

Understanding User Stories

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- When you hear the phrase ***User Stories***, what comes to mind?
- Do you currently write user stories?
- If user stories are a part of your daily work, what is the goal of using them?

What is a User Story?

A user story is a description of a **change** in **system behavior** from the **perspective** of a **user**.

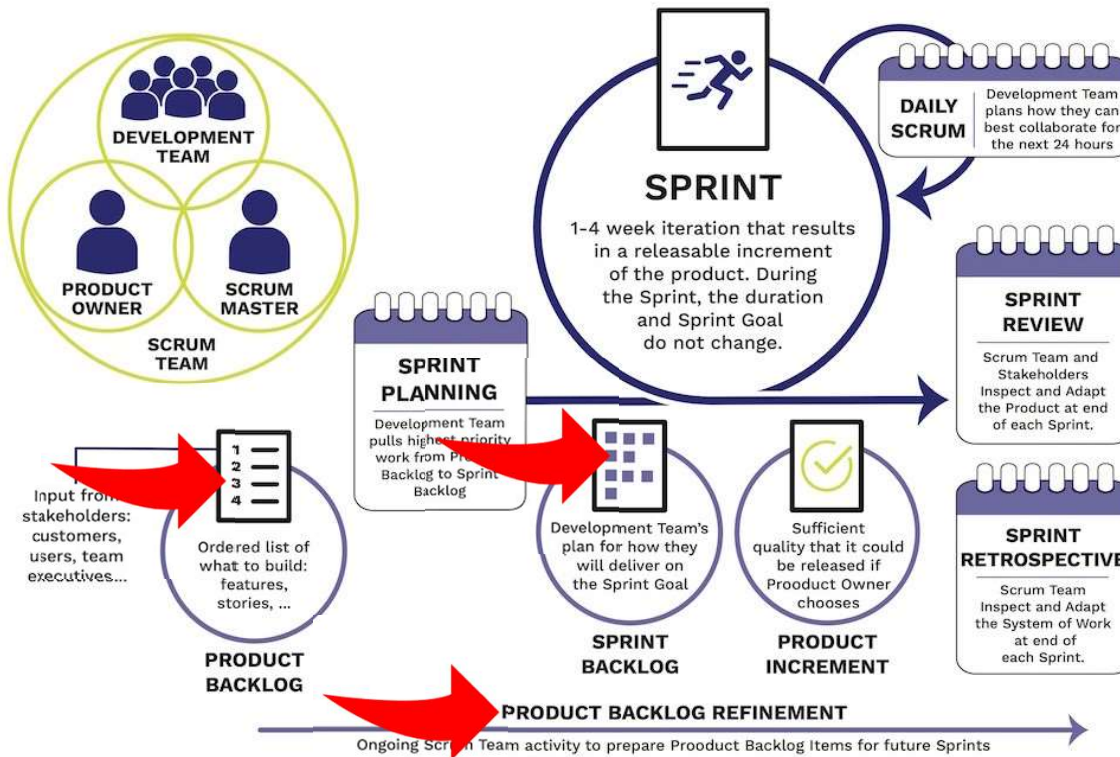
A user story functions as a **placeholder** for **conversations**.

By taking the perspective of a user, we can demonstrate **empathy** towards their situation, with respect to how a change will affect them.

A User Story is not...

- If it's not for a user, it's not a user story.
 - Defects, bugs, data loads, training, refactoring...are all types of Product Backlog Items...but they are not stories.
- User Story ≠ Scrum
 - Very common association, however, User Stories are not actually Scrum Artifacts. You can use one without the other.
- User Story ≠ Agile
 - Agile is a large umbrella which represents many things. User Stories just are one of many tools recommended to help teams become more Agile.
- As a <role>, I want <action> so that <value>
 - This is a template commonly used to help people write user stories. User Stories can follow many other formats.

Scrum Framework



Slide 5

RK3

Reiter, Kevin, 2/20/2019

Which questions should a User Story answer?

- Who?
 - What?
 - Why?
 - When?
 - How?
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- In the chat...which of these questions are answered in a well-written User Story?

Faux User Stories

- Sometimes, we see technical requirements forced into a User Story:
 - *“As the system, I want to verify a user's OAuth credentials before granting access so that I can ensure secure connections.”*
- What issues do you see with this?
- A “system” as shown above does not have wants. We are trying to personify a system, but we are trying to demonstrate empathy against a non-human entity.

“As the system, I want to verify a user's OAuth credentials before granting access so that I can ensure secure connections.”

- If it must be a User Story, perhaps...
 - *“As an amateur chef, I want to log into the system because I want to access recipes behind the paywall.”*

- Or just put it in your backlog as a technical task (or a “chore”)...
 - *“Require a valid OAuth token for access to the system.”*

As a user, I want you to take my money

- Sometimes business requirements are not actually user-focused.
 - *“As a site visitor, I want to see advertisements so I can know about products and services that might interest me.”*
- ...said no one ever.
- This is clearly about the revenue model for the site...not the site visitor.
- This is fine to have in your backlog but should not be forced into a user story. It should be acknowledged for what it is...a business requirement.

INVEST

- I – Independent
 - N – Negotiable
 - V – Valuable
 - E – Estimable
 - S – Small
 - T – Testable
-
- A “good” user story has some amount of all these characteristics.

Independent

- We can prioritize by something other than a technical dependency.

- Antipattern: The user story relies on some other team doing a piece of it, to get it to done.

Negotiable

- Keep options open on how to accomplish the user story
- Common scenario: The mindset shift from “I want it to work like this, so build it this way” to “my focus is on the outcome of the story, not the output of the work.”
- The story writer provides a path for the development team to walk on, but does not tell them how to walk on it.

Valuable

- Visible new capabilities for users
- Not necessarily marketable...

- Potentially Shippable – the state of your product at the end of each sprint and completion of multiple user stories.

- There is some benefit to each story we have completed.

- We COULD release, but it may be the aggregate of many stories that makes something worth “selling”.

Estimable

- Can be estimated / sized
- A well-written user story can be relatively sized against other well-written user stories.
- Is it small? Is it big?
- Story pointing, T-shirt sizing
- Collection of the information informs a teams product roadmap.

Small

- 6-10 per sprint
- How much of your sprint are you willing to bet on any one thing?

- Risk mitigation – given that there is only value in work that is DONE, how can we keep our user stories concise enough that they can be started and finished inside of a consistent timebox.

Testable

- Clear way to know that we are done

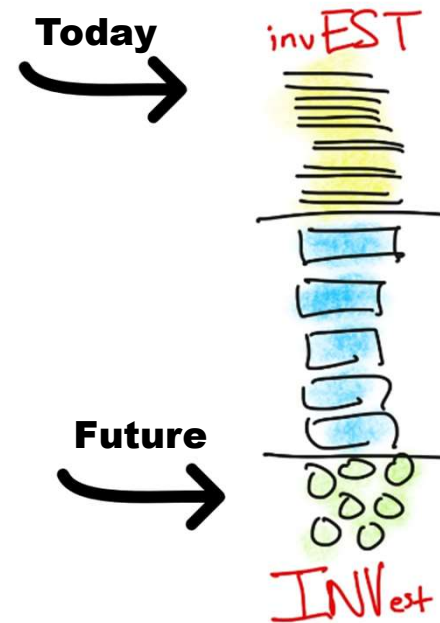
- A good user story is demonstrable. There are methods to confirm a story is delivering what was intended.

UNDERSTANDING USER STORIES

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Which group is most important for sprint planning?



Breakout Discussion

- Discuss the following question in your breakout rooms:

“Which items in the INVEST model seem to come at the expense of other items in the list?”

UNDERSTANDING USER STORIES

- Questions?
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Thank You!