The claims defining the invention are as follows:

1. A method for providing a unified conversation-centric message list and message reading pane, the method comprising:

organizing a plurality of messages by conversation;

providing a list view of the plurality of messages organized by conversation;

providing a content view of the plurality of messages organized by conversation;

presenting a unified user interface simultaneously displaying the list view and the content view; and

~~bi-dimensionally~~ bi-directionally synchronizing between the list view and the content view, wherein bi-directionally synchronizing comprises:

indicating a message within the list view as selected in response to a corresponding message within the content view being selected;

displaying the corresponding message as the selected message within the content view such that the selected message is opened for reading within the content view; and

indicating a message within the content view as selected in response to a corresponding message within the list view being selected, the selected corresponding message within the list view indicating a position within a reply structure of the selected message within the content view.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the list view indicates the reply structure of each expanded conversation.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the content view comprises a reading pane with a message frame for each expanded message.

4. The method of any one of Claims 1 to 3, wherein bi-directionally synchronizing further comprises scrolling the reading pane to display a message in response to a corresponding message within the list view being selected.

5. The method of any one of Claims 1 to 4, further comprising displaying a list view pipe within the list view, the list view pipe showing a reply-to connection between a broken out message and a parent message in the conversation, the broken out

message comprising a message which has branched off to form a sub-thread within a conversation topic in the conversation.

6. The method on any one of Claims 1 to 5, further comprising displaying a content view pipe to associate an expanded frame with a parent message in the conversation, the content view pipe comprising a plurality of indicators for displaying a relationship of a message chain preceding a message within the expanded frame, the message within the expanded frame comprising a reply to the parent message.

7. A computer storage medium having computer executable instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, cause the computer to:

organize a plurality of messages by conversation;

provide a list view of the plurality of messages organized by conversation;

provide a content view of the plurality of messages organized by conversation;

present a unified user interface simultaneously displaying the list view and the content view; and

maintain bi-directional synchronization between the list view and the content view, wherein the bi-directional synchronization is maintained by:

indicating a message within the list view as selected in response to a corresponding message within the content view being selected;

displaying the corresponding message as the selected message within the content view such that the selected message is opened for reading within the content view; and

indicating a message within the content view as selected in response to a corresponding message within the list view being selected, the selected corresponding message within the list view indicating a position within a reply structure of the selected message within the content view.

8. The computer storage medium of Claim 7, wherein the list view indicates the reply structure of each expanded conversation.

9. The computer storage medium of Claim 7 or 8, wherein the content view comprises a reading pane with a message frame for each expanded message.

10. The computer storage medium of any one of Claims 7 to 9, wherein bi-directional synchronization further comprises updating a read/unread status of a message in the list view in response to a read/unread status being updated in association with a corresponding message within the content view.

11. The computer storage medium of any one of Claims 7 to 10, wherein bi-directional synchronization further comprises updating a read/unread status of a message in the content view in response to a read/unread status being updated in association with a corresponding message within the list view.

12. The computer storage medium of any one of Claims 7 to 11, wherein the computer executable instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, further cause the computer to display a list view pipe within the list view, the list view pipe showing a reply-to connection between a broken out message and a parent message in the conversation, the broken out message which has branched off to form a sub-thread within a conversation topic in the conversation.

13. The computer storage medium of any one of Claims 7 to 12, wherein the computer executable instructions stored thereon which, when executed by a computer, further cause the computer to display a content view pipe to associate an expanded frame with a parent message in the conversation, the content view pipe comprising a plurality of indicators for displaying a relationship of a message chain preceding a message within the expanded frame, the message within the expanded frame comprising a reply to the parent message.

14. An electronic message reading system comprising:

a processor; and

a message reading application comprising one or more modules operable to cause the processor to provide a list view of a plurality of messages organized by conversation, provide a content view of the plurality of messages organized by conversation, present a unified user interface simultaneously displaying the list view and the content view, and to maintain synchronization between the list view and the content view, wherein the bi-directional synchronization is maintained by:

indicating a message within the list view as selected in response to a corresponding message within the content view being selected;

displaying the corresponding message as the selected message within the content view such that the selected message is opened for reading within the content view; and

indicating a message within the content view as selected in response to a corresponding message within the list view being selected, the selected corresponding message within the list view indicating a position within a reply structure of the selected message within the content view.

15. The system of Claim 14, wherein the list view indicates the reply structure of each expanded conversation.

16. The system of Claim 14 or 15, wherein the content view comprises a reading pane with a message frame for each expanded message.

17. The system of any one of Claims 14 to 16, wherein bi-directional synchronization further comprises scrolling the content view to display a message in response to a corresponding message within the list view being selected.

18. The system of any one of Claims 14 to 17, further comprising one or more modules operable to cause the processor to display a list view pipe within the list view, the list view pipe showing a reply-to connection between a broken out message and a parent message in the conversation, the broken out message which has branched off to form a sub-thread within a conversation topic in the conversation.

19. The system of any one of Claims 14 to 18, further comprising one or more modules operable to cause the processor to display a content view pipe to associate an expanded frame with a parent message in the conversation, the content view pipe comprising a plurality of indicators for displaying a relationship of a message chain preceding a message within the expanded frame, the message within the expanded frame comprising a reply to the parent message.

20 A method for providing a unified conversation-centric message list and message reading pane, the method being substantially hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

21. A computer storage medium substantially hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.

22. An electronic message reading system substantially hereinbefore described with reference to the accompanying drawings.