Prototyping for Physical and Digital Products

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The main question in the reading was “Why do we Prototype?”, I will answer this along with a few other important details about prototyping. Firstly, we prototype to understand, that is to experiment and figure out exactly what we are making and how it works. Next we prototype to test and improve, this one is obvious and is what people usually think of when they think of prototyping, by creating multiple renditions of a product in inevitably gets better and better each build. We also prototype to communicate, to explain to investors or even the general public what our ideas are, and how we will create a device or software to portray those ideas. Finally we prototype to advocate, to express a certain cause to the public. NExt I will explain fidelity in prototyping, which is a way of categorizing various levels of prototypes, and range from low to high. Various fidelities are better for achieving your goals. Low fidelity is cheap but with limited interactions, mid fidelity is more interactive but also more time intensive, and high fidelity is a complete design but is very skill and time intensive. Prototyping for a physical product and a digital product can be very different, although the reasons we prototype and things like fidelity stay the same. In physical products one must consider the materials involved in the object, as well as their tactility. Physical protypers must also consider the electronics involved, these electronics could come pre coded but most o f the time they must also consider what they want coded on them and how that will help them achieve their goals. In digital prototyping there is a lot more to consider, such as user flow, responsive design, and designing for all interactions types. Digital prototypes also have a few methods of creating low to high fidelity prototypes. A low fidelity prototype in digital is done on paper. A mid fidelity prototype is a clickable visual demonstration of the software. Finally a high fidelity prototype is a coded and semi working software. When testing prototypes with users one must not ask “would you like this product?” as it leads to most people simply saying yes to be kind, the more useful question to ask is “How might you integrate this product into your daily life?” as this leads to more thinking and more constructive answers from your testers. Finally I will end by saying that a prottyper must be accurate and precise, especially when explaining their ideas, and to never simply say “it’s cool because…” this will lead to more meaningful and useful prototypes and therefore, products and artwork.