

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-Reqs for this talk

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

Terminology

- Scrum Terms but they translate
- Story Tests
 - Synonyms – Acceptance Tests, Test Confirmations
 - Conceptual Story Test
 - Test that the button is disabled after clicking it.
 - Executable 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: 3 Components and 2 Must Haves**
- 2. Best Practice: Constant PO Interaction**
- 3. Good Practice: Stories Less than 5 days**
- 4. Best Practice: ATDD with Story Tests**
- 5. Best Practice: PO 100% Allocated**

More Best Practices

- 6. Best Practice: PO Co-located**
- 7. Best Practice: Weekly Story Grooming (with PO)**
- 8. Best Practice: Immediate Story Signoff**

Advanced Best Practices

9. Best Practice/Pattern: Small Stories

- (2-3 days)
- Days per person or pair
- Need Good Story Slicing Skills

10. Best Practice/Pattern: Story Tests Automated (90+%)

Bradley User Story Maturity

Points	Best Practice
3*	3 Components/2 Must Haves (* Required)
2	Constant PO Interaction
2	No Stories More than 5 person days
2	(ATDD) Story Tests defined up front
1	PO 100% Allocated
1	PO Co-located(Talking Distance)
2	Weekly Story Grooming
1	Immediate Story Signoff
2	Small Stories (2-3 person days)
4	Story Tests 90+% Automated
Score	Maturity Level
5-7	Beginning Team
8-15	Intermediate Team
16-17	Advanced Team
18-20	Expert Team

Break for questions

Questions?

The User Story Vision

The User Story Players Present...

User Story Utopia

Break for questions

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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