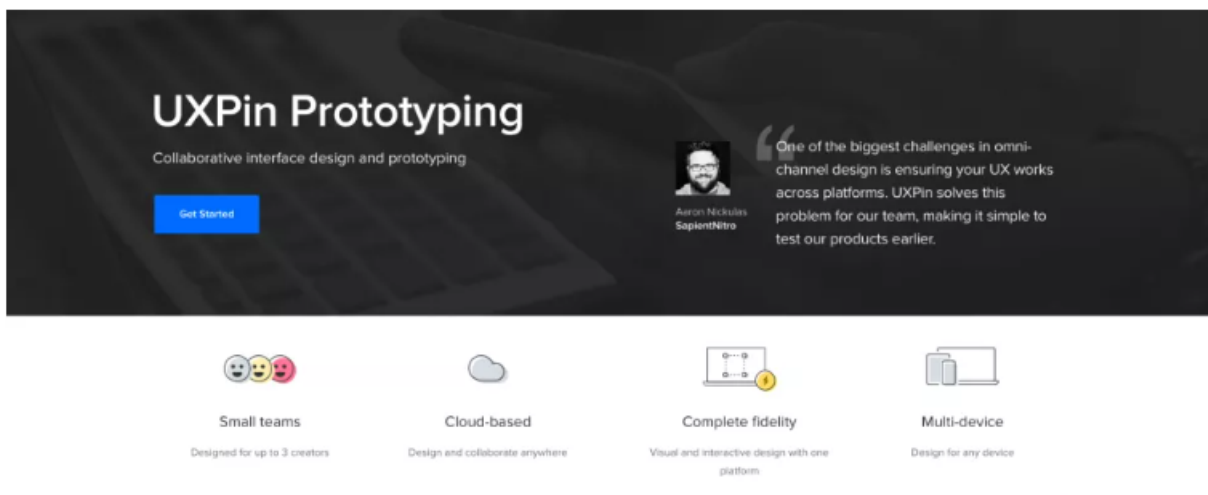


03. Using prototyping software and apps

Eager to dive straight into a computer program that's an actual representation of your idea? The beauty of prototyping software and apps is that they're specifically designed for this purpose, so they provide the perfect balance between functionality, learning curve, and ease-of-use.

Both beginner and veteran designers use specialised tools like the ones below – beginners for the ease-of-use, and veterans for the controls crafted to their particular needs.



A tool like UXPin can help non-coders build working prototypes

These tools vary in their capabilities, with some being better attuned to certain situations than others, so it's best to find the one best suited to your needs. To start on your search, you can check out tools like [UXPin](#), [InVision](#) and [Omnigraffle](#). Take a look at our list of the [top 10 prototyping tools](#) for more.

- **Speed:** Power users can work in specialised tools even faster than paper prototyping because they can create, copy and produce advanced interactions with just a few mouse clicks
- **Element libraries:** While tools like InVision are great for quick clickable prototypes that link together multiple screens with simple interactions (like click and hover), other tools like UXPin come with built-in element libraries (and let you create your own for repeated use)
- **Advanced user flows:** Flow and functionality are the most important aspects of prototyping, and most tools come with these features built-in. Most also enable you to generate sitemaps as you create new screens, and let you view them side by side for easy navigation
- **Built-in collaboration:** Many dedicated tools put collaboration front-and-centre, including the ability to comment on designs, edit them as a team, and share them via URL. The best offer revision history and cloud storage to simplify your workflow by making it device-agnostic
- **Streamlined presentation:** This can mean exporting to PDF, or exporting to a web or mobile app for a real prototype experience

Like anything in life, if you've never used it, you'll need to learn it – so it will likely take you some time to become familiar with the tool you choose. However, many app designers work to make the learning curve as shallow as possible.

Choosing a prototyping method

To take a stab at the question 'What is the best way to prototype?', we'll go with the answer: 'Whichever way works best for you'. That's not a euphemism for 'Whichever is easiest' or 'Whichever requires the least work', though. The best
