Prototyping -

Why Prototype?

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Prototypes come in all forms! They might be...

- Physical components put together to function like the "real thing" (e.g. imagine what the first laptops must have looked like)

- A sleek device which people can touch and feel but with no functional parts inside (this is how they might design cell phones or game controllers)

- An engineering team trying to get a working version of their device together to show to potential investors

- A webpage which has all of the working parts but has no text, images or polish to show to "real customers"

Each of these cases, the prototype is being used to accomplish a different goal.

- By definition, a Prototype is not the final version of a product or the final solution to a problem.   Then what is

- One possibly useful definition:
  - A prototype is anything which can be used to **gather information** about how well or poorly a proposed final solution might work for the **final intended user**
  - A good prototype allows you to gather the **most information** in the **shortest amount of time** using the **fewest possible resources**

First, choose your audience:

- Who will see and use the prototype?

- What are you trying to convince them to do?

- Is a prototype really the best way to convince them? (sometimes a prototype is more distracting than helpful)

Function

Form

You will often have to decide on whether you want to have the prototype actually work, or give the impression of what the final version of the product will actually look and feel like.

Decide on which side you will focus development – it is rare to get both for an early prototype!