

# STORYBOARD

## When can the method be used?

Storyboards can be used throughout the design process. The reader of a Storyboard will experience the intended interactions and he or she will also reflect on these interactions. In each process the meaning of a Storyboard changes. At the beginning of the process the Storyboard will look sketchy and might evoke comments and suggestions. But throughout the process, the Storyboard will become more detailed and help you in making decisions and exploring ideas. In the final stage of your design you can use a Storyboard to reflect on the product's form, values and qualities.

## How to use the method?

Storyboards exploit the powerful aspects of visualisation. The whole setting can be shown at a glance: where and when the interaction happens, the actions that take place, how the product is used, and how it behaves, and the lifestyle, motivations and goals of the users. Storyboards allow you to literally point at elements, which is helpful during the discussion. When used to develop ideas, you start making a Storyboard based on your first idea about the interaction between product and user. The outcome is a good conceptual idea about the interaction, as well as visualisations or written descriptions of the interaction. Both visualisations and written descriptions can be used for communication and evaluation purposes.

**A Storyboard is a visual representation of a story or narrative about your design in its context of use over time. A Storyboard helps you to understand your intended users or user groups, context, product use and timing.**

## Possible procedure

### STEP 1

Start from the following elements: ideas, simulations, a user character.

### STEP 2

Choose a story and a message: what do you want the Storyboard to express? Limit your story to a clear message, for example with 12 panels.

### STEP 3

Create sketchy storylines.

Design the timeline before detailing. Use variations in panel sizes, white space, frames and captions for emphasis and expression.

### STEP 4

Create a complete Storyboard.

Use short captions to complement the images, instead of merely describing the content. Do not make all the panels the same: use a hierarchy.

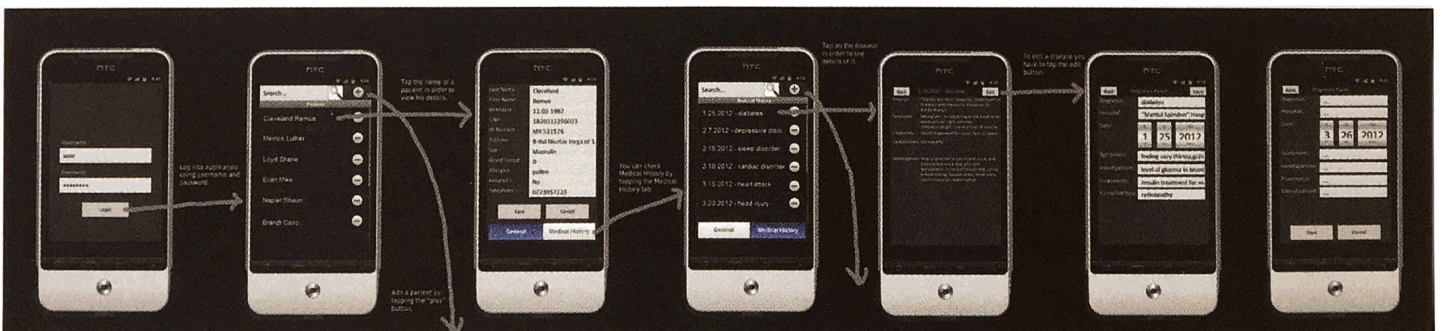
## Limitations of the method

- The visualisation style of the Storyboards influences the reactions. Whereas open and sketchy Storyboards elicit comments, sleek and detailed presentations can be overwhelming. Storyboards used for analytical

purposes – to map situations, problems and feelings – typically have a factual style of visualisation. Storyboards used to conceptualise ideas have a rough visualisation style. Storyboards used to evaluate design ideas are often open, bringing together different points of view. They have a sketchy, incomplete style of visualisation in order to invite reactions. Storyboards intended to transfer or present concepts often look polished.

## Tips & Concerns

- Comics and movies can be a great source of expressive techniques. Some of these can be applied to product design scenarios and storyboards, whereas others are less suitable.
- Think about camera position (for example, close-up versus wide shot), sequence and the style in which you visualise the Storyboards.
- A Storyboard can also be used to make a video clip, for example, about the unique selling points of your design.
- A Storyboard can also help you to communicate with your stakeholders.



A storyboard depicting actions and resulting stages in the user interface of a smartphone application.

**REFERENCES & FURTHER READING:** Jacko, J.A. And Sears, A., 2002. *The Human-Computer Interaction Handbook: Fundamentals, Evolving Technologies and Emerging Applications*. New York, NY: Erlbaum and Associates. / Van der Lugt, R., Postma, C.E. and Stappers, P.J., 2012. *Photoboarding*. Touchpoint, 4(2), pp. 76-79. / Van der Lelie, C., 2005. *The value of storyboards in the product design process*. Personal and Ubiquitous Computing, 22 September, 10(2/3), pp. 159-162.