

Why is prototyping so important?

Various versions of User Interfaces are tested to see how clients respond. Client response is important for main dialogs, such as a sign-up screen for a website or an e-commerce application. Working with User Interface prototypes instead of "real" User Interfaces enables you to work with small details (such as color or the position of a button), as well as a substantially reduced designer and programmer overhead in the design phase. By building mock-ups or prototypes, you receive fast feedback from prospective users for future designs. User Interface prototyping makes this possible. The feedback loop makes for quicker sophisticated designs that work for everybody, which is what matters.

You can build mock-ups or prototypes to meet the following objectives:

- Integrate GUI development with UML specifications. Since this is a new field with increased design capability, it is easier to see the missing parts in UML or User Interface modeling.
- Enable business analysts to quickly gather requirements via permanent feedback from prospective users, making it easier to obtain all the information needed.
- Create browsable User Interface prototypes/ GUI simulation/ Story-boarding. Several prototypes can be connected via hyperlinks with one another and then be presented together in a report to simulate the workflow of an application.
- Resolve flow issues. It is easier to think through a problem when a User-related Interface can be changed quickly.
- Get "buy-in" from stakeholders. A visual representation of a particular User Interface can be shown more rapidly.
- Run a usability test before full production so that potential errors in usability, like overfilled screens or a usage too complicated, can be avoided.
- Test a series of interaction widgets. Consider, for example, that another text field or button would be good on a screen. Since modifying a prototype is easy, it is much simpler to present these suggestions to others.