

Picking Prototypes

MICHAEL BERNSTEIN

CS 247

THANKS TO SCOTT KLEMMER AND MANEESH AGRAWALA

Prototyping: what you know

- Low-fi vs. high-fi prototyping
- Wizard of Oz prototyping
- Video prototyping
- Sketching vs. prototyping

Prototypes are not demos.

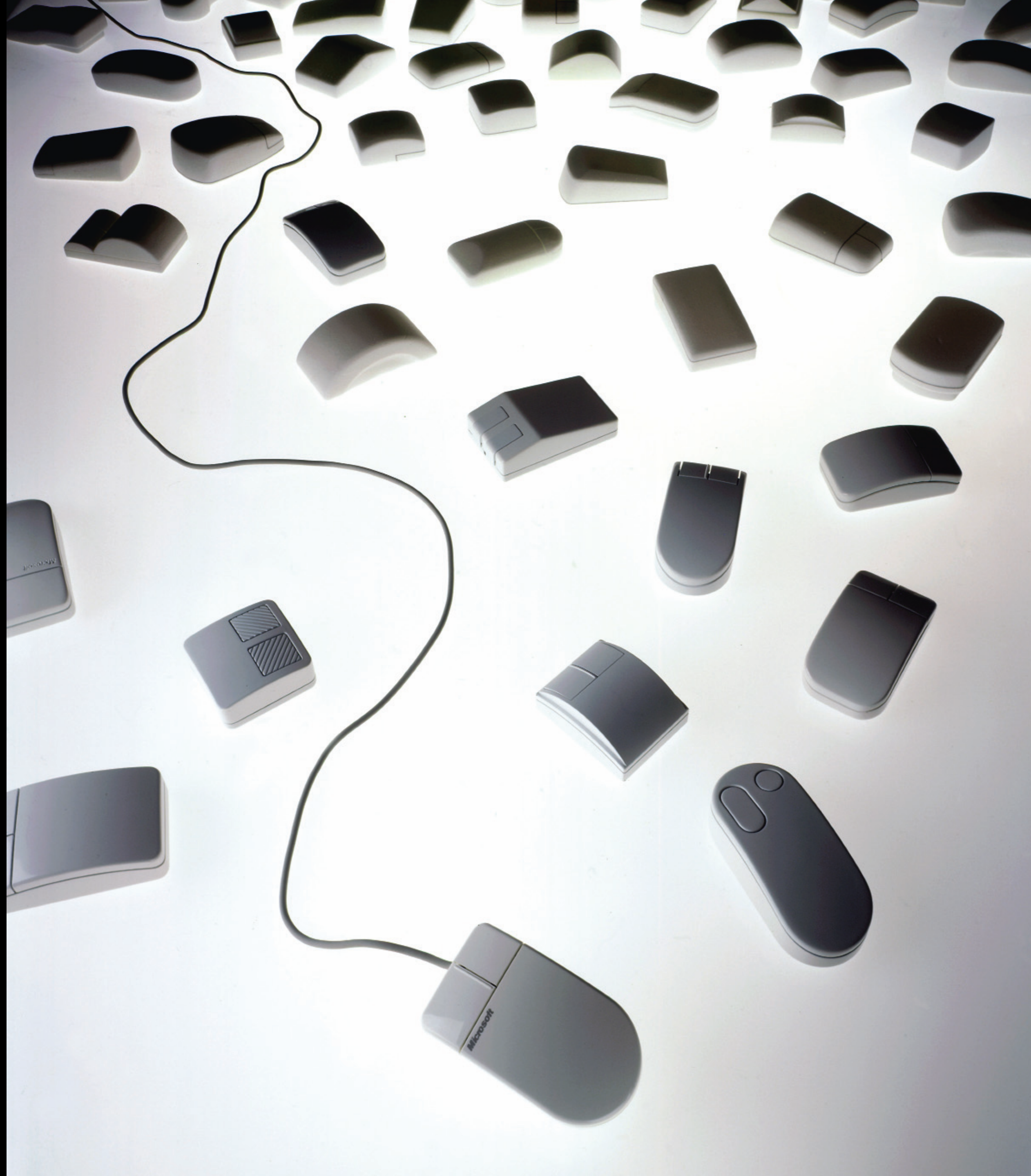
Though this is what is temping: brainstorm, select, and then create.

Prototypes are questions.

When you are done with a prototype, you have answered its question.

Good questions are focused.

Be rapid. Be ruthless. Strip out everything less important.



Being ruthless

- Prototypes should be, by nature, incomplete.
- Do not create a mockup or a scale model.
Instead, create an experience that users can react to.
- But how do you make the decision about what to focus on and what to fake or remove?

What do prototypes prototype?

- **Feel:** how it looks
- **Tech:** how it works
- **Role:** how it feels

The first question: which of these three are you prototyping?

The prototyping process

Generate questions

- Untested design thesis
- Risky design decisions
- Unobserved user behaviors

Rank questions

Which is most critical?

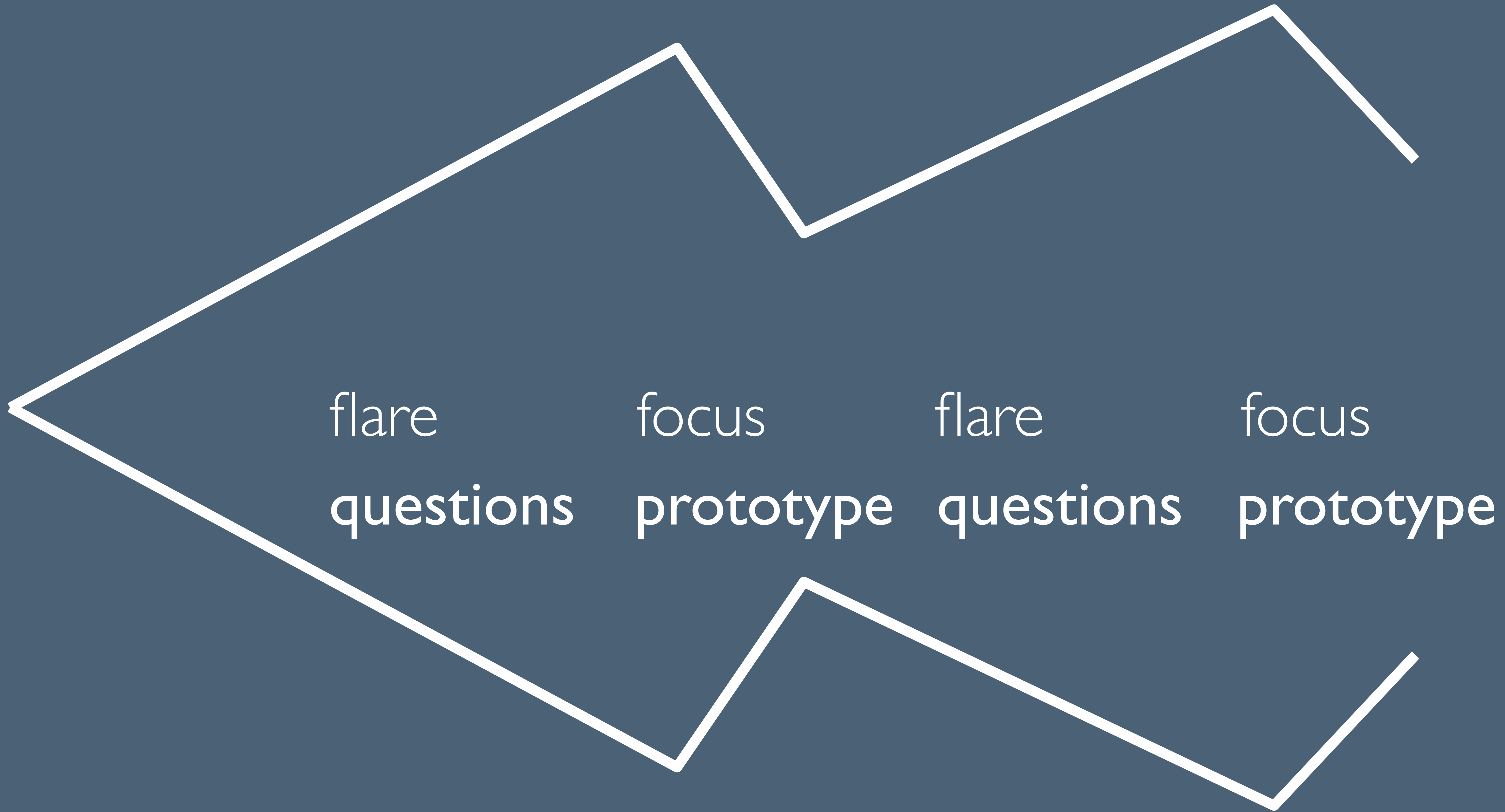
Build and test a prototype

Answer only the most critical question



What's this prototype's question?

- Each prototype can only ask a single question.
- Ask yourself: what's the riskiest question you need to answer about your idea right now?
- Flesh out the elements relevant to that question, and get rid of or fake everything else.
- Repeat with new, different questions



flare

focus

flare

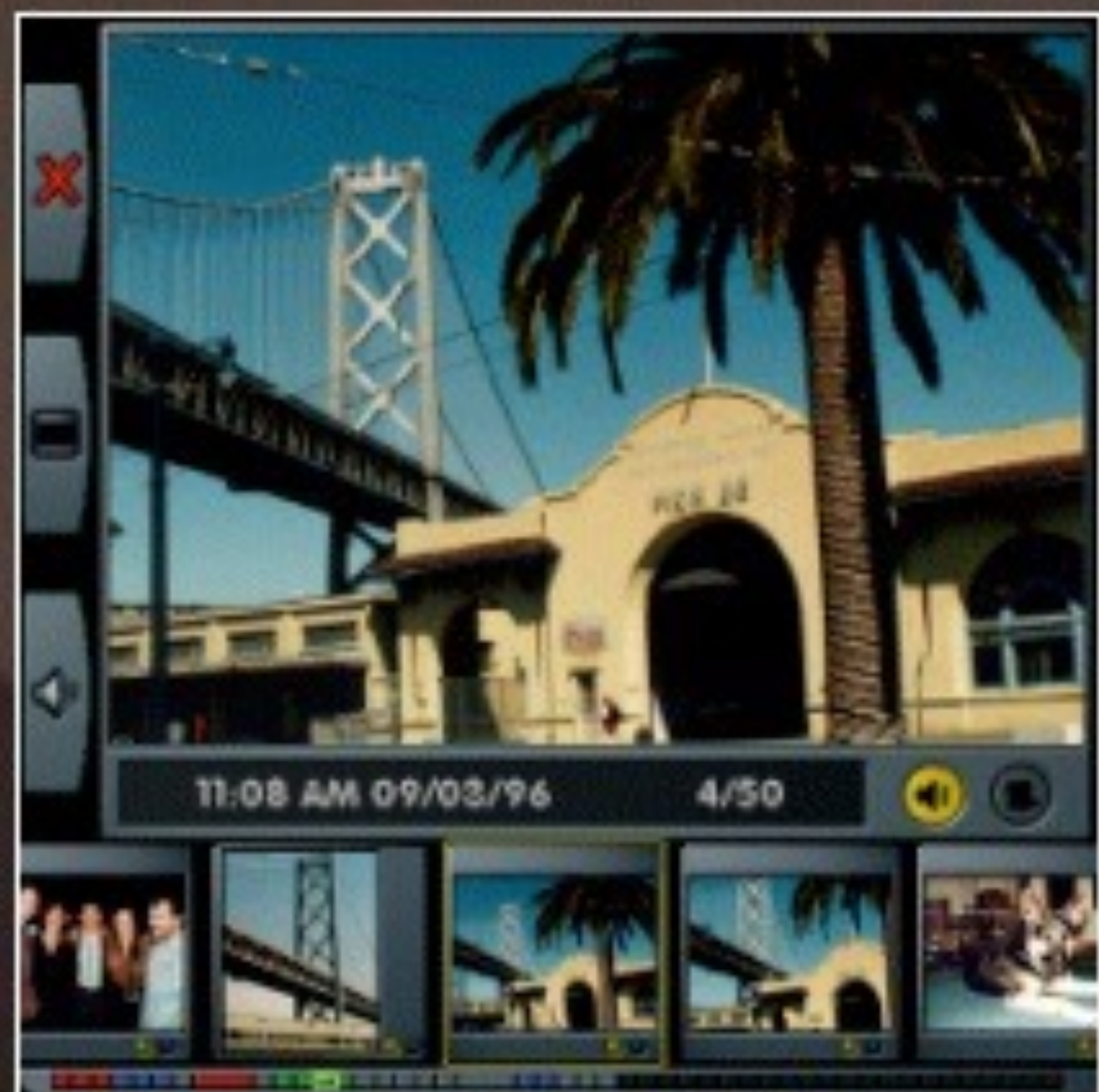
focus

questions

prototype

questions

prototype



Digitally-enhanced mall shopping cart

What's the most important first question? What do you prototype first?

A vest for hugging over a distance

What's the most important first question? What do you prototype first?

A site for paired cultural exchanges

What's the most important first question? What do you prototype first?

Summary

- Iteratively identify the riskiest question at the core of your design idea.
- Create a prototype that helps you answer that question, stripping out everything else.