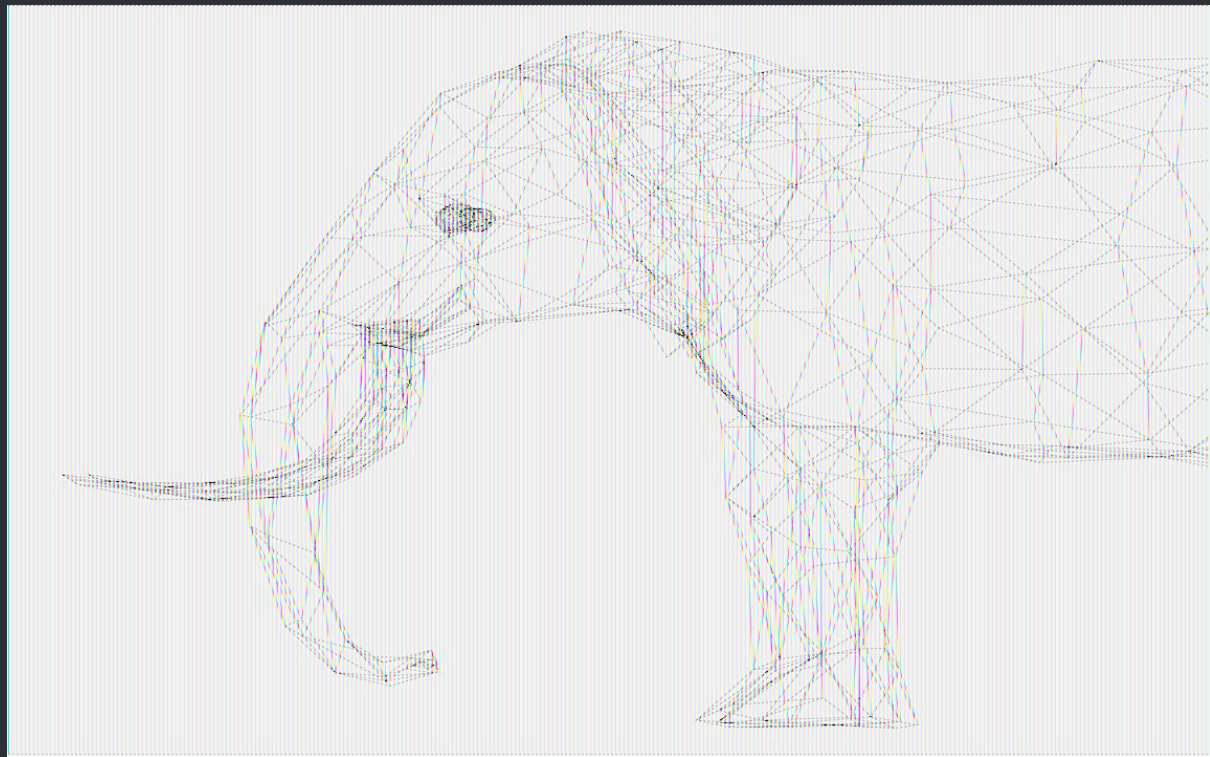


Design Burst

Wireframes

The term most likely comes from CAD wireframes, i.e. relatively simple 3D models consisting of lines (the 'wires') and vertices, like this one:



What we'll cover

1. What are wireframes in UX design?
2. Why use wireframes?
3. How to create wireframes
4. Tools for wireframing

The idea behind wireframing...

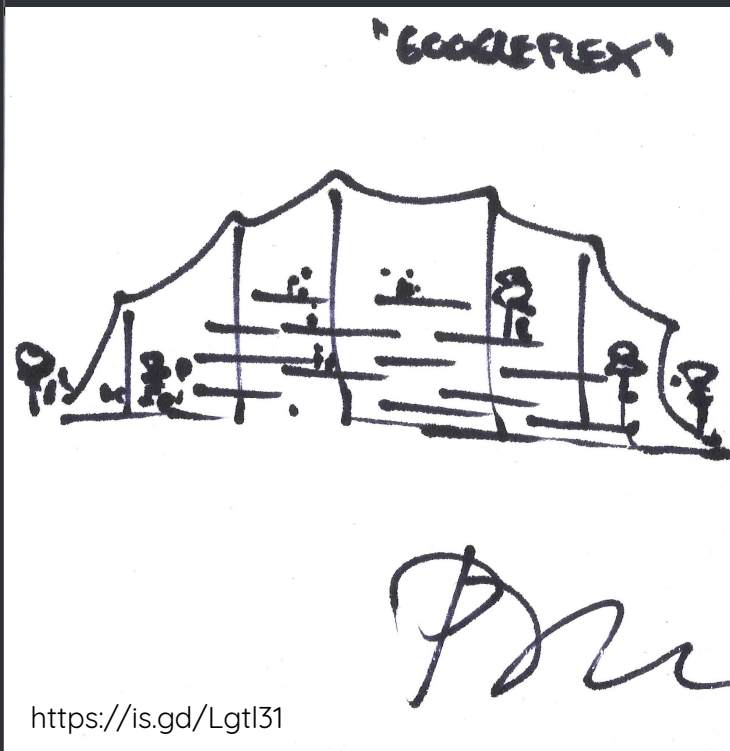
- If you wanted to build a house from scratch, would your **first** step be to
- a) go to the site and start putting together bricks and mortar, improvising as you go, or
 - b) make the roughest sketch of how you visualise the building and use that as a basis for a proper architectural design before touching a single brick?

(Hopefully, no-one was tempted to pick the first option...)

What are wireframes in UX design?

In web design, a wireframe is the simplest blueprint for a website or web app.

An architect might start literally with a sketch on the back of a napkin, like this...



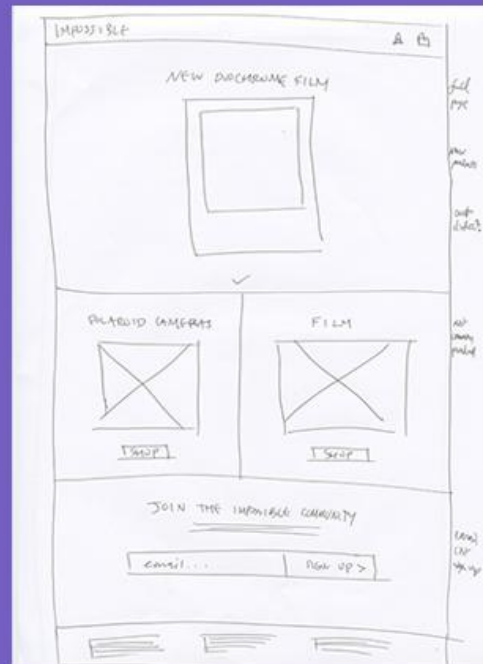
<https://is.gd/LgtI31>

Similarly, in UX design wireframes can range from quick sketches on a sheet of paper to digital sketches.

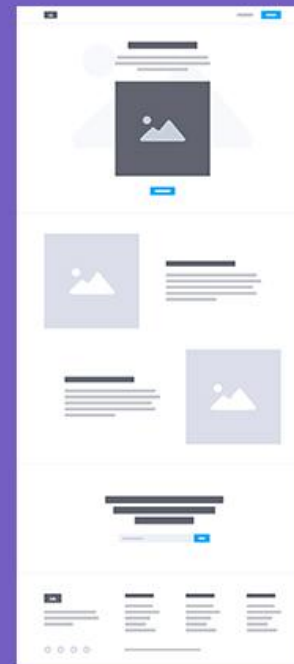
What do wireframes look like?

Here's an example in two phases:

WIREFRAME SKETCH PAPER + PEN



LOW-FIDELITY WIREFRAME MADE IN SKETCH



<https://is.gd/nQcAdk>

What is the purpose of wireframes?

At their simplest, wireframes are diagrams of a webpage, website or app that outline the workflow and user journey.

- Wireframes serve as no-frills blueprints for more advanced prototypes. Because of their simplicity, they make it easier for designers to focus on
 - structure,
 - content,
 - functionality

Why are wireframes useful?

Wireframes allow designers, developers and clients to

1. **visualise:**

- how the pieces of a website will be put together
- what each page will display
- how the user interface will function
- the user journey

2. **focus** on designing the **core elements** without being distracted by detail and aesthetic questions

3. **test** and refine the design early on

4. **plan** the development process

5. **make mistakes!** It's much easier and cheaper to modify low-fidelity mockups than miles of code.

• Wireframes, Mockups, Prototypes

Wireframe

- Basic 2D blueprint
- Low-fidelity mockup
- Static and minimally interactive
- Greyscale with no effects
- Often features placeholder text

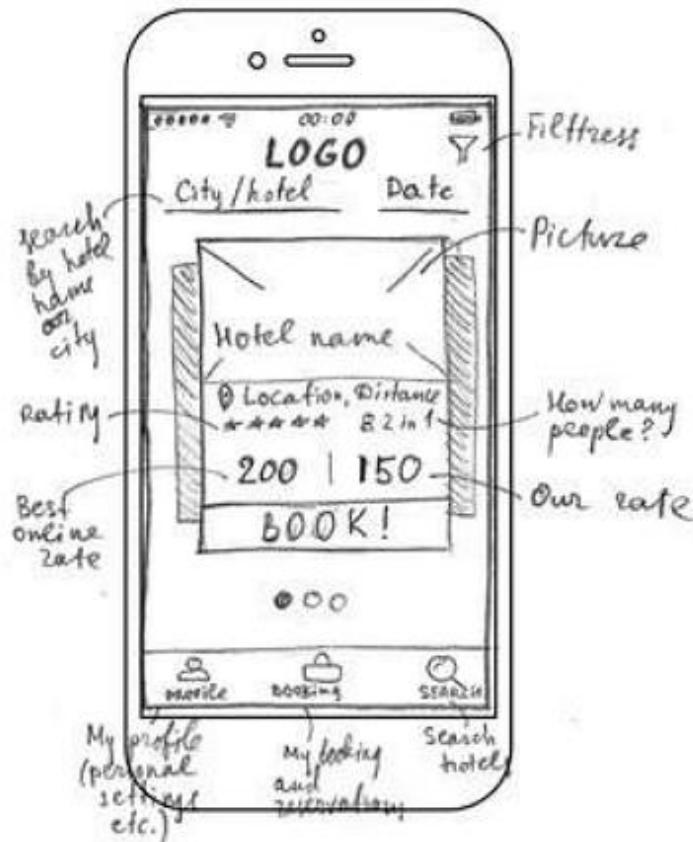
Prototype

- Refined 3D model
- Medium-to-high fidelity
- Dynamic and interactive
- Typically in colour with some effects (e.g. animations)
- Features actual content

Mockup

Intermediate fidelity. May use colour and typography. Usually not interactive.

Wireframe → Mockup → Prototype



Wireframe

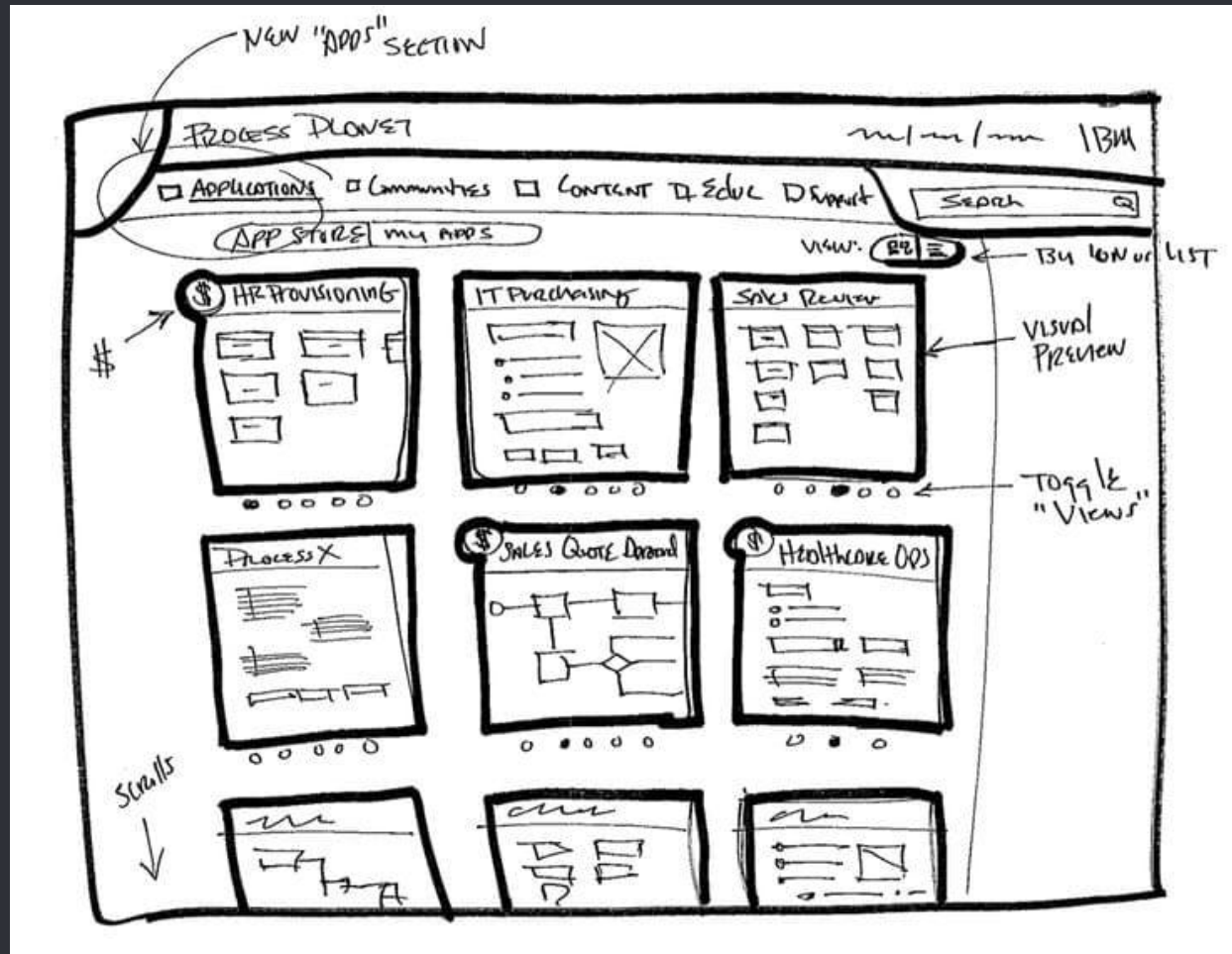


Mockup

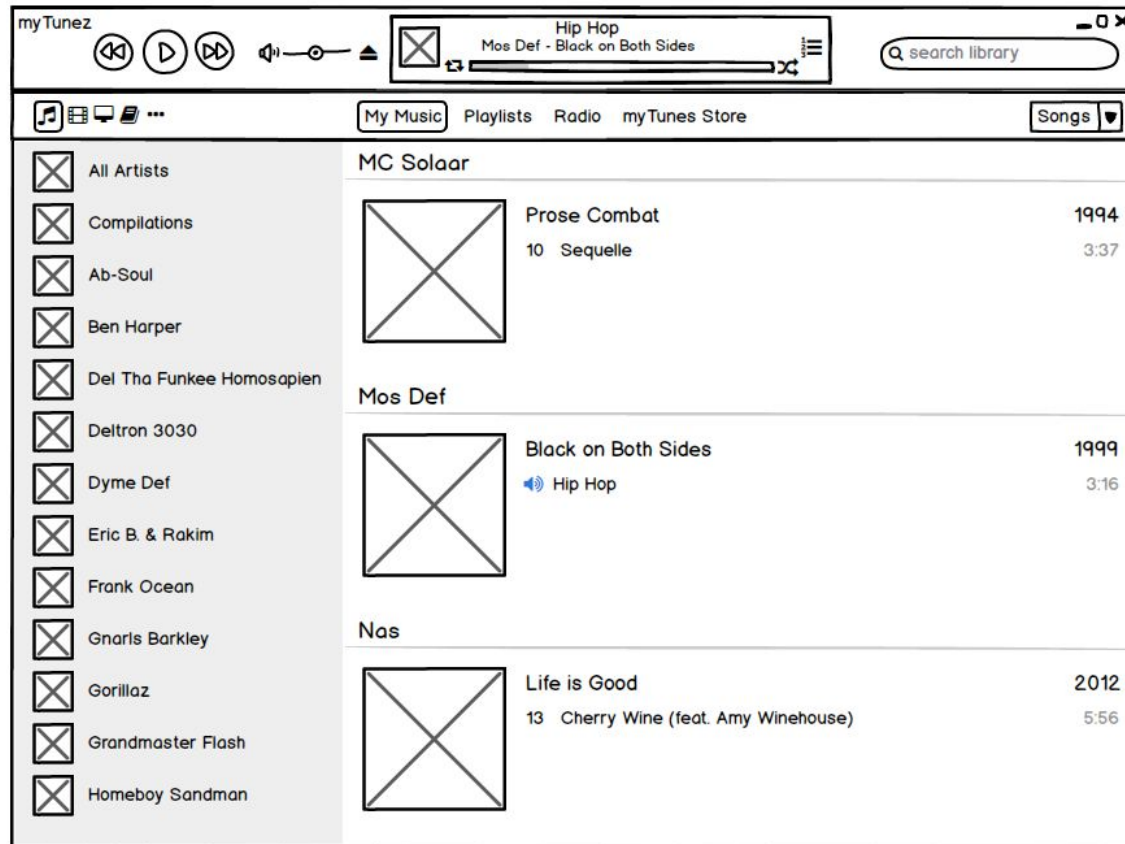


Prototype

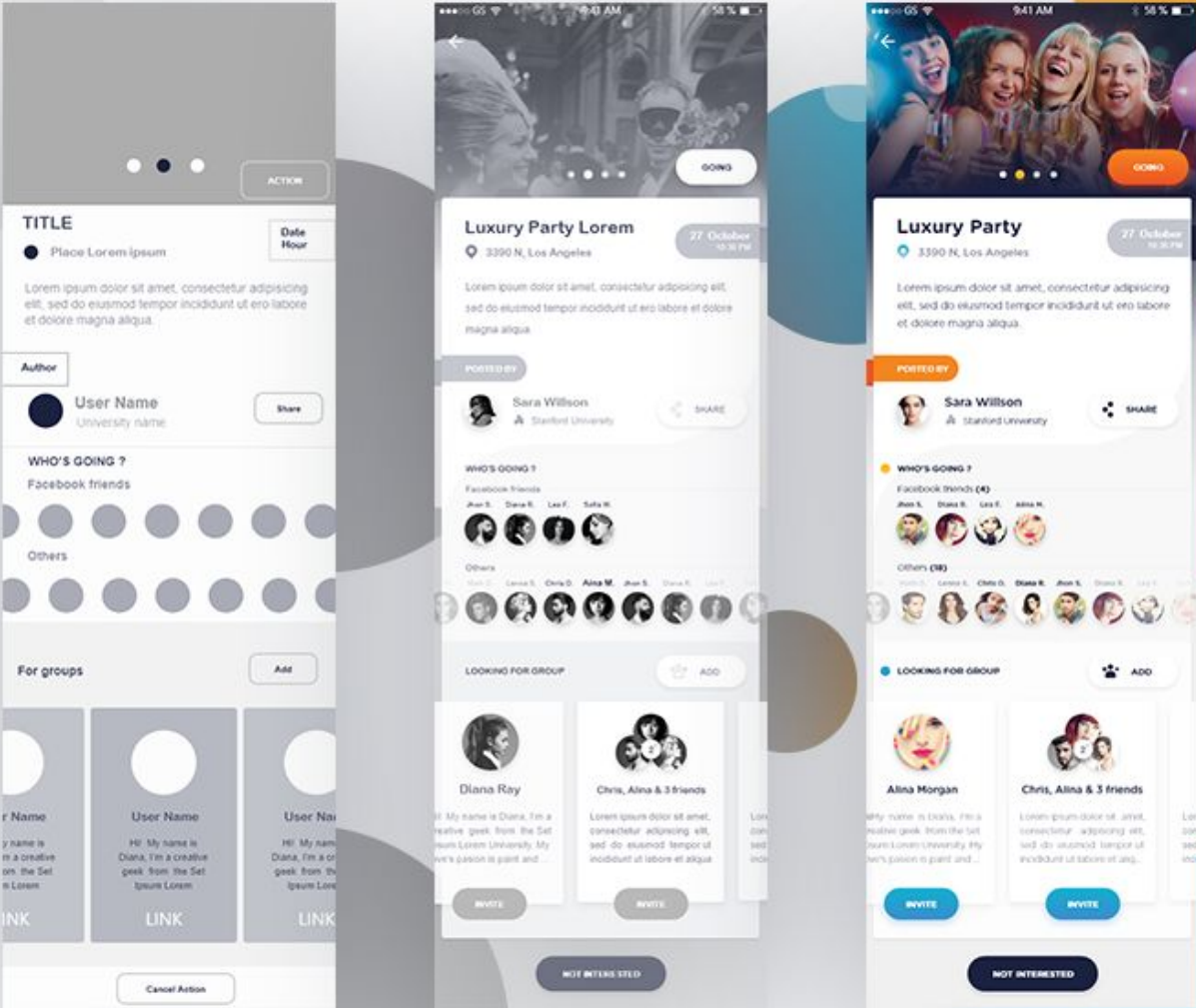
Example of low-fidelity wireframes



Example of mid-fidelity wireframes



Example: from low-fi to hi-fi



When and how to use wireframes

- Create your wireframes before prototyping and before writing a single line of code.
- Annotate them to explain to your team and clients how you visualise the user journey.
- Share them to get feedback on the core ideas of your design.
- Modify them as often as you need.

How do I create a wireframe?

- Use pen & paper
- Use software such as Photoshop or Gimp
- Use tools such as Wirify and Adobe XD

- **Go for greyscale**

You want to focus on content, layout, functionality and the user journey. Colour distracts by drawing attention to feel and aesthetic quality.

- **Use placeholders:**

- basic shapes (e.g. lines and oblongs) instead of fully developed design elements
- boxes with crosses instead of images
- lorem ipsum if the final content is not ready.

Tools for wireframing

- Pen & paper; sticky notes
- Whiteboard & markers
- Graphic-design software (e.g. Sketch, Photoshop, Gimp)
- Wireframing tools (those on the list are free; some limited to 2-3 projects)
 - [Wirefy](#)
 - [Adobe XD](#)
 - [Pencil Project](#)
 - [Mockflow](#)
 - [Frame Box](#)
 - [Invision Freehand](#)

Tips for making wireframes

- Draw paths between webpages to illustrate the user journey.
- Determine how much space you need to allocate to content.

Do use:

- Greyscale / black & white
- Placeholder images (or X-marked oblongs)
- Generic fonts
- Typographic hierarchy (e.g. different font sizes for headings and body text)
- Logos
- Search boxes, headers, footers, buttons (unstyled, non-interactive), breadcrumbs

Design Challenge

1. Create a workflow, using pen and paper or a whiteboard, like this:



Design Challenge (cont.)

2. Look at examples such as [this one](#).

3. Use pen and paper, graphic-design software or a wireframing tool to create wireframes on the basis of your project's workflow.

4. Take photos and include them in the README of your project.

Good luck!