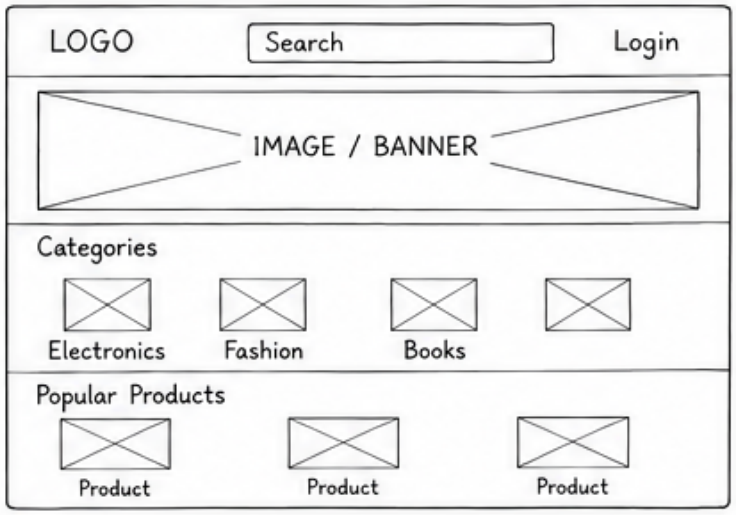
3.8 LOW-FIDELITY WIREFRAMES

Introduction:

- A **Low-Fidelity (Low-Fi) Wireframe** is a **simple visual representation of a digital interface** that shows the basic structure, layout, and functionality of a screen without focusing on colors, images, fonts, or detailed visual design.
- It is usually created during the **early stages of the UX design process** to explore ideas quickly and identify problems before investing time in detailed design.

For example, before designing an e-commerce home page in Figma, a designer may first sketch:



- Notice that there are no final colors, images, shadows, or detailed typography. The designer is mainly thinking about **where things should go**.

Why are Low-Fidelity Wireframes Used?

- Imagine designing a complete website directly with colors, images, animations, and detailed typography.
- After showing it to users, you discover: "The navigation is confusing."

- Changing the navigation at this stage can require considerable redesign.
- Instead, a UX designer first creates a rough wireframe.
- If the idea is wrong, it can be changed in a few minutes.

Therefore:

- **Low-fidelity wireframes allow designers to fail early, learn quickly, and improve the design before spending significant time on visual details.**

Main Purpose of Low-Fidelity Wireframes

Low-Fi wireframes mainly focus on:

- **Layout**
- **Structure**
- **Navigation**
- **Content hierarchy**
- **Screen organization**
- **User flow**
- **Basic functionality**
- **Placement of UI elements**

They do **not** primarily focus on:

- Brand colors
- Final images
- Decorative graphics
- Detailed typography
- Shadows
- Gradients
- Animations
- Final visual styling

Example: Login Page - Low-Fidelity Wireframe Suppose we need to design a login page.



At this stage, the designer is asking:

- Is the login button easy to find?
- Are the fields placed logically?
- Is "Forgot Password" in the right location?
- Is the layout simple?

The designer is **not yet deciding the final colors or font styles**.

Characteristics of Low-Fidelity Wireframes

1. Simple

They contain only essential interface elements.

2. Quick to create

They can be created using:

- Paper
- Pencil
- Whiteboard
- Sticky notes
- Figma
- Balsamiq
- Adobe XD

3. Easy to modify:

Because they contain minimal detail, designers can quickly change the layout.

4. Focused on functionality:

The main concern is: **"How will the interface work?"**

rather than: **"How beautiful will it look?"**

5. Low visual detail:

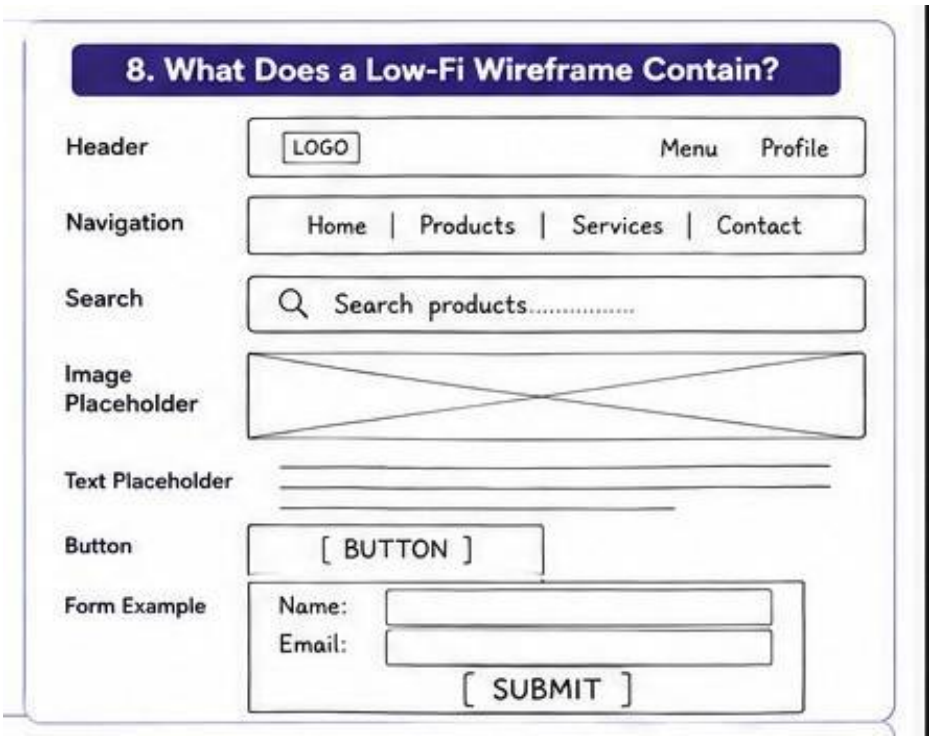
Colors, images, icons and decorative elements are usually minimized.

6. Supports experimentation:

Designers can create several alternative solutions before choosing one.

What Does a Low-Fi Wireframe Contain?

A low-fidelity wireframe may contain:



Low-Fidelity Wireframes and User Flow:

Low-Fi wireframes help convert a **user flow** into actual screens.

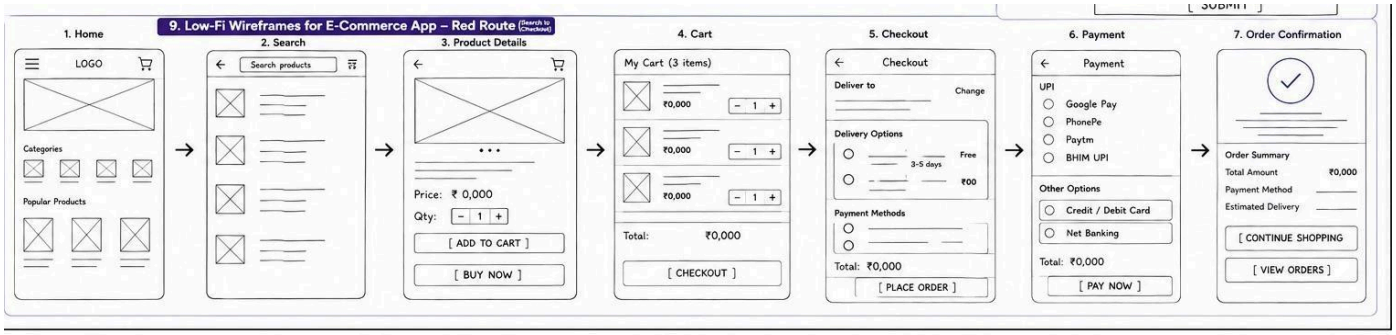
For example: **User Flow**

Login → Home → Search Product → Product Details → Cart

- The designer creates a basic wireframe for each screen.
- This allows the designer to check whether the user can move smoothly from one step to another.

Low-Fidelity Wireframe Example: E-Commerce App

Suppose a user wants to purchase a mobile phone.



Advantages of Low-Fidelity Wireframes:

Fast: They can be created quickly.

Low Cost: They require fewer resources.

Easy to Change: Designers can modify ideas without significant effort.

Encourages Creativity: Multiple design alternatives can be explored.

Focuses on User Needs: It prevents designers from becoming distracted by visual styling.

Supports Collaboration: Designers, developers, clients, and users can discuss the basic structure easily.

Helps Identify Problems Early: Navigation and layout problems can be discovered before detailed development.

Limitations of Low-Fidelity Wireframes: Low-Fi wireframes also have some limitations.

Limited Visual Representation: They do not show the final appearance of the application.

Limited Interaction: They may not demonstrate complex interactions or animations.

Can Be Misinterpreted: Stakeholders may assume that the rough design represents the final interface.

Limited Branding: Brand colors, typography and visual identity are usually not represented.

Less Realistic Testing: They may not provide the same experience as a high-fidelity prototype.

Low-Fidelity Wireframe vs High-Fidelity Wireframe:

Feature	Low-Fidelity	High-Fidelity
Detail	Low	High
Colors	Usually minimal	Realistic
Images	Placeholders	Actual images
Typography	Basic	Final typography
Interaction	Basic/limited	More realistic
Creation time	Short	Longer
Modification	Easy	More time-consuming
Main focus	Structure & functionality	Visual design & interaction
Stage	Early design	Later design
Example	Sketch	Detailed Figma prototype

Tools Used for Low-Fidelity Wireframing

Designers can create Low-Fi wireframes using:

- **Paper and pencil**
- Whiteboards
- Sticky notes
- **Figma**
- Balsamiq
- Adobe XD

However, **paper sketching is often the fastest method during the initial ideation stage**.

Low-Fidelity Wireframing Process

Step 1 – Understand the user

Identify:

- Who is the user?
- What does the user need?

Step 2 – Identify the task

Determine what the user wants to accomplish.

Example:

"Student wants to register for a course."

Step 3 – Identify the Red Route

Example:

Login → Courses → Select Course → Register → Confirmation

Step 4 – Identify required screens

Create screens for:

- Login
- Course List
- Course Details
- Registration
- Confirmation

Step 5 – Sketch the layout

Use simple boxes, lines and placeholders.

Step 6 – Review

Ask:

- Is navigation clear?
- Is important information visible?
- Are there unnecessary steps?
- Can users understand what to do next?

Step 7 – Test and improve

Show the wireframe to users and modify it based on feedback.

3.9. HIGH FIDELITY WIREFRAME

1. What is a High-Fidelity Wireframe?

- A **High-Fidelity (Hi-Fi) Wireframe** is a detailed, interactive visual representation of a digital interface.
- It closely resembles the final product in:
  - Layout
  - Content
  - Colors
  - Typography
  - Design elements
- Usually created during the **later stages of UX design**.

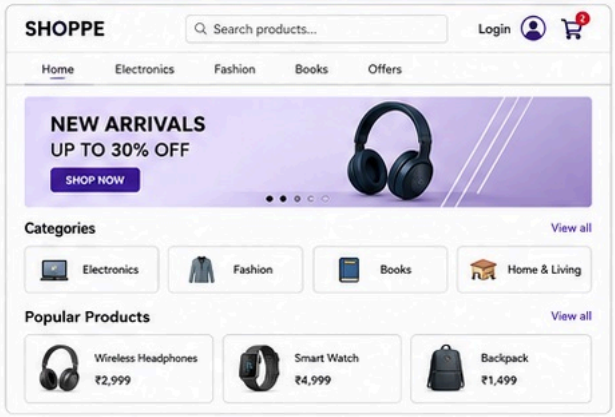
1. What is High-Fidelity Wireframe?

- A High-Fidelity (High-Fi) Wireframe is a detailed, interactive visual representation of a digital interface that closely resembles the final product in terms of layout, content, colors, typography, and design elements.
- It is usually created in the later stages of the UX design process to validate design decisions, test usability, and communicate the final experience before development.

2. Simple Definition

A high-fidelity wireframe is a detailed, realistic interface design that includes final content, colors, typography, images, and interactions to simulate the actual user experience.

3. Example – Home Page (High-Fidelity Wireframe)



4. Why are High-Fi Wireframes Used?

- Provides a realistic preview of the final product
- Helps in user testing and usability evaluation
- Improves communication with clients and stakeholders
- Reduces ambiguity for developers
- Saves time and cost by validating early

5. Main Purpose

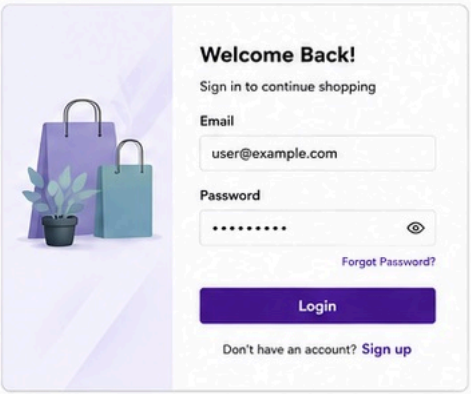
High-Fi wireframes focus on:

- ✓ Visual Design
- ✓ Real Content
- ✓ Typography
- ✓ Colors & Branding
- ✓ Images & Icons
- ✓ Micro-interactions
- ✓ Usability Testing
- ✓ Final User Experience
- ✓ Design Validation
- ✓ Developer Handoff

They do NOT focus on:

- ✗ Ideas Generation
- ✗ Basic Structure
- ✗ Low-level Details
- ✗ Complex Animations
- ✗ Backend Logic
- ✗ Final Code
- ✗ Technical Architecture

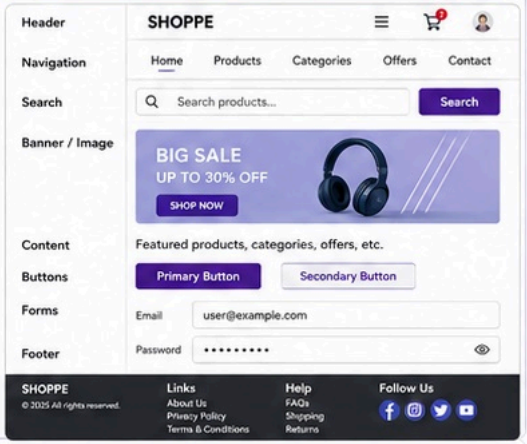
6. Example – Login Page (High-Fidelity Wireframe)



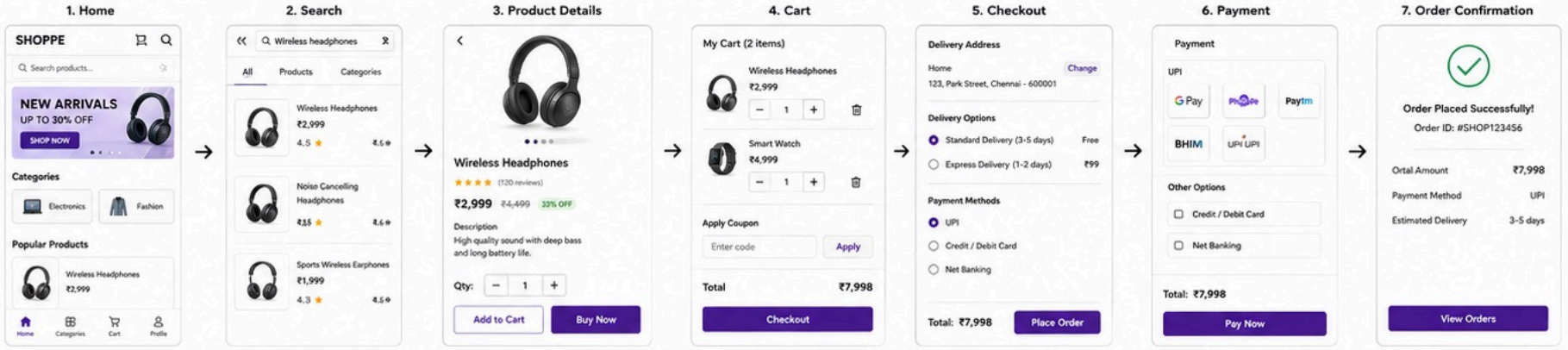
7. Characteristics of High-Fi Wireframes

- Highly detailed and realistic
- Uses real content and branding
- Interactive and clickable elements
- Consistent with design system
- Usability test ready
- Close to final product
- Easy to understand for all stakeholders
- Developer ready for implementation

8. What Does a High-Fi Wireframe Contain?



9. High-Fidelity Wireframes for E-Commerce App – Red Route (Search to Order)



- Used to:
    - Validate design decisions
    - Test usability
    - Communicate the final user experience before development

2. Simple Definition

A high-fidelity wireframe is a **detailed and realistic interface design** that includes:

- Final content
- Colors
- Typography
- Images
- Interactions

It is designed to simulate the **actual user experience**.

3. Example – E-Commerce Home Page

The example shows an online shopping website called **SHOPPE**.

Main elements:

- Header with logo, search bar, login, user profile and cart
- Navigation:
    - Home
    - Electronics
    - Fashion
    - Books
    - Offers
- **New Arrivals** promotional banner
- Categories:
    - Electronics
    - Fashion
    - Books
    - Home & Living
- Popular products:
    - Wireless Headphones
    - Smart Watch

- Backpack

4. Why Are High-Fidelity Wireframes Used?

- Provide a **realistic preview** of the final product
- Help with **user testing and usability evaluation**
- Improve communication with **clients and stakeholders**
- Reduce ambiguity for **developers**
- Save **time and cost** by identifying problems early

5. Main Purpose

High-fidelity wireframes focus on:

- Visual Design
- Real Content
- Typography
- Colors & Branding
- Images & Icons
- Micro-interactions
- Usability Testing
- Final User Experience
- Design Validation
- Developer Handoff

They do NOT focus on:

- Ideas Generation
- Basic Structure
- Low-level Details
- Complex Animations
- Backend Logic
- Final Code
- Technical Architecture

6. Example – Login Page

The login page contains:

- Welcome message: **"Welcome Back!"**
- Email field
- Password field

- Show/hide password option
- **Login** button
- **Forgot Password?** link
- **Sign Up** link for new users
- Supporting visual/image on the left

7. Characteristics of High-Fidelity Wireframes

A Hi-Fi wireframe is:

- Highly detailed and realistic
- Based on real content and branding
- Interactive with clickable elements
- Consistent with the design system
- Ready for usability testing
- Close to the final product
- Easy for stakeholders to understand
- Ready for developer implementation

8. What Does a High-Fidelity Wireframe Contain?

Typical components:

- **Header** – logo, menu, cart, profile
- **Navigation** – links to different pages
- **Search** – product search field
- **Banner/Image** – promotional or visual content
- **Content** – products, categories, offers, etc.
- **Buttons** – primary and secondary actions
- **Forms** – email, password and other inputs
- **Footer** – links, help, social media, copyright

9. E-Commerce App Flow: Red Site → Search to Order

The wireframe demonstrates a complete shopping journey:

1. Home

- Search products
- Promotional banner
- Categories
- Popular products

- Bottom navigation: Home, Categories, Cart, Profile

2. Search

- Search for **Wireless Headphones**
- Results display:
  - Product image
  - Product name
  - Price
  - Rating
  - Reviews
  - Discount

3. Product Details

- Wireless Headphones
- Price: **₹2,999**
- Original price: **₹4,499**
- **30% OFF**
- Product description
- Quantity selector
- **Add to Cart**
- **Buy Now**

4. Cart

- Shows selected products
- Quantity controls
- Remove/delete option
- Apply coupon
- Total amount
- **Checkout** button

5. Checkout

- Delivery address
- Delivery options:
  - Standard Delivery (3–5 days) – Free
  - Express Delivery (1–2 days) – ₹99
- Payment methods

- Total amount
- **Place Order** button

6. Payment

Payment options include:

- UPI
- Credit/Debit Card
- Net Banking
- Other supported UPI/payment apps
- Total: **₹7,998**
- **Pay Now** button

7. Order Confirmation

- Green confirmation/check icon
- Message: **Order Placed Successfully!**
- Order ID
- Total amount: **₹7,998**
- Payment method: **UPI**
- Estimated delivery: **3–5 days**
- **View Orders** button