

- » Exploring tools and menu items
- » Creating your first screen
- » Comparing Design versus Prototype mode

Chapter **1**

Introducing the XD Workspace

Adobe Experience Design (XD) is a high-fidelity prototyping tool used to demonstrate apps and website designs. In this chapter, you find out how to use XD's design tools to create your UI (user interface) quickly using features such as shapes, text, grids, reusable components, layers, and more. Keep in mind that Adobe XD is updated at a rather fast pace so there may be slight differences in the feature set from the time of writing. Another note: Although XD works on both the Windows and Mac platforms, you may see slight differences in the UI. Those differences will be addressed when appropriate.

Adobe Experience Design is included in your Creative Cloud subscription. If you do not have it already installed, launch your Creative Cloud application and install it before trying to follow along with this minibook.

Understanding the Modern User Interface

XD's clean and simple UI has been created from scratch with the user's experience in mind. After you discover the primary tools, you will easily be able to integrate XD into your production workflow. XD is like Adobe Illustrator; in fact, many

Illustrator users prefer the simplicity of XD's interface. To discover these tools, you can build a new document and follow along with the exercises in this chapter. Throughout the chapter you will take steps toward building a complete, working prototype with art, images, text, and hyperlinks. You can then dig into the details of those steps in the following chapters.

Creating a new artboard

In this chapter, you can follow along to learn while using some of the basic features. As with most of the other Adobe applications, you will want to define an artboard size before working in Adobe XD. You can choose from artboards that are standard screen sizes, or create a custom-sized artboard. The size of the artboard can be changed at any time. To create a new artboard, follow these steps:

1. Launch Adobe XD.

A start screen appears that introduces you to the XD application and offers you a choice of screen sizes. Your selection creates an artboard of that specified size. Figure 1-1 shows the drop-down menu for the iPhone 11 Pro Max artboard. By opening other drop-down menus, you can access other mobile sizes.

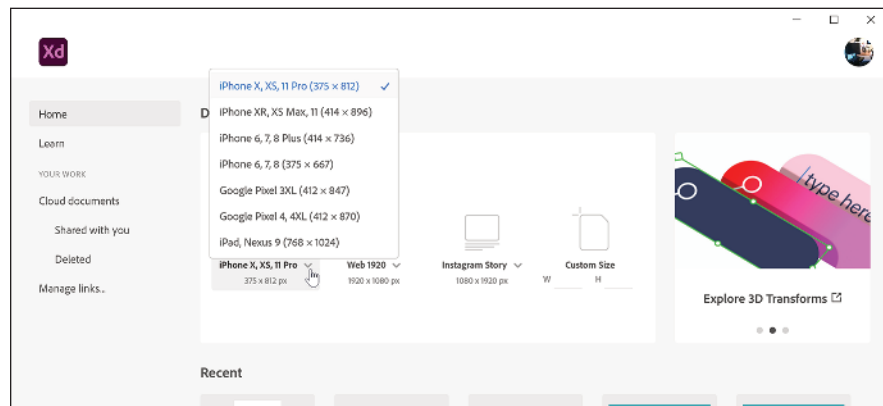


FIGURE 1-1: Selecting the size of the artboard.

2. Select an artboard size from the drop-down menu and press the Return or Enter key.

The artboard appears in the XD workspace.

The workspace includes a work area in the middle, a main menu across the top (Mac only), an application menu above the work area, a toolbar to the left, and a Property Inspector on the right; see Figure 1-2.

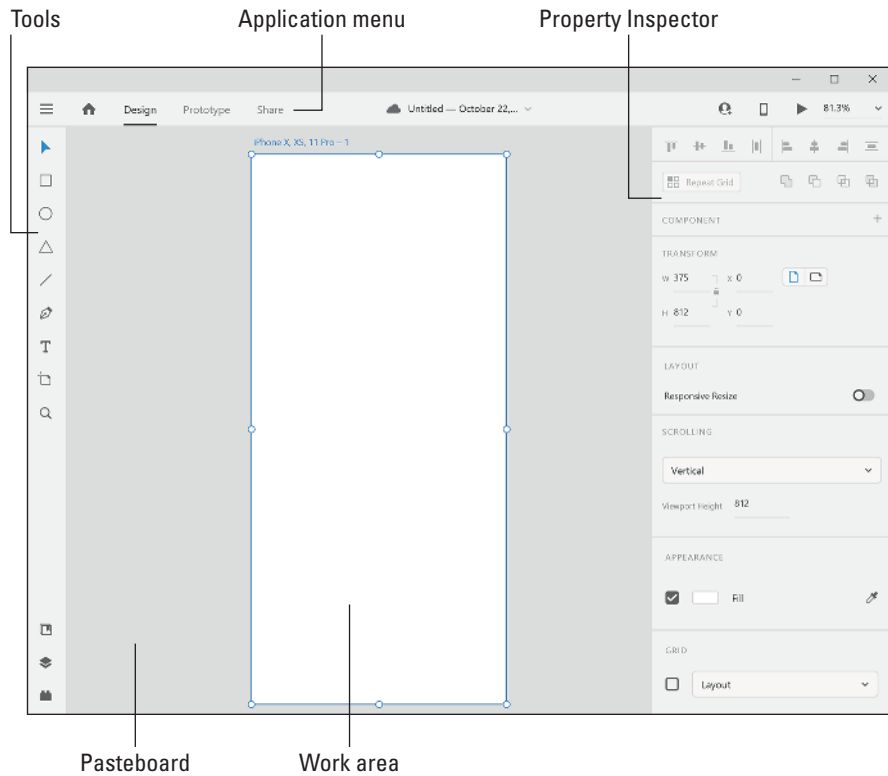


FIGURE 1-2: In the Windows XD workspace, the menu is accessed in the top-left corner. On the Mac, the Main menu appears at the top of the workspace.

Using the tools

In XD, primitive shapes, as well as more advanced drawing tools, are available to you on the toolbar. In addition, some other tools, such as the Select and the Artboard tools, might be familiar to you if you use Adobe Illustrator. See all tools in Figure 1-3.

Relating Objects to the Property Inspector

In this section, you use the tools to place objects on the artboard so you can see the relationship between objects and the Property Inspector:

1. **With an artboard of any size open, double-click on the artboard name that appears at the top of the artboard to activate the textbox and change the name of the artboard to “home.”**

Creating a name for your artboard is helpful so that you can identify it easier in the Layers panel or other menus.



TIP

2. **Choose the Ellipse tool and click and drag an ellipse on the screen.**

As with other Adobe applications, you can press the Shift key while dragging to create a perfect circle. You can also press Alt/Option+Shift while dragging to create a circle generated from a center point.

When the ellipse is complete, its properties now appear in the Properties Inspector on the right, as shown in Figure 1-4.

3. **The Ellipse tool is still selected. To avoid unexpectedly creating another circle, click the Select tool.**

Centering an object on the screen

The Align options at the top of the Properties Inspector are helpful when you want to align the circle with the center of the artboard, horizontally or vertically (or both). The Distribute options are not relevant unless you have more than one object selected. Further down the Properties panel are other items, such as Repeat Grid and Component. These features are discussed in context later in this book.

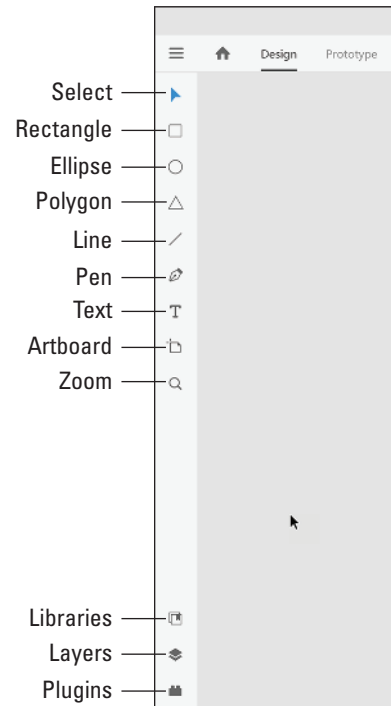
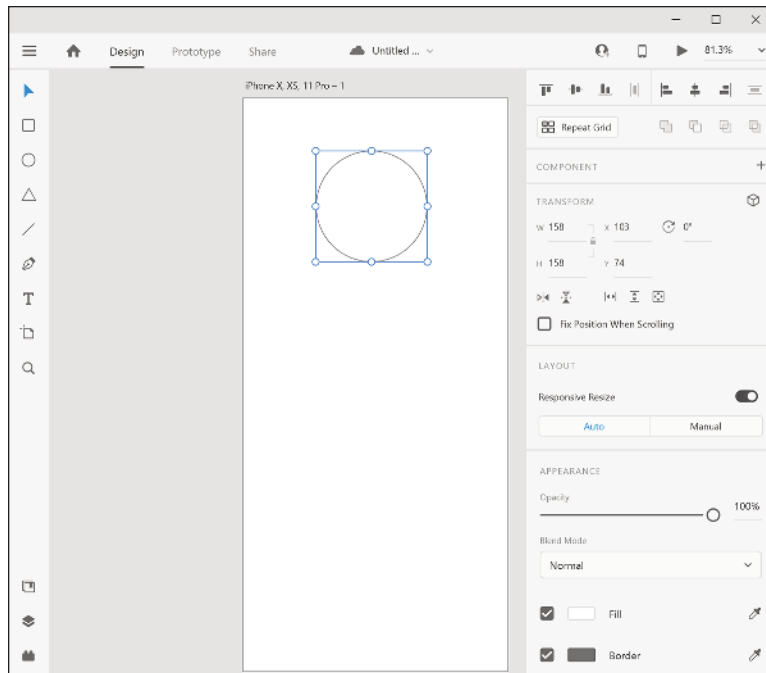


FIGURE 1-3:
XD tools.

FIGURE 1-4:
When an object is selected, its properties appear in the Properties panel.

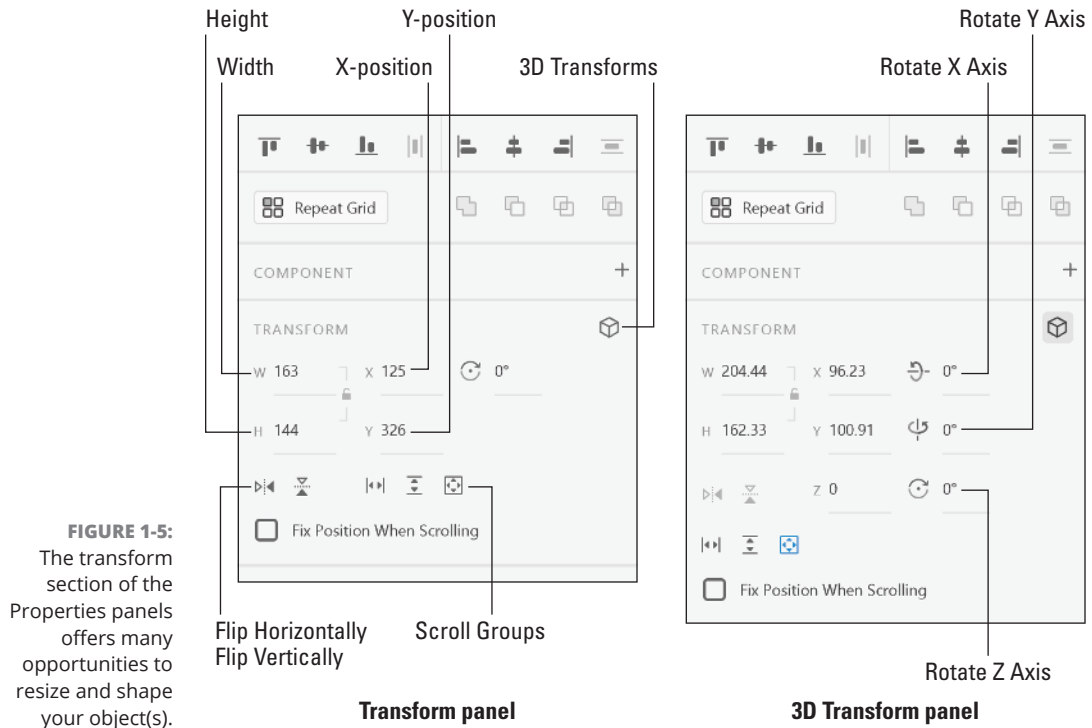


Using transform features

In the Transform section, shown in Figure 1-5, you can adjust the size of your selected object using the Width and Height textboxes and change the position of your selected object by changing the x , y coordinates. In this section, you work with these and also flip your object vertically and or horizontally.

Some advance features such as scroll groups allow you to define areas of content that can be scrolled horizontally, vertically, or in all directions. This is perfect when you are trying to replicate an experience of panning a map or when you have multiple, scrollable, panels on one screen. You will find out more about scroll groups in Chapter 2, “Working with Artboards.”

Click the 3D Transform button in the upper-right to access 3D transformation tools such as x and y rotation in a 3D space. The 3D transform mode the rotate icons appear. To use these, choose whether you want to rotate on the x -, y -, or z -axes.



Fixing position when scrolling

Click the Fix Position When Scrolling checkbox to keep the selected object from scrolling with the rest of the content. This is a great feature that allows you to build a navbar that stays put while the rest of the content on a screen scrolls. This will be demonstrated when you preview the screen, and it is discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

Laying it all out

In this section, two simple choices appear under Responsive Resize: Auto and Manual. You can choose to have your selected object automatically resize, based upon the artboard, or stay fixed in size. You could use this feature when designing multiple views of your website or app. Many designers clone an artboard by using Alt/Opt and dragging an artboard to a new location and then resizing it to show a view of their design for phone, web, or tablet.

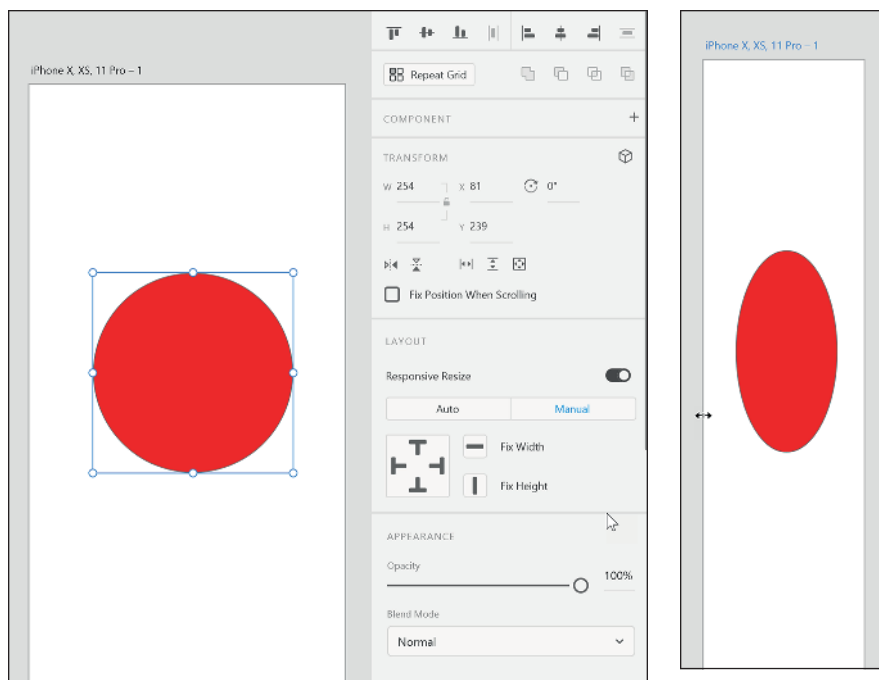
To try these features out, follow these steps:

Auto resizing

If you simply want imagery and other content to shrink and grow when an artboard is expanded or reduced in size, you can take advantage of the Auto Resize feature. Try these simple steps to see how it works:

1. If you do not already have an artboard, use the Artboard tool to create one in any size.
2. While the artboard is selected, turn on Responsive Resize in the Layout section of the Properties Inspector.
3. Select any shape and click and drag to add it to the artboard. In this example, select an ellipse.
4. Click the Select tool.
5. Hold down the Ctrl (Windows) or Command (Mac) key and click on the artboard to activate it.
6. Click and drag one of the side handles to widen the artboard. Note that the ellipse automatically resizes with the artboard, as shown in Figure 1-6.

FIGURE 1-6: You can set-up your objects to resize automatically when the artboard is resized. See results of the resize on the right.



Manual resizing

If you don't want all the content on your artboard to automatically resize, you can select some of your objects and keep their size fixed. This basically freezes them so that they do not expand or shrink when the artboard size is adjusted. Here's how:

- 1. If you do not already have a shape on an artboard, create one now.**
- 2. Click the Responsive Resize switch in the Layout section of the Properties panel.**
- 3. Click the Manual button and click Fix Width and Fix Height to turn off those settings.**

The lines in the UI are blue if the feature is set on, gray if they are turned off.
- 4. Select the artboard by clicking on the Artboard name, or Ctrl/Command-clicking on any empty space in the artboard.**
- 5. Grab one of the side handles and click and drag to resize the artboard. Notice that the object resizes with the artboard.**
- 6. Press Ctrl/Command-Z to undo and try fixing the size of the object by selecting it again and clicking back on the Fixed Width and Height controls. Now when you resize, it stays the same size.**

Changing the appearance of your object

In the Appearance section of the Properties panel, you can change the opacity, fill and border (stroke) or deselect either by unchecking the checkbox to the left of the attribute. In this next step, you use the Properties Inspector to change the size, position on the page, and the fill and border colors:

- 1. With your ellipse selected, click the textbox to the right of W (Width) in the Properties panel and type 200.**
- 2. Type 200 in the textbox to the right of H (Height).**
- 3. Easily center the circle horizontally on the page by clicking the Align Center button at the top of the Properties panel.**

If you prefer keyboard shortcuts, you can press Shift+C to do the same thing.
- 4. With the Ellipse still selected, click the box to the left of Fill in the Properties Inspector to open the Color Picker, as shown in Figure 1-7. Choose any color you like. If you want a color that is not displayed, click and drag the Hue slider to the right.**



REMEMBER

Color, gradients, and transparency are covered in more detail in Chapter 3 of this minibook.

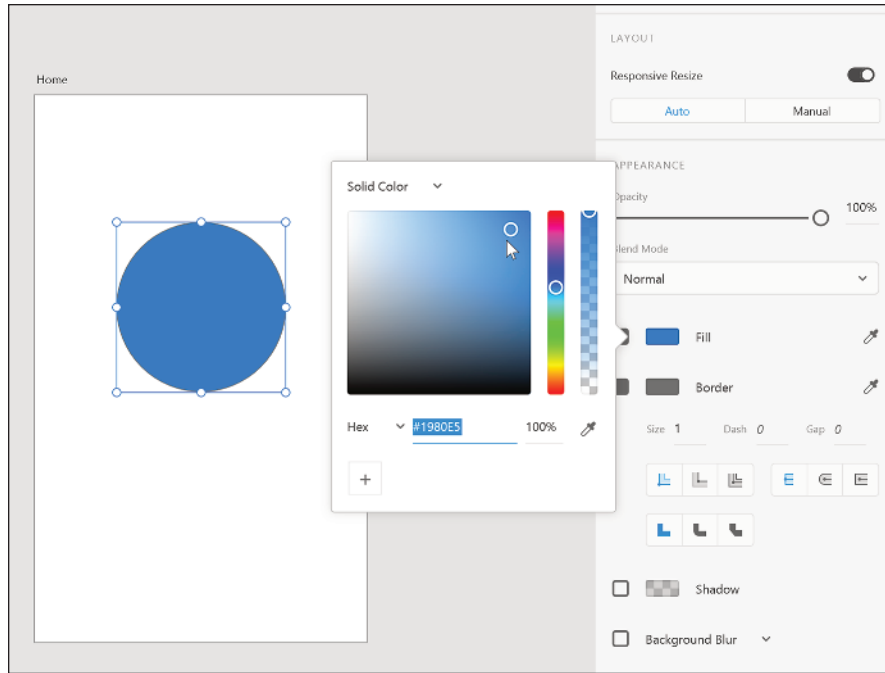


FIGURE 1-7: Choose a color for your fill from the color picker.

5. Click the box to the left of **Border** to select any stroke color.
6. Select the width value below the **Border** and type 10 so that you can see a 10 pt border on your ellipse.

You have many options to select when you want to use a border, as you see in Figure 1-8. These options allow you to change the corner points, add dashed lines, and more. You will find out more about borders on Chapter 3, “Creating Your User Interface (UI) with Shapes, Paths, and Custom Shapes.”



TIP

7. **As a bonus, add a drop shadow using the Properties Inspector: With your ellipse still selected, check Shadow. The values that appear beneath are the X and Y coordinates and the blur.**

If you have been following along, choose to close your file by clicking on the Close box in the upper-right corner. You do not need to save this file; you will be starting a new example in the next section.

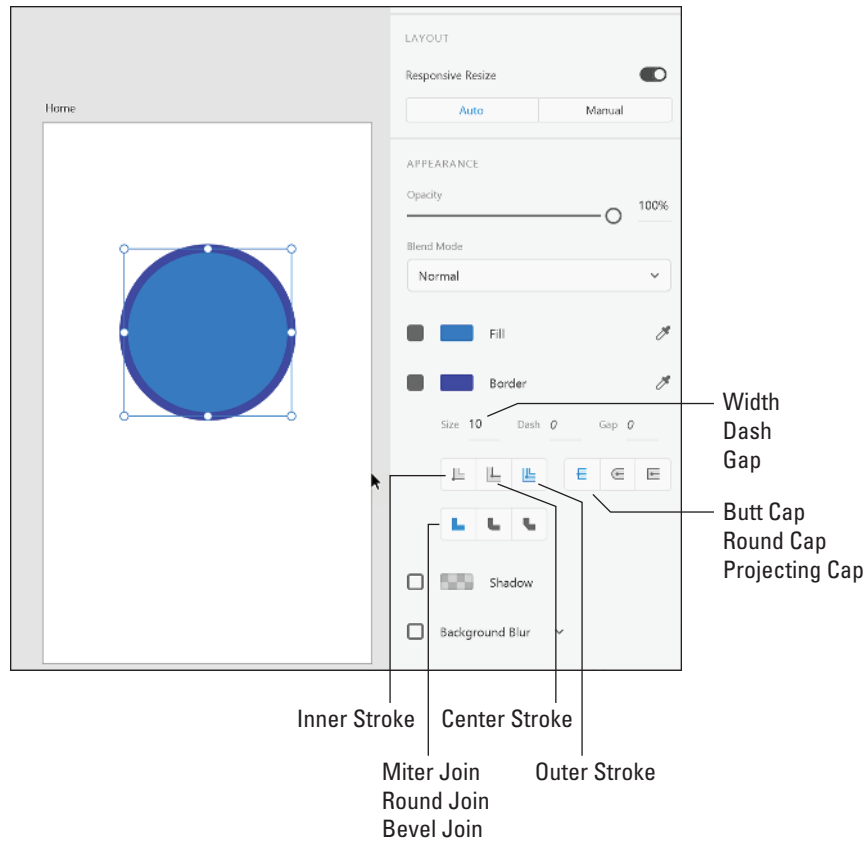


FIGURE 1-8: Check the border option to see additional properties.

A Little Bit about Artboards

In the previous section, you became familiar with ways to create objects and change their properties. In this section, you create a set of three artboards in order to investigate the properties associated with artboards:

1. **Create a new XD document by pressing Ctrl+N (Windows) or Command+ N (Mac OS).**
2. **For this example, choose any of the default size artboards displayed in the New dialog box. In this example, the iPhone artboard was selected.**

After you click on the artboard size, a new document appears with the first artboard ready to go.

Saving your file

This is a good time to save this file. In Adobe XD, you can save either locally or to the Adobe Cloud. Why two methods? It depends on the amount of collaboration you are looking to enable. By saving your file as a cloud document, you can access it across multiple platforms and devices. This can be helpful when you want to share your document for comments and or development. You find out more about saving as a cloud document in Chapter 9, “Sharing your XD Project.” Now, however, you will save the file locally, which means to the hard drive on your current device:

1. **Click and hold the burger menu in the upper-left and then choose Save as a Local Document (Windows) or File ⇨ Save as a Local Document (Mac).**
2. **In the File Name section, name this practice and browse to a location where you want to save this file. Keep the Save as Type as XD File and press Save. Keep this file open.**

3. **Double-click on the artboard name, at the top of the artboard, and change the name to home. When you start creating multiple artboards it is good practice to provide each with a descriptive name.**

Now add a simple graphic element to the home screen.

4. **Using the Ellipse tool, click and drag the artboard to create an ellipse. It can be any size or color, but position it somewhere near the top of the screen.**
5. **With the ellipse selected, click the Align Center icon at the top of the Properties Inspector.**

Your screen should look similar to the one shown in Figure 1-9.

Now add some text to this screen.

6. **Select the Type tool and then click and release to create a text insertion point.**

If you click and drag, you will create a text area that is not as dynamic when you add additional characters to your text. More details about controlling text are covered in Chapter 5, “Working with Text in Your XD Project.”

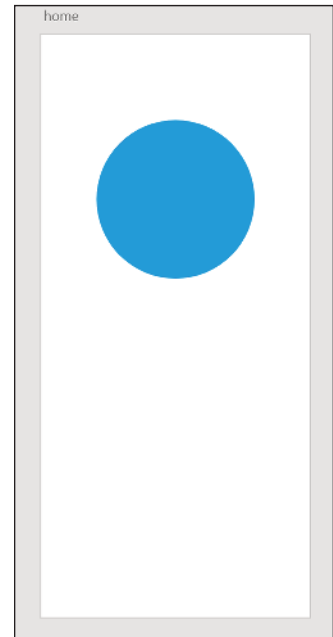


FIGURE 1-9:

Create a screen and add an ellipse with any color fill.

7. **Type the word *Welcome* in the Properties Inspector and choose any size type in Text section — for this example, choose 50 pts. Also, choose Center to center the text. To make sure the text object is in the center of the artboard, click the Align Center (Horizontally) button at the top of the Properties Inspector.**

Your screen should look similar to the example in Figure 1-10. For more type features, see Chapter 5, “Working with Text in Your XD Project.”

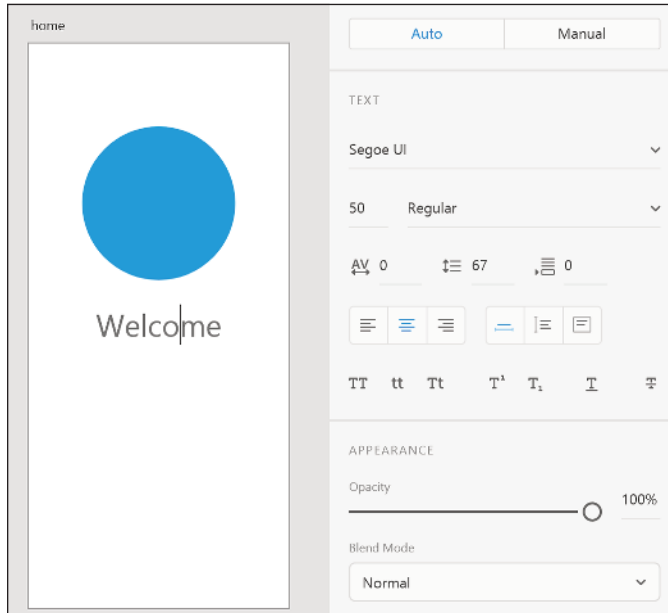


FIGURE 1-10: The screen now has a graphic element and a text object.

Cloning your text objects to the first artboard

These steps add additional text elements to the first page. Later, you will create links from these text objects to other artboards:

1. **Using the Select tool, click the *Welcome* text that you just created in the previous section.**
2. **Hold down *Alt/Option* and drag a clone of the text down and away from the first text.**

3. Double-click on the new text field and type See dog.
4. Repeat the cloning step by selecting the textbox that states “See dog” and then Alt/Opt-dragging it down underneath the original text.
5. Double-click the text and change it to See cat.
The result should look like Figure 1-11.
6. If you want to evenly distribute the lines of text, select all three and then click the Distribute Vertically icon at the top of the Properties Inspector. (See Figure 1-11.)

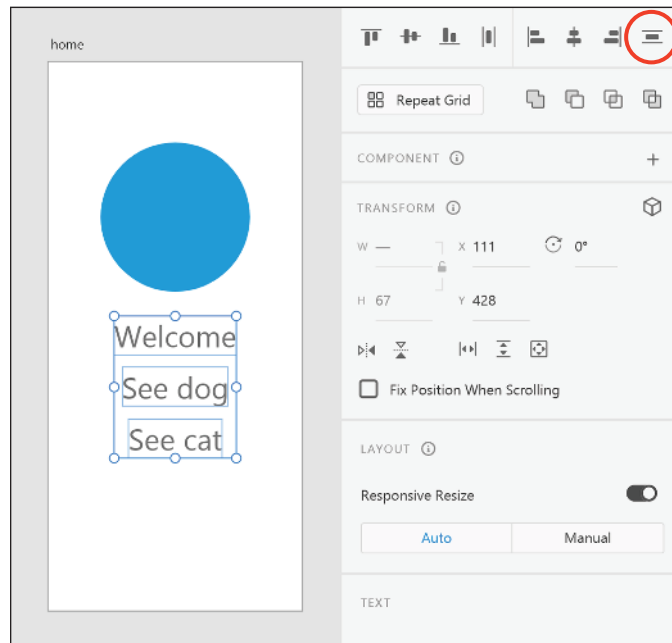


FIGURE 1-11: Clone your original text object by holding down the Alt/Option key and dragging it to another location.

Duplicating your artboard

There may be instances when you want save steps by using an existing artboard to build other screens. Follow these steps to duplicate the artboard you named home in the previous section.

1. Click on the name of your layer, home, at the top of the artboard to select it.

2. In the Layers panel on the left, look for your artboard name, right-click (Windows) or Control-click (Mac) it, and select Duplicate from the contextual menu, as shown in Figure 1-12.

A new artboard appears above home named home-1.

3. Double-click the home-1 name in the Layers panel, and change it to dog.

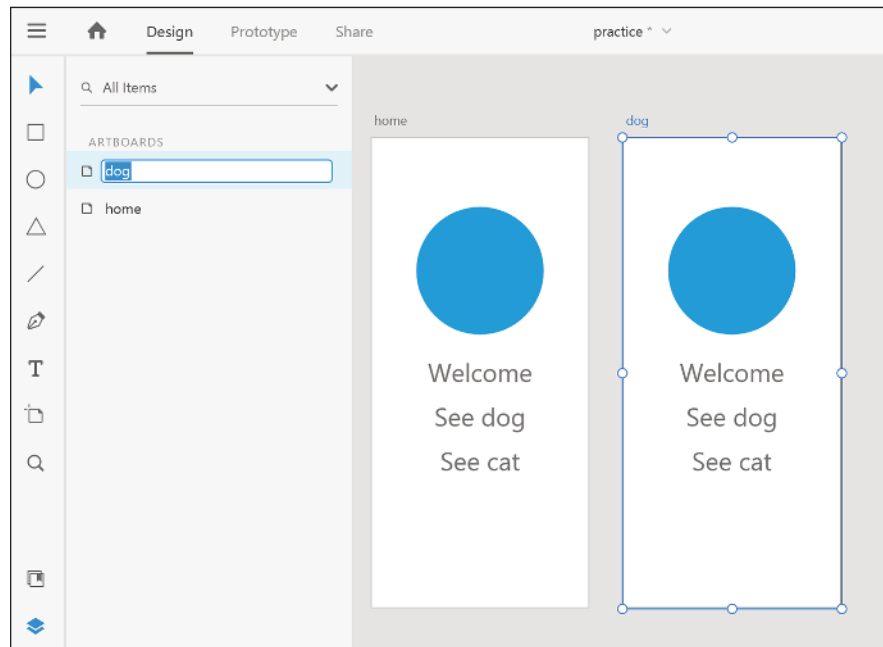


FIGURE 1-12: Duplicate and rename your new layer.

Creating a third artboard by cloning

You can also clone an existing artboard to start building from existing elements on a screen. You clone objects in XD much like you would in other applications, by using the Alt or Option key. Follow these steps to create a third artboard:

1. Make sure you have the Select tool active.
2. Click the dog name at the top of the dog artboard you just created to select the artboard.
3. Hold down the Alt (Windows) or Option (Mac OS) key and click and drag a third artboard to another location in your XD document.
4. Double-click the name at the top of the new artboard and change it from dog-1 to cat.

Editing your text to fit the screens

In this section, you change the text on the dog and cat pages so that you can link to them later.

1. **On the dog page, double-click the text object that states *See dog* and change it to *This is a dog.***
2. **On the cat page, double-click the text object that states *See cat* and change it to *This is a cat.***
3. **Save the file by pressing Ctrl+S (Windows) or Command+S (Mac).**

Experimenting with artboard properties

You now have three artboards: home, dog, and cat. In this section, you change the background color of your artboards and turn off and on precision layout and grid tools that help you keep your designs neat:

1. **With the any artboard selected, click the box to the left of Fill, in the Appearance section of the Properties Inspector, and select any color of background for your new artboard. For this example, select a light tint so that text in the design is still visible.**
2. **Check the box to the left of Layout in the Grid section of the Properties Inspector in order to display a layout grid that is visible to you only while working in XD. Change it to a square grid by clicking and holding down Layout and selecting Square.**
3. **Change the size to 20 pixels, as shown in Figure 1-13. Keep in mind that you can hide this grid at any time by unchecking the Grid checkbox.**

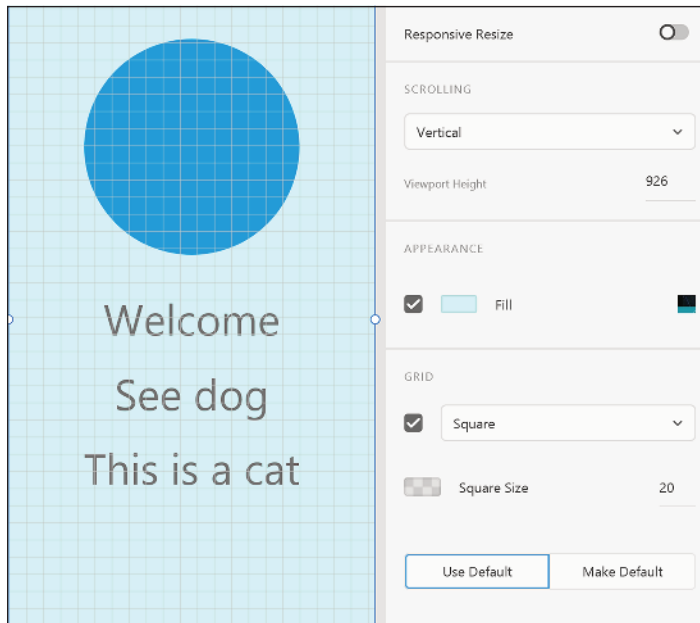
Adding an image

To make our app just a little more exciting, you can add some images to the cat and dog pages. This won't produce a beautiful app, maybe, but it will certainly create a functional one:

1. **Remove the circle graphics on all three screens by selecting them and pressing Delete or Backspace.**
2. **Select the dog artboard and then choose Burger menu⇨Import (Windows) or File⇨Import (Mac).**

An Open dialog box appears.

FIGURE 1-13:
Change the background color and add a grid in the Properties Inspector.



You can import any images that you like, but if you downloaded the DummiesCCFiles folder, noted in Book 1, Chapter 1, you can use the prepared exercise files for XD.

- 3. Navigate to the DummiesCCFiles folder and to the folder named Book07_XD and select the image named BrownWhitePup. Hold down Ctrl (Windows) or Command (Mac) and click the home-icon.svg file to add the second image to your selection, and then press Import.**
The files are added to the dog artboard.
- 4. Arrange the dog image and the home button on the page. If you want to horizontally align them on the center of the page, press the Align Center button at the top of the Properties panel or press Shift+C.**
- 5. Now select the cat artboard and repeat the procedure, choosing the Burger menu Import (Windows) or File Import (Mac). In this example, the GrayKitty, jpg image and the home-icon.svg image are used.**
- 6. If you want to add an image to the home page, use the image named babyanimals01.**

After you have arranged the images on the artboards, the result may look similar to Figure 1-14. Note that in this example the square grid lines have been turned off so that you can see the screens better.

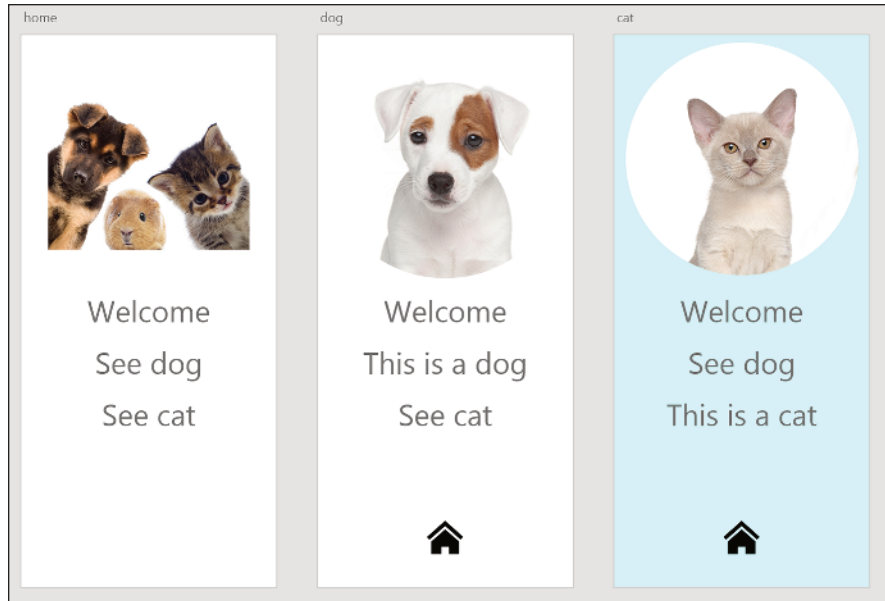


FIGURE 1-14:
Import images
into your
document.

Keyboard Shortcuts for Navigating the Workspace

Now that you have several artboards, you can practice navigating your workspace. Practice using the keyboard shortcuts provided in Table 1-1.

TABLE 1-1 Keyboard Shortcuts for Navigating the Workspace

Function	Windows Shortcut	Mac Shortcut
Fit all artboards in window	Ctrl+0	Command+0
Zoom in	Ctrl++ (plus sign) or Alt+mouse wheel	Command++ (plus sign) or Option+mouse wheel
Zoom out	Ctrl+- (minus sign)	Command+- (minus sign)
Go to 100%	Ctrl+1	Command+1
Go to 200%	Ctrl+2	Command+2
Zoom to selection	Ctrl+3	Command+3

(continued)

TABLE 1-1 (continued)

Function	Windows Shortcut	Mac Shortcut
Full screen	N/A	Ctrl+Command+F
Scroll	Spacebar and push with mouse	
Horizontal pan	Ctrl+mouse wheel	Ctrl+mouse wheel
Vertical pan	Mouse wheel	Mouse wheel



TIP

On a laptop, you can simply pinch your fingers in and out on your trackpad to zoom in and out of your artboard.

Design View versus Prototype Mode

Up to this point, you have been working in the default Design mode. This is the view that you work in when creating artwork. Notice at the top of the XD workspace that you have three different modes in which you can work: Design, Prototype, and Share. You learn more advanced features about prototyping in the following chapters of this minibook, but think of this as a quick run-through:

- 1. Press Ctrl+0 (Windows) or Command+0 (Mac) to make sure that you are viewing all three of your artboards.**
- 2. Click Prototype in the Application menu.**
Now you define an artboard to be your default screen; this is typically your home screen. You'll discover later how to create more advanced interactions, but for right now, start an initial flow. The home screen that was created in this exercise is the first screen of the app. To default to that screen showing up first, define it as the home screen.
- 3. Click the home artboard. A gray Home icon appears in the upper-left corner. Click the Home icon. It turns blue, indicating that the artboard is now successfully set as the start screen for your interactive prototype, as seen in Figure 1-15.**

Creating your links

Creating an interactive link is done by creating a wire from one screen to another. You can now link your screens together. To do so, just follow these steps:

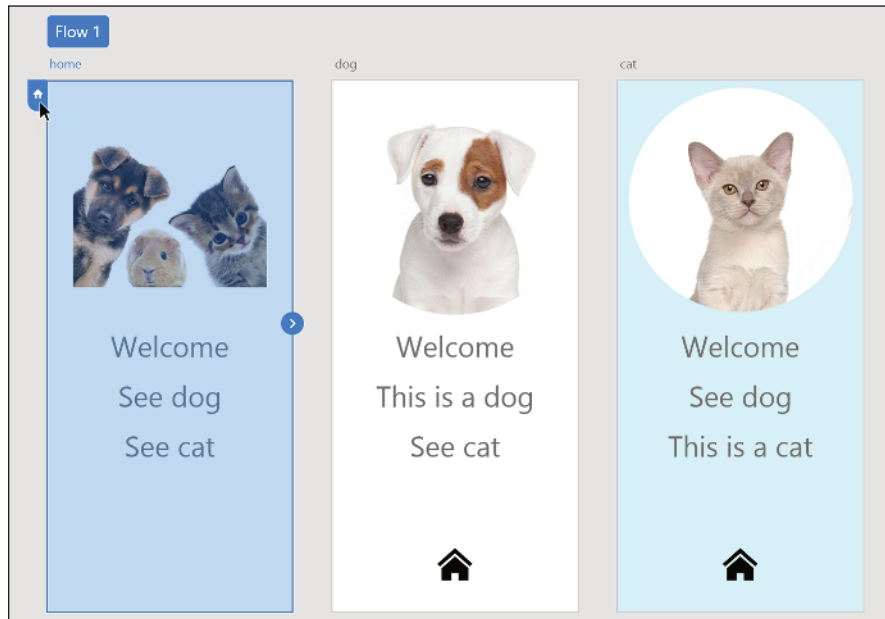


FIGURE 1-15: Click Prototype to enter the mode where you can define the start of your flow and create links to other screens.

1. Click the *See dog* text object on your home artboard. Notice that a blue arrow appears to the right of the object. Click that arrow and drag a wire from the dog text object to the dog artboard.
 When you release, the target for your link is displayed. There are many options in the Prototype mode, including the ability to link to other pages, create animations, rollovers, show overlays, and more. These are listed as options in the Type drop-down menu of the Properties menu. In this exercise, keep the Type set to Transition.
2. Click the cat text object on the home page, click the blue connecting arrow, and drag the wire to the cat artboard.
3. Allow users to return home by selecting the `home-icon.svg` icons on both screens and clicking and dragging from the blue connecting arrow back to the home artboard, as you see in Figure 1-16.

Testing your prototype

You can test your prototype by using the Desktop Preview feature:

1. Select the home artboard.
2. Click the Desktop Preview icon in the upper right of the XD workspace, as shown in Figure 1-17.

3. Click on the objects that you defined as links, such as See dog, and See cat, and the home icons.

You can either allow the Desktop Preview window to stay open while you work — it will show live updates — or you can close it to keep it out of view.

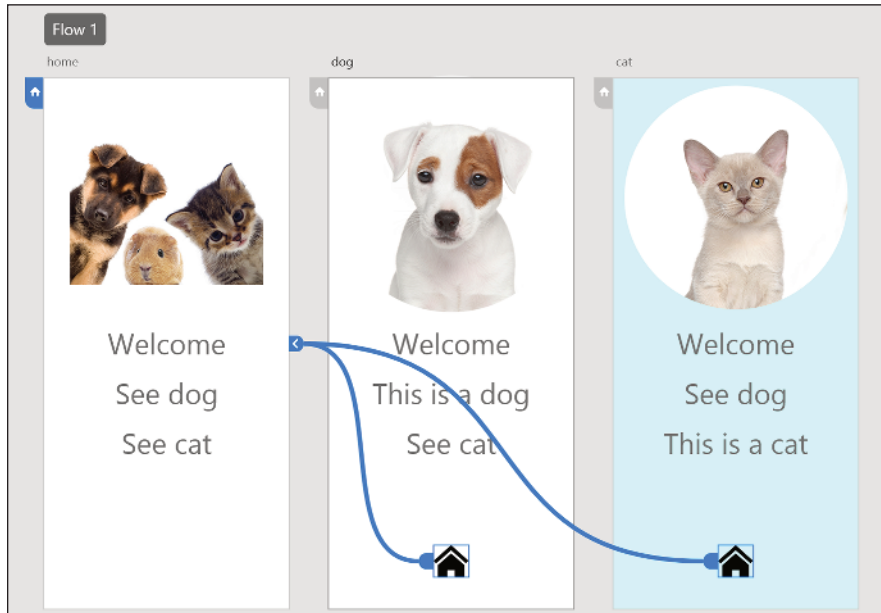


FIGURE 1-16: Click and drag a wire from the object's blue connecting arrow to the artboard that you want to link it to.

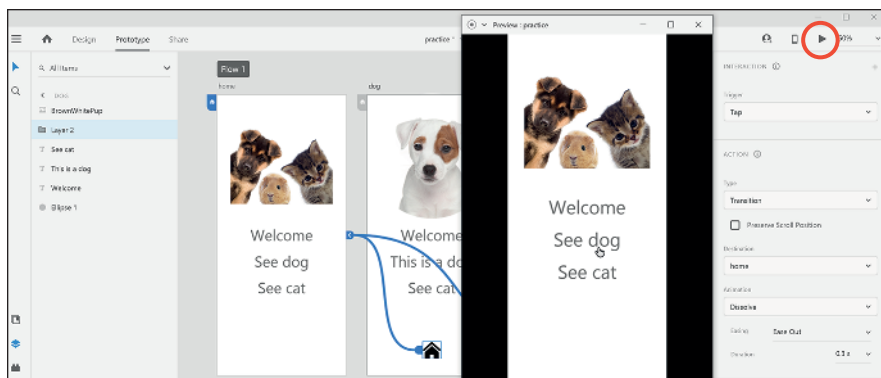


FIGURE 1-17: Preview your prototype by clicking the Desktop Preview button.