



## PROTOTYPING

### What is this phase about?

Prototyping is about making ideas tangible. Transform your abstract idea into something concrete and testable by adopting a build-to-think attitude.

Please always keep in mind that prototypes are not meant to last. It is not about creating the perfectly designed solution but about quickly sharing your idea with others and getting feedback at an early stage. If your prototype is too elaborate and pretty, users might be discouraged to give you critical feedback since you have already put in so much work. Hence, the "quick-and-dirty" approach is often more fruitful.

### Why is this phase important?

First of all, you prototype to learn. Creating a prototype together as a team helps to develop a common understanding of what the idea is about and what needs and problems you are addressing. Through prototyping you gain empathy with your users and often discover hidden issues and possibilities. Last but not least, prototypes are a great (and cheap) tool to get feedback from users, in order to refine your solution.

### What is required for this phase?

For prototyping you mainly need a building attitude, an open space that can get messy and simple materials like paper, cardboard, sharpies, pipe cleaners, foil, pens, playdough, forms, fabrics and old packaging. Legos and wigs are also always welcome!

In the first phase of prototyping it is advisable to split the team into pairs and trios, so they are more agile and can work on multiple prototypes. Avoid long discussions and get into building quickly.

### At the end of this phase, these questions should be considered in the team:

- What intention do you have concerning the prototype?
- What kind of experience do you want to offer with the prototype?
- Who should experience the prototype?
- What is the critical function of your idea?

### Possible Prototypes

Basically your prototype can take any physical form as long as people can experience and interact with it. Here is a selection of possible prototypes:

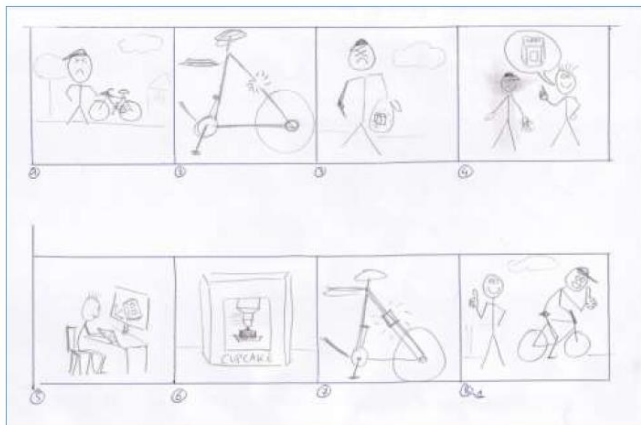
#### 3D Prototype

Take any kind of material and use it to build a physical representation of your idea. It doesn't have to be too detailed, a rough prototype already helps to demonstrate your concept. You can further iterate your prototype after the first testing feedback.



## Storyboard

Storyboards are visual prototypes, which you can use to create user scenarios. They are a great tool for communicating an idea to other team members, since they provide a better understanding of a product's usage. You can either draw a graphic comic storyboard or create a photo storyboard.



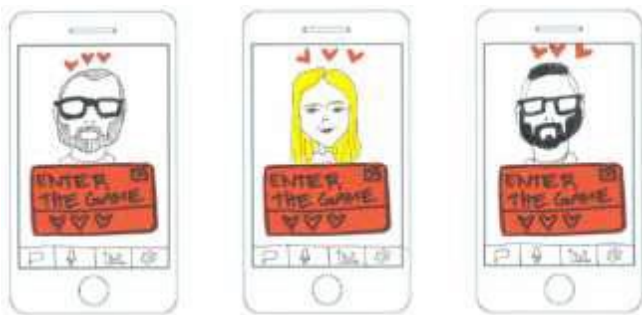
Example for a comic story board (Source: Laboratoire Ouvert Grenoblois, CC BY-SA 2.0)

## Paper Prototype

If you need to test possible sizes and shapes of an idea but neither have much time nor a wide range of materials, you can make a paper prototype. Glue–paper–scissors – and ready is your prototype!

## Paper Wireframe

If you have an idea for a website or an app, it is a good idea to start with a paper wireframe to sketch its content, layout and functions. A paper wireframe is not only easy to make but you can also iterate it quickly based on first testing feedback.





## Role Play

When your idea is not a concrete product but an experience, it is often helpful to do a role play to vividly demonstrate your solution. You can either go for an informative role play or a user-integrated role play where you invite the tester to interact with you. For both, you should think of a rough script beforehand. To get everybody in “acting mode” it is always fun to use costumes and props!

\* References:

<https://ecologic.mk/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/D-LEARNING-manual-en.pdf>