

Blueprint Wireframing for Android with Photoshop



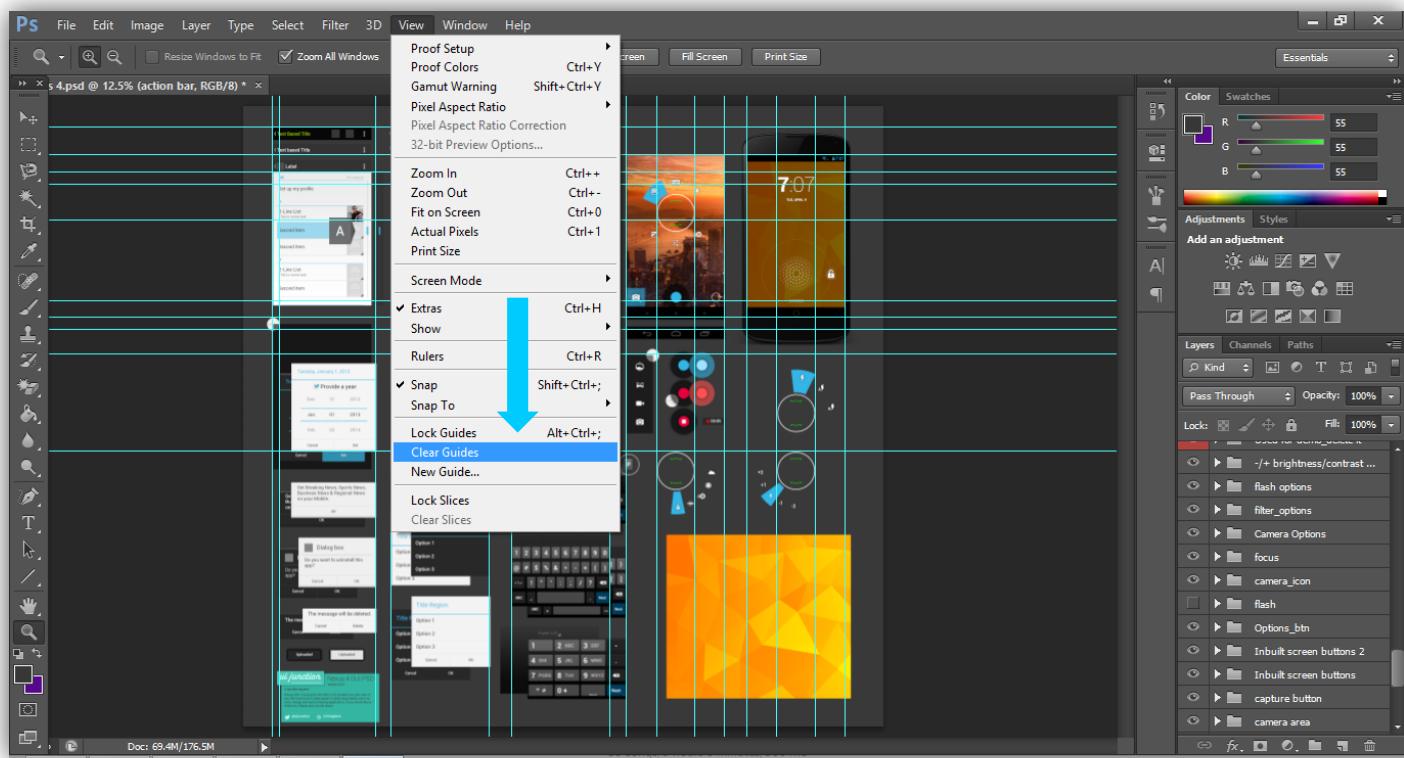
Introduction

In this tutorial we will learn how to construct a very high-level view of an Android mobile application. To follow along with this tutorial, you will need Photoshop CS6, basic knowledge of Photoshop, a WinZip Client, and a pre-made wireframing kit found here: <http://freebiesbug.com/psd-freebies/android-4-ui-design-kit-psd/>. The goal of this tutorial is not to create a detailed wireframe of your mobile application, but rather a “blueprint” or sketch.

What Comes with the Wirekit?

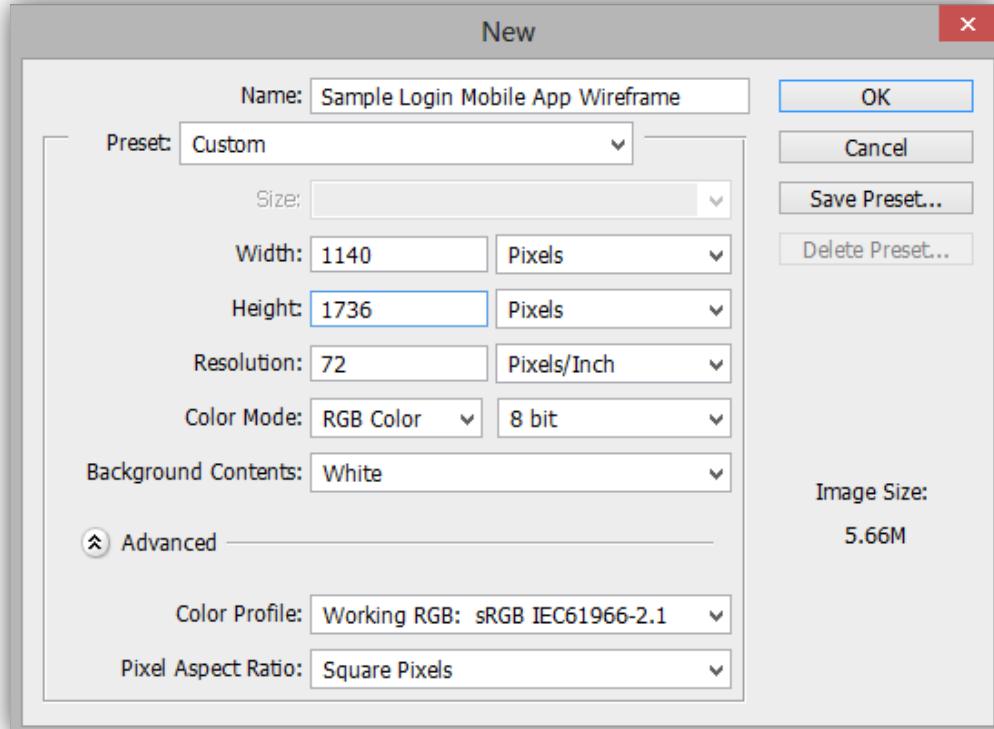
Before we begin, it is important to note that the wirekit above contains icons catered to Android 4 Jelly Bean. Although this is not the latest Android release, for our purposes this wirekit will work fine as a blueprint.

When you first open up the PSD, you will find that it comes with a slew of Android screens, buttons, and menus. If you use the Zoom Tool or click “Actual Pixels” you will be able to clearly see each item provided for you. We can also begin by clearing the lock guides to better see each item (View -> Clear Guides).

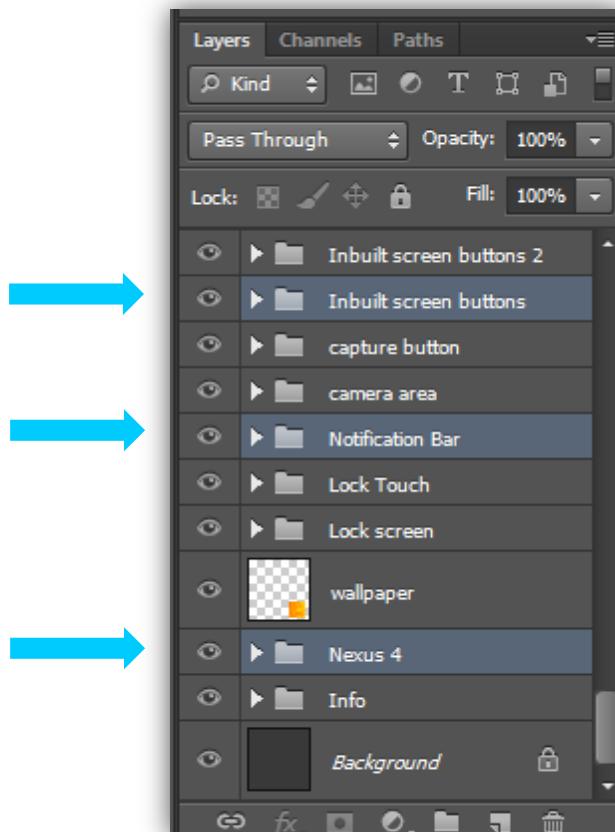


Getting Started

The wirekit was made at a relatively large pixel resolution. Therefore, when going to create our first wireframe page, a good resolution to match it will be 1140 x 1736. You may name the new project whatever you like as well – but just as a tip, try to keep it specific to exactly that wireframe’s purpose for your app.

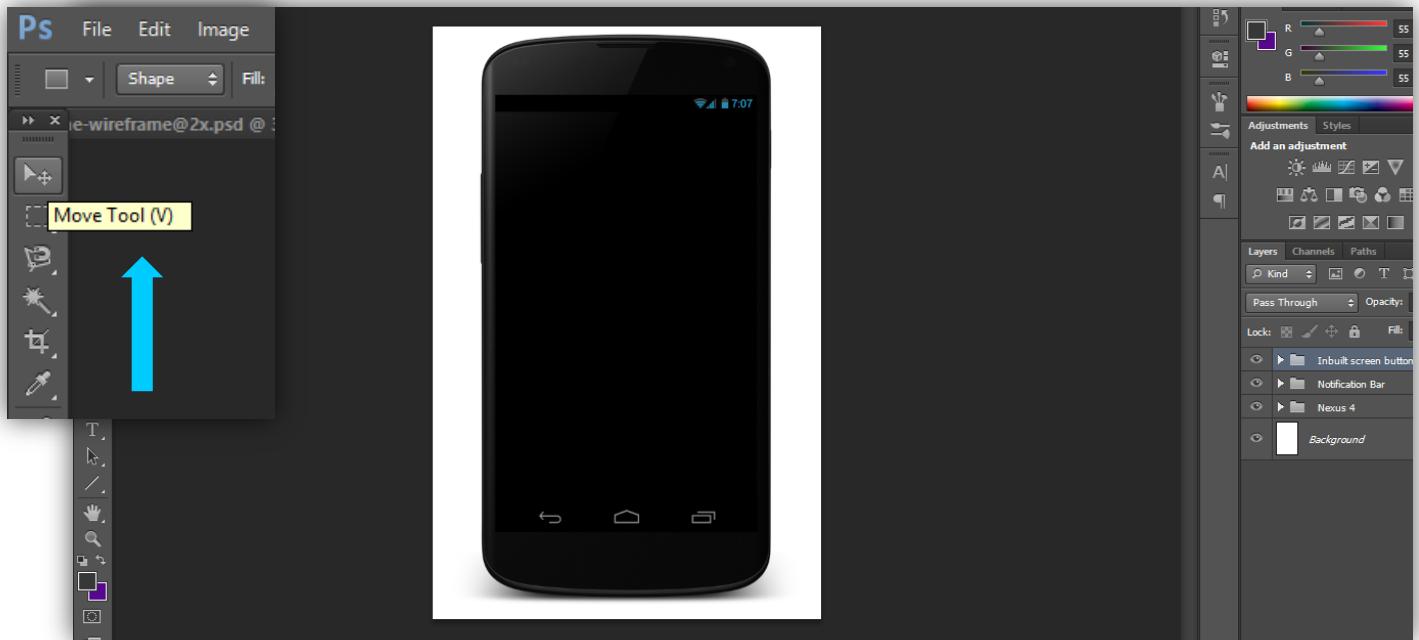


Now, let's begin with a basic notifications pane wireframe for our sample mobile application. Go back to the downloaded wirekit and under the bottom right Layers panel, find the folders marked "Inbuilt screen buttons", "Notification Bar", and "Nexus 4".



Once you have identified the proper layers, select all three by using the Ctrl+Click option.

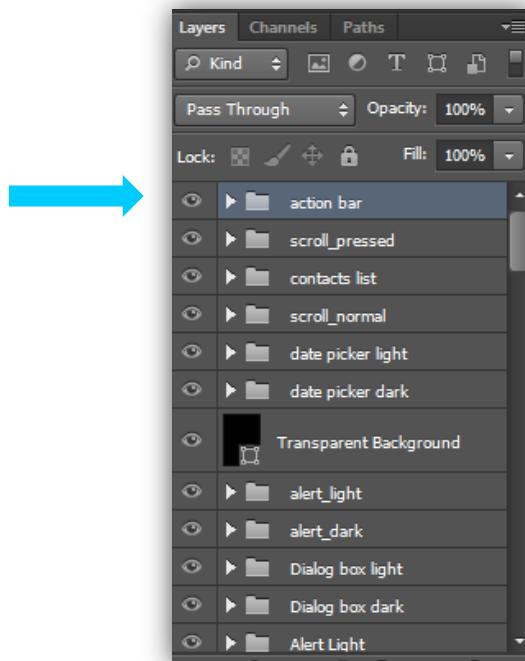
Then, select the Move Tool to drag and drop the two layers into the new file we created earlier. Your screen should now look something similar to the following screenshot. Once you have this complete, it may also be helpful to save this as a template for future wireframes so you don't have to repeat the process later on.



Filling in the Blueprint

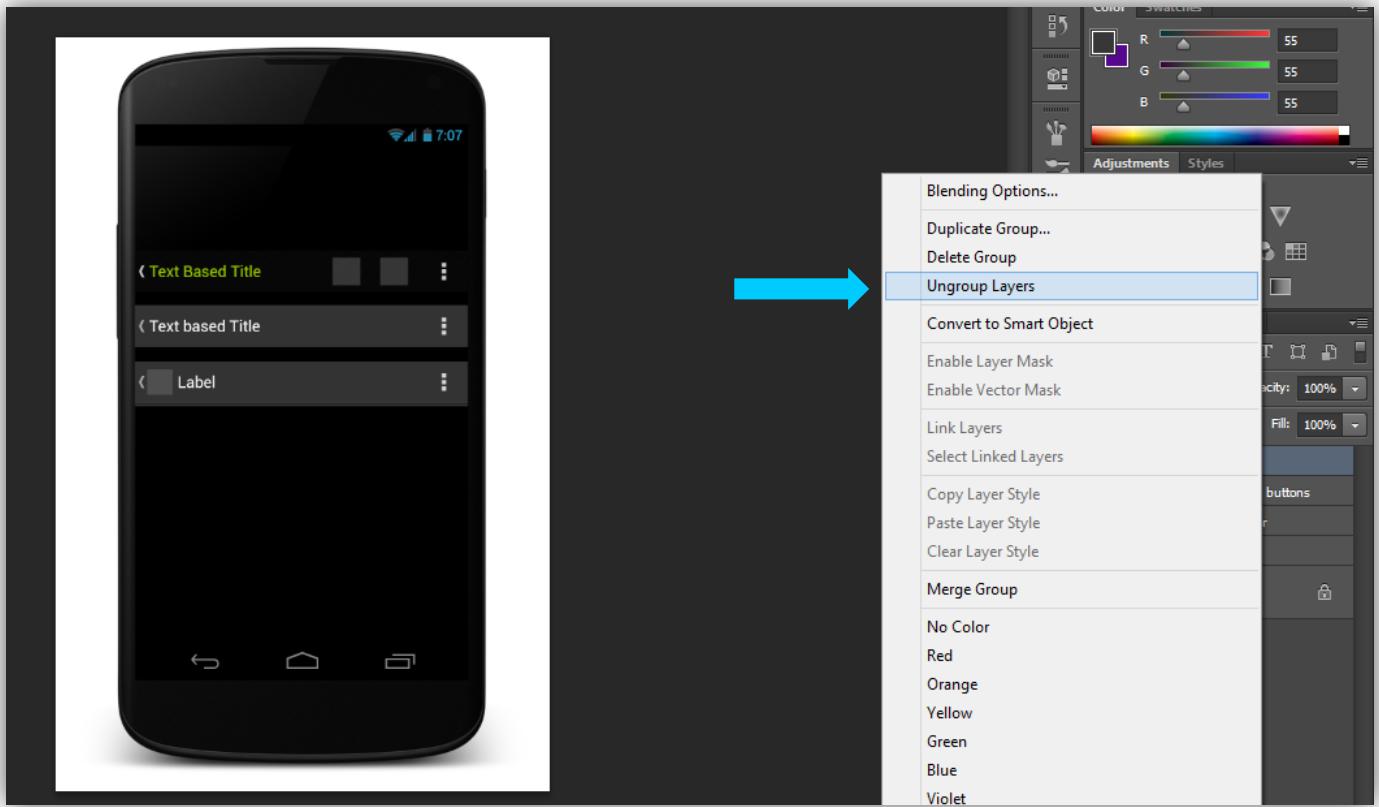
You are now ready to begin filling the screen with a simple notifications pane. Note that if you prefer to draw your wireframes you may fill in the black screen with a white foreground color using the Paint Bucket tool. However, for this tutorial's purpose, we will continue utilizing the wirekit's graphics.

In fact, the wirekit has made it easy to incorporate Android OS standards and principles. If you navigate back to the wirekit PSD, you will find a folder under the Layers tab labeled "action bar".

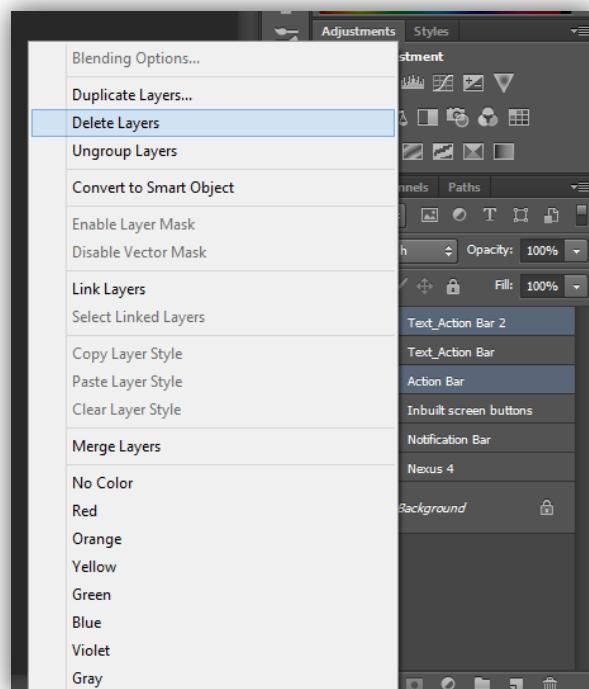


Complete the drag and drop process again for the layers under the “action bar” folder. Because three different action bars are grouped together under this folder, all three will move together. This can be fixed in our wireframe file by ungrouping them and deleting the unwanted layers.

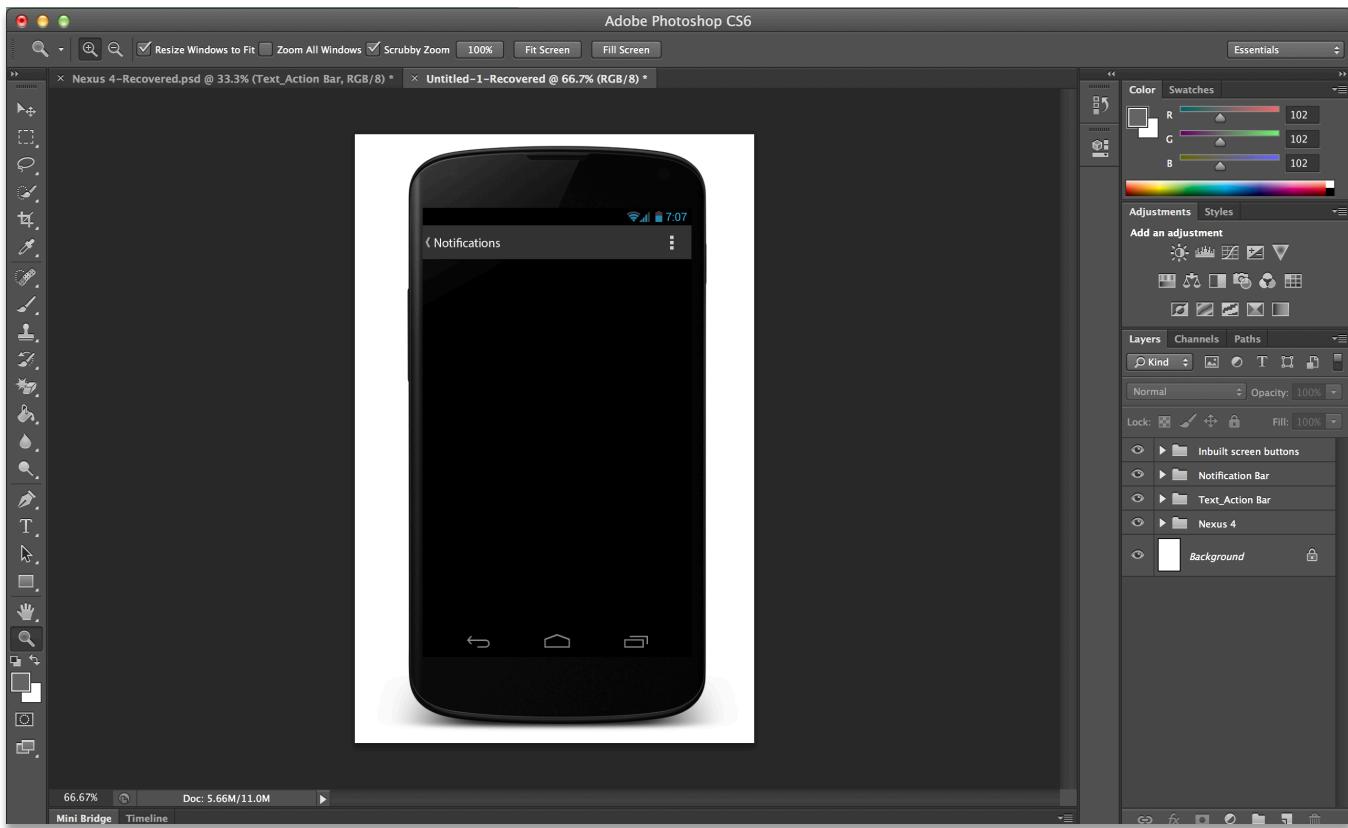
Under the Layers tab of our wireframe right click the “action bar” folder and select “Ungroup Layers”.



This will cause the “action bar” folder to separate into three folders under the Layers tab – “Text_Action Bar 2”, “Text_Action Bar”, and “Action Bar”. For our notifications page we will use “Text_Action Bar”, so the other two may be deleted (Ctrl+Click -> Right click -> Delete Layers).

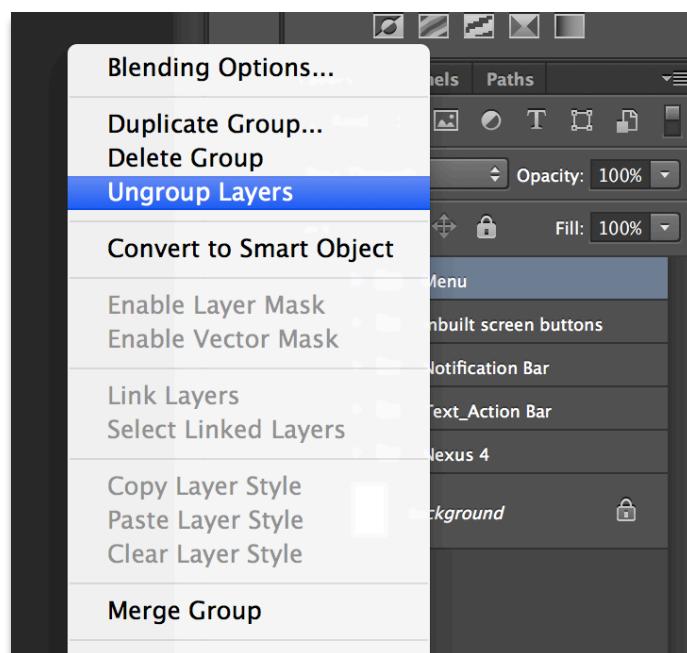


With the Move Tool, you can move the remaining action bar into place. Use the text tool to replace “Text based Title” with the word “Notifications.” Your wireframe should now look similar to this:

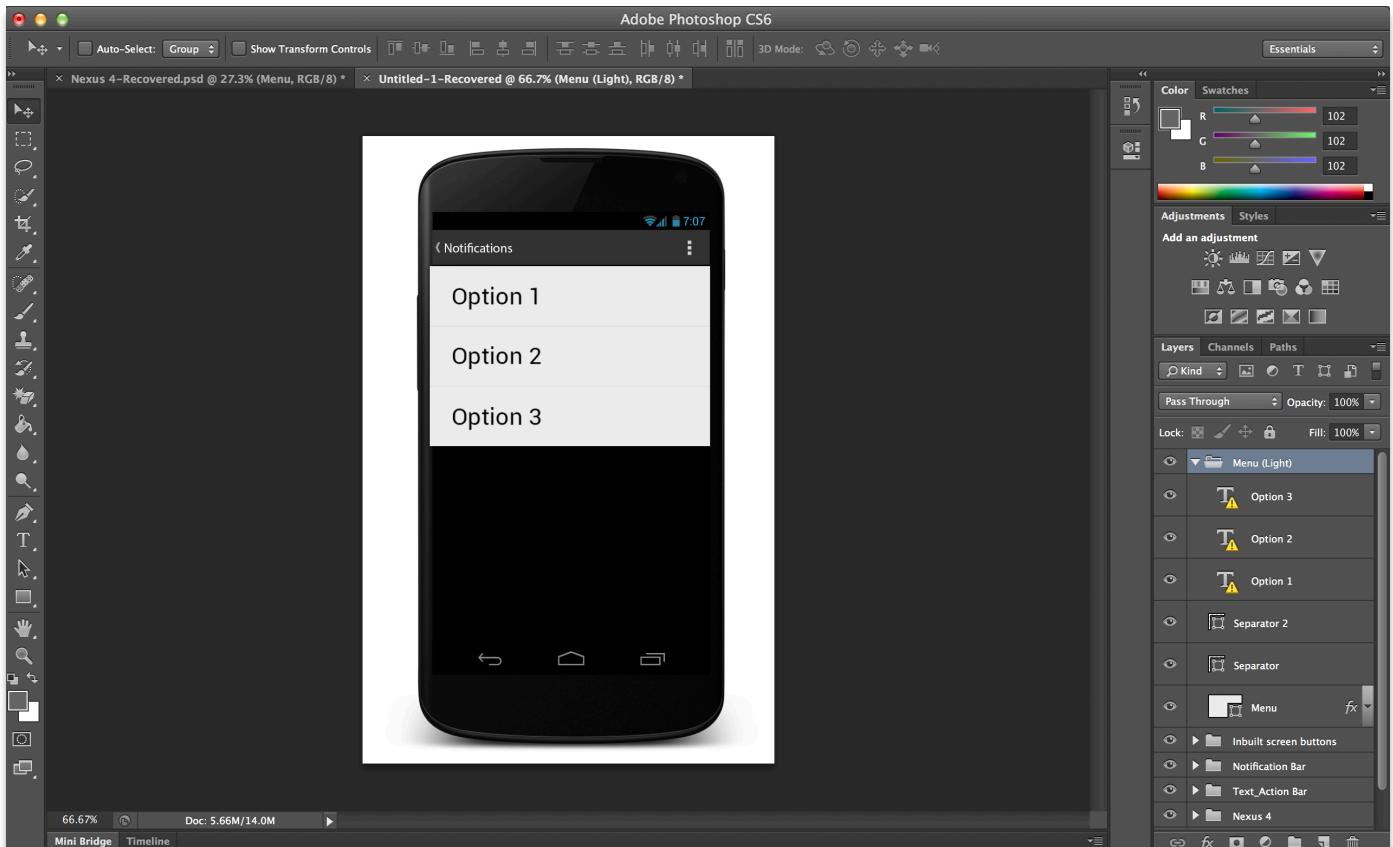


What you choose to fill the notification pane with is entirely dependent upon the application’s functionality. For this tutorial we can pretend that the app will be social media based; so in that case, notifications will most likely inform a user about updates on their friends’ activity in relation to their profile.

Return to the downloaded wirekit and complete the drag and drop action with the items under the “Menu” folder. Similar to the action bar layers, we will have to ungroup the layers in the “Menu” folder by right-clicking on it and selecting “Ungroup Layers.”

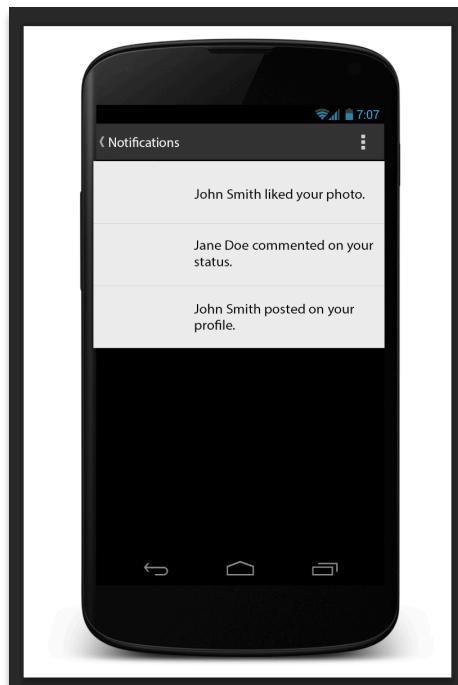


Proceed to delete either “Menu (Dark)” or “Menu (Light)”, but not both. Use the move tool to shift the menu into place and then the transform features to stretch out the menu into the phone screen. Your wireframe should now look similar to the following:



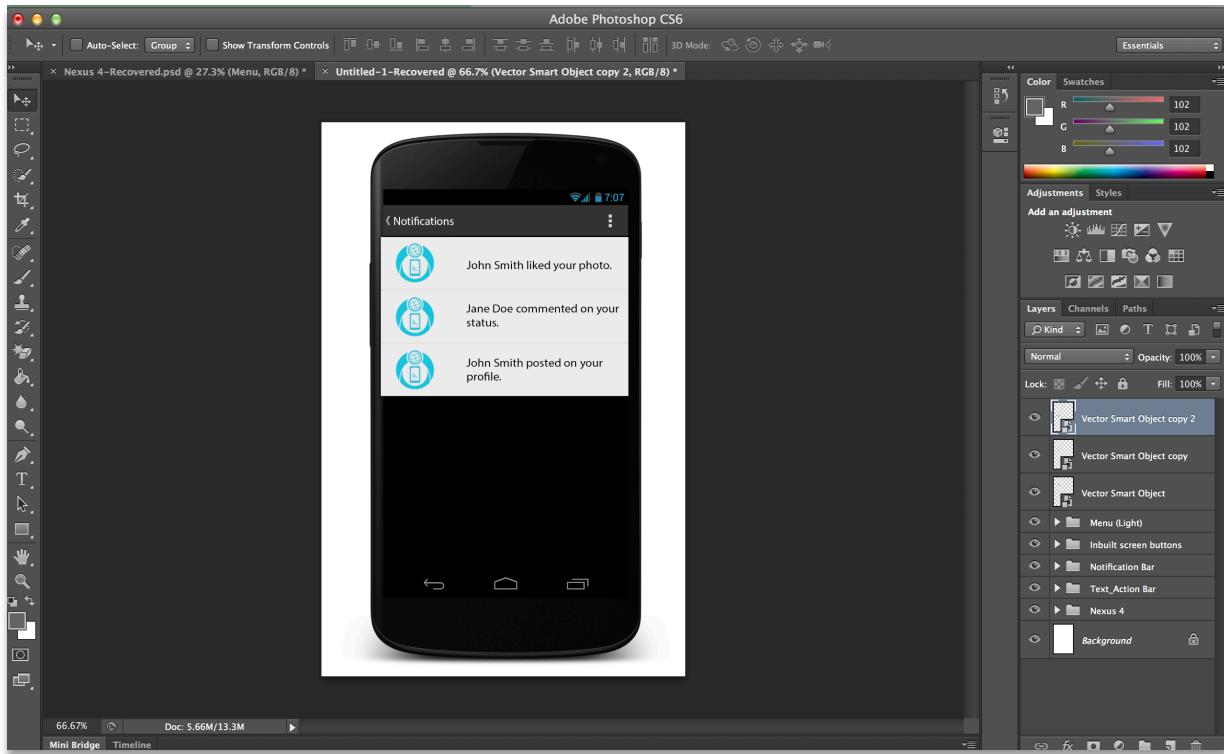
Evidently, the text looks a bit clunky and out of place by stretching it. However, this is easily fixable using Photoshop’s text tool. As you try to edit the texts “Option 1”, “Option 2”, and “Option 3” Photoshop will warn you that a font substitution will occur if the wirekit’s fonts are not installed onto your computer. This warning is dismissible.

Edit the notifications according to your desire or copy something similar to the following:

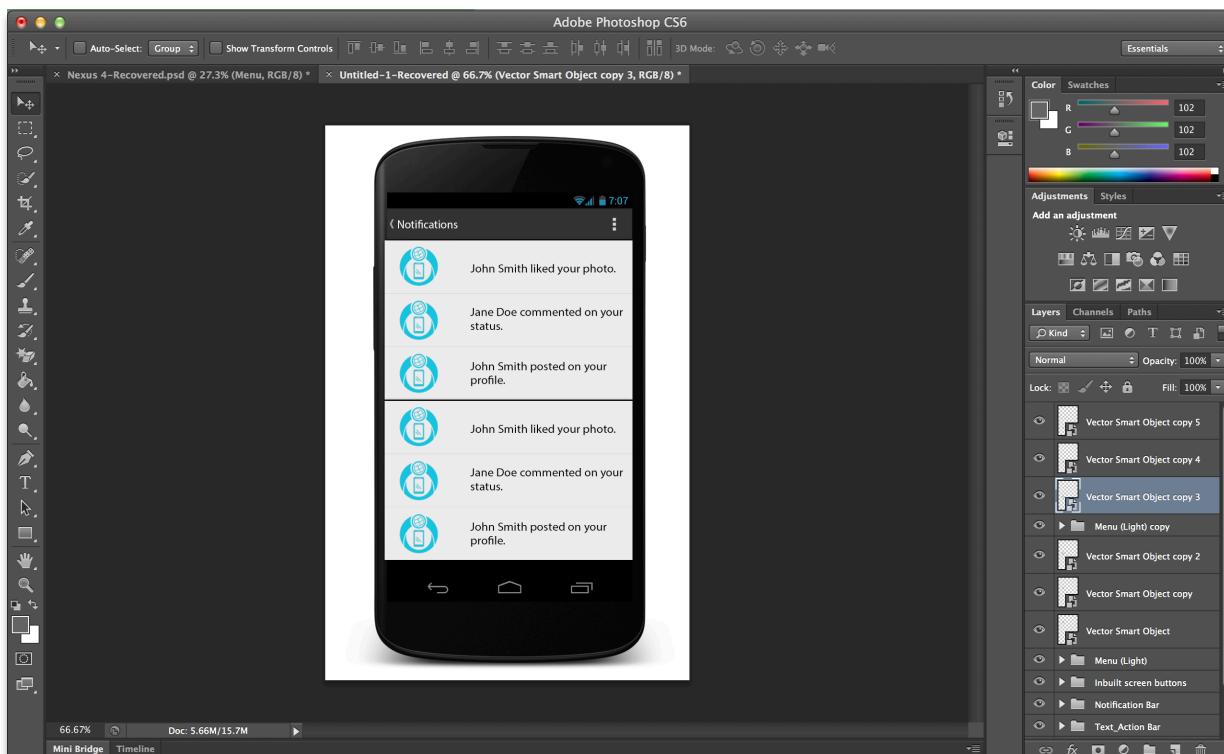


Your wireframe is almost complete! You can add finishing touches by giving each notification an icon or profile photo. This can be done on Photoshop by simply copying, pasting, and resizing a photo onto the clipboard or opening a file and dragging and dropping once again.

Following any of those steps adds just a little more detail to your wireframe as shown below.



And lastly, you may duplicate (Ctrl+Click layers -> Right Click -> Duplicate Layers...) all the layers ("Menu Bar" folder and images) you've just added to fill the bottom half of the screen.



Conclusion

You are now done with your first blueprint wireframe! As you can see, it does not tell users too much about your app yet, but a wireframe like this will definitely come useful for your team. It provides an overview of page-to-page navigation and helps others begin envisioning what the application will look like.

Using the steps and tools above, you will be able to easily create more pages for your Android app and eventually create a working storyboard.

Tutorial created for you by: Kristel Tan | Boston University c/o 2017 | Computer Science Major

Special thanks to Chirag Dave for posting this Android 4 wirekit on <http://freebiesbug.com>. Please do not redistribute his original work commercially or freely.