WIREFRAMING

MIS3506

Fall 2025

A wireframe is a layout of a web page that demonstrates what interface elements will exist on key pages. It is a foundational piece of the design process.
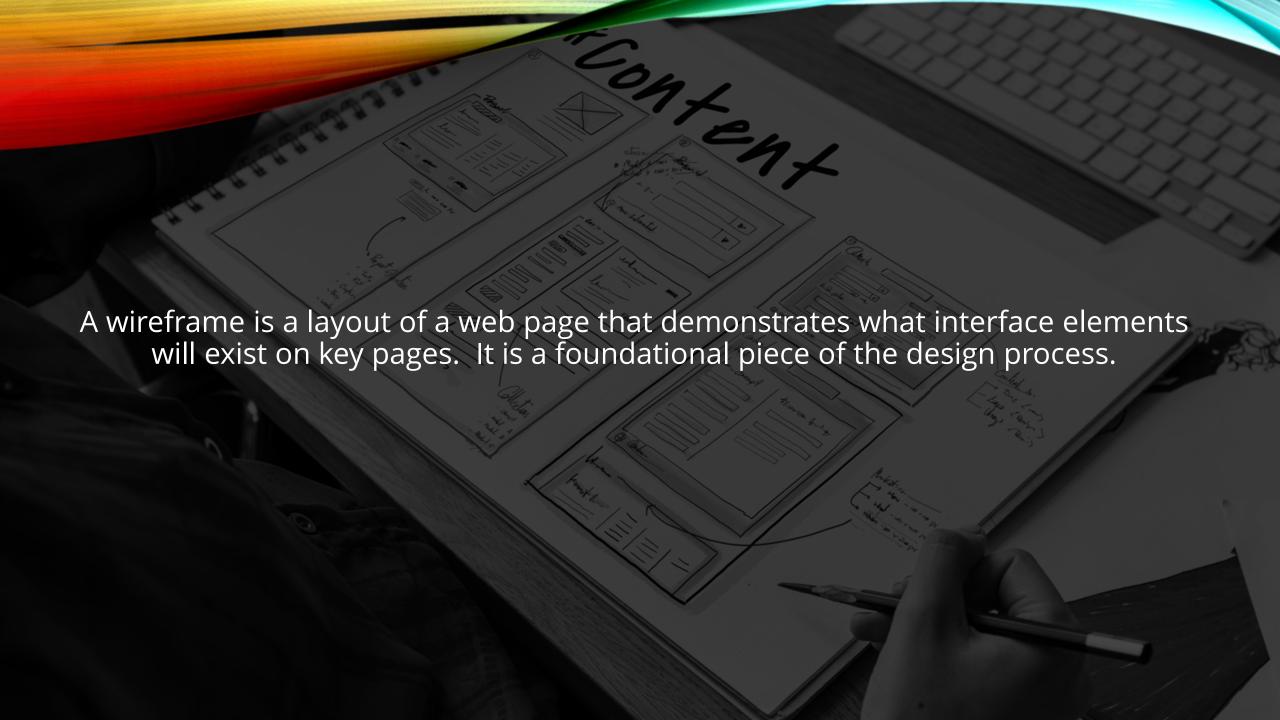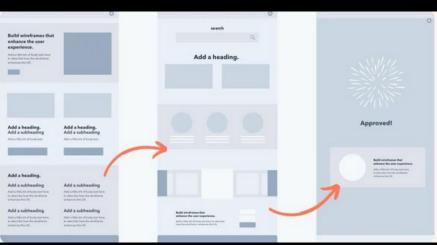
WIREFRAMING

- Wireframing is a way to design a website service at the structural level.

- A wireframe is commonly used to layout content and functionality on a page which takes into account user needs and user journeys.

- Wireframes are used early in the development process to establish the basic structure of a page before visual design and content is added.
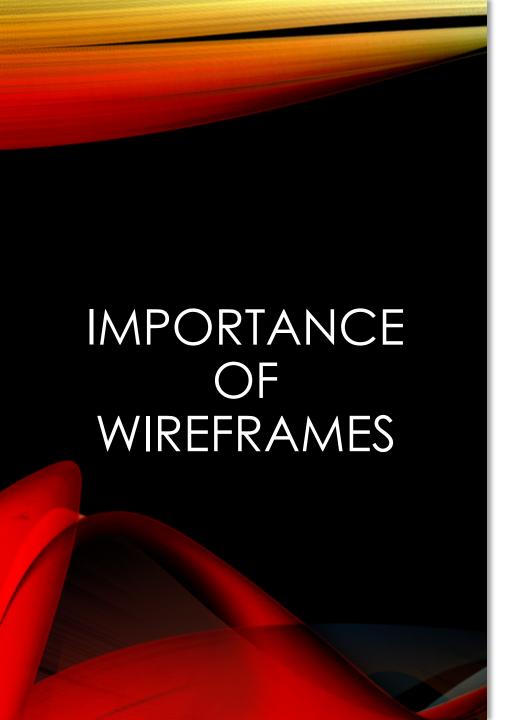
A BLUEPRINT FOR DESIGN

- **Definition**: Skeletal blueprint of digital products (websites, apps, dashboards)
- **Purpose**: Focus on structure, layout, and functionality—not visual design
- **Analogy**: Like architectural blueprints before building construction
- **Key Focus**: The "what goes where" before colors, fonts, and polish

IMPORTANCE OF WIREFRAMES

Clarify structure and information hierarchy early

Communicate ideas without visual distractions

Save time and money by catching issues before development

Improve feedback quality - stakeholders react to concrete layouts

Align teams on functionality and user flows before investment

- Low-Fidelity (Lo-Fi):
  - Basic sketches, grayscale, placeholder content
  - Focus: Layout and information architecture
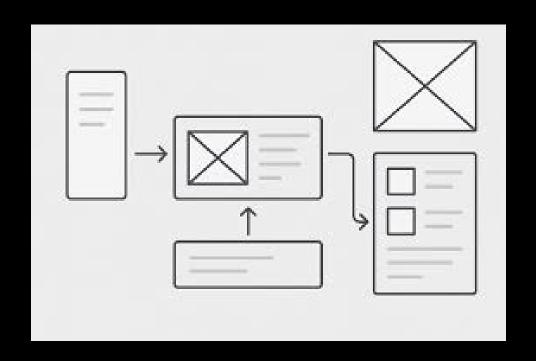 - Best for: Early concept validation, quick iteration

- High-Fidelity (Hi-Fi):
  - Detailed, real content, some branding elements
  - Focus: Near-final structure with interactions
  - Best for: User testing, design handoff preparation

WIREFRAME FIDELITY

EFFECTIVE WIREFRAMES INCLUDE:

- **Page Structure**: Element placement and screen layouts
- **Information Architecture**: Content organization and hierarchy
- **User Flow**: Navigation paths and task completion routes
- **Functionality**: Interactive elements and intended behaviors
- **Key UI Elements**: Headers, CTAs, search bars, menus

WIREFRAMES VS. PROTOTYPES

Wireframe

Low visual detail

Structure focus

Static blueprint

Early stage

Mockup

High visual fidelity

Visual design focus

Static visual

Mid-stage

Prototype

Interactive simulation

Behavior focus

Dynamic/clickable

Late stage

ADVANTAGES

- An early visual that can be used to review with the client. Users can also review it as an early feedback mechanism for prototype <u>usability tests</u>. Not only are wireframes easier to amend than concept designs, once approved by the client and the users they provide confidence to the designer.

- From a practical perspective, the wireframes ensure the page content and functionality are positioned correctly based on user and business needs.

- Vision and scope agreement!

BEST PRACTICES FOR WIREFRAMING

Keep it simple: Grayscale, limited fonts, basic shapes

Use real content when possible (avoid "Lorem Ipsum" for content-heavy UIs)

Maintain consistency across components and screens

Make navigation obvious and intuitive

Don't get attached - wireframes are meant to evolve

Focus on usability over aesthetics

WIREFRAMING IN PRACTICE

- Canva.com – Wireframe Review Template
- Miro.com – website wireframing template

- Equally good options – whichever you are comfortable with using.