

# User Stories: Best and Worst Practices

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# Introduction

# My information sources

- User Stories Applied [Mike Cohn]
- Extreme Programming Installed [Ron Jeffries]
- Discussions with Mike and Ron
- My Experiences Coaching 5 Teams

# Ideal Pre-Reqqs for this talk

- Some knowledge of User Stories
  - Sprint Level
- 3 Components of a User Story
- Familiarity with Acceptance Testing Basics
  - “Test that...”, “Test with...”
  - Specification by Example
  - Given/When/Then

# Terminology

- Scrum Terms but they translate
- Acceptance Tests
  - Synonyms – Story Tests, Test Confirmations
  - Conceptual Acceptance Test
    - Test that the button is disabled after clicking it.
  - Executable Acceptance Test
    - Test Script (manual or automated)
  - Story Tests are Conceptual

# Disclaimers

**Don't Shoot the  
Messenger!**

# Overview

- Best Practices
- User Story Maturity
- User Story Utopia
- Worst Practices
- Super Quick Retrospective



# Best Practice: 3 Components and 2 Must Haves

- 3 Components for Every User Story
  1. Title/Short Description (aka Card)
  2. Verbal Discussions (aka Conversation)
  3. Acceptance Tests (aka Confirmations)
- 2 “Must Have” Story Characteristics
  1. Direct Value to External Stakeholder
    - Often times in GUI – but not always
  2. Describes Change to SuD

# Best Practice: Adhere to the User Story Vision

- Card
  - Token for Planning
  - Reminder to have Conversations
  - Jot down details
- Conversation
  - Draw out requirements details, sizing
- Confirmation
  - Confirm that requirements were met

# User Story Vision

- Very small features (2-3 person days)
- Tons of Conversations
- Extremely light documentation
- Large % of Acceptance Tests Automated
- **If you can't adhere to the vision, then try to progress towards the vision.**

# More Best Practices

(Try to progress maturity in this order)

- 1. Best Practice: PO 100% Allocated**
- 2. Best Practice: PO Co-located**
- 3. Best Practice: Weekly Backlog Grooming  
(with PO)**

# More Best Practices

4. **Best Practice:** Multiple Acceptance Testing Styles
5. **Best Practice:** Immediate Story Signoff
6. **Best Practice:** (2-3 days)
  - Days per person or pair
  - Need Mad Story Slicing Skillz
7. **Best Practice:** Acceptance Tests Automated (90+%)

# User Story Maturity

Points	Best Practice
15*	3 Components/2 Must Haves (* Required)
15	PO 100% Allocated
5	PO Co-located(Talking Distance)
10	Weekly Backlog Grooming
10	Multiple Acceptance Testing Styles(4+)
5	Immediate Story Signoff
20	Small Stories (2-3 Person Days)
20	Acceptance Tests 90+% Automated
Score	Maturity Level
25-39	Beginning Team
40-79	Intermediate Team
80-89	Advanced Team
90+	Expert Team

**Break for questions**

# The User Story Vision

The User Story Players Present...

## User Story Utopia



**Break for questions**

# Violating 3 Components and 2 Must Haves

- **Worst Practice:** Story == Sentence
- **Worst Practice:** Story == Card
- **Worst Practice:** Acceptance Test Absence
- **Worst Practice:** Story == Project Task
- **Bad Practice:** Technical Stories

# Violating the User Story Vision

- **Worst Practice:** Product Owner Bottleneck
- **Worst Practice:** Too Many Swollen Stories
- **Worst Practice:** Too Much Template
- **Bad Practice:** All Verbal Too Soon
- **Bad Practice:** Draconian Documentation

# Super Quick Retro

- On one index card:
  - Questions to be answered by email
  - Be sure to write your email address
- On another index card:
  - Rate Presentation 1 to 10
    - (categories? Material/Presenter/Audio)
  - 1 or 2 (or more) things you liked
  - 1 or 2(or more) suggested changes

# How to Contact Me

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