The Prototyping Spectrum

An overview of the issues, goals, tools, and phases of design prototyping

"conception and shaping of the artificial"

Abstraction

low fidelity & resolution

Fuzzy idea

PHASES & PURPOSES

TYPES OF PROTOTYPES

TOOLS & MEDIA

exploratory

1 Play

Preliminary exploration and play, trying out options, feeling out the boundaries, exploring possibilities, making sense of the toolkits, etc.

Rapid Sketches

Paper Prototype

Sandbox tests & exercises

Paper & pen, stickies, print-outs
Whiteboards, improv using props

communicative

2 Propose

Well-formed proposal for discussion, evaluation, and iteration per testing

Concept Car

Sales Demo

Vision Video

Proof of Concept

Quicktime Movie, or similar

Click-through slideshow
    (Keynote, PDF, HTML, Flash)

Interactive PDF w/behaviors
Interactive HTML w/behaviors
Interactive Flash w/behaviors

{ *Area of most intense cross-disciplinary conflict/decisions* } >>>

declarative

3 Specify

Spec'd out solution (proto-spec, for instance) with granular decisions for styles, text, behaviors, animations, icons

Functional Prototype
(Prototype As Spec)

* With supporting behavior notes
* Prototype is "record of truth"

High degree of behavior simulation
(backend hooks, web services, etc.)
using HTML, Flash/Flex, XML, Java, etc.

high fidelity & resolution

Reality

"manufacturing and delivery of the artificial"

Built product

Full-blown engineering code & data

Dev toolkit (Eclipse, JDev, etc.)