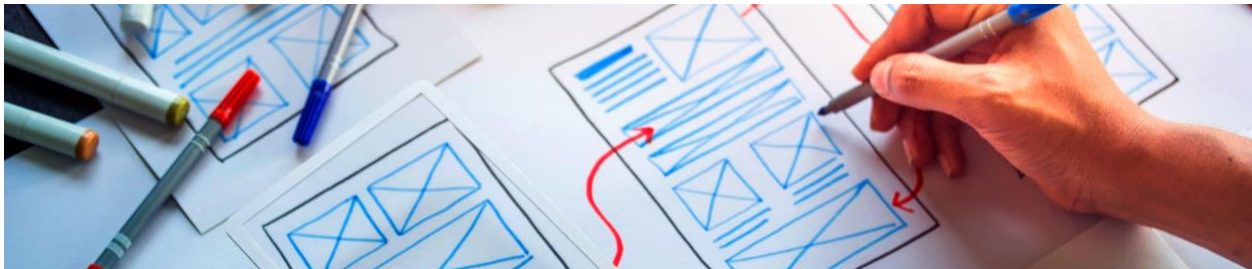# WEBSITE DESIGN – ADOBE XD PROTOTYPE PRODUCTION STEPS

After the completion of your Usability Testing (from your Wireframes), we will plan, design, and prototype your site in Adobe XD. Here are some basic production steps to follow. These are good best practices for any of our web design project.

Original inspiration and planning. Have your rough sketches (Deliverable 1) and final wireframes handy (Deliverable 2).

Image collection. Go to unsplash.com, pixabay.com, or pexels.com and collect photographs, illustrations and/or graphics that will work well and be appropriate for your website. If you are redesigning an existing site, you can collect images from that site so long as they are good quality. Of course, you are welcome to include your own, original images as well, so long as they are appropriate for the site.

Prepare your images. In either Photoshop or Illustrator, you will want to optimize all of your images for the web using the built in Image Ready function (File > Export > Save for Web (Legacy)….). Check out this handy guide to learn more about optimizing images for web.

Copy collection. In a word processing document (MS Word, Google Doc, Apple Pages) collect all of the written copy you will need for your site. This can be original writing, copy and pasted from an original site (redesign), or simply Lorem Ipsum to be used as a placeholder. If you need to generate enough Lorem Ipsum, go here.

Decide on colors and fonts. Create a style guide/visual library of all the visual elements that will be used in your website design. From color palette to font choices to graphics, images and icons. In Illustrator, create a large artboard and place and embed 4 to 6 of your favorite images from the collection above. Create 4 to 6 1-inch squares. Using the eyedropper tool, start pulling colors that you like from the images and filling each of the squares. Play around and explore different combinations of colors until you are happy with your palette. Be sure to have one really dark color (not necessarily black) and one really light color (not necessarily white) to use where high contrast is needed.

Next, in the same artboard, create some type samples (headline, sub headline, body copy, lists). Decide on fonts for each but limit yourself to 2 or 3 fonts (with good style choices). Be sure to name the font next to each sample, so you remember what you chose.

Prepare you file folders. Now it's time to get organized. Create a new folder and name it for the project and/or client. Inside that folder, create a folder named "Site" and another named "Production". Inside the "Site" folder, create a folder named "images". Place all of your optimized images from above into this folder. Place your collection of copy in the "Production" folder. From here, any original items (copy or images) goes in "Production" while all optimized images go in "images" under "Site".

Open Adobe XD. Launch Adobe XD and, from the Home Screen, choose the screen size you are designing for. This will then open up the appropriately sized art board into the XD workspace. Name your first art board "index". This is your home page.

If you are creating a single-screen site, you will need to duplicate that artboard after the basic layout is complete. If you are creating a scrolling site, you will pull downward on the bottom anchor point of the art board to lengthen it. The resulting dashed line indicates the "fold" and upper most section.

Design in Adobe XD. All XD projects begin under the "Design" tab (at the top of the workspace). Using basic shapes and the document guides, plan out your screen(s), following the layout from your final wireframes. Use guides further to create a design grid to help you line up elements.

Once happy with your layout, you can begin to assign colors, at bits of type, images, etc. Be thoughtful and purposeful as you add visual elements. Keep in mind good design practices such as use of margins, negative space, visual hierarchy, alignment, and so on. Take your time. Try many options. Play. Once happy with your design, continue the process onto the other screens or sections of the site.

Tip: Be sure to group objects together that make up a single element (button, frame, etc.)

Tip: Leave a good amount of room between each artboard. This will make the prototyping phase easier.

Prototype in Adobe XD. With you design completed, click on the "Prototype" tab at the top of the workspace. You will see less tools now in the left-hand toolbox and your artboard(s) will be highlighted with blue elements. This takes us into the prototyping tools in XD. Using the blue circles (with directional arrows inside) you will begin making artboard-to-artboard and object-artboard links. You can test these links as you go by clicking the Play Button (black triangle) in the upper-right corner of the workspace.

Note that each link you create can be adjusted using the settings on the right-hand palette. Take your time. Try many options. Play.

Publish in Adobe XD. Once you are happy with the prototype of your site, click on the "Share" tab at the top of the workspace. Here, in the right-hand palette, you will be able to adjust settings and create a link to your published XD Prototype. Share the link with others so they can test out your site.

Adobe XD Tutorials. Many helpful Adobe XD tutorials can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

PROJECT 1: A Real-Life Redesign

Developing a website for a company of any size can take a long time — months, years even. This is to say nothing of the cost or amount of people who worked on it. As such, it's not surprising that most companies are not in a huge hurry to redesign an existing site, no matter how old or ineffective it has become. Luckily, they have you guys to help them out.

Directions

Identify a company that you really like. It can be a retailer, major company, small-town falafel restaurant, non-profit organization, municipality, etc. It should also be a company whose website you think is in need of an overhaul. Perhaps the visual design looks dated. Maybe the navigation is confusing. Is the content not working for you? Media poorly implemented? Whatever it is (or maybe it's everything), you are to document those shortcomings, devise a plan to make it better, and design them a new and improved website prototype.

Prep Steps

1. Research your chosen company. Learn about what they do and how they do it.
2. Review their current website. Look closely at how elements and pages look *and* function.
3. List and annotate all of their site's shortcomings as you see them.
4. Begin your redesign of their website following our Web Design Project Workflow.

Specs

You must redesign the homepage (index) and two other pages of your choice (minimum).

If you create a scrolling site, you must include a minimum of three equal-height sections.

You must use the company's actual logo and branding elements (graphics, type, color).

You are free to alter, edit, or completely replace any of the content on their existing website.

For simplicity, all website redesigns will be created at the size 1920 x 1080 pixels.

Note that "above the fold" content fits inside the first 1920 x 1080 section – the home page.

On scrolling sites, each subsequent section would measure 1920 x 1080 pixels.

About Website Redesigns

Five Excellent Website Redesigns

PROJECT 2: An Excellent E-commerce Site

Theme: 25 Years of Toy Design at FIT (Fashion Institute of Technology)

About the Theme: FIT's Pioneering Toy Design Program Celebrated its 25th Anniversary in 2016. FIT's Toy Design BFA program - the first of its kind in the world - has at its heart a respect for children and for play. That's why the program has been so successful, producing graduates who shape the industry, working on some of the world's most iconic toys.

Directions: Go to the link below and look through the flip book of student toy design from 1991 to 2016. Choose a toy that you will create an excellent e-commerce site for – no duplicates. (Note that right-clicking on your chosen image will allow you to save that image for reference)

LINK: https://www.fitnyc.edu/toy-design/25th-anniversary/

Prep Steps:
1. Write a one-page explanation of what you think this toy is all about (What is its name and narrative? What are its play features? Who is its intended audience?).
2. Next, imagine what other toys, accessories, or items would complement your main toy, expand its world, and be offered alongside it. Write a second page about these.
3. You may include sketches. Use your imagination. Be specific.
4. Begin your website design following our Web Design Project Workflow

Planning an E-Commerce Website
Simply put, an e-commerce website is a website people can directly buy products from. Any website that includes a shopping cart and a way for you to provide payment information to make a purchase falls into this category. While there are many back-end things to set up a working e-commerce site (choosing in ecommerce software, getting an SSL certificate, etc.), we will be focusing on the front-end design here with an eye toward user experience, supporting sales, and customer service.

Visit a number of e-commerce sites (perhaps some you shop at) and begin compiling a list of visual and interactive elements that you think are most effective. These can include introductory narrative(s) and world building, play scenarios, image galleries, toy specifications, product descriptions, customer reviews and ratings, and more.

Specs
You must include a homepage, shopping cart, product page, and another of your choice.

If you create a scrolling site, you must include a minimum of four equal-height sections.

For simplicity, all website redesigns will be created at the size 1920 x 1080 pixels.

Note that "above the fold" content fits inside the first 1920 x 1080 section – the home page.

On scrolling sites, each subsequent section would measure 1920 x 1080 pixels.

To Learn More: https://www.hostgator.com/blog/get-ecommerce-website-running/

The Web Design Project Workflow

There are two major Web Design Projects in DMD220. While each one is different in theme and intent, you will follow the Web Design (UX) Project Workflow (outlined below) for each.

What is a UX workflow?
A UX workflow outlines all the steps within your process, from doing UX research and gathering user feedback, defining design specifications, to low fidelity wireframing and high-fidelity prototyping, ui, ux design, and performing user and usability testing prior to development.

The Importance of a Good Workflow
Regardless of what type of designer you are, you will need a good workflow to stay productive, on task, and to hit deadlines. From illustration, to graphic design, to web design – whether working alone or in teams – a good workflow is essential. Unfortunately, there is not one, perfect workflow for everyone and every situation. Ultimately, through experience and trial and error, you will begin to develop a system (or systems) that work best for you. In a studio or office environment, you will likely have a workflow imposed upon you. Understanding the importance of a good workflow and learning how to be creative within that structure, is key to becoming a successful designer and content creator.

> Here is a data visualization of the workflow we use in this class:

There are **three deliverables** for each Project, as part of this workflow:

Deliverable 1: Written responses to Steps 1-3 and sketches from Step 4

Deliverable 2: Final wireframes and usability testing report

Deliverable 3: Full prototype in Adobe XD and Online publication

On the next page, the workflow steps are explained in detail, including the required deliverables.   **>>**

1. **PROJECT INTRODUCTION**

2. **NEEDS ASSESSMENT**
   Review the Project Handout a couple of times and begin to ask yourself some questions about the client and the proposed project. What problem(s) are the client trying to solve with this web design project? What type of content does the client expect to see on their website? What are the project's specifications (specs)?

3. **RESEARCH**
   Using reliable sources from the web and/or the library, you are to conduct research and answer more questions. What is your client all about? What are their goals? What do they do best? Who is their intended audience? Also, be sure to research other similar organizations. Their competition. Get to know their industry and how that is represented best on the web.

4. **IDEATION**
   Now it is time to use your imagination and start to brainstorm ideas about what your client's website may look like, the content it will have, and how it will be visually presented. Your initial needs assessment and research will drive your brainstorming (ideation) practice. There are no bad ideas at this stage. Simply go through any concepts you have.

5. **SKETCH**
   Next, you will start to create sketches of your best ideas (on paper, in your notebook). Keep these loose and fast, creating many iterations of them.

❖ **DELIVERABLE 1:** You will submit a document that contains your written responses to Steps 1-3 as well as your sketches from Step 4.

6. **WIREFRAMES**
   Based on your best sketches, create a set of wireframe drawings, either using Adobe Illustrator or on graph paper (with pencil and ruler). These are to be neat and detailed with one web page per artboard/piece of paper.

7. **USABILITY TESTING**
   Follow the guidelines on the *What is Usability Testing* handout.

❖ **DELIVERABLE 2:** Submit your final wireframes and a usability testing report from Steps 5 and 6.

8. **REPEAT**
   Steps 3-6 (as needed) based on User Testing Results

9. **ARTWORK**
   In Adobe Illustrator, you will create a style guide/visual library of all the visual elements that will be used in your website design. From color palette to font choices to graphics, images and icons.

10. **PROTOTYPE**
    You will build a working prototype of your website design in Adobe XD.

11. **PUBLISH**
    You will publish your final XD prototype via Adobe solutions

❖ **DELIVERABLE 3:** Submit your final full prototype in Adobe XD and online publication.