

Sketch is a Mac-only design tool (\$70) that was introduced only a few years ago. It has quickly gained traction within the design community, and is now approaching its status as a must-have tool. Browse Designer News, Dribbble, or even some of your favorite designer's websites, and you may find an article or two about it.

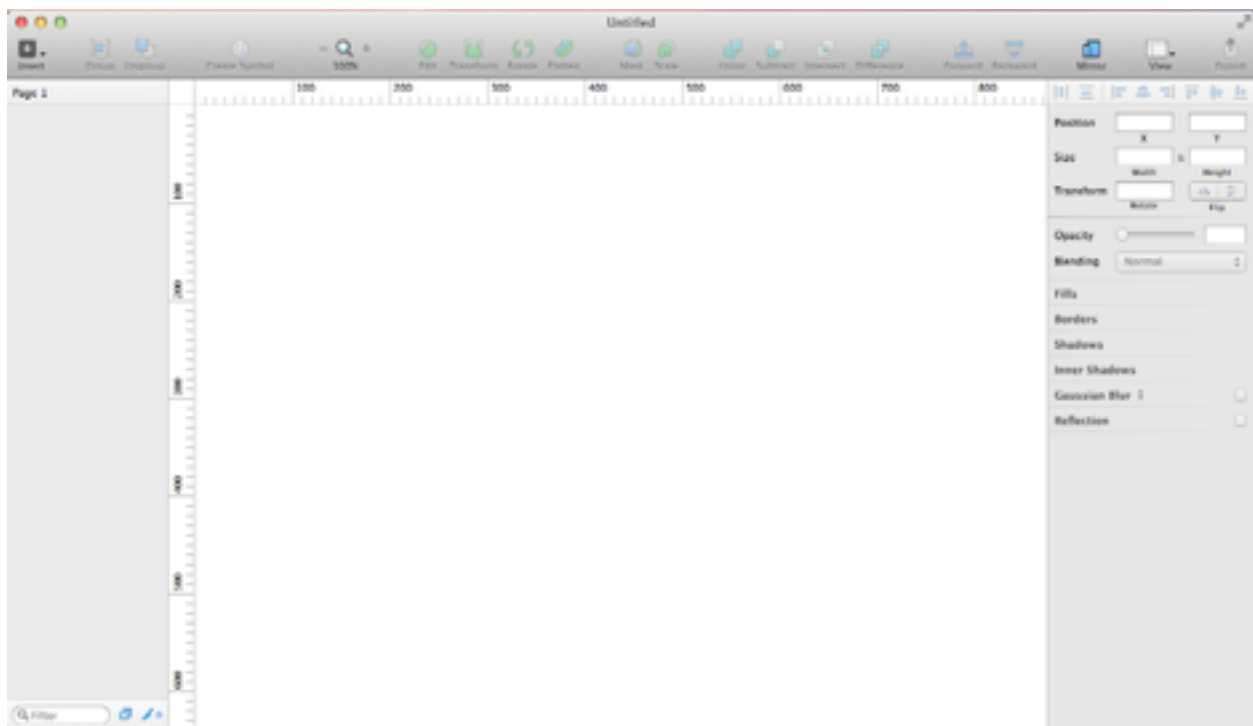
What makes Sketch so appealing is that it's a tool *dedicated* to UI and web designers. It's a vector-based application, meaning every shape, line, and text scales seamlessly from small to large or vice versa. You can stretch your designs to fit different screen sizes, and nothing becomes distorted or pixelated in the process.

The user interface itself is also easy to understand. If you've never used design software, some things will be foreign. But the UI is far more approachable than Photoshop.

Let's get started!

### New Document

When you open up Sketch, a Finder window will pop up asking you to open a file or create a new document (lower left). Click "New Document." You'll see a window that looks like this:



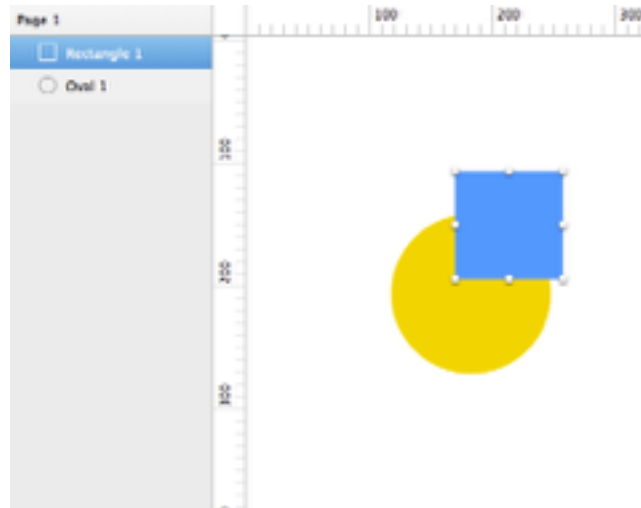
### Top Navigation

The top left button "Insert" allows you to add most of what you need: shapes, lines, text. The rest of the top bar contains features pertinent to your designs. You can zoom in/out, edit your objects, use the pathfinder tools (more explanation on this later), use Sketch mirror (a service that lets you live-preview your designs on iPhone or iPad, and export your document.



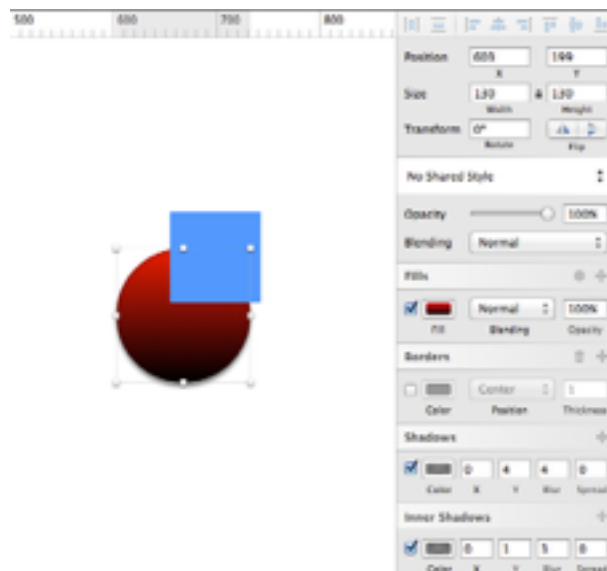
## Left Panel

The left navigation houses all your **layers**. If you aren't familiar with layers, think of it in a literal sense like a stack of pancakes or stack of books. Whatever you add to the design is its own individual layer, and you can put it on top of what's below, or put it underneath. You can also group layers together to neaten the pile.



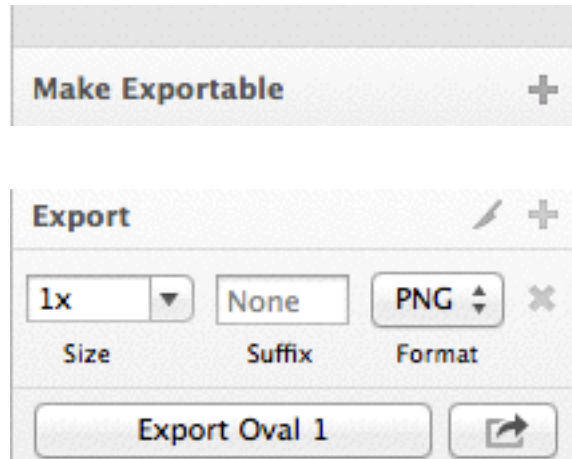
## Right Panel

The right navigation is basically an object editing tool-kit. Any layer(s) that you have selected, you will be able to directly edit them through the features provided in this area. For example, you can select a rectangle shape and immediately add drop-shadows, gradients, colors, inner-shadows, etc. You will definitely find it easy to familiarize yourself with these terms and what they do, and you'll begin to see how you can create UI elements quickly and easily!



## Exporting

Exporting is also a breeze. You can select any layers you have and then click “Make Exportable” on the right navigation panel. This lets you export an isolated group of layers, so you can fire off that button to the developer in a matter of seconds.



## Artboards

In the middle is an infinite canvas. This is one of the strengths of Sketch. You aren't limited by a single canvas/document size like in Photoshop, but instead you can create **artboards**.

Artboards are flexible canvases that you can design in. For example, Sketch provides templates for iPhone and iPad artboards, and if you need to extend beyond the default size, simply drag to resize an artboard, and you can continue to design within it. This is extremely important in UI design, as it allows you to neatly view each artboard as its own screenshot in an app/website.



