

Wireframe Tools

Wireframing is an important step in developing a website layout that is well designed and has good form and usability. Two tools I have used in this process is Adobe Illustrator and Mockingbird.

Adobe's plethora of creative programs is familiar to practically any designer. Illustrator is a flexible tool capable of making everything from print to drawings. If one is familiar with Photoshop, it very easy to transition to and learn. The tools are enough to create a wireframe for small projects. One aspect that is especially handy is the use of vector graphics meaning that the wireframes are capable of being resized easily. The organization of layers also provides a way to manipulate elements as you want them to appear. Although this program is great, if one is not familiar with the Adobe software suite it might be challenging to get into as there is a learning curve. It is not designed to be a tool specific for wireframes rather it is more of a jack-of-all trades tool.

On the other hand, Mockingbird (gomockingbird.com) is a web-browser based wireframing tool. The use of a web-browser means that installing software is not necessary and projects may be saved and accessed as long as you have a internet connection. The tool is very user-friendly and easy to get into. Building wireframes is as simple as dragging and dropping preassembled elements. With that said, it is not as flexible as Illustrator. You will not be able to create your own buttons nor will you be able to insert your own pictures or logos. The most you may do is manipulate the text in a list, button, or link however there seems to be more options when a pro-version is purchased.