

# Balsamiq Mockups & Process

I198: UI Prototyping  
Tuesday 26 February 2013

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# Who am I?

- freelance User Experience Designer
- started out as a Web Designer during the first tech bubble
- took a detour through Urban Design (masters' from Cal in ARCH and DCRP in 2008)
- missed tech! learning from users, the quick pace of design and innovation, etc.

# Balsamiq Mockups



- a lightweight, easy-to-learn prototyping tool
- meant to enable “digital drawing” – keeps wireframes looking like rough sketches rather than a polished end product
- best for “wireframes with annotations”
- good for the earlier, more generative stages of a project

# Balsamiq Mockups



Increased  
Time & Effort

Working Code

Rich Interaction  
Prototypes

Click Through  
Prototypes

Storyboards

Flow Charts

Wireframes with  
Interaction Flow

Wireframes  
with Annotation



Mockups  
Friendly Zone

Use Cases

Sketchboards

Quicker  
Less Effort

Stories &  
Scenarios

Sketches

Words

Words & Pictures

Words, Pictures, Code

# Their Manifesto (partial)

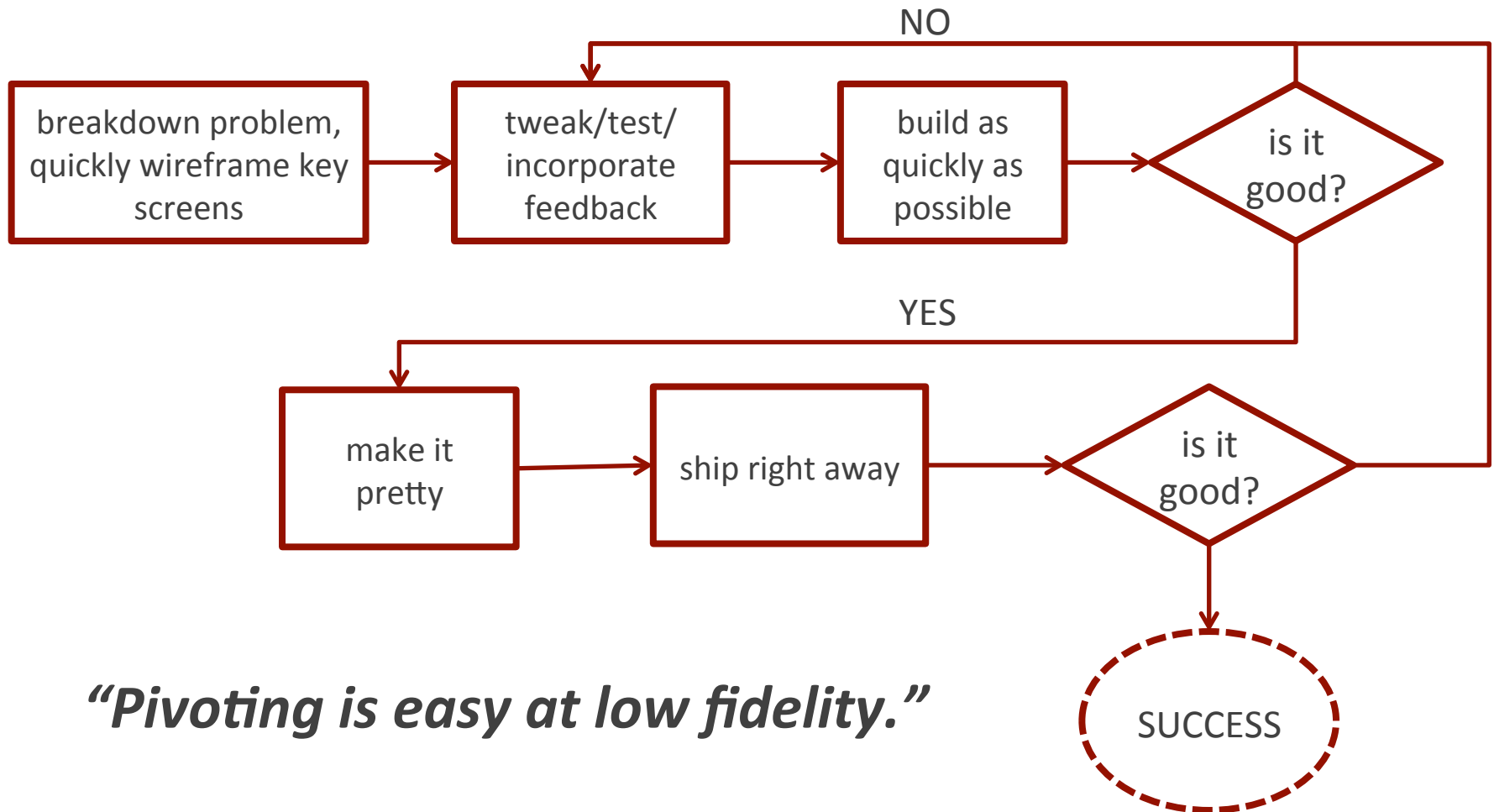


- Our sweet spot: the ideation phase
- Excruciatingly simple, filled with hidden powers
- Wireframing + real running code is way better than prototyping
- Low in cost, high in quality, built with love
- We love the problem even more than our solution

“Sketches and prototypes are both instantiations of the design concept. However they serve different purposes... **Sketches dominate the early ideation stages**, whereas prototypes are more concentrated at the later stages where things are converging within the design funnel.”

- Bill Buxton, *Sketching User Experiences*

# Balsamiq's idea of the design process: wireframe + code (simplified)



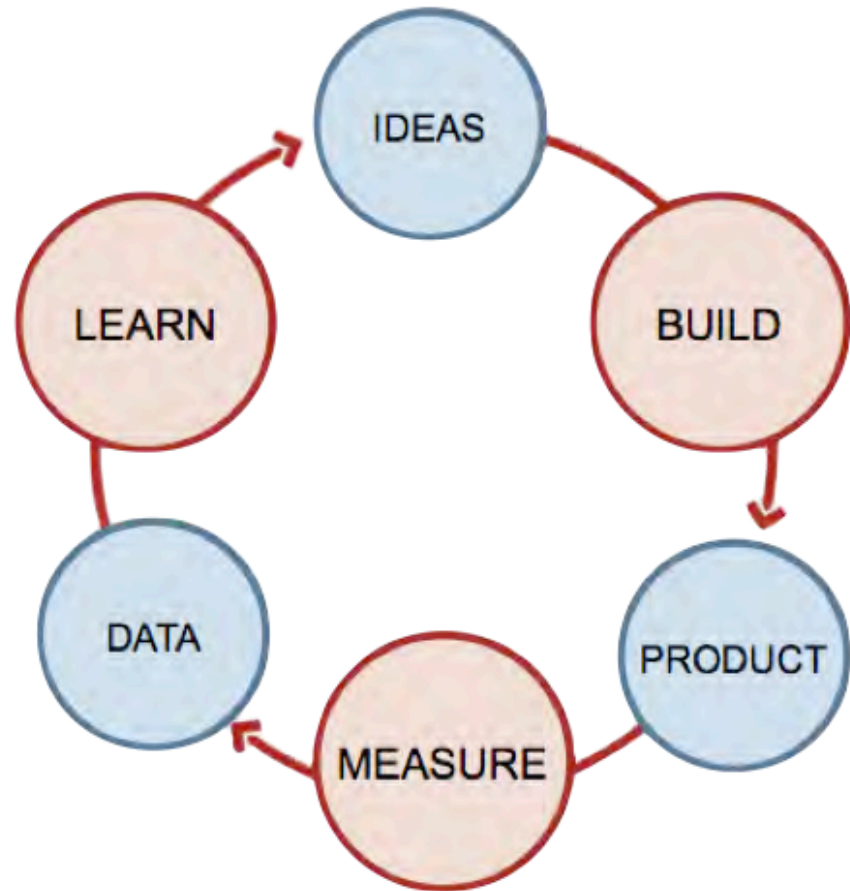
***“Pivoting is easy at low fidelity.”***

# The Lean Startup Process

**Build.  
Measure.  
Learn!**

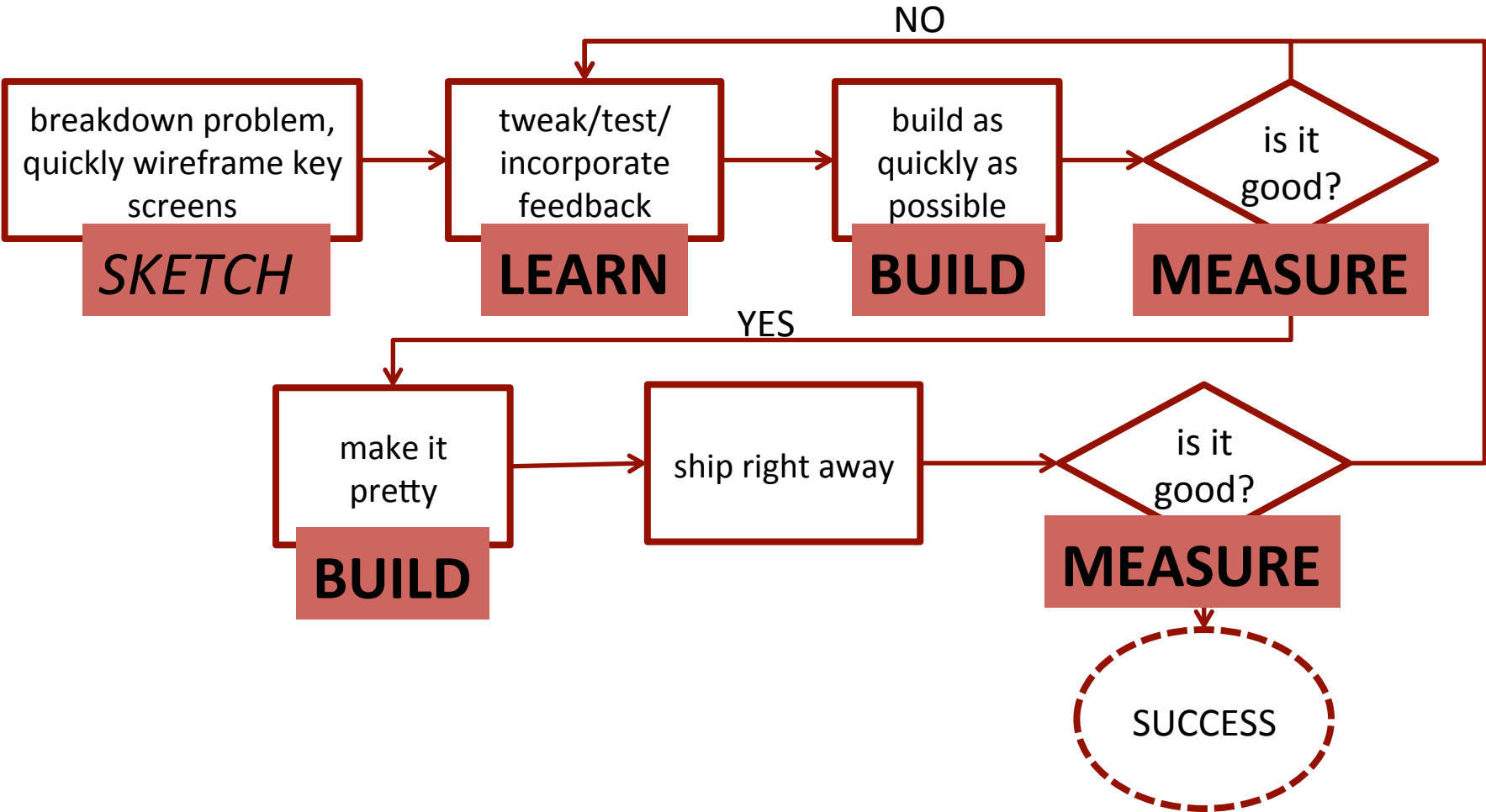


Eric Ries





# Balsamiq's idea of the design process: wireframe + code (simplified)



# Strengths *and* Weaknesses

**easy to learn**

it's one of the quickest-to-pick-up wireframing tools around, thus **particularly great for non-designers**

**no rich interactivity**

designed to be used for **low-fidelity sketching** as opposed to high-fidelity interactive prototyping

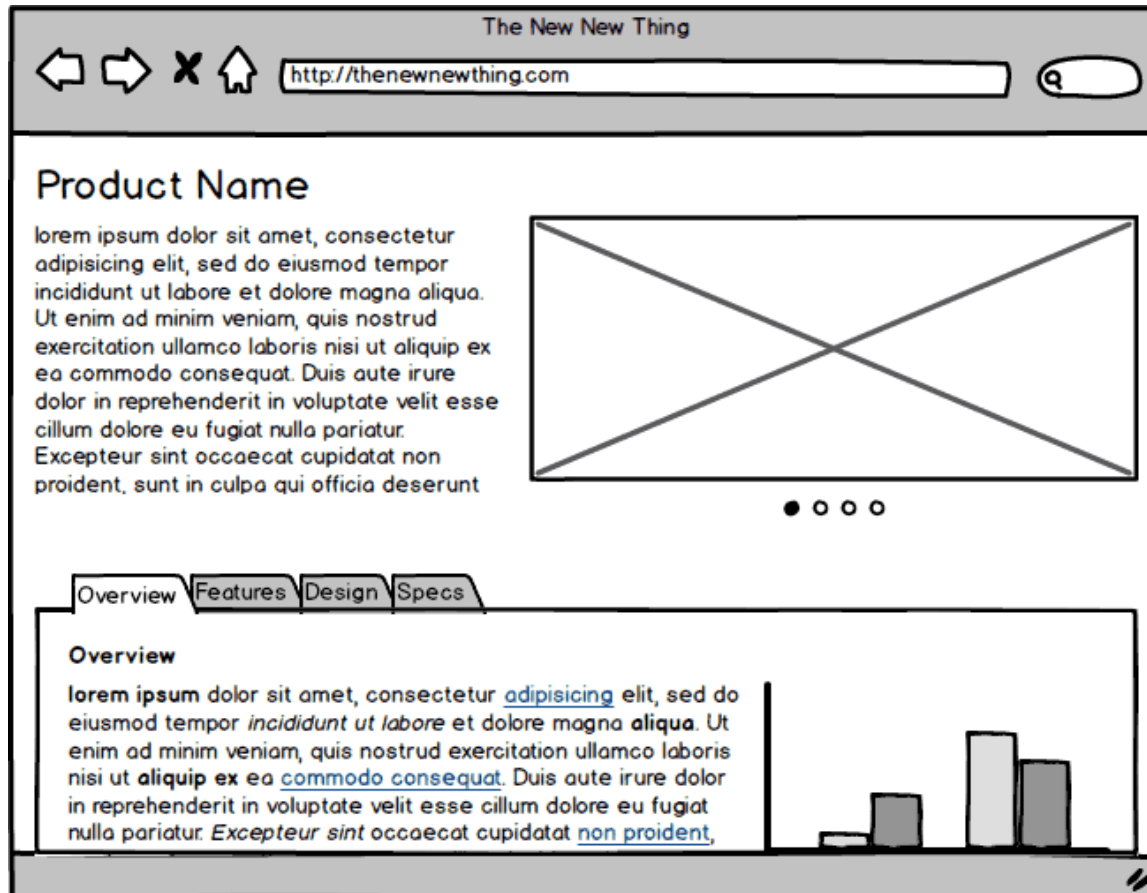
# Design process-related quotes

**“Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.” - Samuel Beckett**

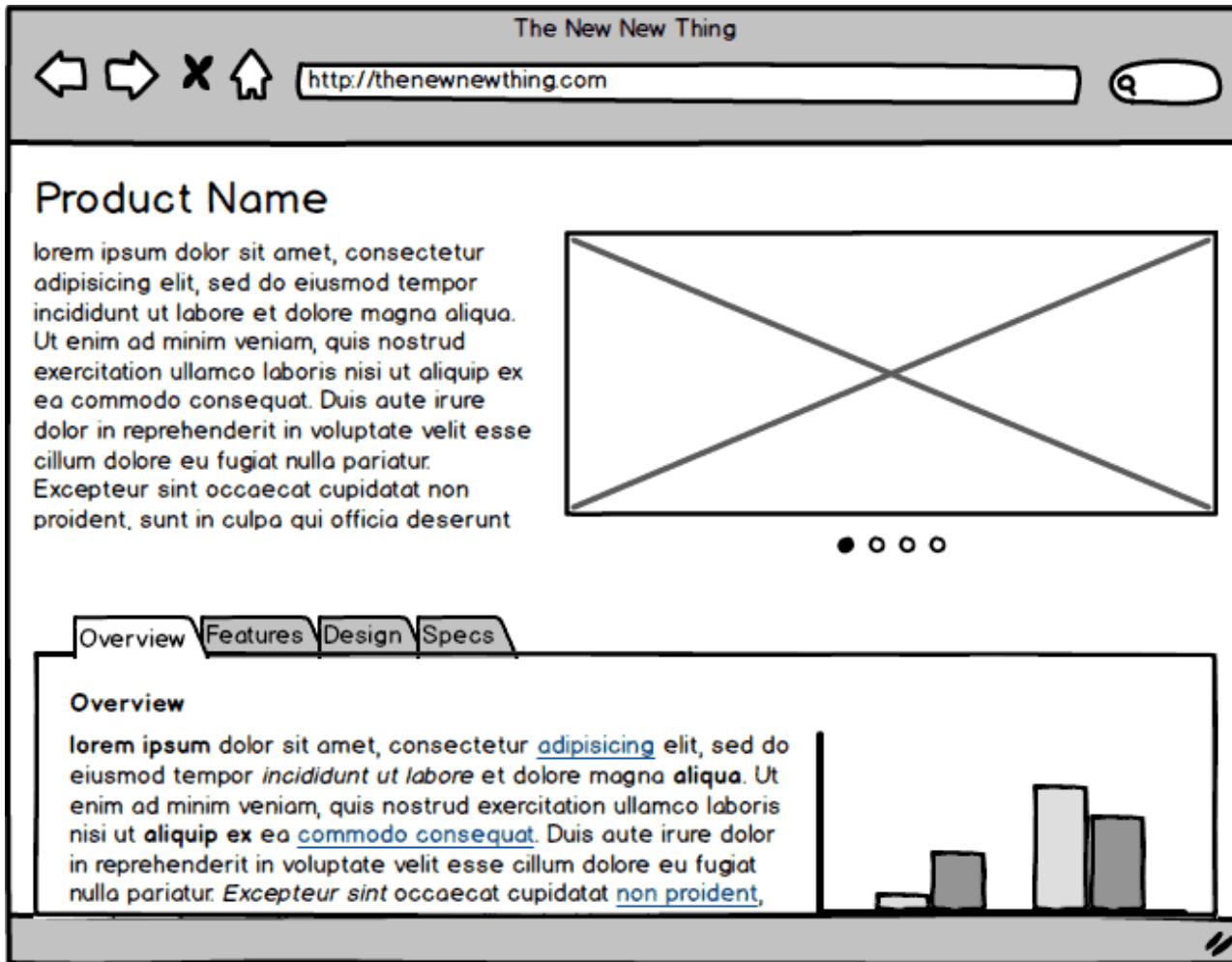
**“Fail early, fail fast, fail often” - Unknown**

# Activity 1 – Dive in – 10 minutes

Open up Mockups and see if you can make this:

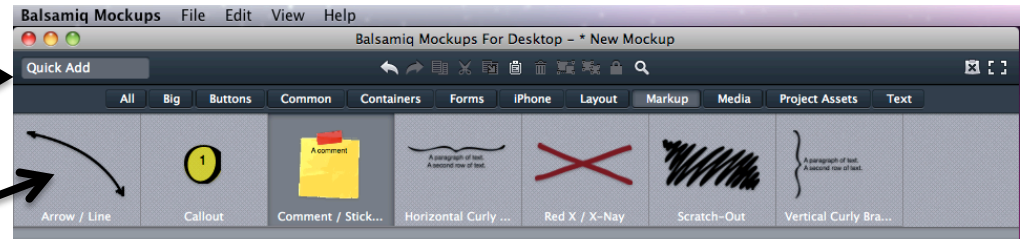


# Not too bad, right?

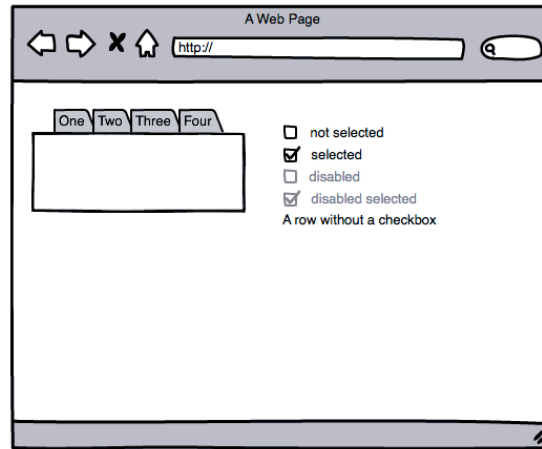


# Application Overview

- Application Bar →

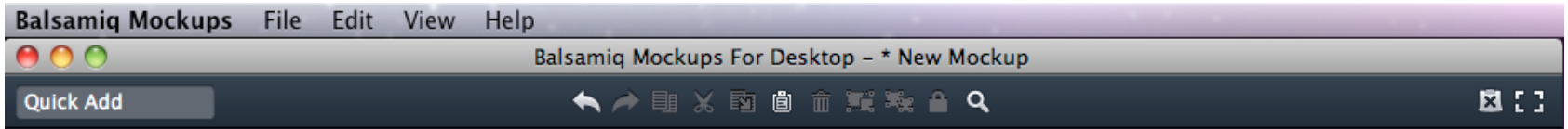


- UI Library →

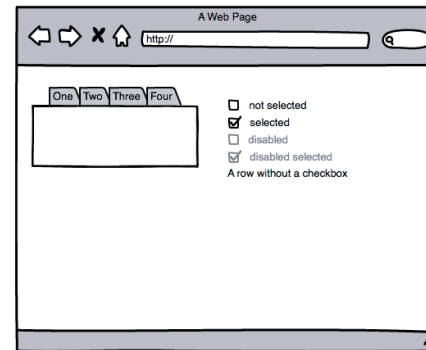
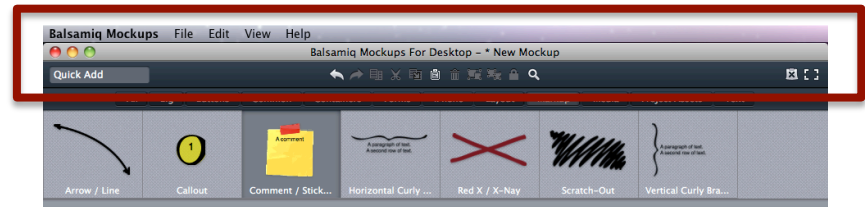


- Mockup Canvas →

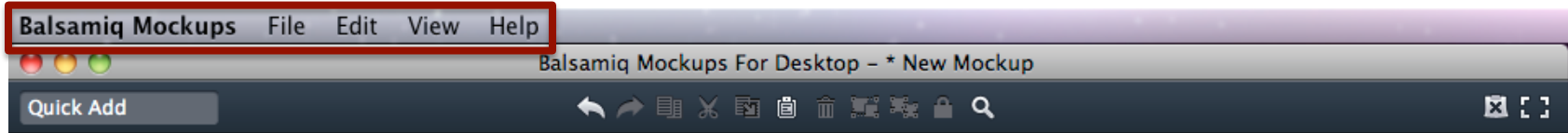
# Application Bar



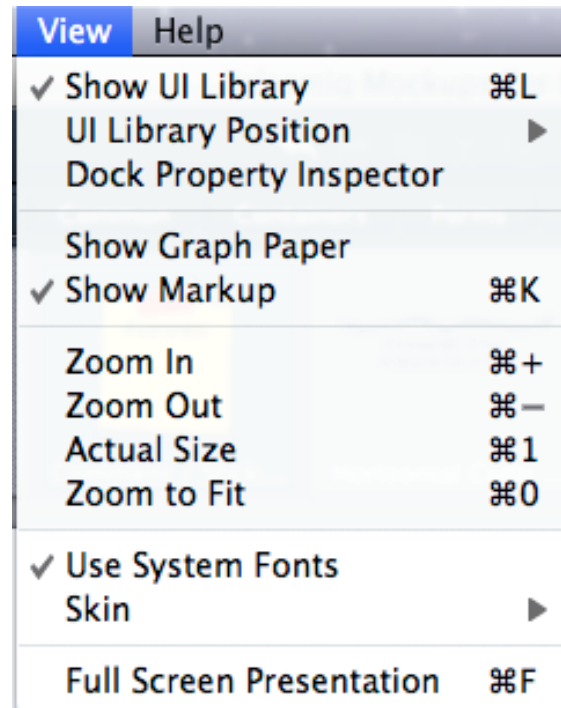
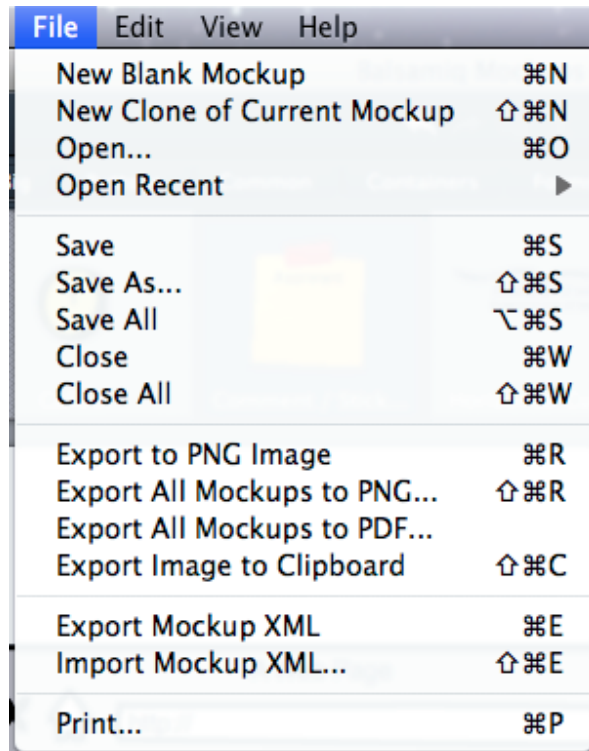
Includes menus,  
the **Quick Add** tool  
and the **toolbar**.



# Application Bar: Menus

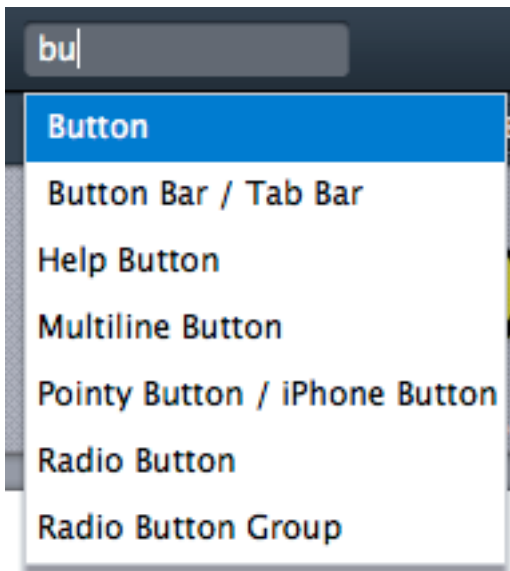
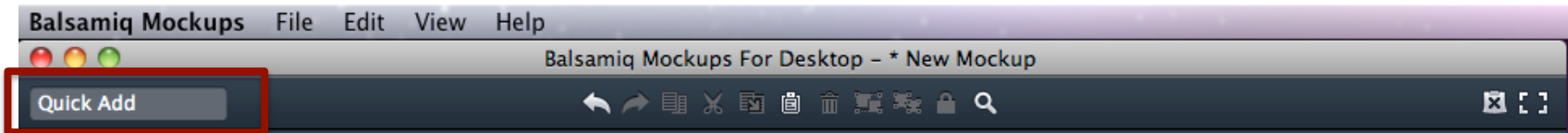


Commands related to your mockups as a whole.



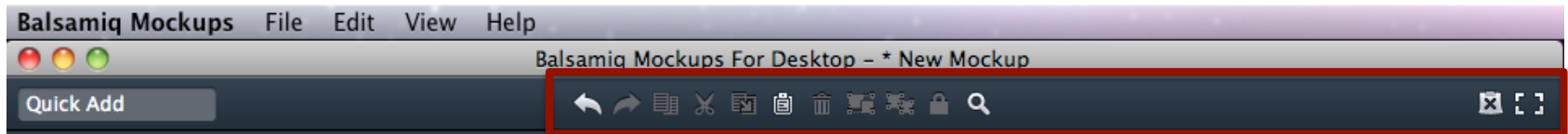


# Application Bar: Quick Add Tool



A fast way to find and add UI controls to your mockup.

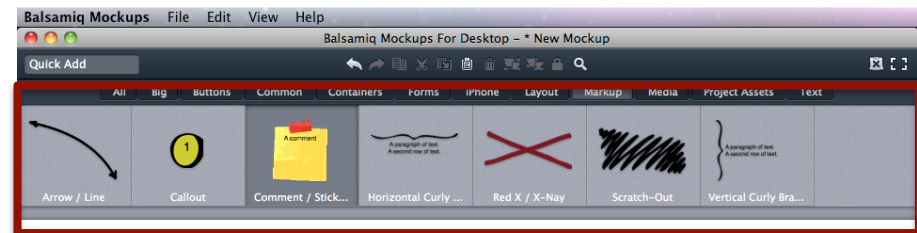
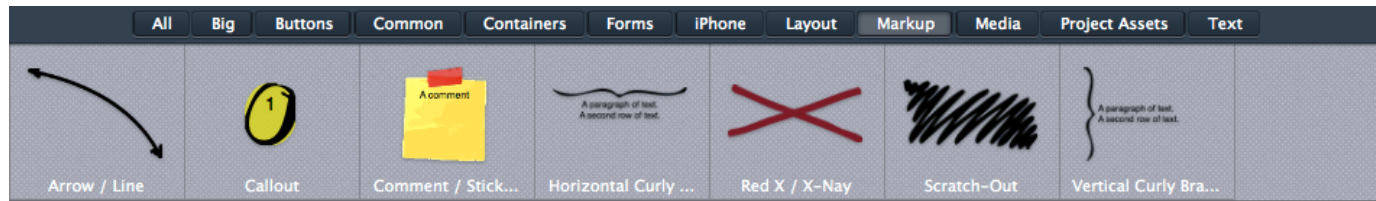
# Application Bar: Toolbar



Includes most of the same commands as the Edit menu (also located in the Property Inspector) and at far right, “Hide Markup” and “Full Screen” screen mode buttons.



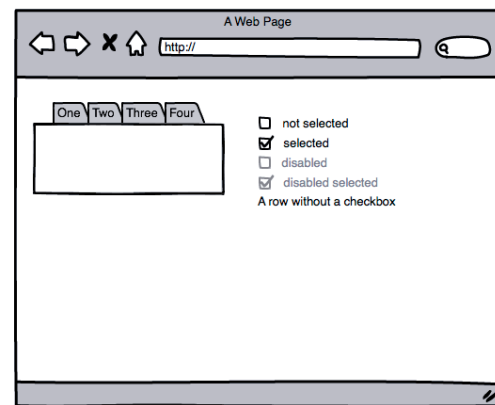
# UI (Controls) Library



- Displays all the different UI control types that Mockups supports

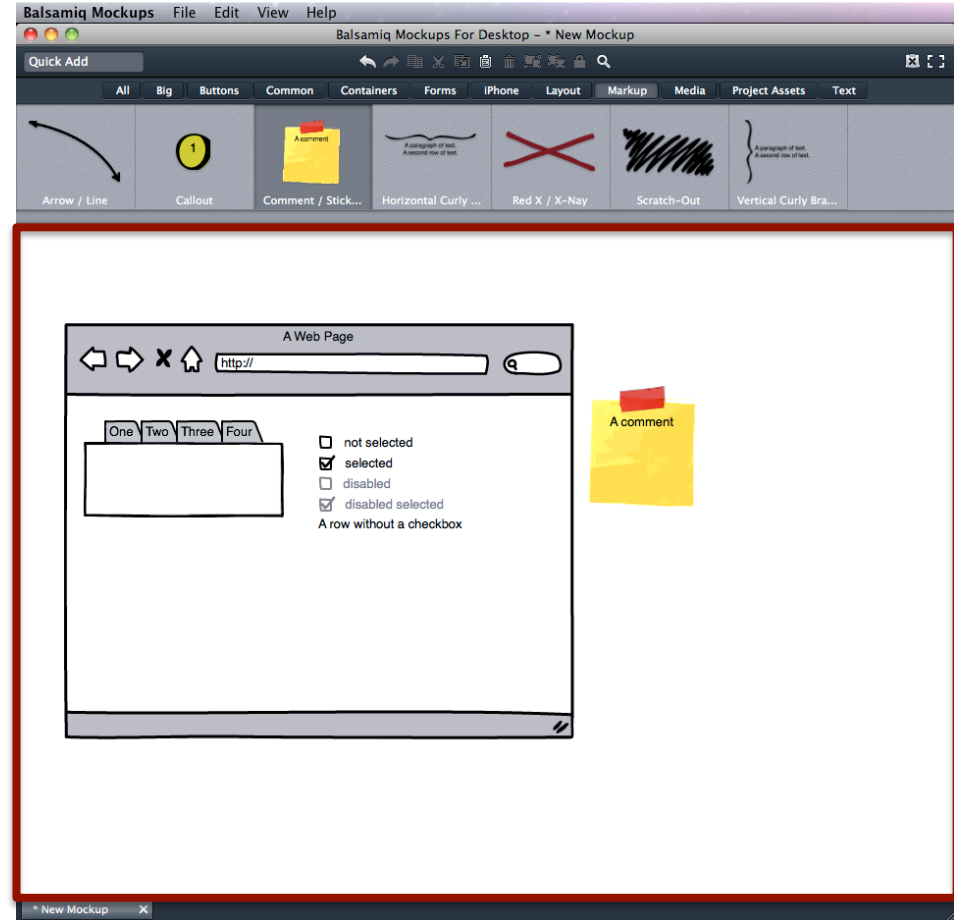
- Listed alphabetically and in broad categories

- Drag-and-drop, or double-click to place on Canvas



# Mockup Canvas

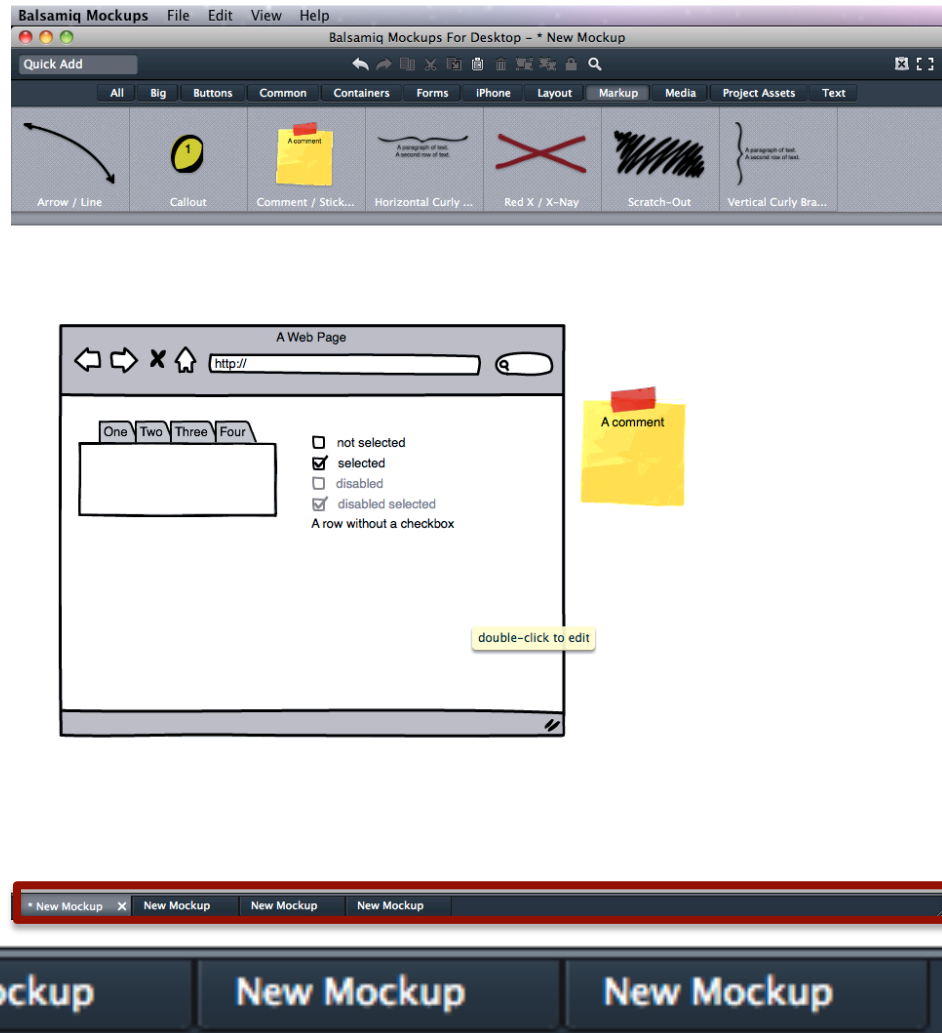
- Your main working area
- To increase its size, just resize your application window



# File Browser

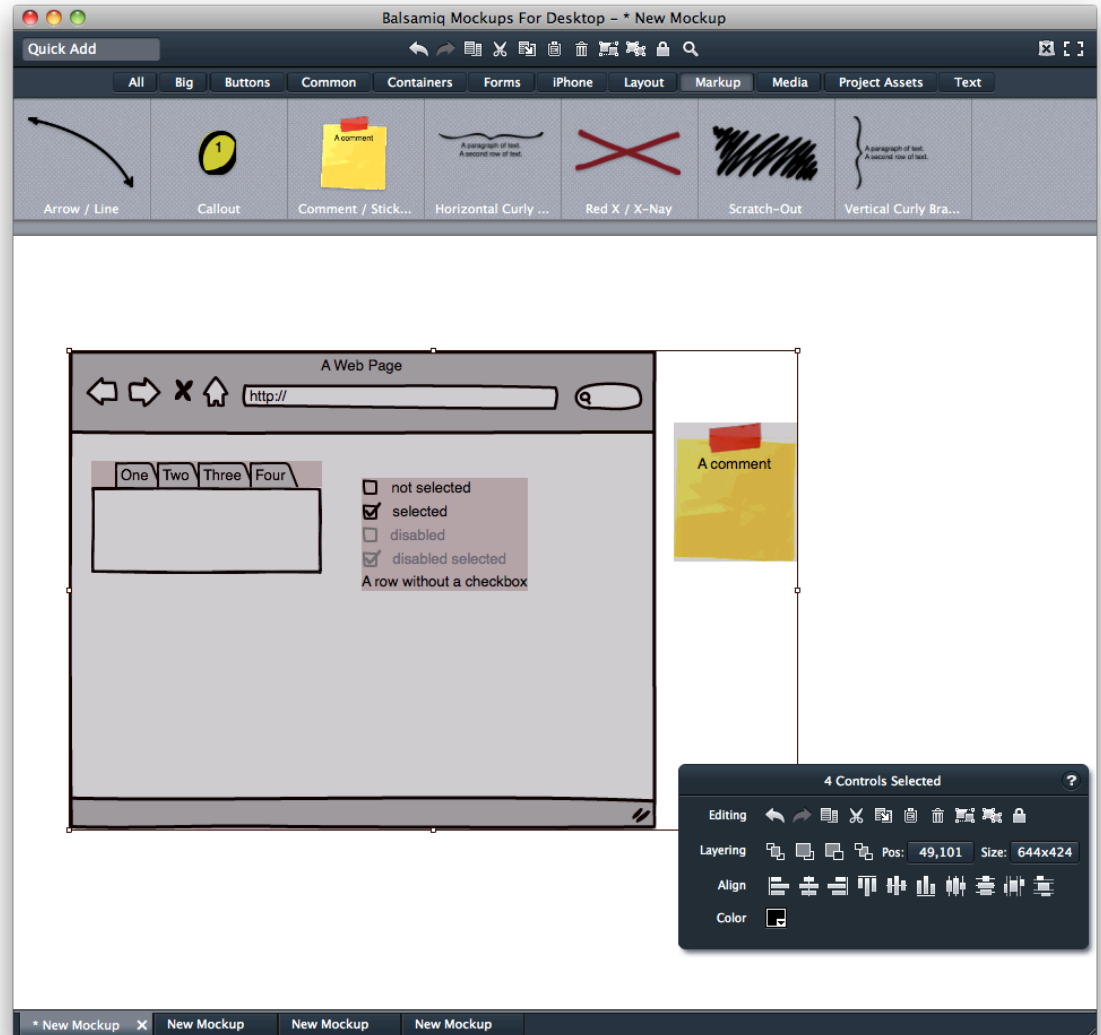
- Shows tabs for all Mockups files you have open

- Right-click on any tab for a contextual menu



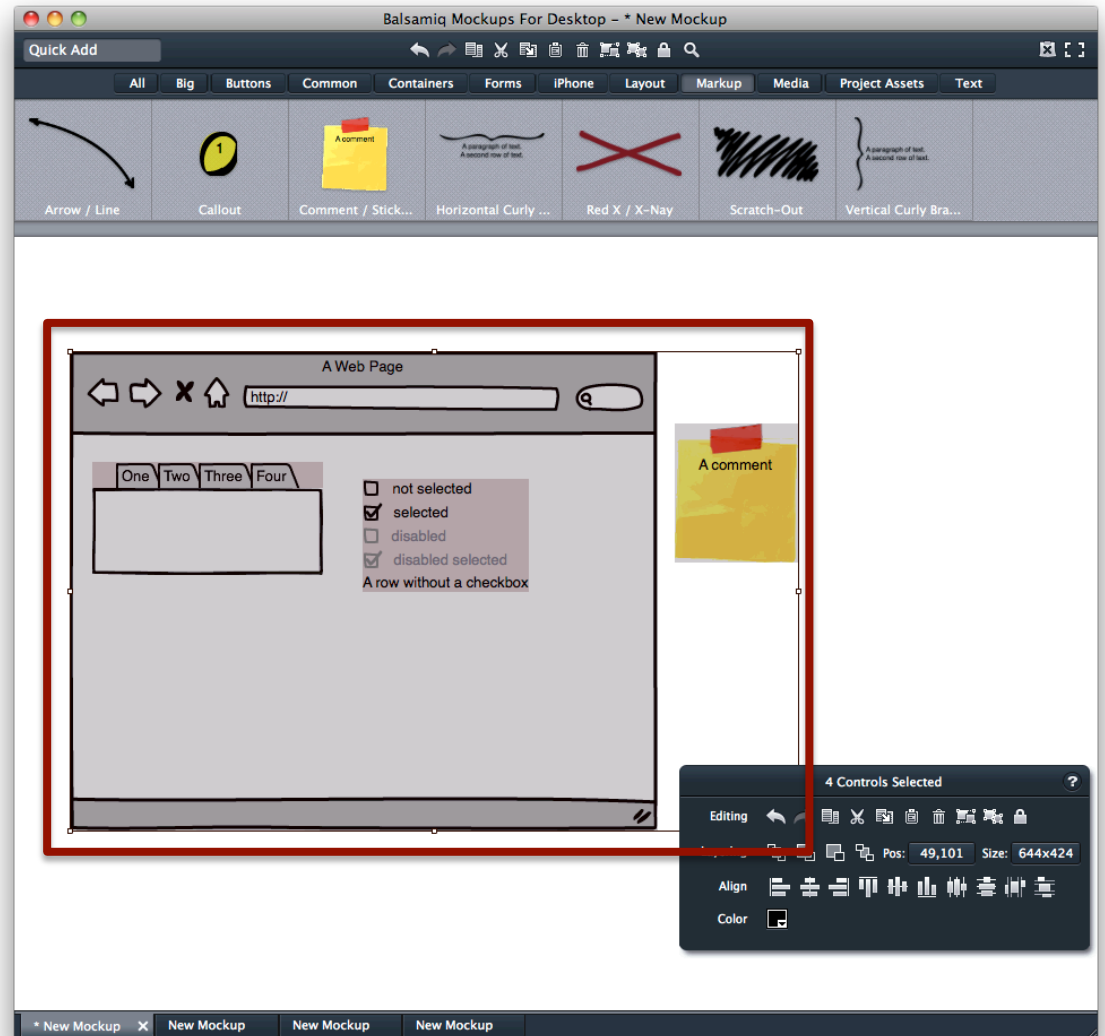
# Building a Mockup

- Canvas
- UI Control from Library
- Property Inspector



# UI Control

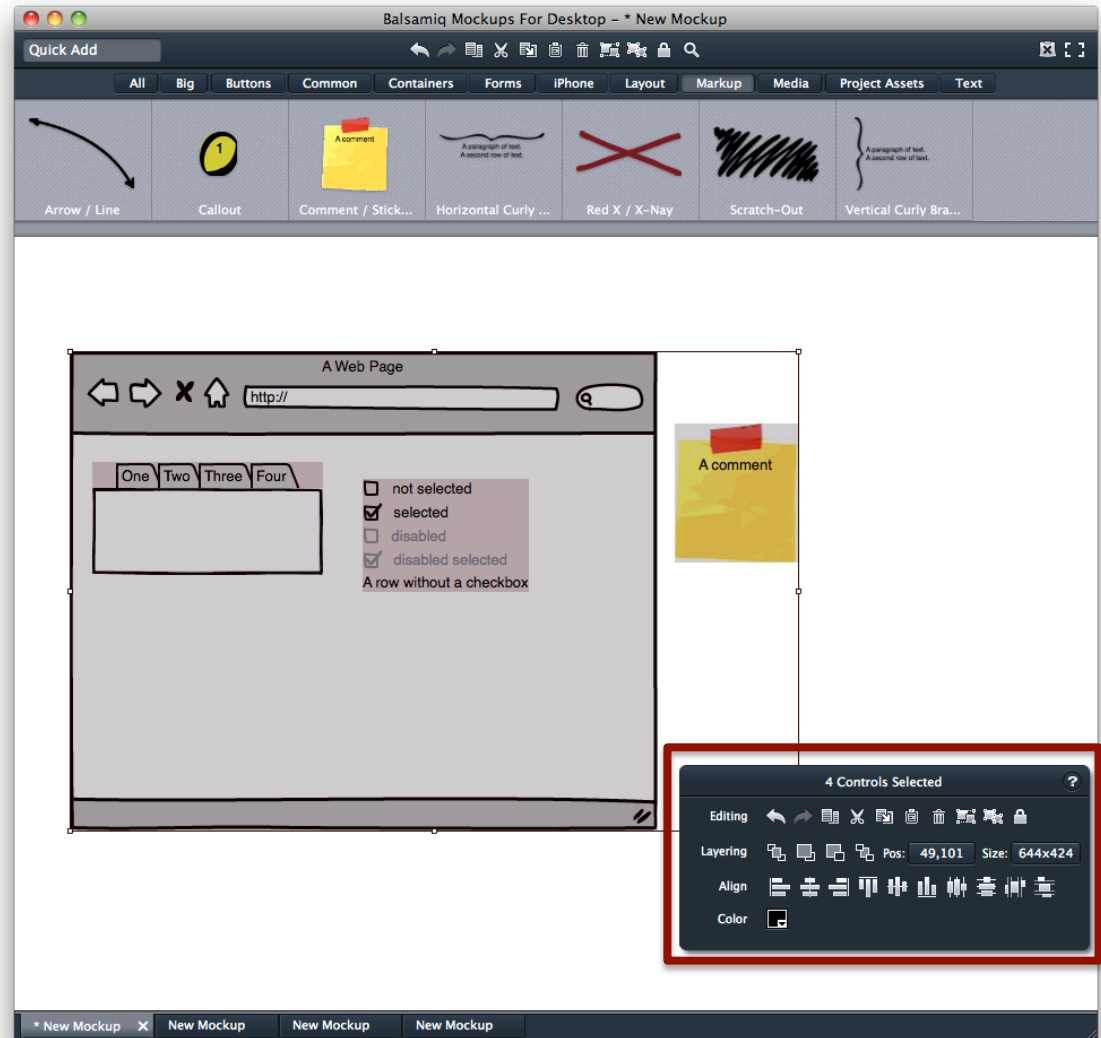
- standard user interface widget
- pulled from UI Library
- building blocks of any Mockup



# Property Inspector

A floating toolbar that contains:











- common actions
- UI control-specific actions











# Property Inspector(s)

**Checkbox Group** ?

Editing          

Layering     Pos:  Size:

Auto-Size 

Color 

Hide











<input type="checkbox"/> not sel...	Please Save First	▼
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> select...	Please Save First	▼





Links

<input type="checkbox"/> disab...	Please Save First	▼
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> disa...	Please Save First	▼
A row wit...	Please Save First	▼


Text **B** *i* u 13 ▼

**Tabs Bar / Ribbon** ?

Editing          

Layering     Pos:  Size:


Border  Show border

Color  Opacity:





Hide

One:	Please Save First	▼
Two:	Please Save First	▼
Three:	Please Save First	▼
Four:	Please Save First	▼

Links











Scrollbar 





Selection


Tabs Position    




Text **B** *i* u 13 ▼

**Comment / Sticky Note** ?

Editing          

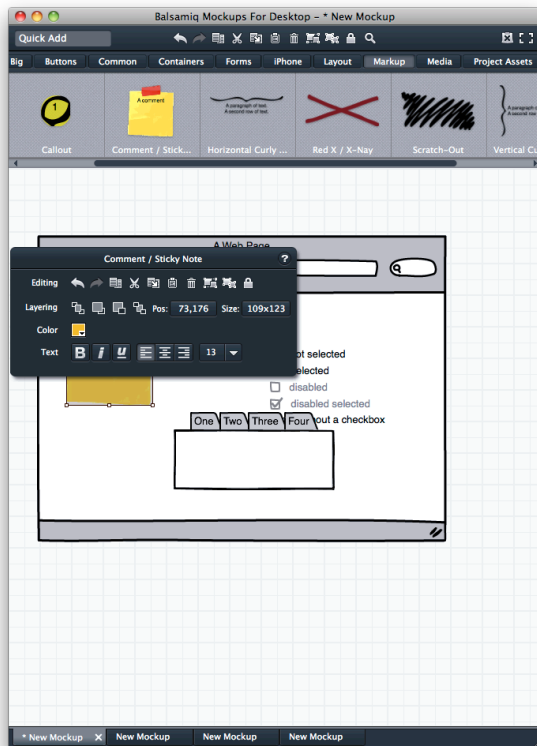
Layering     Pos:  Size:

Color 

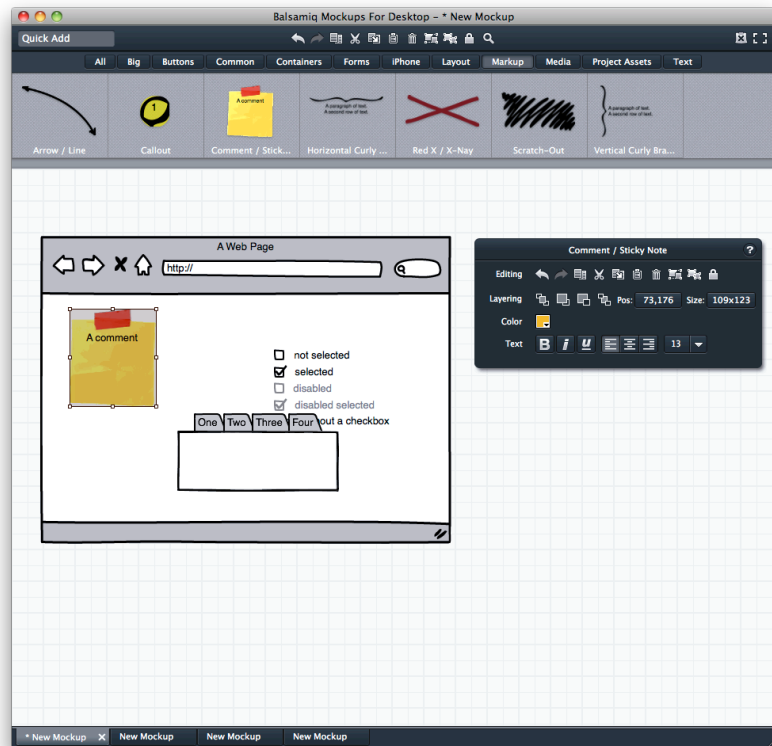
Text **B** *i* u    13 ▼

# Property Inspector: Tip

Keep your application window wide enough to create a blank area on one side where the property inspector can appear.



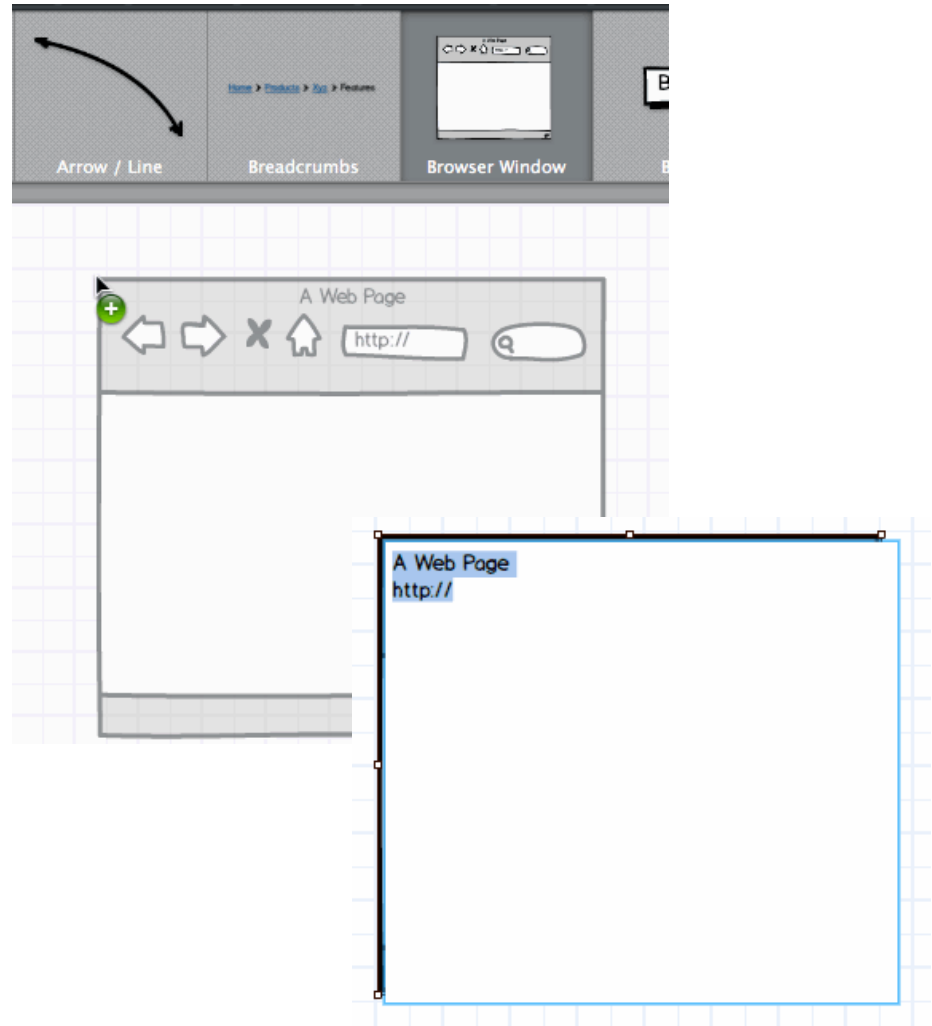
Annoying!



Ahh.

# Adding Content

- The UI control provides hints on how to use it
- To edit, double-click or press Enter
- Resize by dragging at the edges and corners
- Controls will intelligently “snap” to each other’s edges and also a few pixels over



# Adding Content

not selected  
 selected  
 disabled  
 disabled selected  
A row without a checkbox

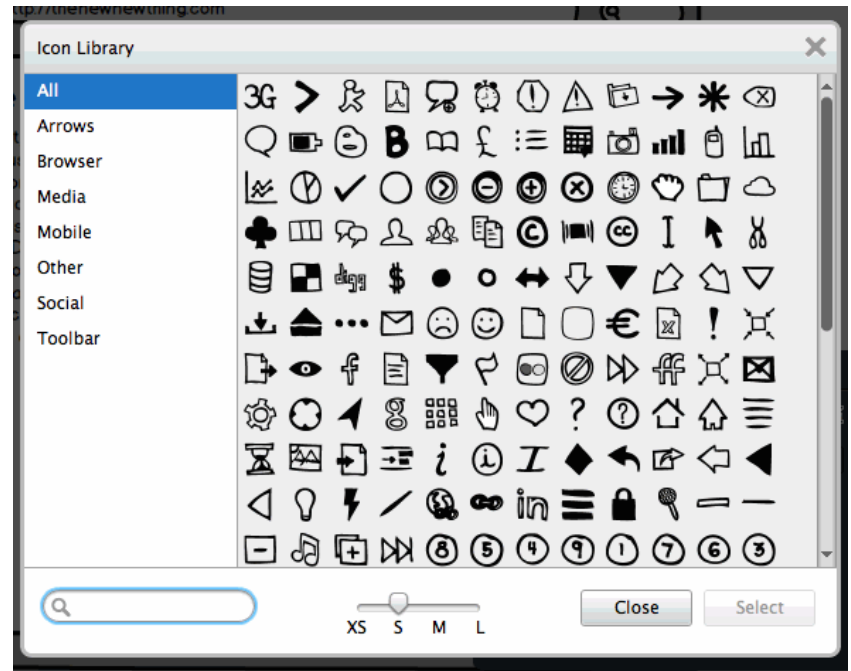
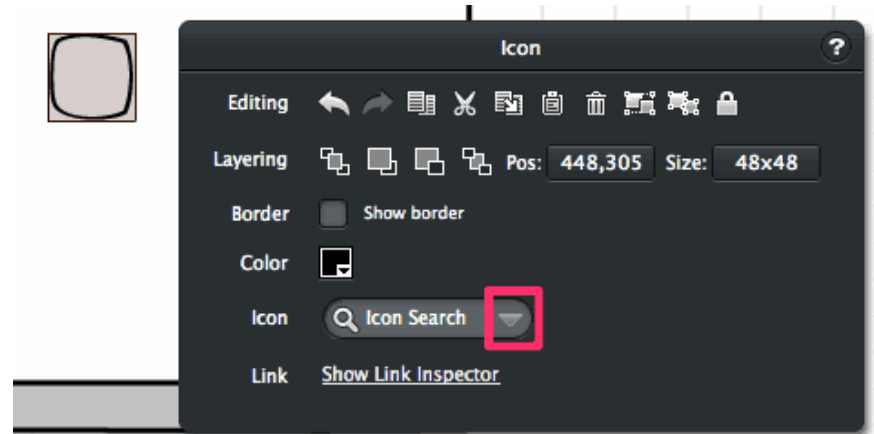
[ ] not selected  
[x] selected  
-[ ] disabled-  
-[x] disabled selected-  
A row without a checkbox

A paragraph of text.  
A second row of text.

A [paragraph] of \*text\*.  
A \_second\_ &row& of ~text~.

# Adding Icons

- Use the **Icon** control
- Double-click to open the **Icon Library**, or search from Property Inspector (works like Quick Add)



# Adding (some) Interactivity

- First make sure the files you want to link are saved, and in the same folder
- Controls that support linking have a “Link” pulldown(s) in the Property Inspector
- Links will export to a clickable PDF

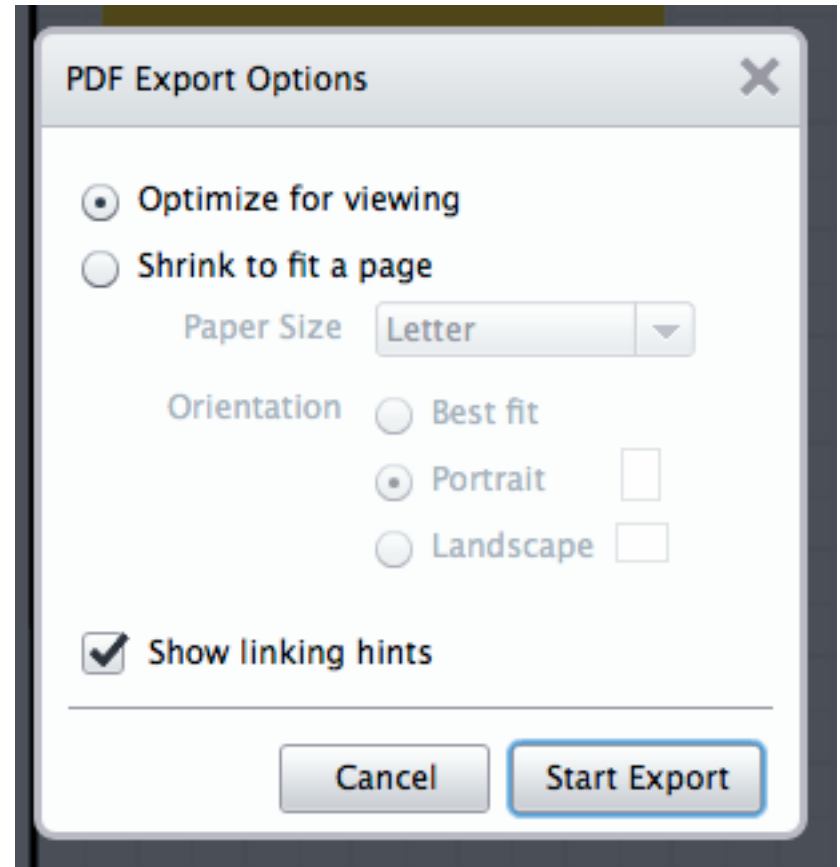


# Useful commands/shortcuts (similar to other design apps)

- Grouping UI controls: CMD/CTRL-G
- Locking items (esp. to get to items below): CMD/CTRL-2
- Hold down SHIFT while using arrow keys: moves controls 20 pixels at a time vs. 2 pixels.
- Hold down OPTION when dragging to copy a control.

# Sharing your work

- Can export to PNG or PDF via File menu
- Export a portion by selecting some controls, then choosing Export to PNG
- Teammates can comment directly on the PDF in Mac Preview, Adobe Acrobat
- Lots of recommendations for other ways of working together on Balsamiq's support site (well-written documentation!)

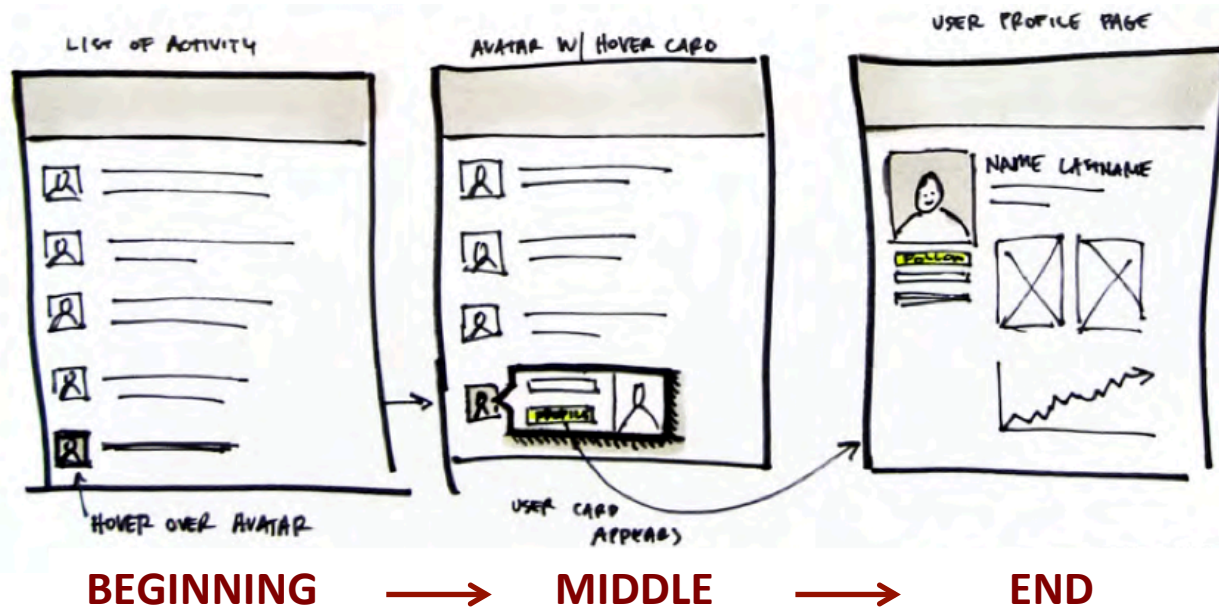




# Activity 2: Sketch!

30 minutes

Sketch a *3-up interaction* in Balsamiq – focusing on the **beginning, middle, and end**.

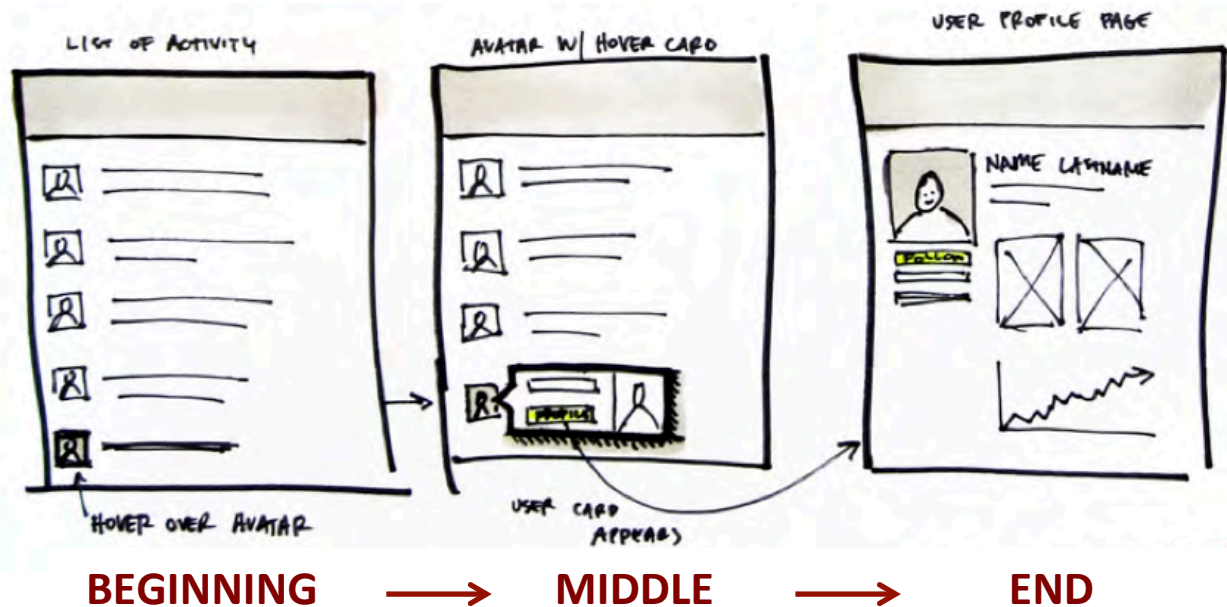


"3-up interaction" concept and graphic are Kate Rutter's.

# Activity 2: Sketch!

Part I – 15 minutes

Sketch your 3-up for the following web app: A website that helps you find a florist to send or pick up flowers. Through it you can choose your desired arrangement and place your order.



*"3-up interaction" concept and graphic are Kate Rutter's.*

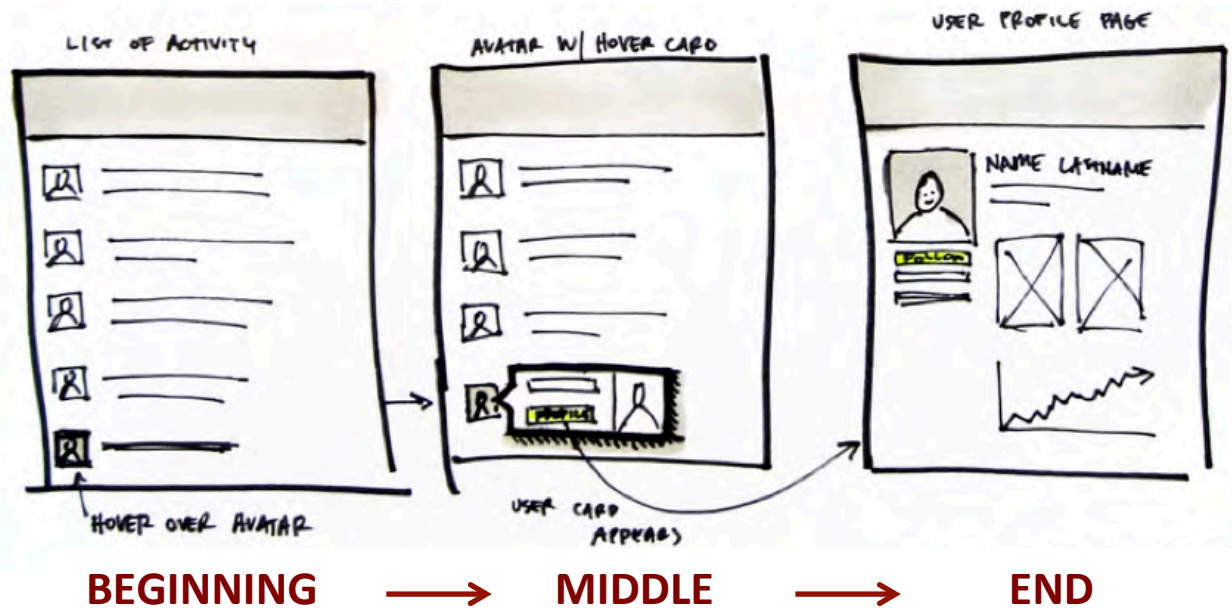
## **Activity 2: Sketch!**

*Part II – 5 minutes*

Done? **Pair up** with a fellow student and **critique** each others' sketches.

# Activity 2: Sketch! *Part III – 10 minutes*

Now, take the feedback you've received, and create an improved version.



*"3-up interaction" concept and graphic are Kate Rutter's.*

# The End

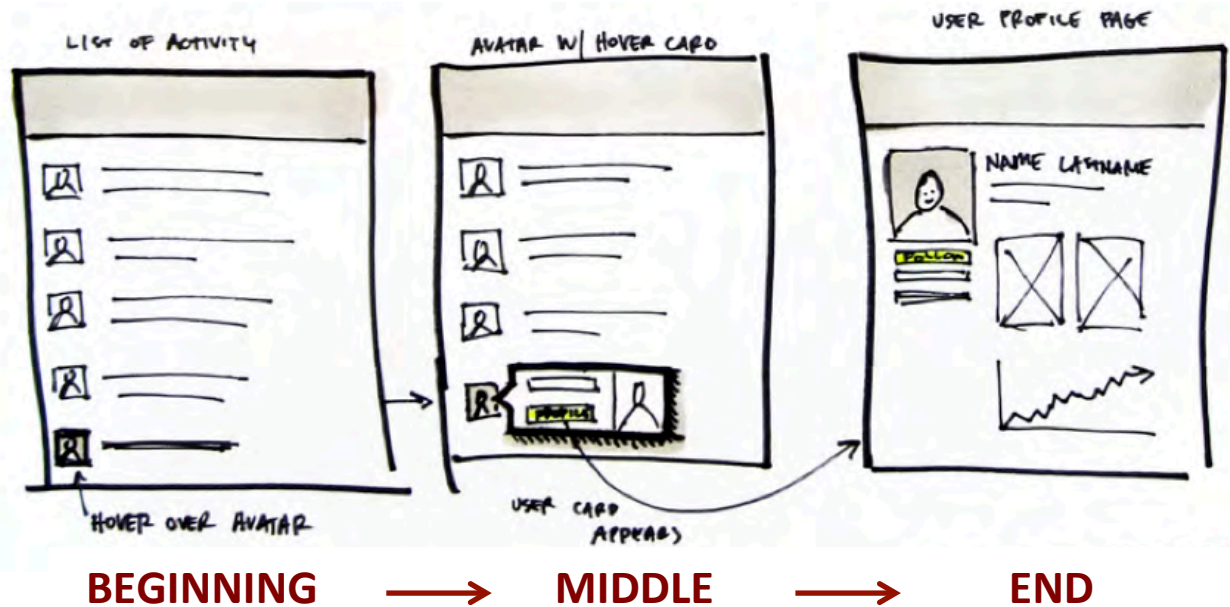
## Questions?

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[linkedin.com/in/aditijrao](https://www.linkedin.com/in/aditijrao) | @aditirao

# Activity 4 – *If there's time*

Sketch a *3-up interaction* in Balsamiq for your project's application.



"3-up interaction" concept and graphic are Kate Rutter's.