Prototyping

❓What is it

- Prototyping serves as a tangible or interactive representation of one or more solution options from the opportunities generated during the discovery phase. The main purpose of prototyping is to visualize how the final product will function and to test this with users. Prototyping has greatly diminished value when not tested with end users. The number of tests recommended falls in line with qualitative research numbers.
- Prototyping minimises the effort expended to validate satisfying the user needs before creating detailed UX designs and associated technical solution designs, and is a key aspect of both lean experimentation and design thinking methods.
- Enhancing a lo-fi prototype with a prototype specification helps the team and stakeholders to self-answer a number of inherent curiosities, e.g. "Under what conditions does a page element show as active or inactive?". It removes uncertainty about how the design works and improves communication efficiency.
- Prototyping covers a range of fidelity, from paper prototypes to clickable wireframes. The approach taken is typically influenced by the product's development stage.

🔑 Key Benefits / Why is this important

- Have a solid foundation from which to ideate towards improvements
- Direct interaction with a prototype allows users to provide immediate feedback, which is invaluable for product improvement
- Since prototypes are often low-fidelity, the cost of failure is low. This encourages experimentation and innovation at pace
- Improve time-to-market by minimizing the number of errors to correct before product release. Finding issues in UAT is far more expensive and time consuming to fix.

🛠 Techniques supporting this practice

- Lo-fi prototyping
- Test and Learn cards