Creating Wireframes: Examples, Advice and Tips

Mike Locke: Hey, what's up folks, Mike Locke here MLM consulting. Thanks for checking out this video. So in this video, I wanted to go over wireframes and go over some examples and give you some ideas to keep in mind when designing your websites.

One of the things that I like to do, or if you're interested in finding out where some good wireframe examples are, just go to flickr.com *[On Screen: Web page: Flicker.com - search results showing examples of wireframes]* and do a search for wireframes. All one word like this, you know, *[Zooms into the search bar to show parameters described]* you get to a page that looks like this. And one of the things you know, you can click around here and see all the different types of wireframes.

Now, one of the things that I like to keep in mind when designing wireframes, there's two types of wireframes. There's a wireframe that I would call a low fidelity wireframe, which is something like this right?*[Clicks on an example from the search results. Very basic sketch]* This could be done on a on a piece of paper. And low fidelity meaning that the details aren't in the wireframe. The wireframe is just to sort of hash out your ideas to lay out your ideas of what the site might look like, maybe just to get an idea of where you want to lay out certain components on the site.

Right. So there's no details in a low fidelity wireframe. And mostly, when you're getting started with the website, I recommend doing—going that route, the and so here's *[Switches to new tab displaying a second example]* another example of a low fidelity wireframe, where, you know, you can just pretty much take out a piece of paper or a back of a napkin, and just start jotting down ideas on how you, you kind of see the site being laid out. And then *[Switches to new tab displaying a detailed blank template]* the other side of wireframe is something like this, which is a high fidelity wireframe, where, if you if you see here, high fidelity wireframe is really clean,*[Zooms into side tab showing search filter on right of page]* but you see they already have the font type of text. They have these rounded corners in here they have the size of the fonts. And, you know, they have a lot of little details in here *[Highlights headings and titles]* that could come into—could be an issue when you're at an early phase of designing a mock up. So an example would be if you're designing a mock up for your company, or team and you're, you're now wanting to present this wireframe to a development team or to get sign off to go further. You know, maybe it's your client, they might look at this wireframe and say, you know, what? Can you make my font bigger, you know, and because you have fonts, you have the font size in here*[Zooms into side tab showing search filter on right of page]* and you have it small, that might take away from the goal that you're trying to achieve with the wireframe. You know, where it might just be, hey, I want to get signed off on the way this is laid out whether you know, we should have navigation on the left or right.

So, having a high fidelity wireframe isn't really a good first step, you really want to go here,*[Switches tabs back to low fidelity example]*, go something like this where, you know, the client goes, Yeah, okay, I like the fact that we're gonna have two boxes, you know, on this page, and we're gonna have a big box down here, you know, with content. So then you move

forward, and you'll get to something like this*[Switches tabs back to high fidelity example]*. And then, you know, you'll progress through the steps and designing a website.

Now, here's another wireframe that I got from another designer, mikeprecious.com.*[Switches tabs to mikeprecious.com]* And he designed, he shows wireframes of his work. And this is a really high fidelity wireframe. So I wouldn't I wouldn't recommend starting at this level*[Zooms into side tab showing search filter on right of page]* of detail because, again, you show this to a client, they may focus on the fact that there's an arrow right here, versus the fact that you're just trying to get the user interface, you know, approved from from your client. They might be focused on the fact that this font here is black, when that essentially is not going to be the color at the very end, okay? So this is remember high fidelity, *[Switches tabs back to low fidelity example]* low fidelity.

One tool that I found out recently was a good tool that I started using was this tool called Mockingbird*[Goes to website]*. Go it's just if you go to gomockingbird.com, it's a site it doesn't it doesn't work on on IE, but it works on Firefox and, and Chrome, so and other browsers. But if you go ahead and try this out, it's a really cool online platform for designing wireframes*[Enters site and clears Template for use]*.

Now, what you can do, if you look on the left here, *[Zooms into Toolbar on left of screen, scroll up and down.]* you have all these little tools and components that you can use. So all you do is just drag it onto the page and you can start laying out your site. You know, you can have, here's a box of an image*[Selects tool with image on it]*. You know, obviously, this could be your logo. You could say, you know, I want some, some buttons over here*[adds in button tool onto his page]*. And you can add buttons, all you do is click in there [*clicks on button box*] and just go to the button for that's all you got to do. And then you can just, you know, spread it out. You can add a search box if you want*[Selects search box tool from box]*. And it's really all done online. You can save it, you can add multiple pages. Let me see if there's any other, there's a bunch of cool features that you see here on the left hand side*[Scrolls through the tool box on the left side of the screen]*. There's checkboxes you can add*[Selects and adds feature from box]*, you can add you know, music player, which is cool. So, an example would be if you are designing a site and this was your music player*[Selects and adds feature from box]*.You know, you could do something like that.

What's cool about this is that these little components are already pre built and where I normally would use fireworks to do my mock ups or my wireframes I'm now starting to use this because all these little components are pre-built and they allow you to easily create a nice clean mock up, you see so go to gomockingbird.com and check it out.

Let me show you an example of a wireframe that I recently did*[Switches tabs to finished mock up]*. This is a site that I did for my wife. Believe it or not, she's a real estate agent and you know, she was on me about creating a website for her. One weekend, one night I was just you know, I opened up Mockingbird and I started laying out her site the way I see it, see it fit.

If you look in this area *[Motions to the top left]*, this would be the logo. This is her navigation bar *[Motions to the top right]*. This is a little number *[Motions to the top right corner]*, you know her phone number. And this is obviously the billboard section *[Motions to the middle top of the page]*. I wanted a photo of her here *[Motions to the top right]*. This little area would be like the home search *[Motions to the middle left of the page]* and I had a map, there's actually a map feature in this in these tools, you know, the graph *[Motions to the middle of the page, over a*

block]*, and then her blog post *[Motions to the middle right].* So check this out, I use this site to create the mock up here. And then it led to it ending up being this*[Navigates to her actual web page]*. So here's the end result, you have the logo at the top left, navigation bar, the phone number, here's the Billboard.

Again, because I let this be a low fidelity wireframe. Basically, you can have anything in this position here *[Switches back to previous tab motions to the top left 'billboard' section]* . And that's what I like about low fidelity wireframes is that it doesn't, it doesn't lead you down a path that you might not want to go it actually just keeps the keeps the canvas you know at a blank slate so that when you get to the creative portion of marking up your site, let's say in Photoshop or fireworks, then you can decide what you want to have in this section *[Motions to middle left of site, and zooms in]*. You know photo here and then here's the the home search area that I talked about which is right here and you can see the little icons all this was done in Mockingbird *[Motions between search and calculator section]* and then when I did when I went to go and mock up the site I created, you know, obviously, you know, the official icons here *[Motions to the final product ina new tab]*. So here's our blog post. Let me just show you that in Mockingbird right up here*[Switches back to previous tab motions to the middle right on the blog post square]*. And then you have the footer. Here's the footer here. And that's it.*[Switches back to previous tab for comparison]*

Okay, so, basically if you go to Mockingbird.com, I recommend going there *[Switches back to mockingbird.com, zooms in to URL]*and then you know, start playing with it and keep in mind that these are low fidelity wireframes. I highly recommend starting very low and not so high in detail because what it does, the main purpose of wireframing out your website is to kind of lay out where you want certain components. How you want the user interface to look and sort of give you an idea of how much content you're going to have on the site. And sort of repair it that way.

Because if you start in, if you start mocking up your site in, in fireworks, *[Switches to Firefox]* which I do a lot, you tend could you tend to, to not, you tend to be bias a little bit and start going down a creative path that you might not be you might not have thought of if you're starting, you know, here*[Switches to mockingbird.com]*. So you might, you might once you start, if you start mocking your site in Photoshop or fireworks, then you know, you end up not being so open in a creative sense of exploring multiple ideas.

Okay, so, again, go to Mockingbird.com, you know, and start playing around with it. You can go to flicker dot com to just check out some wireframe examples and, you know, hopefully, you can start using this. It becomes a part of your development process.

All right. If you have any questions, shoot me an email to mlocke@mlwebco.com and I'll be happy to answer any questions for you. All right, we'll talk soon.

Bye.

[End of video]