

LESSON

“The Value of Wireframes”

Total Time: 70 min

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

- Identify the goal of wireframing.
- Explain why wireframes are valuable during the development of a product.

OPENING

5 minutes

Introduce learning objectives

INSTRUCTOR LEADS (“I DO”)

15 minutes

Define wireframing and explain why creative teams do it. Touch on philosophy and see how wireframing differs vs. other development processes. Recommend at least one slide per question.

What are wireframes? (2 mins)

Look at a few definitions:

- a skeletal three-dimensional model in which only lines and vertices are represented.
- an image or set of images which displays the functional elements of a website or page, typically used for planning a site's structure and functionality

What are included in wireframes? (6 mins)

Summary: It should lay out the details necessary to visualize how the page will be structured

- boxes for primary graphical elements
- placement of headlines and sub-heads
- simple layout structure
- calls to action
- navigation
- links
- text blocks

NOTE: Try to include two pictures, sketched and internet-generated

What pages are included in wireframes? (1 min)

Project-dependent, but typically:

- a homepage
- all main-level sections
- sub-sections are created

Terms confused with wireframe (3 mins)

- prototype - demonstrable system; there is functionality, usually without styling
- mockups - models of the website or app design; include color logo and images
- sitemap - about content; a web page that lists structure and content of whole site; like “table of contents”

Comparison: “Think wireframe to skeleton as mockup is to skin”

Why do development teams wireframe? (6 mins)

- Wireframes make it easier (and cheaper) to make quick design changes
- Navigation around the website can be tested/tweaked quickly
- They help developers by having a clearer outline of the end product
- The ability to create more designs/layouts in a short amount of time
- Allows the client to be more engaged in the project from start to finish
- Allows the client to think deeply about their needs and goals and what the focus should be
- Gives developers clear pictures of what they will need to code and what tech is involved
- Make communication and feedback easier
- Avoid scope creeps and rework

Choose five homepage wireframes and display them to the class. Ask the class to answer the following questions: Which is your favorite and least favorite? Why? (6 mins)

KEY IDEAS: Wireframes are used to streamline the development process with a series of graphics showing the structure and function of an application's elements. It can be used to bridge the idea and the prototype. It helps clients engage and make better decisions in the process; and it allows developers and designers to get a better understanding of the product while communicating more effectively.

GROUP ACTIVITY ("WE DO")

30 minutes

Instructor facilitates student practice.

"Map that site! Exercise"

- Scenario:
 - Step 1. Outline the wireframes of popular websites: (1. from memory (2. by looking at page.
 - Step 2. Pretend you are a designer, working with a team of developers. Think about how to explain the key features of your site and how the wireframe highlights the most important features to the developers. (You'll present this to the class).
 - Step 3. Get ready to show your wireframes and present for 3 mins to the class.

Present the scenario to the students and break them up into five groups of five. Assign each group a scenario. 10 min to complete exercise. Each group presents for 3 min.

INDIVIDUAL ACTIVITY ("YOU DO")

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Homework - Create a wireframe for your final project. See course materials for assignment sheet.

CLOSING FRAMING

15 min

Debriefing the Activity & introduce homework

Ask students to explain how the wireframe affected how you communicated with the developer regarding priority of features on a page.

Ask students to recap *how and to what extent* they achieved the learning objectives (THINK-PAIR-SHARE)

Ask students how they will apply this knowledge in their own jobs and lives (Whole -group discussion).

Distribute Exit Tickets

5 min