

# HOW TO APPROACH PROTOTYPING

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CSE 599 Prototyping Interactive Systems | Lecture 10 | May 2

**Jon E. Froehlich** • Jasper O'Leary (TA)

# PROTOTYPING PROCESS: HOW TO APPROACH PROTOTYPING

Ideation and getting the **design right** and the **right design**

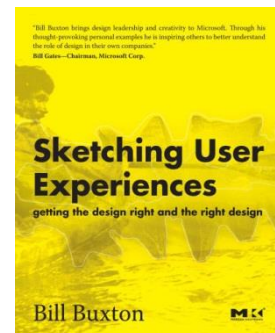
**Ideation process** as a **tree** and process of **elaboration+reduction**

When to **prototype**: **ABP**

How to **prototype**: **best practices**

“Getting the **design right** and the **right design**.”

**Bill Buxton**  
Designer, Scientist, Author



The best version of the  
best possible idea

The best possible idea

“Getting the **design right** and the **right design**.”

**Bill Buxton**

Designer, Scientist, Author



Well, ok... **but how** do you do that?

**Step 1:** Generate as many ideas as possible for a problem space

“Getting the **design right** and the **right design**.”

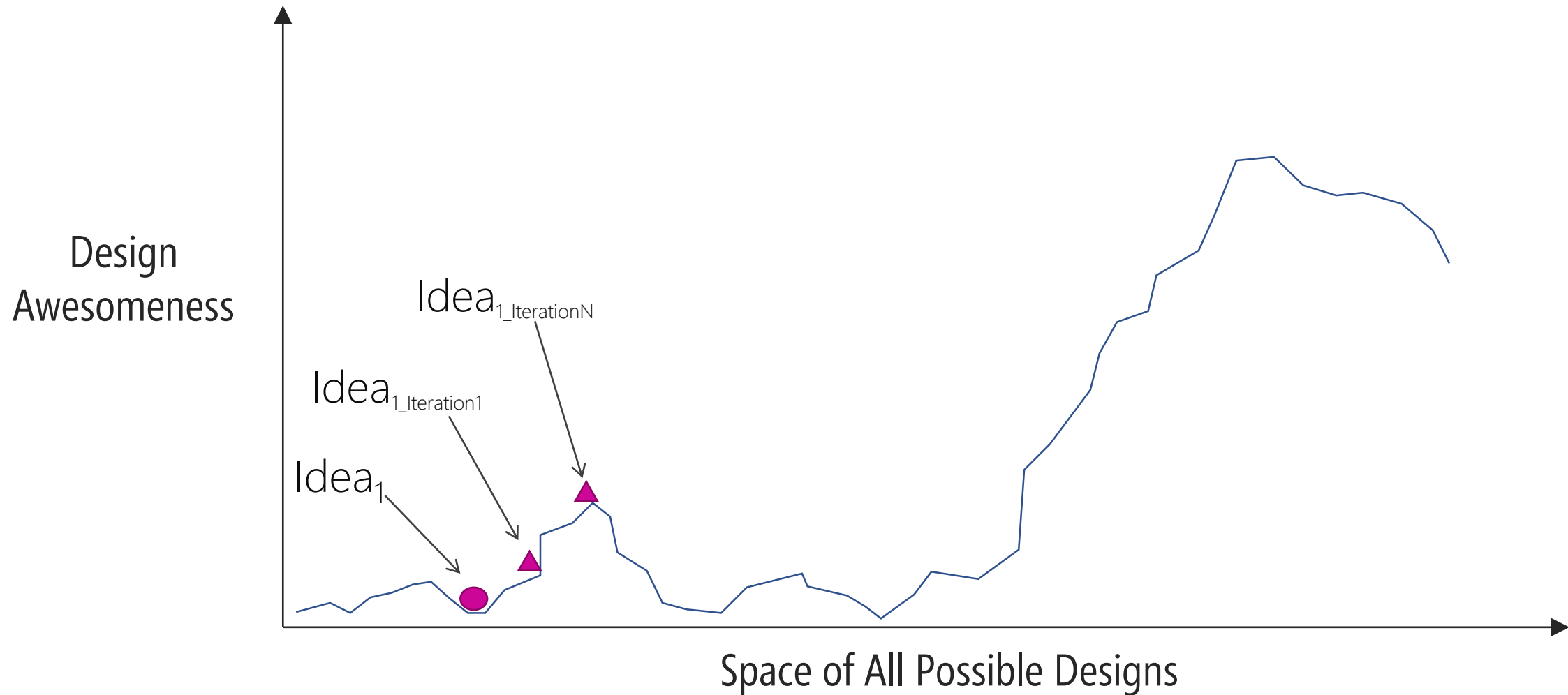
**Step 2:** For the top N ideas, evolve, improve, develop. Push those ideas to their potential.

**Bill Buxton**  
Designer, Scientist, Author



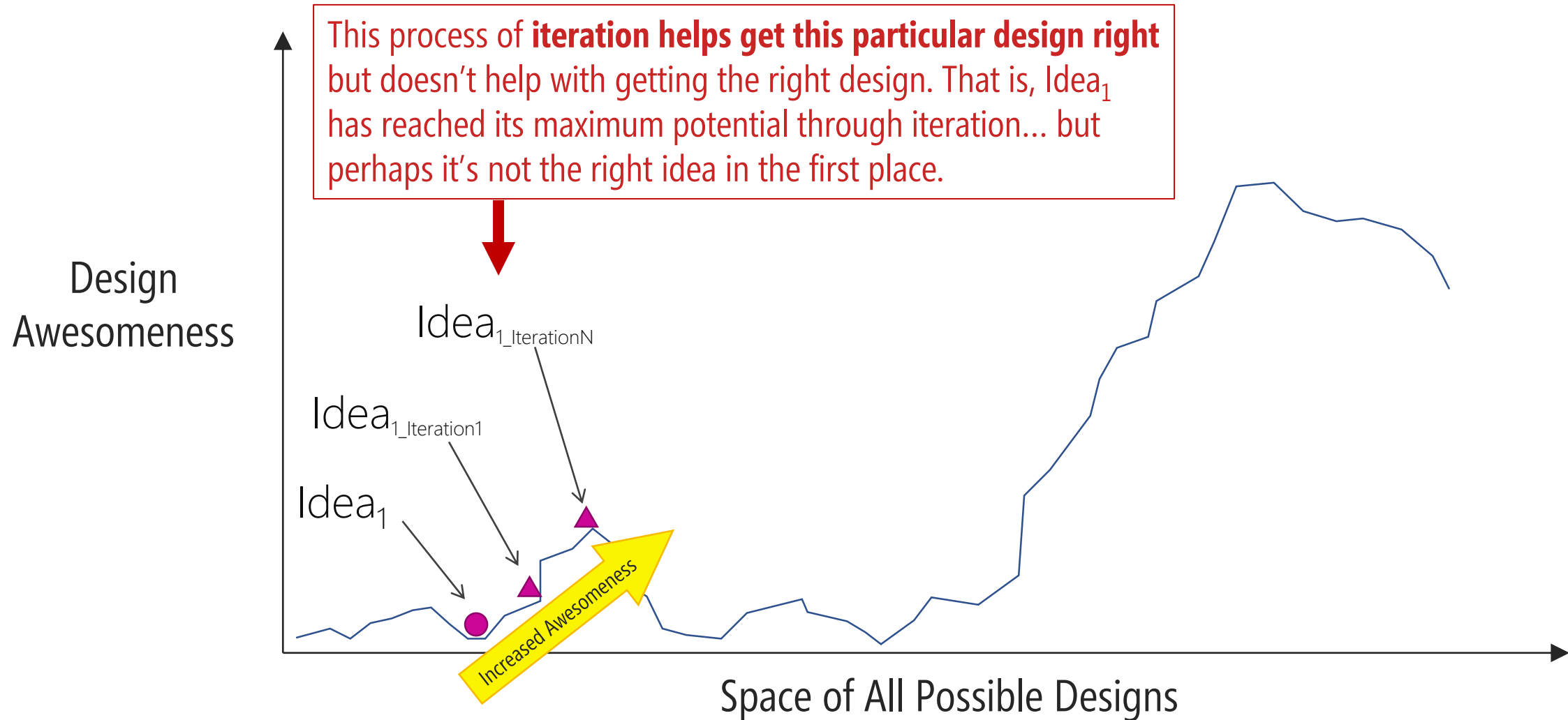
WHY PROTOTYPE?

# GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT & THE RIGHT DESIGN



WHY PROTOTYPE?

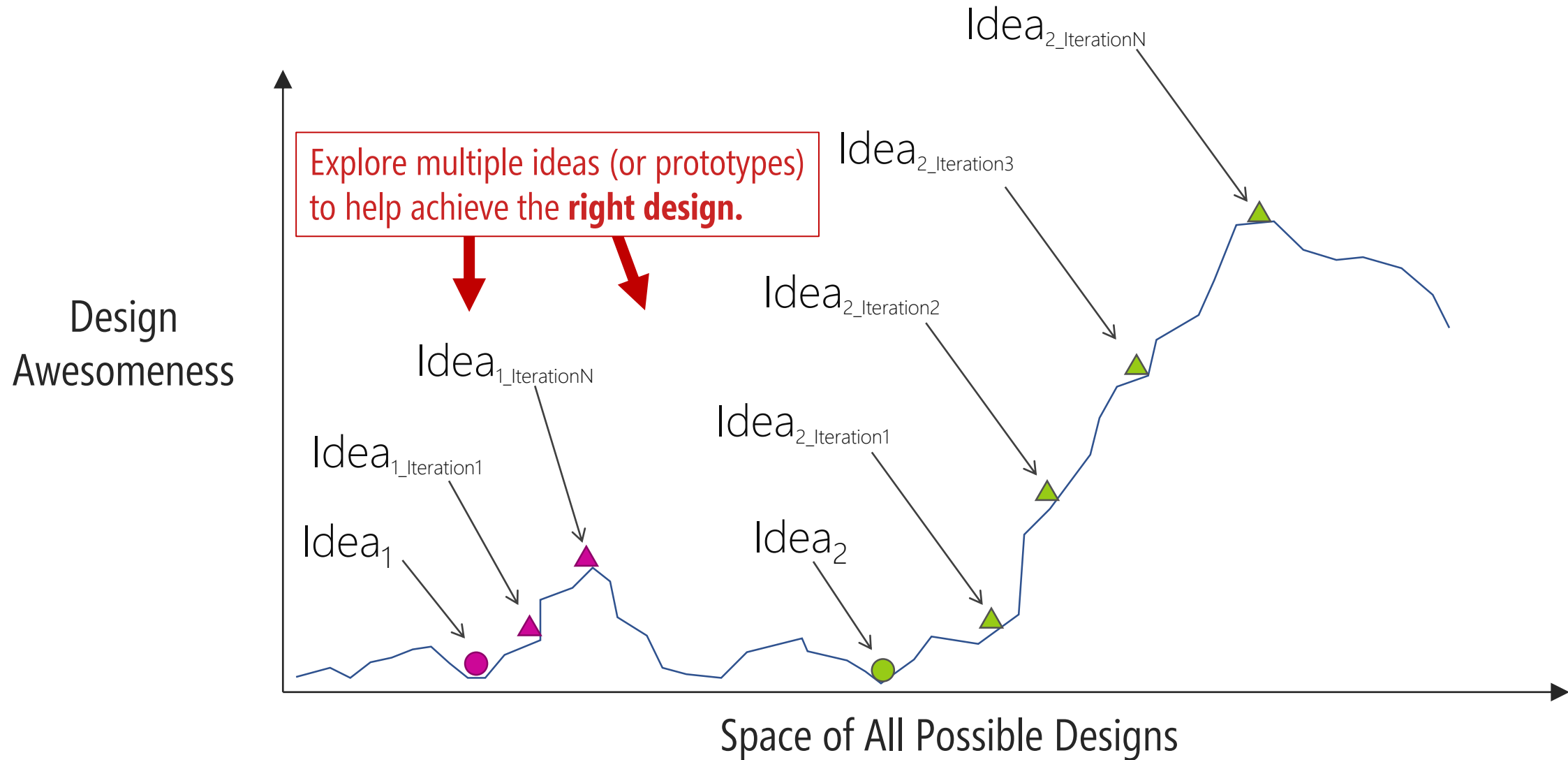
# GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT & THE RIGHT DESIGN





WHY PROTOTYPE?

# GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT & THE RIGHT DESIGN

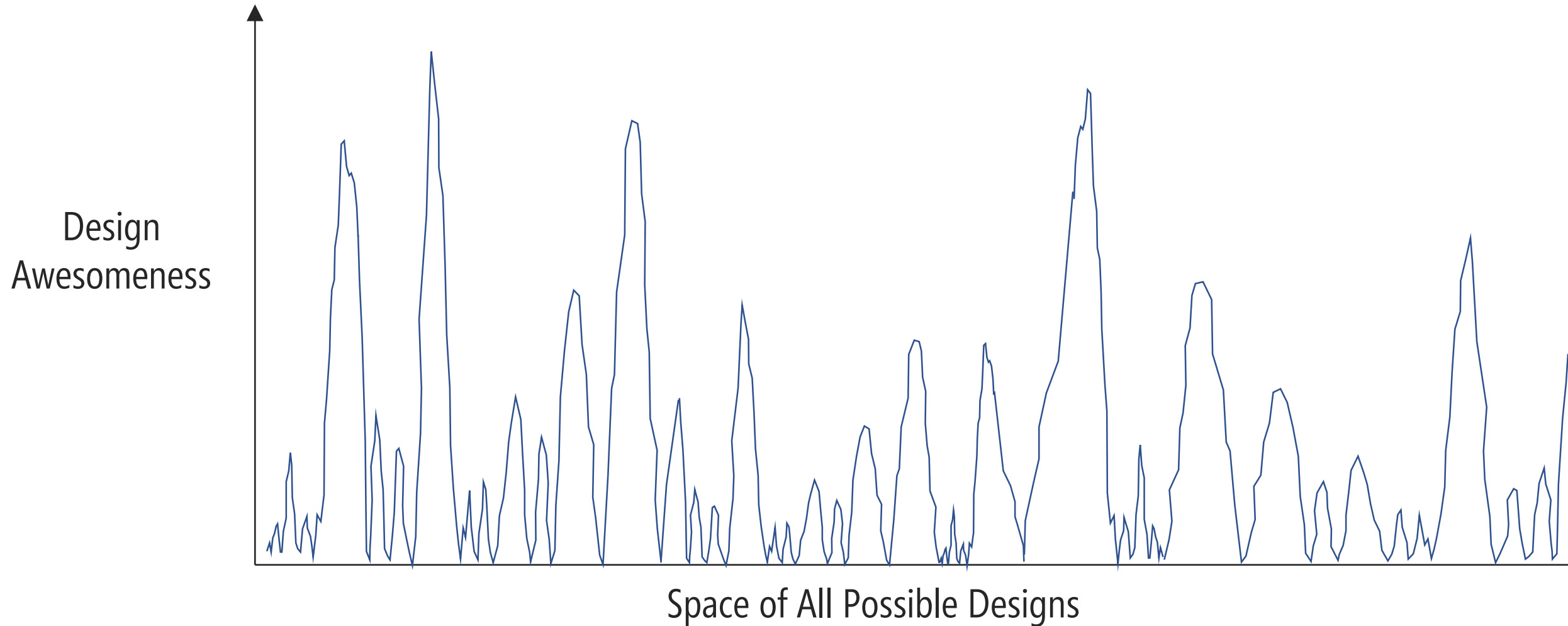


# GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT & THE RIGHT DESIGN



WHY PROTOTYPE?

# GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT & THE RIGHT DESIGN



WHY PROTOTYPE?

# GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT & THE RIGHT DESIGN

Design  
Awesomeness

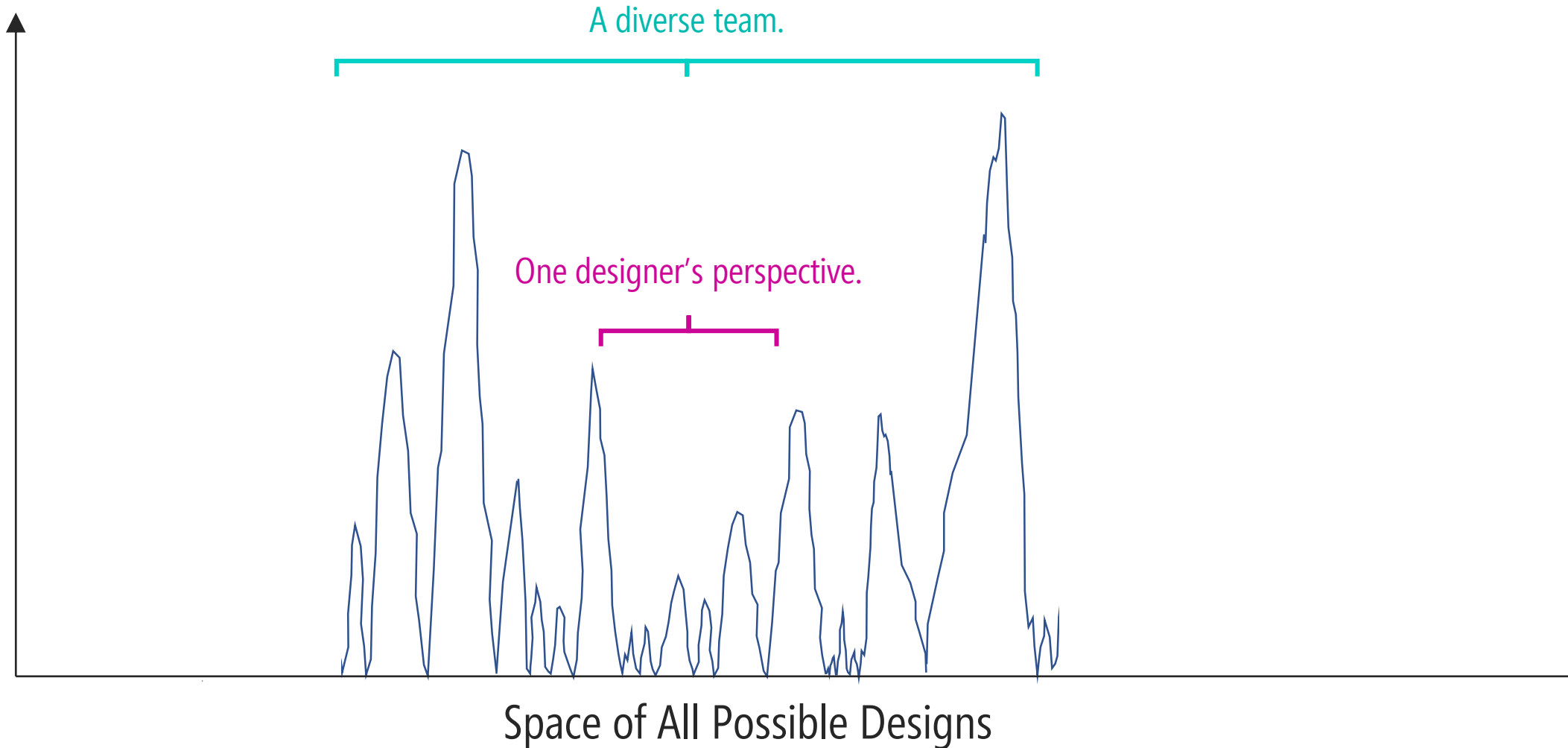
One designer's perspective.

Space of All Possible Designs

WHY PROTOTYPE?

# GETTING THE DESIGN RIGHT & THE RIGHT DESIGN

Design  
Awesomeness



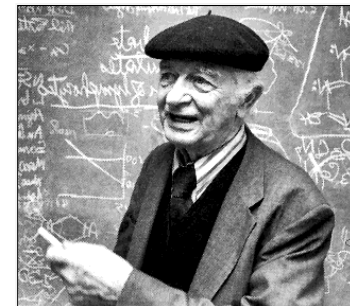
“The best way to have a good idea  
is to **have lots of ideas**”

**Linus Pauling**

Professor of Chemistry

Caltech, UC San Diego, Stanford

Only person awarded two unshared Nobel Prizes

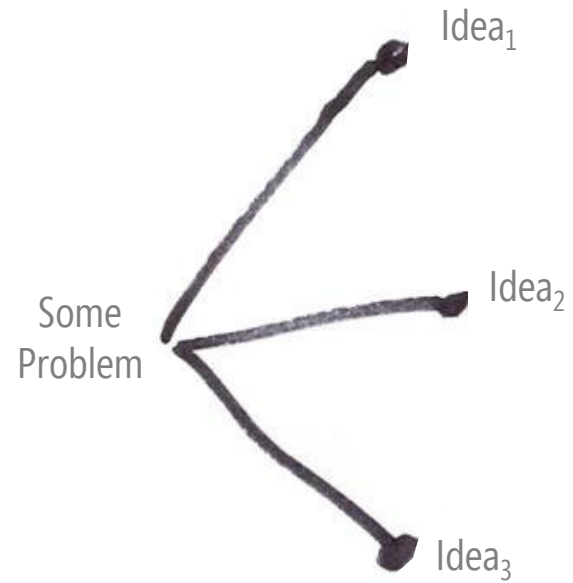


“...a designer that pitched only one idea would probably be fired. I'd say **5 is an entry point** for an early formal review (distilled from **100's**).

**Alistair Hamilton**  
VP Design, Symbol Corp.

WHY PROTOTYPE?

# IDEATION PROCESS AS A TREE





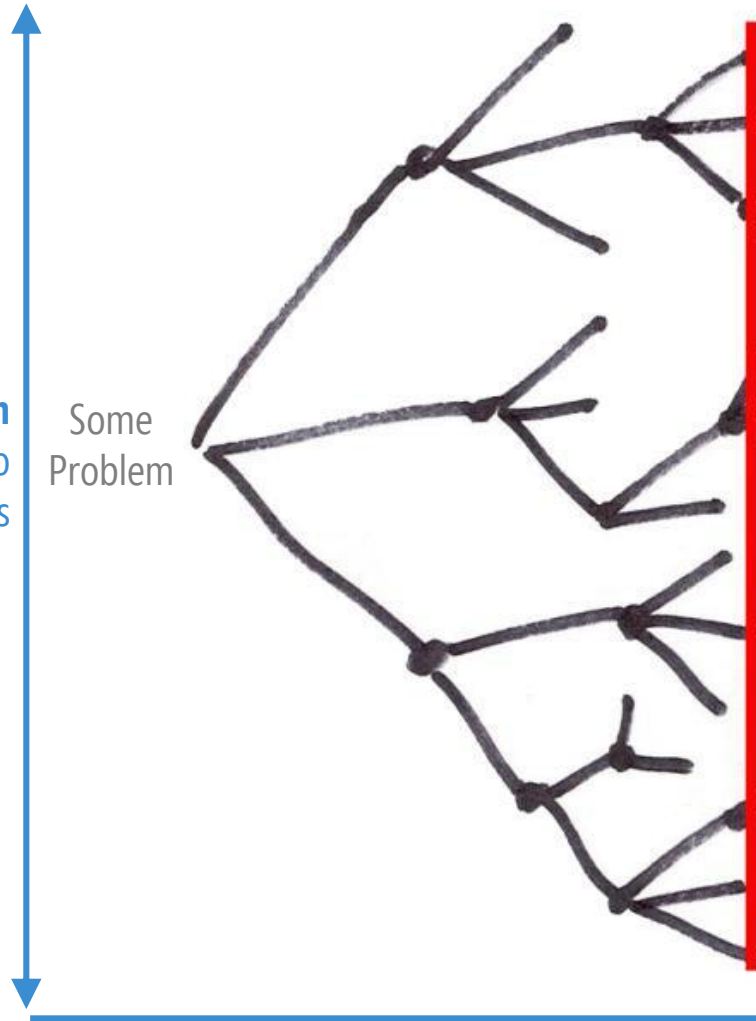
# IDEATION PROCESS AS A TREE



## WHY PROTOTYPE?

# IDEATION PROCESS AS A TREE

**Getting the Right Design**  
Tree width corresponds to  
breadth of ideas

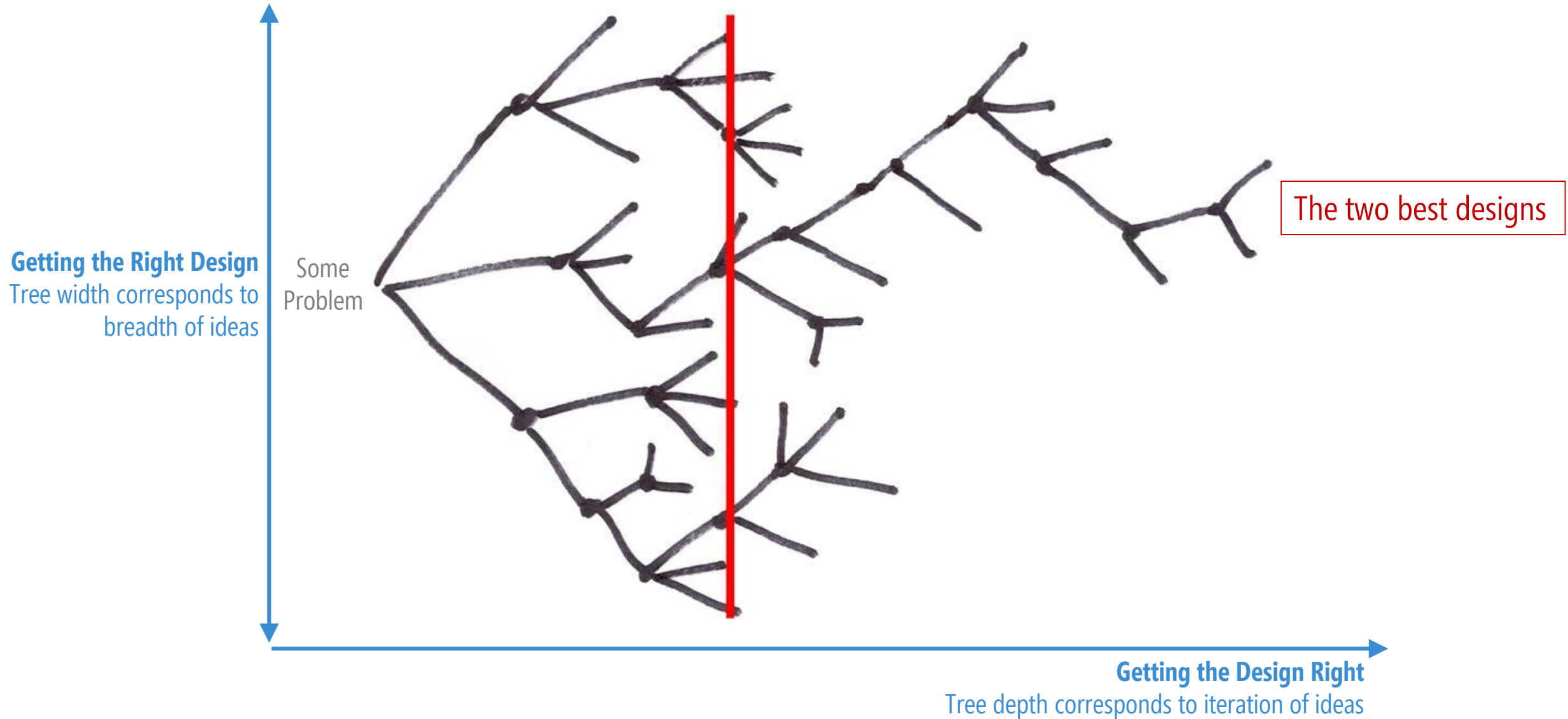


At some point—through user testing, design critiques, *etc.*—you switch from broadening ideas to converging and iterating on the best N ideas.

**Getting the Design Right**  
Tree depth corresponds to iteration of ideas

WHY PROTOTYPE?

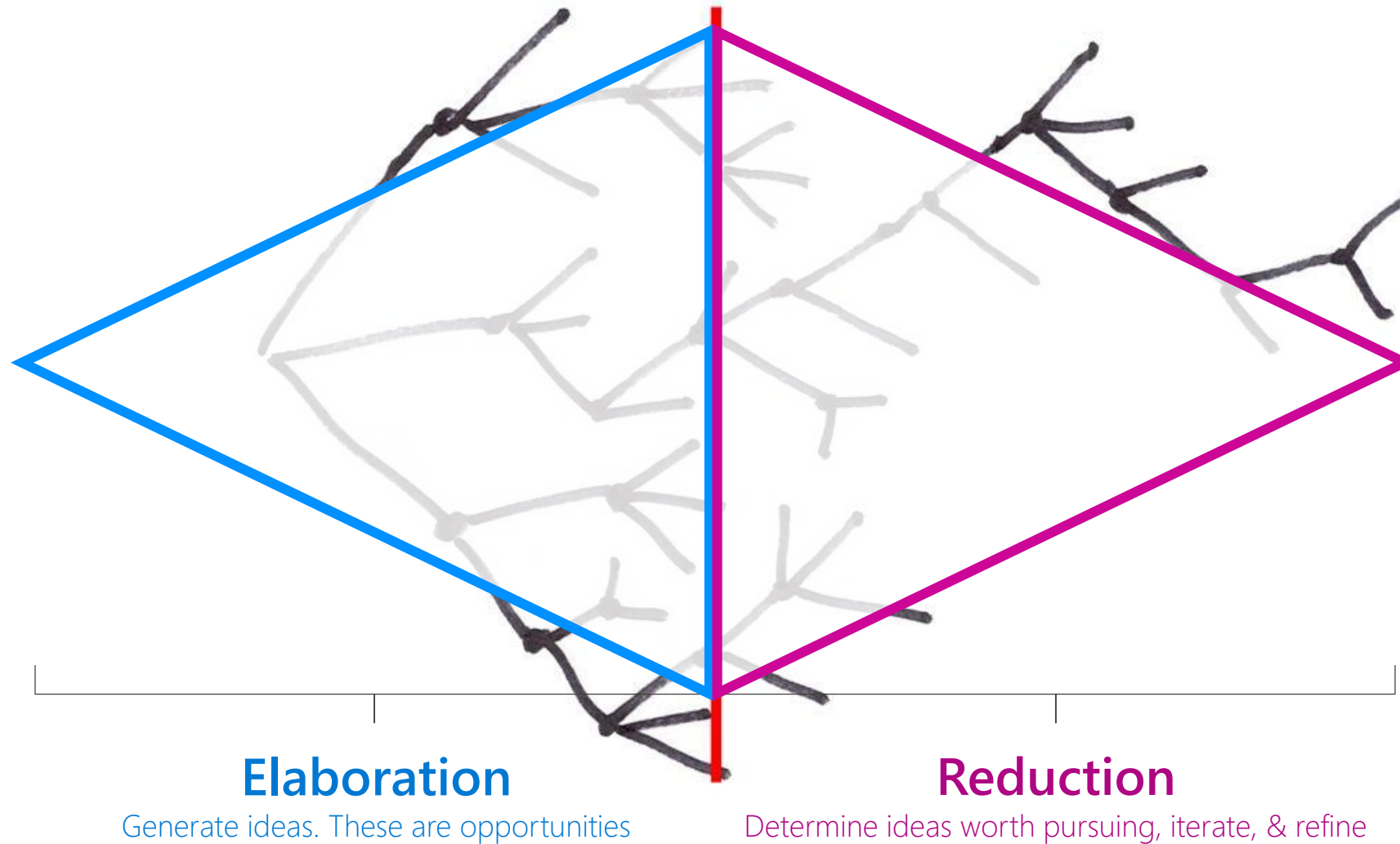
# IDEATION PROCESS AS A TREE



## WHY PROTOTYPE?

# ELABORATION & REDUCTION

Paul Laseau (1980) describes this process as a symbiotic relationship between idea elaboration and reduction.



**WHEN TO PROTOTYPE?**

**A.B.P.**



“To get the most out of prototyping, you must incorporate it into **every part of your process**, and constantly be looking for feedback.

**Prototyping for Designers**  
Kathryn McElroy







To get the most out of prototyping, you must incorporate it into **every part of your process**, and constantly be looking for feedback.

**Everything can be prototyped**, and everything is a prototype. There can always be a better, improved version of what you are creating...

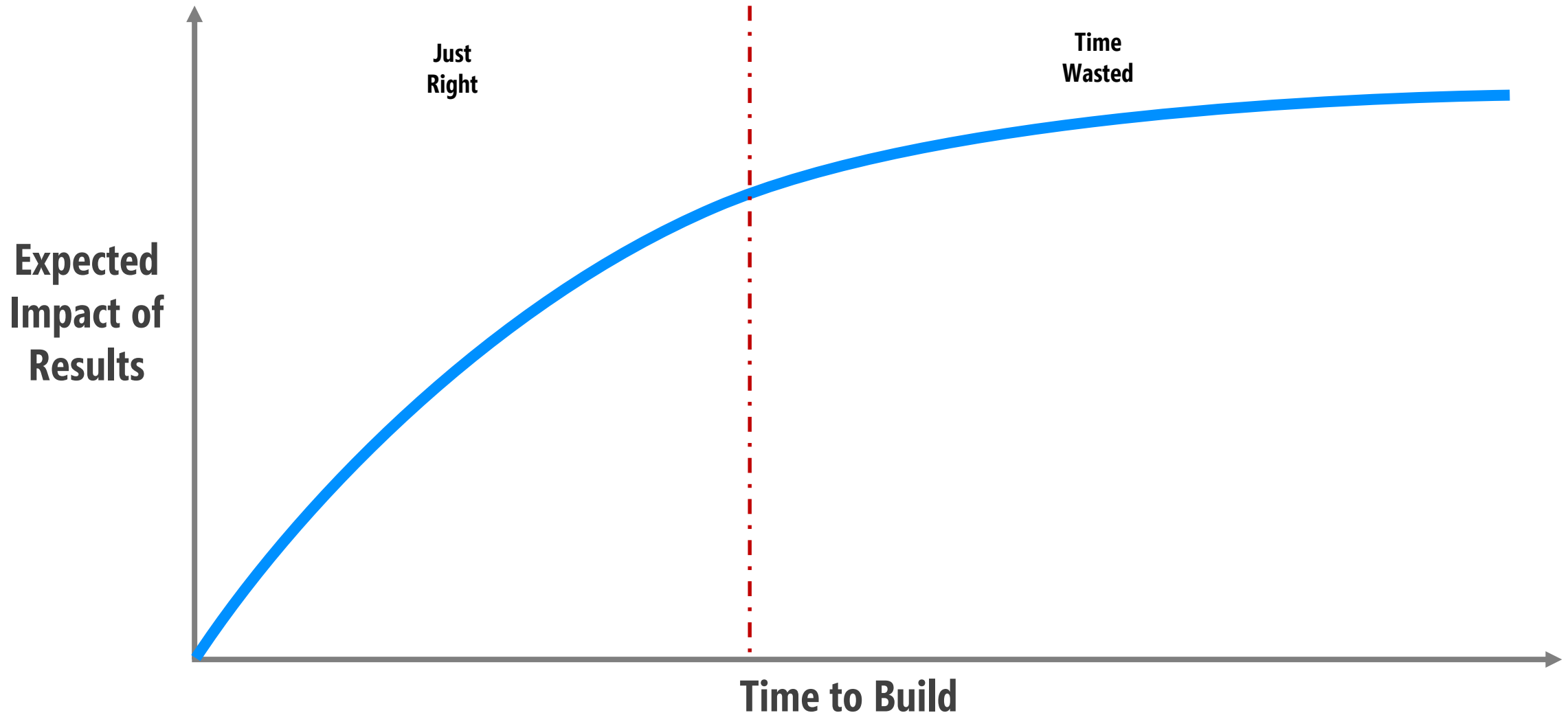
## Prototyping for Designers

Kathryn McElroy



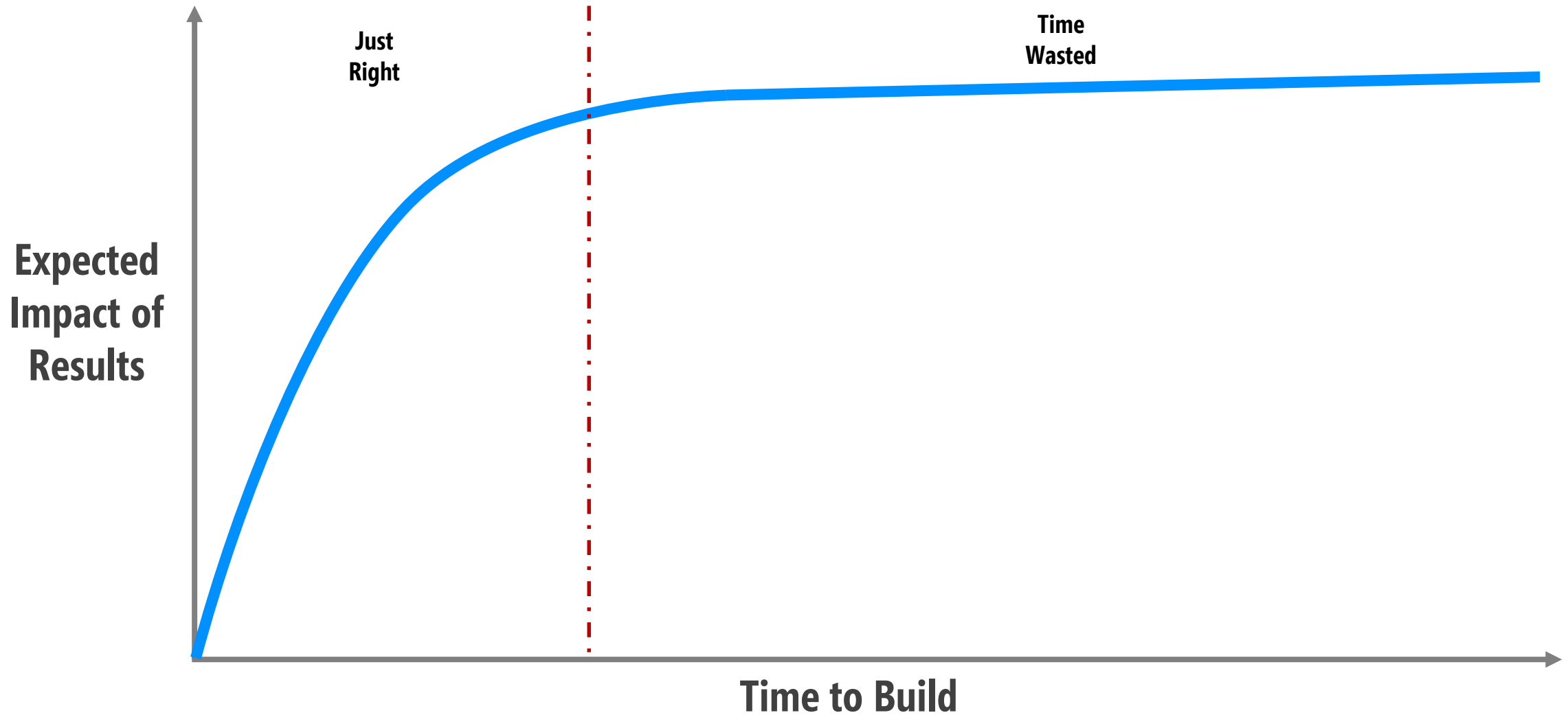
WHEN TO PROTOTYPE?

# PROTOTYPING TIME VS. REWARD



WHEN TO PROTOTYPE?

# PROTOTYPING TIME VS. REWARD



# WHAT TO PROTOTYPE?

Focus on the **key elements** needed for feedback at current stage in design process.



Selecting **the focus of a prototype** is the art of identifying the most important open design questions.

**What do Prototypes Prototype?**

Stephanie Houde & Charles Hill, Apple Computer

WHEN TO PROTOTYPE?

# HOW DO YOU CHOOSE WHAT TO PROTOTYPE?

What is the key **goal of the prototype**—to demonstrate viability, to highlight new key interaction, to show user flow?

**Who** will you show it to and in **what setting**?

What do you **expect to learn** from building & showing/testing the prototype?

How will you **evaluate** that **learning**? (*i.e.*, what are your key measures and how will you analyze this data?)

# HOW TO PROTOTYPE

(BEST PRACTICES SUPPORTED BY RESEARCH AND INDUSTRY)

# PROTOTYPING: BEST PRACTICES

The importance of **exploring a breadth of ideas**

Focus on **rapidly building prototypes** to explore design space

**Perceived fidelity of prototypes** can impact **responses**

**Iteration** is critical

Prototype **multiple designs in parallel**

**Show/test multiple prototypes** to enable comparison



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## HOW TO PROTOTYPE

# THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEA QUANTITY/BREADTH

A ceramics teacher divided a class into two groups: those on the left side of the studio would be graded solely on the quantity of their work; those on the right solely on the quality of their work.

## QUANTITY GROUP



Graded solely on the quantity of work they produced

## QUALITY GROUP



Graded solely on the quality of work they produced

HOW TO PROTOTYPE

## THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEA QUANTITY/BREADTH

A ceramics teacher announced that he was dividing the class into two groups: those on the left side of the studio would be graded solely on quantity of work; those on the right solely on its quality.

QUANTITY GROUP

QUALITY GROUP

**WHICH GROUP PRODUCED HIGHER QUALITY WORK?**



Graded solely on the quantity of work they produced



Graded solely on the quality of work they produced

# THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEA QUANTITY/BREADTH

A ceramics teacher announced that he was dividing the class into two groups: those on the left side of the studio would be graded solely on quantity of work; those on the right solely on its quality.

## QUANTITY GROUP



Graded solely on the quantity of work they produced

“It seems that while the **quantity group** was busily churning out piles of work — and **learning from their mistakes** — the **quality group** had sat theorizing about perfection, and in the end **had little more to show** for their efforts than grandiose theories and a pile of dead clay.”

- Bayles and Orland, 2001, p.29

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# RAPID PROTOTYPES ARE PREFERRED ESPECIALLY EARLY IN DESIGN PROCESS

Besides speeding up that process of experimentation, prototypes are easy to **throw away when they fail**. Creativity requires cycling lots of ideas. The more you invest in your prototype and the closer to “final” it is, the harder it is to let go of a concept that’s not working.

**Tom and David Kelley**

From: *Why Designers Should Never Go to a Meeting Without a Prototype*,  
Slate 2013



Keep in mind that **rapid doesn't necessarily mean lo-fi.**

GUILLAUME ARDAUD, APPLE DESIGNER | WWDC 2017

# EXAMPLE: RAPID PROTOTYPING AT APPLE



Source: <https://developer.apple.com/videos/play/wwdc2017/818/>



# **DESIGN TASK: REDESIGN TIMER APP**





**HOW WOULD YOU BUILD THIS PROTOTYPE?**





**HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO BUILD THIS PROTOTYPE?**





**HOW LONG DID IT TAKE TO BUILD THIS PROTOTYPE?**



**60 SECS | BUILT USING KEYNOTE**





**MAKING THINGS FAST ENABLES EXPLORING MANY IDEAS**





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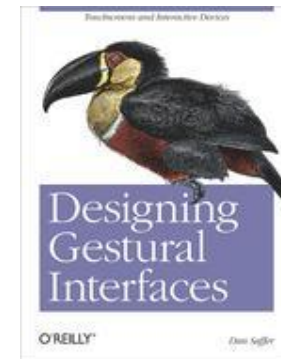
**Show/test multiple prototypes** to enable comparison

# PERCEIVED FIDELITY OF PROTOTYPES CAN INFLUENCE REACTIONS

“The more refined the **prototype** is, the more refined the **response** to it will likely be.

**Dan Saffer**

Chapter 6: Prototyping Interactive Gestures  
*Designing Gestural Interaction*, 2008

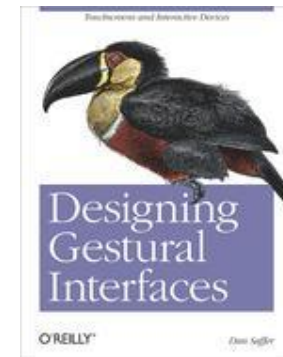


# PERCEIVED FIDELITY OF PROTOTYPES CAN INFLUENCE REACTIONS

Oddly, **refined feedback can be a bad thing**. A high-fidelity, working prototype could engender lots of comments about the colors used or typefaces involved, not about the concept, features, gestures, and system flow, which may be what you really care about (and should care about in the early stages of prototyping).

**Dan Saffer**

Chapter 6: Prototyping Interactive Gestures  
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DOW ET AL., ACM TOCHI 2010

# DESIGN ITERATION EXPERIMENT: EGG DROP STUDY

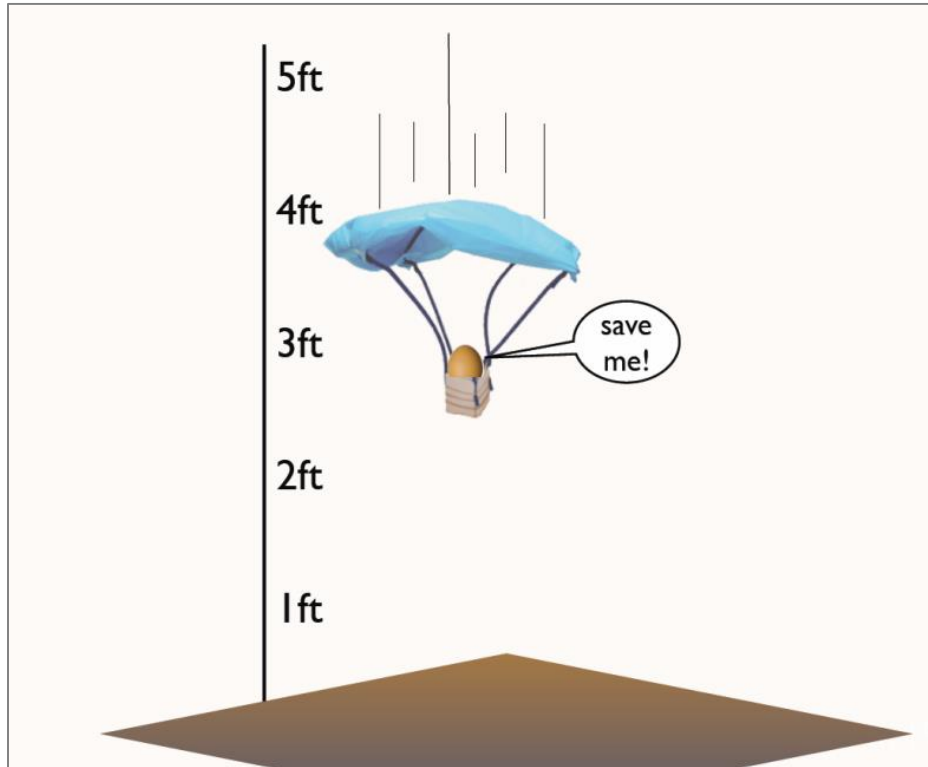


## Design task selection



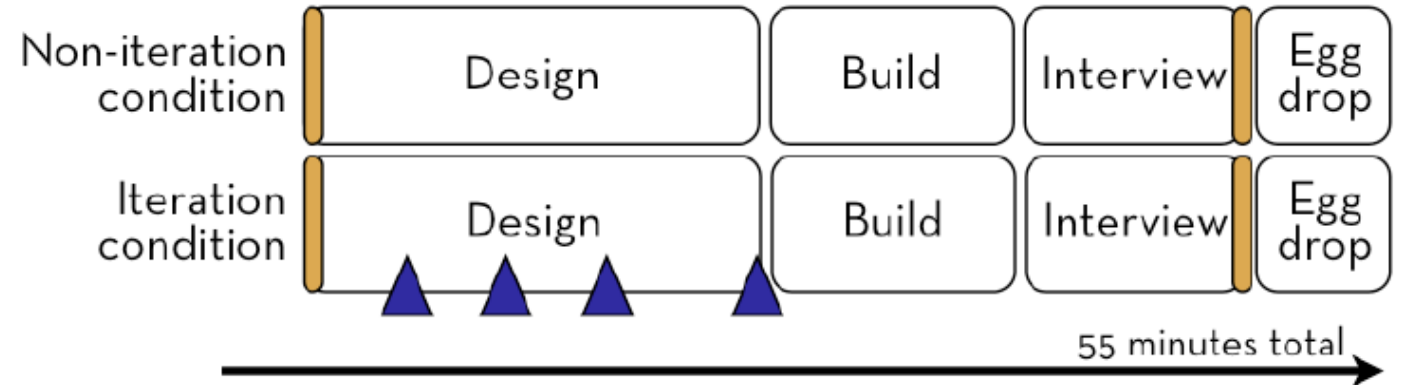
## IMPORTANCE OF ITERATION

# DESIGN ITERATION EXPERIMENT: EGG DROP STUDY



## STUDY TASK

Design a robust egg drop vessel that maximizes the height of the drop without breaking the egg.

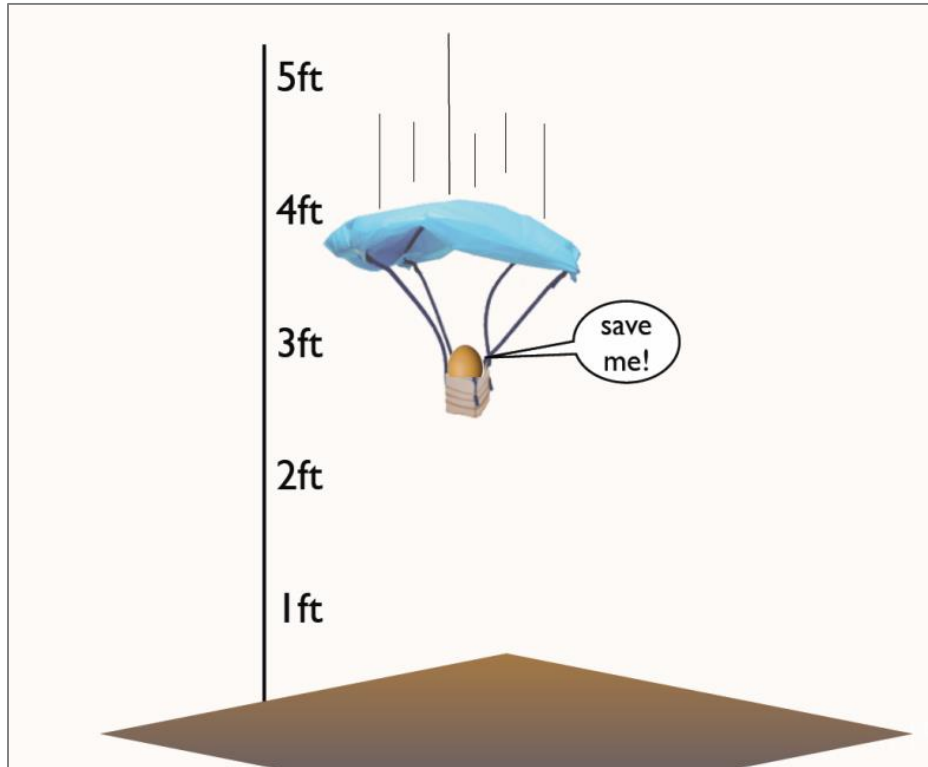


## EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

Study had two groups (between subjects design): one group given a full carton of eggs and encouraged to conduct test drops (iteration group). The other group was given only one egg, which was used the final egg drop.

## IMPORTANCE OF ITERATION

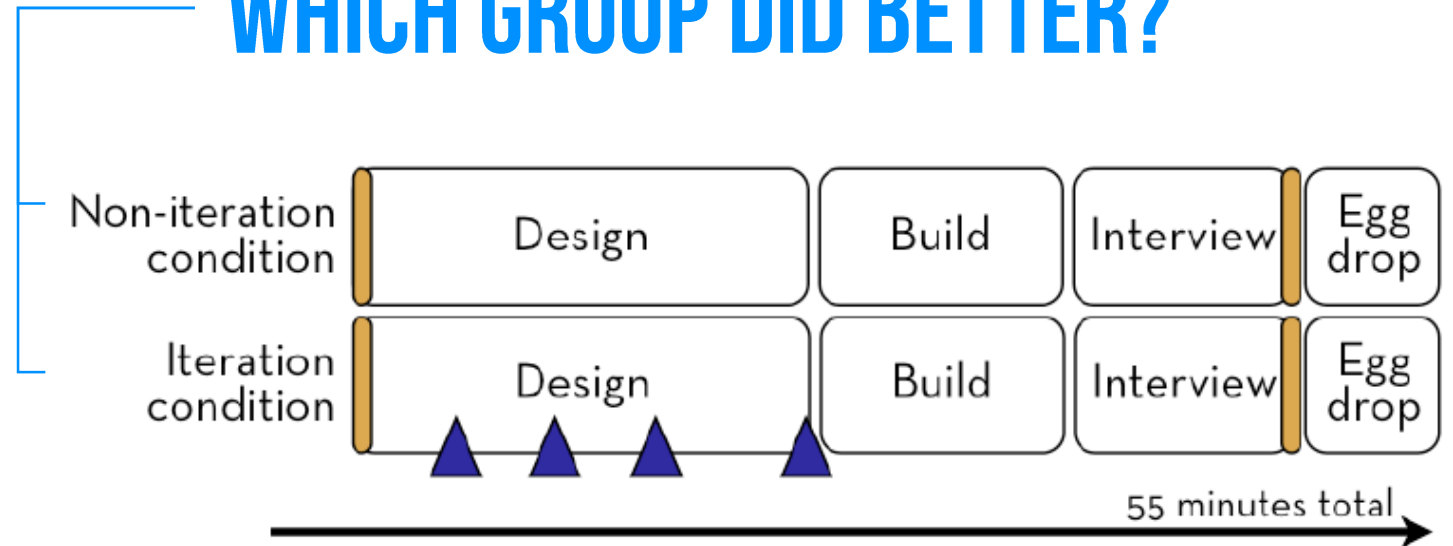
# DESIGN ITERATION EXPERIMENT: EGG DROP STUDY



### STUDY TASK

Design a robust egg drop vessel that maximizes the height of the drop without breaking the egg.

## WHICH GROUP DID BETTER?



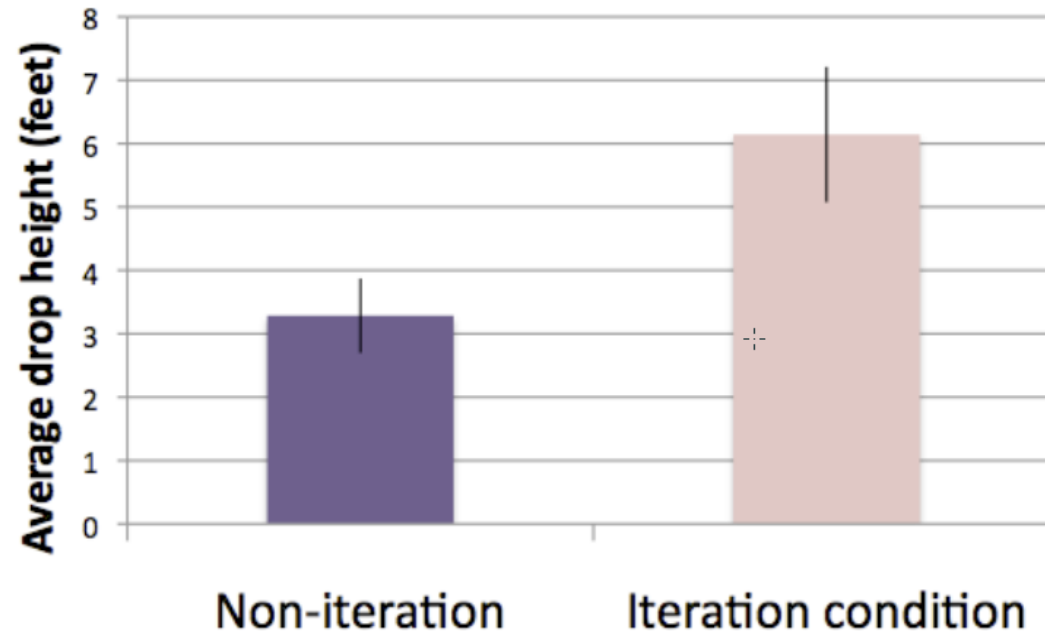
### EXPERIMENTAL DESIGN

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# RESULT SUMMARY

Iteration group outperformed non-iteration group & gained more confidence while designing.



## PRIMARY RESULT

Participants in the iteration condition significantly outperformed the non-iteration condition in the egg drop design task.

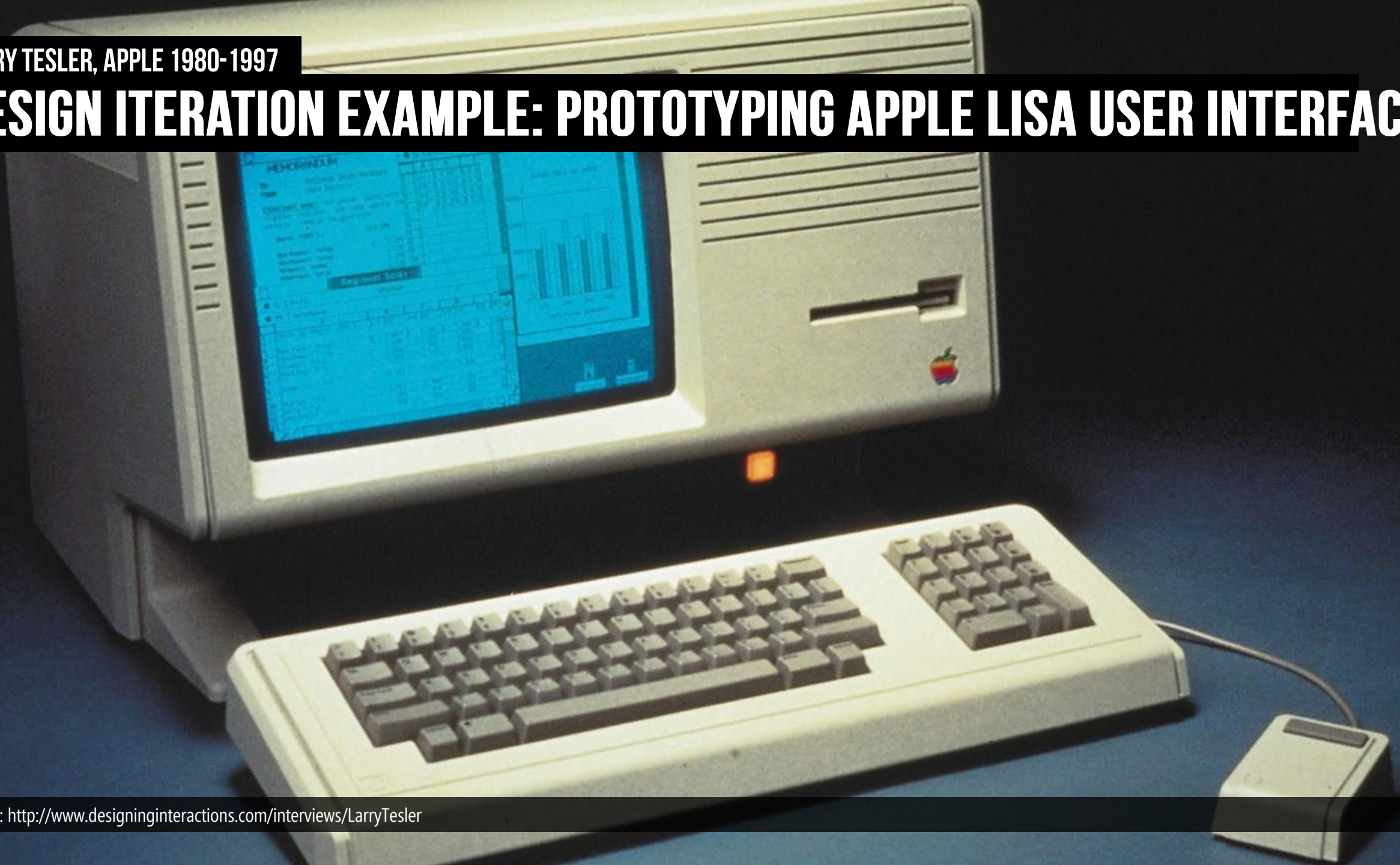
This study also nicely highlights **design fixation** and **getting stuck in local maxima**.

Participants learn through experimentation



LARRY TESLER, APPLE 1980-1997

# DESIGN ITERATION EXAMPLE: PROTOTYPING APPLE LISA USER INTERFACE



Source: <http://www.designinginteractions.com/interviews/LarryTesler>



Bill Atkinson

Apple Computer  
20525 Mariani Avenue  
Cupertino, Calif. 95014  
USA  
(19)(1)(408) 996-1010



Make

Learn

Show



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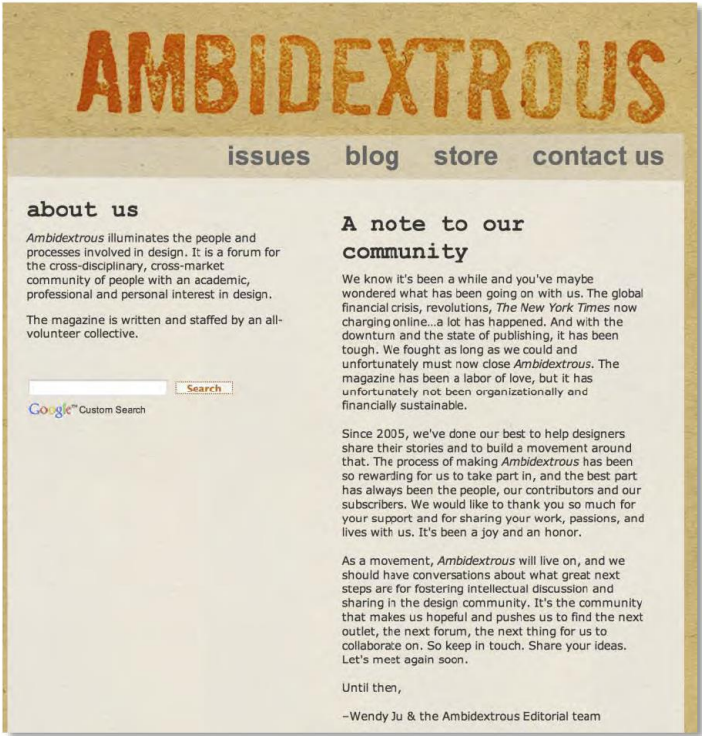
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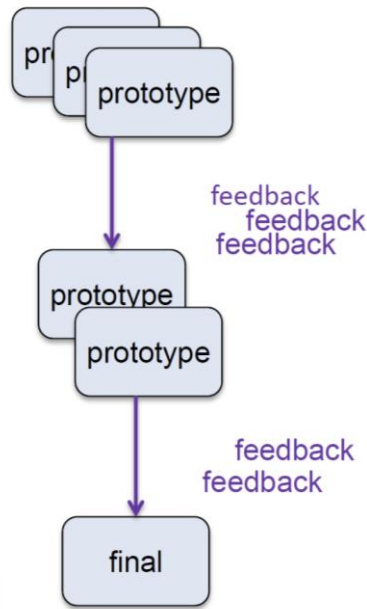


# HOW TO PROTOTYPE

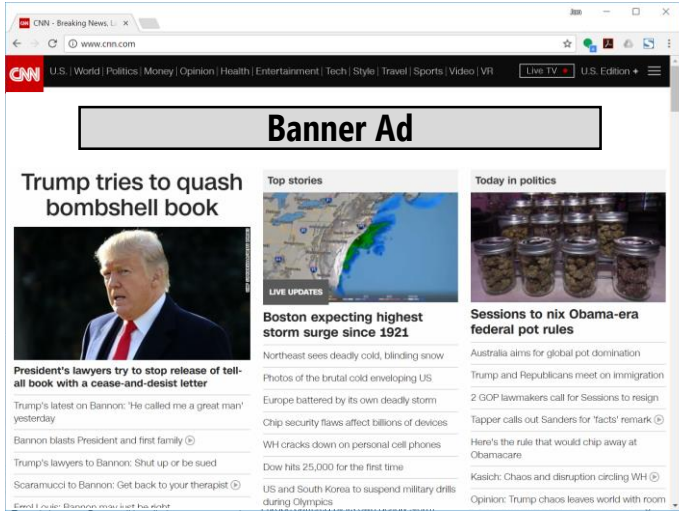
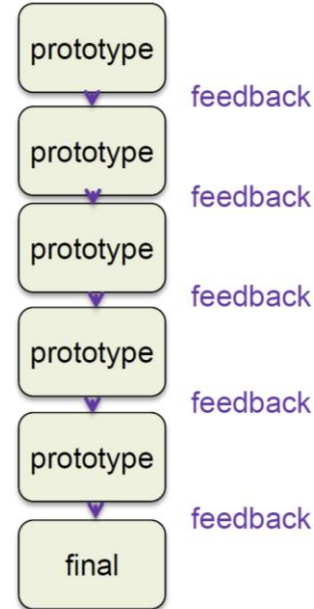
## IMPORTANCE OF CREATING MULTIPLE PROTOTYPES IN PARALLEL



### PARALLEL GROUP



### SERIAL GROUP



## STUDY TASK

Create a web banner ad for Ambidextrous magazine

## STUDY DESIGN

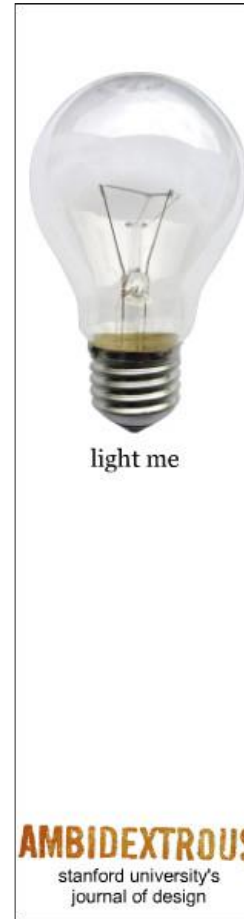
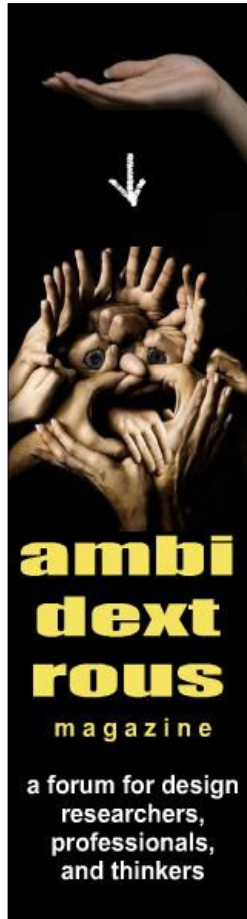
Two study groups (again, between subjects). One group was the parallel prototyping group that was told to prototype multiple designs in parallel. The other, the serial group, was told to produce one design and iterate.

## MEASURES

They deployed the ads and actually measured click-through rates. Also received novice and expert critiques

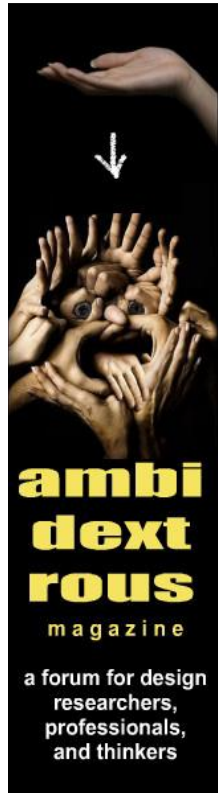


# SOME EXAMPLE FINAL ADS: WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE?

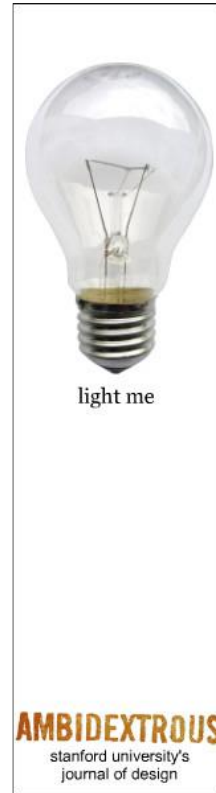


# SOME EXAMPLE FINAL ADS: WHICH IS YOUR FAVORITE?

## PARALLEL PROTOTYPING CONDITION



CLICK-THROUGH RATE: 1<sup>ST</sup>  
EXPERT RATING: 6<sup>TH</sup>



CLICK-THROUGH RATE: 9<sup>TH</sup>  
EXPERT RATING: 1<sup>ST</sup>

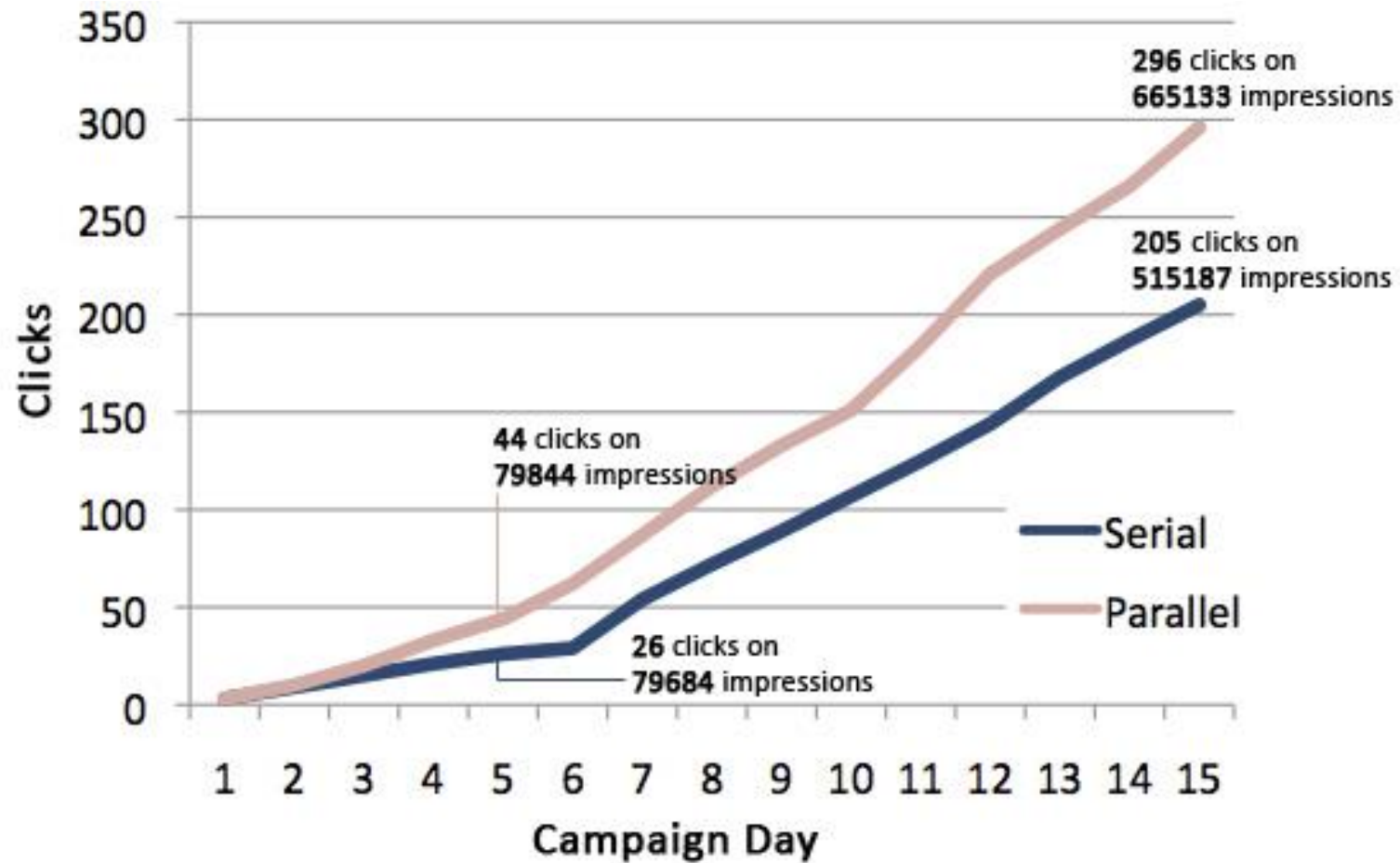
## SERIAL PROTOTYPING CONDITION



CLICK-THROUGH RATE: 4<sup>TH</sup>  
EXPERT RATING: 32<sup>ND</sup>

# OVERALL RESULTS: CLICK-THROUGH RESULTS

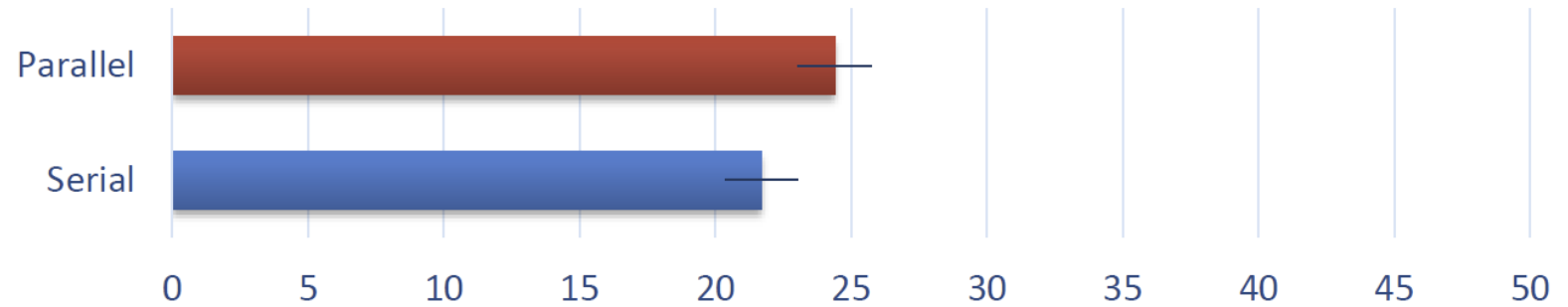
Parallel ads received more clicks—and more clicks per impression—than serial ads during 15-day campaign.



# OVERALL RESULTS: SUBJECTIVE RATINGS

## EXPERT QUALITY RATING

Scale of 0-50; 50 is best



Experts rated ads produced in parallel group as significantly better than ads in serial group. Importantly, the experts did not know how the ads were produced.

# PROTOTYPING: BEST PRACTICES

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HOW TO PROTOTYPE

# IMPORTANCE OF TESTING MULTIPLE PROTOTYPES TOGETHER

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We have found **subjects reluctant to be critical of designs** when they are asked to assign a rating to the design. In our usability tests, we see the same phenomenon **even when we encourage subjects to be critical.**

**Wiklund, Thurrot, & Dumas**  
Human Factors Society 1992

# IMPORTANCE OF TESTING MULTIPLE PROTOTYPES TOGETHER



We have found **subjects reluctant to be critical of designs** when they are asked to assign a rating to the design. In our usability tests, we see the same phenomenon **even when we encourage subjects to be critical**. We speculate that the test subjects feel that giving a low rating to a product gives the impression that they are “negative” people, that the ratings **reflect negatively on their ability** to use computer-based technology... or that they **don’t want to hurt the feelings of the person conducting the test**.

**Wiklund, Thurrot, & Dumas**  
Human Factors Society 1992

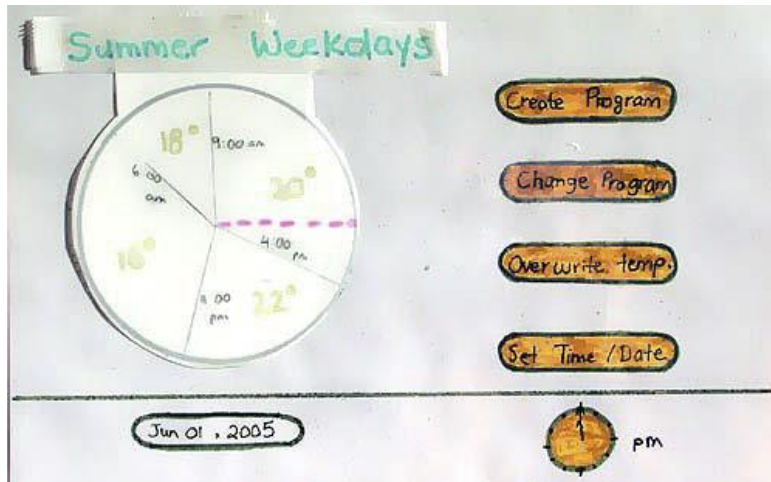


## HOW TO PROTOTYPE

# TESTING MULTIPLE PROTOTYPES TOGETHER: AN EXPERIMENT

Developed three lo-fi prototypes. All designed by same team. Tried to ensure that all three designs were consistent in terms of fidelity, functionality, and quality

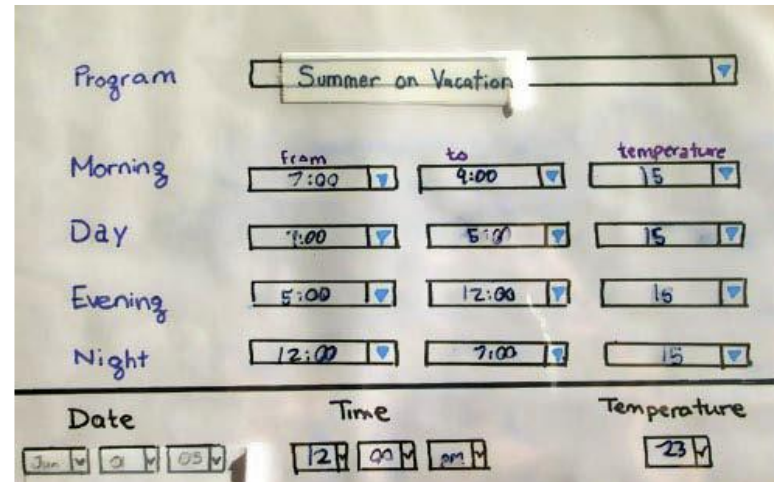
### CIRCULAR PAPER PROTOTYPE



### STUDY DESIGN

48 participants. Two groups (between subjects design). One group only used one prototype. Other group used all three.

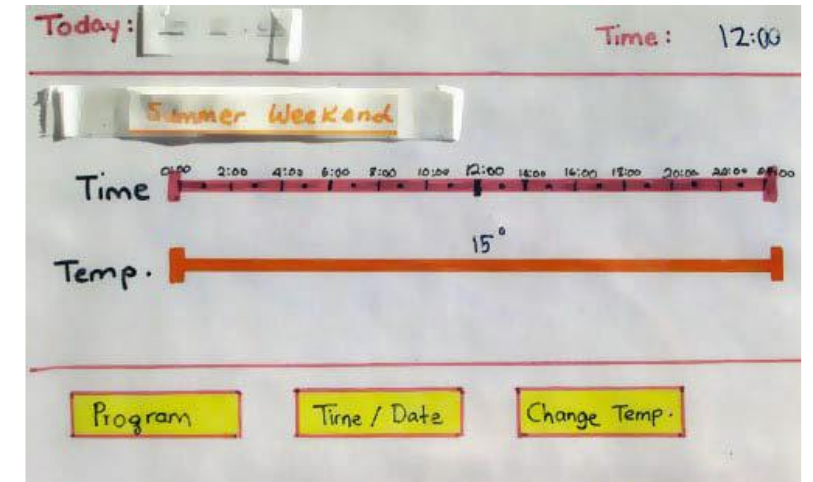
### TABULAR PAPER PROTOTYPE



### STUDY TASKS

Participants performed four tasks, including setting the time/date, setting the temperature, & programming thermostat.

### LINEAR PAPER PROTOTYPE



### STUDY DATA

Observational notes, video recordings, questionnaires, post-study interviews

HOW TO PROTOTYPE

TESTING MULTIPLE PROTOTYPES TOGETHER: AN EXPERIMENT

CHI 2006 Proceedings • Usability Methods

April 22-27, 2006 • Montréal, Québec, Canada

Getting the Right Design and the Design Right:  
Testing Many Is Better Than One

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ABSTRACT

We present a study comparing usability testing of a single interface versus three functionally equivalent but stylistically distinct designs. We found that when presented with a single design, users give significantly higher ratings and were more reluctant to criticize than when presented with the same design in a group of three. Our results imply that by presenting users with alternative design solutions, subjective ratings are less prone to inflation and give rise to more and stronger criticisms when appropriate. Contrary to our expectations, our results also suggest that usability testing by itself, even when multiple designs are presented, is not an effective vehicle for soliciting constructive suggestions about how to improve the design from end users. It is a means to identify problems, not provide solutions.

Author Keywords

Design, Prototyping, Usability Testing, Evaluation, Methods, User Centered Design, Participatory Design.

ACM Classification Keywords

H5.m. Information interfaces and presentation (e.g., HCI): Miscellaneous.

INTRODUCTION

The use of low-fidelity and paper prototypes is now well established in the design of commercial user interfaces [11, 12, 14]. This is largely due to their relatively low cost, coupled with the results of a number of researchers [2, 13, 15, 16] who have found that the usability data that they got from low and high fidelity prototypes were comparable. Hence, this type of instrument can provide a means to gain early insights into a design before the size of the investment prevents changes being made.

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CHI 2006, April 22-27, 2006, Montréal, Québec, Canada.  
Copyright 2006 ACM 1-59593-178-3/06/0004..\$5.00.

Much of the often cited literature [11, 14] emphasizes the use of paper prototypes in usability testing [8]. The primary benefit in this case is to provide an inexpensive way to refine a design earlier in the process than would otherwise be possible. In this, they serve as an aid in *getting the design right*.

Another aspect of the relatively low cost of paper prototypes is their potential to enable the early exploration of more design alternatives than would otherwise be affordable (in time and money). Taking these two things together, an underlying question in our research is, “Can exposing users to multiple design alternatives also help us in *getting the right design*?” Besides helping us improve the usability of any particular design, can they also help us explore alternative designs?

Much of the often-cited literature on paper prototyping [11, 13, 14] focuses almost exclusively on the former. However, there is some literature on “parallel design” where different teams independently work on the same problem [7, 8, 9, 10], but this only touches on what we are interested in with the latter. Our experience in the traditional design arts, such as industrial design, graphic design and architecture, is that the simultaneous investigation of multiple alternatives by the same designer or team and the exploration of alternative designs pervades all stages of the process. The following quote from the VP of design for a major corporation captures this:

...a designer that pitched one idea would probably be fired. I'd say 3 is an entry point for an early formal review (distilled from 100's). Oh, and if you are pushing one particular deign you will be found out, and also fired. By my standard it is about open mindedness, humility, discovery, and learning. If you aren't authentically dedicated to that approach you are just doing it wrong!<sup>1</sup>

In this study, we investigate the impact of simultaneously evaluating three designs compared to just one during early usability testing.

<sup>1</sup> Alistair Hamilton, VP Design, Symbol Corp. Personal Communication.

Participants exposed to multiple prototypes (*i.e.*, alternative designs) were more critical compared to participants exposed to only a single design.

No differences were found in providing design suggestions.

Source: Tohidi *et al.*, Getting the Right Design and the Design Right, *CHI2006*

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**Perceived fidelity of prototypes** can impact **responses**

**Iteration** is critical

Prototype **multiple designs in parallel**

**Show/test multiple prototypes** to enable comparison

Use prototypes to **communicate and convince**





Source: IDEO, *Prototyping for Elmo's Monster Maker iPhone App*, <https://youtu.be/-SOeMA3DUEs>





BACK STORY

# VIDEO PROTOTYPING ELMO'S APP



Source: [http://www.slate.com/blogs/the\\_eye/2013/10/23/the\\_importance\\_of\\_prototyping\\_creative\\_confidence\\_by\\_tom\\_and\\_david\\_kelley.html](http://www.slate.com/blogs/the_eye/2013/10/23/the_importance_of_prototyping_creative_confidence_by_tom_and_david_kelley.html)

A **single take**, a **quick edit**, and the video clip was sent off to the Sesame Workshop team members just a few minutes before their meeting. Adam and Coe Leta's quick video was fun and endearing.

## Tom and David Kelley

From: *Why Designers Should Never Go to a Meeting Without a Prototype*,  
Slate 2013







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### Tom and David Kelley

From: *Why Designers Should Never Go to a Meeting Without a Prototype*,  
Slate 2013

