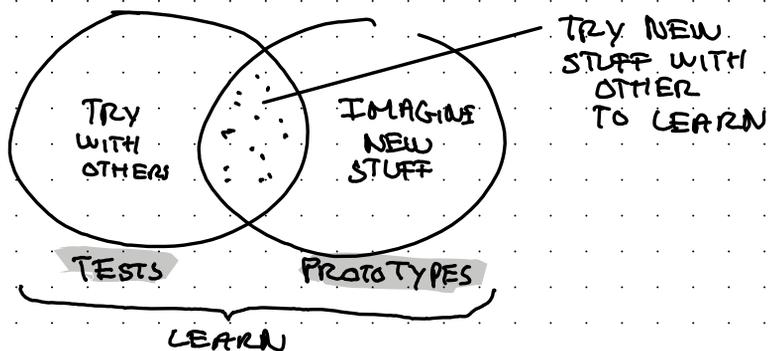# What's the difference between a test and a prototype?

In short: a test is a way of learning by showing or asking something to someone. A prototype is something new that you create that can, but is not always, tested.

Not all tests need a prototype

A survey, an interview, can be tests, where you learn something by making people react to something. A great test for example is to show people the websites of existing services and make them try them out. You haven't created anything, but still you have tested a lot.

Not all prototypes are tested

Sometimes you create a prototype of a service idea, or of a part of a service, not so much for testing it, but for making clear what you have understood or what you have in your head.

Here the prototype is another way of doing what the smart nerds call **Design Synthesis**, Using design to make sense of what you've learned.

I have seen for example, great prototypes that show physically how an intangible service works in a very artistic way. And that very artistic prototype strength was that it helped the designer better understand what was actually the problem she was working on, and gave her the meatphors that guided the rest of her project.

ADD HERE PROTO SHARAYA.