Learning Axure RP Interactive Prototypes

A practical, step-by-step guide to creating engaging prototypes with Axure

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In this package, you will find:

- The author biography
- A preview chapter from the book, Chapter 1 "Pages, the Design Area, and Panes"
- A synopsis of the book’s content
- More information on Learning Axure RP Interactive Prototypes

About the Author

John Henry Krahenbuhl has over 20 years of experience in architecting practical, cost-effective, and innovative solutions. Being a creative thinker and having an entrepreneurial spirit has enabled him to be the lead or co-inventor on numerous utility patent applications. He is a multifaceted, collaborative management professional who is highly skilled at managing products through the entire life cycle, from design to obsolescence, including specification and use case definitions, schematic and PCB layouts, production software implementation, and hardware implementation. He's a passionate, resourceful leader who demands and delivers excellence in design and user experience.

I would like to thank my family for their endless love and support: my children, Matt, Jason, Lauryn, and Henry, and especially my wife, my friend, my life coach, and the most amazing person I have ever had the privilege to love and admire—Melissa Krahenbuhl.
Learning Axure RP Interactive Prototypes

Axure has rapidly become one of the leading tools for rapid prototyping in use today. There are many reasons for Axure's popularity. You can easily create wireframes as well as generate a specification documentation.

Axure also provides the ability to quickly develop prototypes that can be leveraged in web browsers or as native Android, iPhone, or iPad applications. It is no wonder that Axure has become the tool of choice for a large percentage of the Fortune 100 corporations as well as User Experience Professionals worldwide.

*Learning Axure RP Interactive Prototypes* provides a rapid introduction to interactive prototyping. Starting with the fundamentals, you will create progressively complex experiences while learning basic, intermediate, and advanced interactions in Axure. You will apply what you learn to create an increasingly interactive prototype.

This book will show you how to create interactive prototypes with Axure RP 7 Pro. First, you will gain practical knowledge of Axure's pages, panes, and the design area. Then you will learn how to construct page and widget interactions.

Next, we will generate common interactions for a typical home page that will include a global header and footer as well as an interactive carousel. We will continue our journey by incorporating social media feeds from Facebook and Twitter. Your confidence with Axure will grow as you enhance your functional prototype with user account creation and login validation experiences.

Finally, you will fashion a dynamic shopping cart with a progress indicator and checkout interactions. By using Adaptive Views throughout your prototypes, you will transpose your designs and interactions for the desktop to tablet and mobile devices.

There are plentiful resources available to assist you no matter what your skill level. With a passionate community and exceptional technical support, any question you may have regarding Axure will quickly be answered. Visit [http://www.axure.com/community](http://www.axure.com/community) for access to Widget Libraries, the Axure Forum, and more resources. Welcome to the Axure community and enjoy the journey!
What This Book Covers

Chapter 1, *Pages, the Design Area, and Panes*, introduces fundamental interfaces and concepts. Master Axure's pages, panes, and the design area in addition to building a Sitemap for an e-commerce prototype.

Chapter 2, *Home Page Structure and Interactions*, presents interactions for a header, an interactive carousel, and includes a right column with live feeds from social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter.

Chapter 3, *Registration and Sign In*, creates an Inline Field Validation master, Registration, and Sign In pages and tracks a user's signed-in state.

Chapter 4, *Dynamic Content Management*, shows you how to leverage the Repeater widget to create a content management master.

Chapter 5, *Product Pages and Interactions*, provides examples for Catalog, Category, and Production Detail pages with immersive interactions.

Chapter 6, *Search and Search Results*, simulates Search interactions and populates a Search Results page by filtering the Repeater items shown on the content management master.

Chapter 7, *The Shopping Bag Functionality and Interactions*, builds a shopping bag that updates dynamically based on user interaction.

Chapter 8, *Check Out Flow and Interactions*, constructs a Check Out flow using forms and pages that include a dynamic progress indicator.

Appendix, *Answers to Self-test Questions*, reinforces concepts by reviewing chapter questions and answers.
A key to creating compelling interactions in Axure RP (Rapid Prototyping) is to quickly develop proficiency with Axure's environment and interface. Once you are familiar with specific aspects of the environment, you will be able to rapidly create interactive prototypes. The interface comprises a main menu, a toolbar, a sitemap, the design area, and several panes.

In this chapter, you will learn about exploring the environment and interface. This includes the following subtopics:

- Inspecting pages
  - The Sitemap pane
  - Creating a child page
- Investigating our design area
  - Opening pages
  - Showing the grid
  - Adding page guides
- Discovering panes
  - The Widgets pane and libraries
  - The Masters pane
  - The Page Properties pane
  - The Widget Interactions and Notes pane
  - The Widget Properties and Style pane
  - The Widget Manager pane
Exploring the environment and interface

Axure's environment has a similar feel to other desktop applications. When we open a RP document, the interface looks like this:

The interface is organized into the following sections: a main menu, a toolbar, the design area, and the surrounding panes. First, we will explore the interface as follows:

- At the top is the main menu that contains the following items:
  - **File**: This menu will have options to create new RP files, open and save as, import, open and save Team Project, print, export, and options for backup and recovery.
  - **Edit**: This menu has options such as **Cut**, **Copy**, **Paste**, **Find**, **Replace**, and an option to insert special characters.
• View: This menu has options such as **Panes**, **Toolbars**, **Reset View**, **Masks**, and several show options.

• **Project:** This menu has options for widgets and pages (for example, Style Editors and Notes Fields). It also has options such as **Adaptive Views...**, **Global Variables...**, and **Project Settings...**.

• **Arrange:** This menu will have **Group/Ungroup**, **Bring to Front/Send to Back**, **Align** (for example, Left, Right, Center, and so on) options, and options for **Grids and Guides**.

• **Publish:** This menu will have the new **Preview** option that enables quick viewing of our prototype, and also the **Generate HTML Files**, **Generate Word Documentation**, as well as **More Generators and Configurations...** options.

• **Team:** Team Projects allow us to share and work on single Projects in a Team environment. Items in this menu are **Create Team Project from Current File...**, **Get and Open Team Project**, as well as **Browse Team Project History...**.

• **Window:** This menu has the **Minimize** and **Zoom** options.

• **Help:** This menu has options to search, access Axure forums, manage the license key, and check for updates.

• Near the top of the Axure RP 7 interface is a toolbar. The toolbar comprises two sections stacked vertically, which are explained as follows:

  • The top toolbar section contains the following options:

    • **Selection Mode:** Intersected mode, Contained mode, and Connector mode.

    • **Zoom:** This is a drop-down list to set the default zoom level.

    • **Publishing:** Preview our prototype, AxShare (for example, publish our prototype to Axure's cloud-based sharing service), and **Publish** menu options.

    • **Arrangement of widgets:** The **Group**, **Ungroup**, **Front**, **Back**, **Align**, **Distribute**, **Lock**, and **Unlock** options.

    • **Interface layout:** This includes **Left** and **Right** options. Click to toggle (for example, show or hide) the left and right panes. When panes are shown, the **Left** or **Right** icon will change state, with visible panes on the icon shown in blue.
The bottom toolbar section contains the following options:

- Selected widget style drop-down list
- Widget style editor
- Format painter
- Font formatting options (for example, font family, typeface, size, bold, italics, underline, color, bulleted list, and insert text link)
- Text alignment (for example, left, center, right, top, middle, and bottom)
- Fill color
- Outer shadow
- Line options (for example, color, width, pattern, and arrow style)
- Widget location and visibility (for example, x coordinate and y coordinate, w for width, h for height, and Hidden)

In the center of the interface is the design area. The design area is where we open pages and drag and drop widgets to build our interface. The design area is surrounded on the left, right, and bottom by panes. The panes are organized as follows:

- The left-side column contains the following panes:
  - **Sitemap**: This pane provides a hierarchical overview of the pages in our design.
  - **Widgets**: This pane contains libraries of widgets that enable us to rapidly create wireframes and flow diagrams. Libraries of widgets can be downloaded, created, and shared.
  - **Masters**: This pane organizes templates that can be reused throughout our design. Common uses for masters are page elements, such as headers, footers, and so on.

- Under the design area, the bottom-center column contains the Page Properties pane. It has the following three tabs:
  - **Page Notes**
  - **Page Interactions**
  - **Page Style**
• The right-side column contains the following panes:
  
  ° **Widget Interactions and Notes**: It has the following two tabs:
    ° Interactions
    ° Notes
  
  ° **Widget Properties and Style**: It has the following two tabs:
    ° Properties
    ° Style
  
  ° **Widget Manager**: This pane enumerates widget states (for example, dynamic panel states).

**Inspecting pages**
Traditionally, the Sitemap pane provides a top-down view of pages for a website. In Axure, the Sitemap comprises pages and folders organized in a hierarchical fashion. Just under the toolbar, we will find the Sitemap pane.

**The Sitemap pane**
When we open a blank RP document, we will see four pages in the Sitemap pane. The pages are labeled Home, Page 1, Page 2, and Page 3, which are organized as follows:

![Sitemap Diagram](image-url)
In the Sitemap pane, you will notice (4) next to Sitemap. This number indicates the total number of pages currently in the Sitemap pane.

At the top of the Sitemap pane, we see a row of eight icons as follows:

- Add Page
- Add Folder
- Move Up
- Move Down
- Indent
- Outdent
- Delete
- Search

Creating a child page

Icons of pages higher in the hierarchy are left justified. When a page becomes a parent page by having a child page association, a gray arrow is shown to the left of the page icon. The gray arrow enables us to collapse or view pages in that branch of the hierarchy.

There are several ways to create a child page. We can create a child page by clicking on the page in the Sitemap pane, clicking on the indent icon, and then clicking on the Move Up or Move Down icons to move the page.

Another method is to click and drag the page to the right and drag up or down if you want to move the page. You will see a blue box appear around the page that will become the parent page.

We can also create child pages by right-clicking on the parent page, moving the mouse over Add, and clicking on Child Page, as shown here:
Investigating our design area

The design area is to the right of the Sitemap pane in the center of the interface, as shown here:
Opening pages
Pages can be opened in the design area by double-clicking on the page name or icon. Masters are also opened in the design area by double-clicking on the master name or icon. When a page or master is opened in the design area, a tab will be added to the design area with the name of the page or master. For example, double-clicking on the Home page in the Sitemap pane will display the page in the design area in a tab named Home.

When we open more than one page or master, the tabs will remain available in the design area until we choose to close the tab. Inactive tabs will be colored gray and the active tab will be white, as shown here:

![Tab Example](image)

To close a given tab, click on the cross next to the tab name. You can also manage tabs by clicking on the down arrow to the left of the tab names.

Showing the grid
When placing widgets in the design area, you may prefer having a grid to use as a visual reference. To show the grid, right-click on the design area, mouse over Grid and Guides, and click on Show Grid, as shown here:

![Grid Example](image)
The default spacing for the grid is 20 pixels. To change the default spacing, right-click on the design area, mouse over Grid and Guides, and click on Grid Settings.

Adding page guides

We can also add page guides to pages in our design. We can select from preset guides or add single page guides. To add page guides, right-click on the design area, mouse over Grid and Guides, and click on Create Guides. In the Create Guides dialog window, click on the Presets drop-down list to select from the following:

- 960 Grid: 12 Column
- 960 Grid: 16 Column
- 1200 Grid: 12 Column
- 1200 Grid: 15 Column

We can also create custom guides by changing the default values offered in the Create Guides dialog window. The options presented are as follows:

By default, guides are created as global guides. To create a guide just for the current page, uncheck the Create as Global Guides checkbox.
We can also create single guides for a page. To create a single guide, click on the left or top ruler and drag the guide onto the wireframe. To reposition a guide, click and drag the guide to the new position.

By default, single guides are blue and only appear on the current page. To make a global single guide that will be shown on all pages, hold down the Command key on a Mac (or the Ctrl key on Windows) while clicking and dragging the guide onto the wireframe. By default, global single guides are pink.

**Discovering panes**

As already mentioned briefly, the design area is surrounded on the left, right, and bottom by panes. You will now explore these panes in further detail.

**The Widgets pane and libraries**

In the left-side column under the Sitemap pane, we will find the Widgets pane, as shown here:
The Widgets pane allows us to view and leverage common interface objects, also known as widgets (for example, Image, Button Shape, Rectangle, and so on) in our design. Widgets are organized into custom libraries that can be shared and loaded into the Widgets pane.

The Masters panes
In the left-side column at the bottom under the Widgets pane is the Masters pane, as shown here:

![Masters pane](image)

In the Masters pane, you will notice (1) next to Masters. This number indicates the total number of masters currently in the sitemap.

The Masters pane contains all the masters available in an RP file. Masters can range from a single widget to a collection of widgets used in our design. In most cases, masters enable you to make changes or updates in a single place. When we update a master, each page that contains the master will be updated as well.

Masters have three types of drop behavior. The drop behavior determines the location where the Master will be placed on the wireframe in the Design Area. The possible drop behavior options are as shown here:

- Place Anywhere
- Lock to Master Location
- Break Away

When placed on a page, Break Away masters can be edited just like widgets and do not change if the original master is updated.
The Page Properties pane

The Page Properties pane has three tabs: Page Notes (available with Axure RP Pro only), Page Interactions, and Page Style. The Page Interactions tab offers the following interactions:

There are three default events: OnPageLoad, OnWindowResize, and OnWindowScroll. Click on More Events to display the additional events, as shown in the previous screenshot.

The Page Style tab is used to change the style of individual pages, as well as page defaults. The Page Style tab offers the following options:
The Widget Interaction and Notes pane

The Widget Interaction and Notes pane has two tabs: Interactions and Notes. The Interactions tab presents interaction options based on the widget selected. An example from an Image widget is shown as follows:

There are three default events: **OnClick**, **OnMouseEnter**, and **OnMouseOut**. Click on **More Events** to display the additional events, as shown in the previous screenshot.
The Widget Properties and Style pane

The **Widget Properties and Style** pane has two tabs: **Properties** and **Style**. The **Properties** tab presents interaction options based on the widget selected. An example from an Image widget is shown as follows:

The **Style** tab is used to change the style of the widget selected. The **Style** tab has options organized into the following categories:

- Location + Size
- Base Style
- Font
- Fills, Lines, + Borders
- Alignment + Padding
The Style tab is shown as follows:

The Widget Manager pane

The Widget Manager pane is used to change the visibility of dynamic panels, as well as to manage panel states. The following is an example Widget Manager pane with two dynamic panels, labeled Panel 1 and Panel 2, respectively:
Next to the dynamic panel labeled Panel 1, there is a blue rectangle. This indicates that the default for Panel 1 is Show in view. In contrast, next to the dynamic panel labeled Panel 2, there is a gray rectangle. This indicates that the default for Panel 2 is Hide from view. Clicking on the icon will toggle the state.

At the top of the Widget Manager pane, we can see a row of seven icons as follows:

- Add State
- Duplicate State
- Move Up
- Move Down
- Delete
- Widget Filter
- Search

**Summary**

In this chapter, you learned about the various aspects of Axure's environment and interface. You explored the main menu, toolbar, sitemap, design area, and panes. You also became familiar with pages, widgets, and masters.

In the next chapter, we will create common interactions for several widely used web design elements. After organizing these elements into reusable masters, you will design a header, carousel, and global footer.
Self-test questions

• What sections does the Axure interface consist of?
• Can you show or hide individual widgets placed in the design area?
• When would we use a dynamic panel?
• What does it mean when you see a blue rectangle next to a dynamic panel in the Widget Manager pane?
• What does it mean when you see a gray rectangle next to a dynamic panel in the Widget Manager pane?
• How many tabs are there in the Widget Interactions and Notes pane and what are the names of the tabs?
• In the Page Interactions tab of the Page Properties pane, how many events are shown by default and what are the names of the events?
• In the Page Interactions tab of the Page Properties pane, how would you display additional events?
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