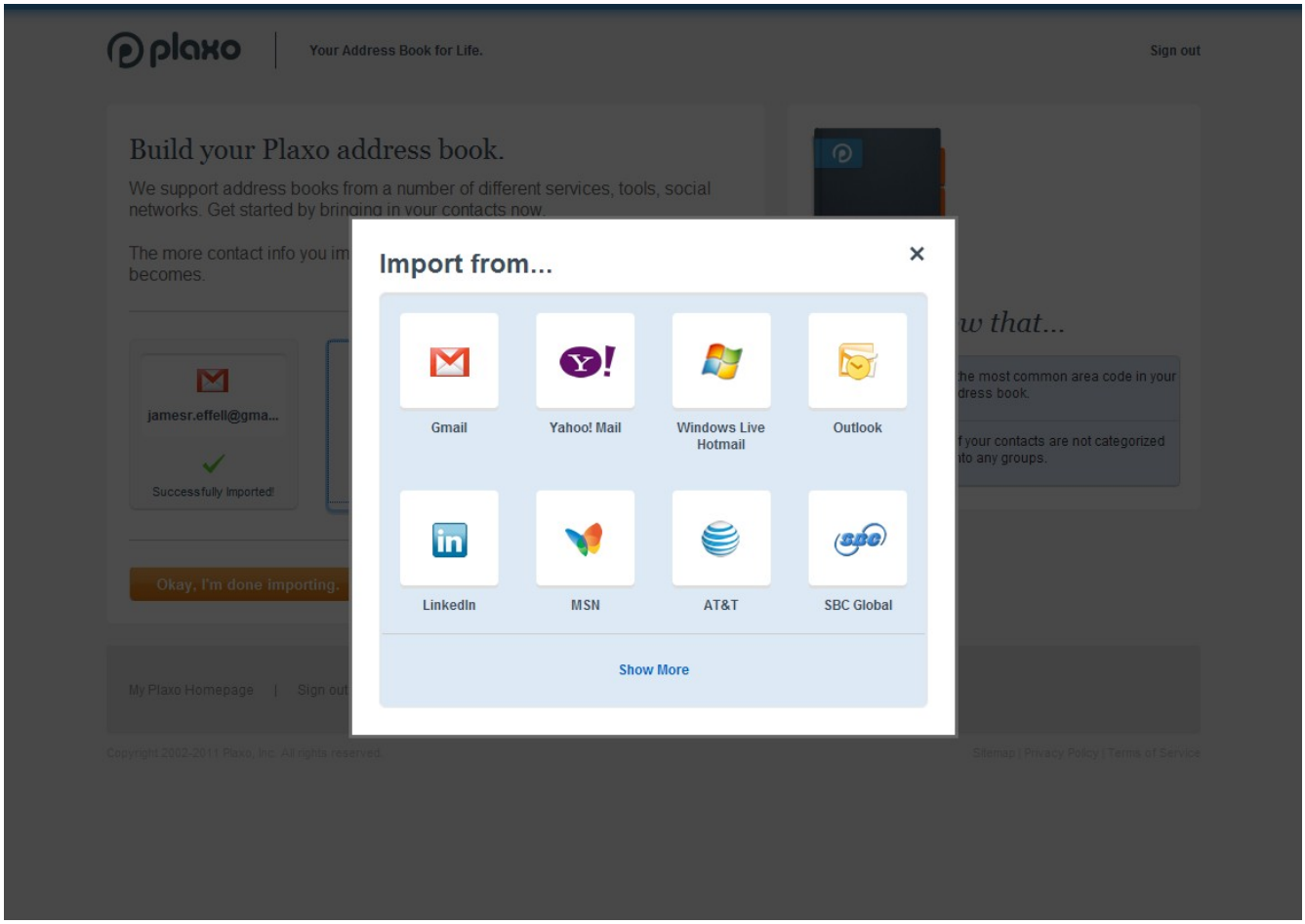
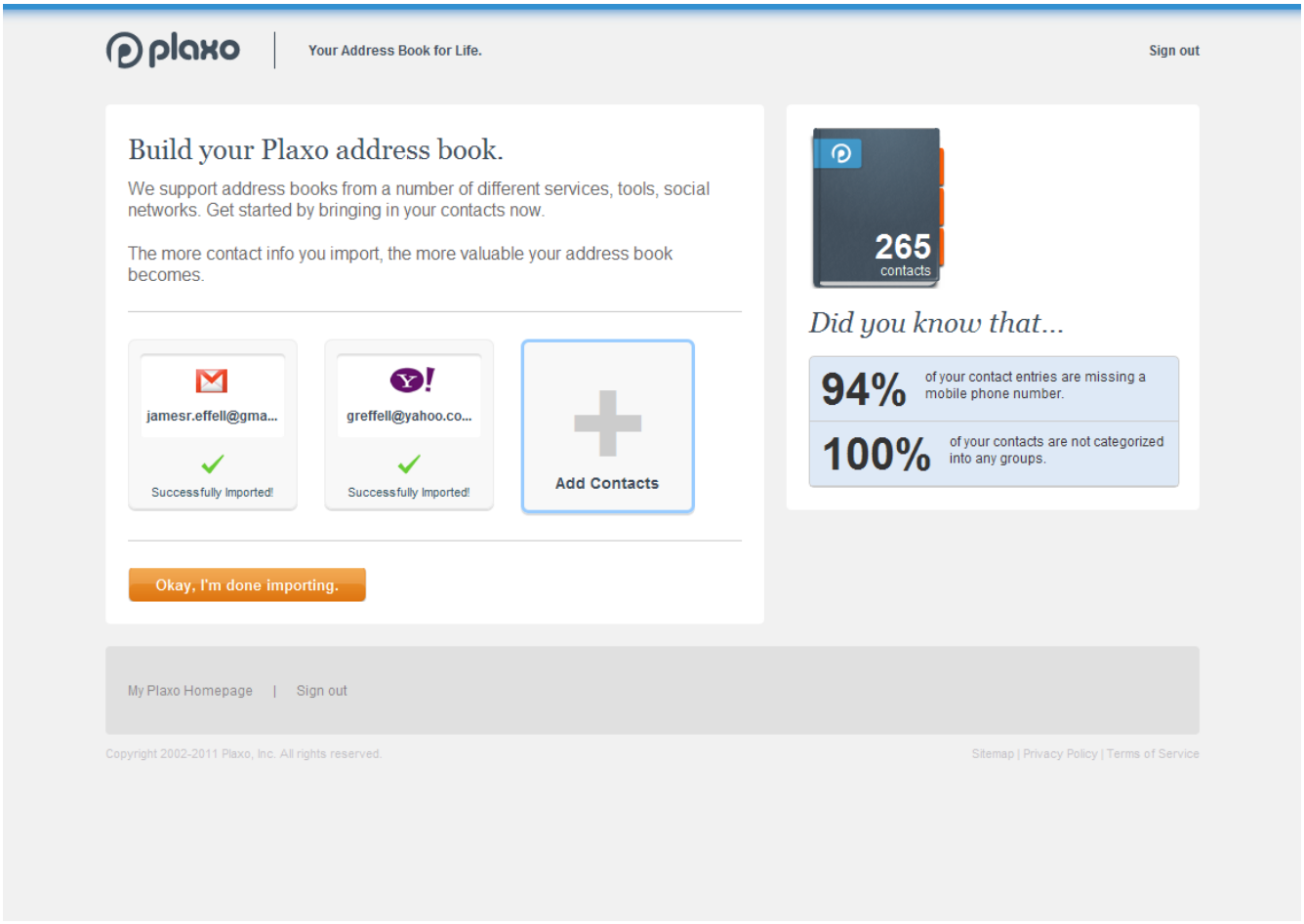


Launch

The redesigned flow went live a couple months after the project. The design had been further refined from my concepts & wireframes by Plaxo's internal design team. Plaxo reported significant increases in conversion rates (~30%) as a result of the project, and have since continued to further iterate their first-time flows.

The following screenshots were taken from the live site after launch:

Import layer



Partially completed import