Attacking Things Incrementally
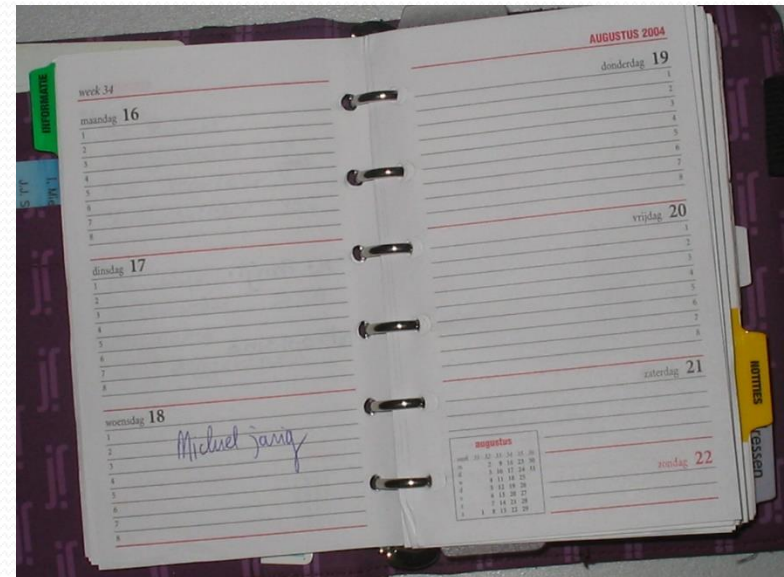
About Me

- Doing agile since 1999
- Start ups / Enterprises
- Planigle - Consulting and Training

Agenda

- Small Stories
  - Why small?
  - Barriers
  - How do we make it small?
- Small Releases
  - Why small?
  - Barriers
 - How do we make it small?

Why Small Stories?

- Easier to estimate
- Easier to ensure quality
- Easier to track down issues
- Harder to get lost
- Enables earlier testing
- More opportunity for feedback
- More opportunity to pivot
- More visibility
- Less risk
- Less at risk
- Less variance
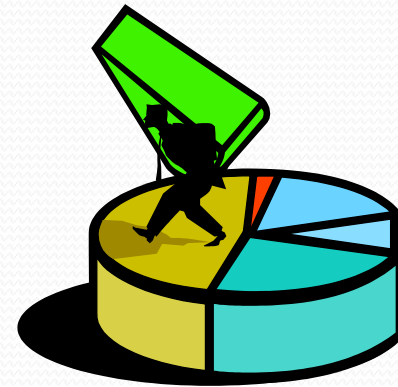
Simplicity--the art of maximizing the amount of work not done--is essential

© 2017   Planigle

Not Too Early

- Small stories at the top
- Bigger stories further down
- Keep backlog maintainable
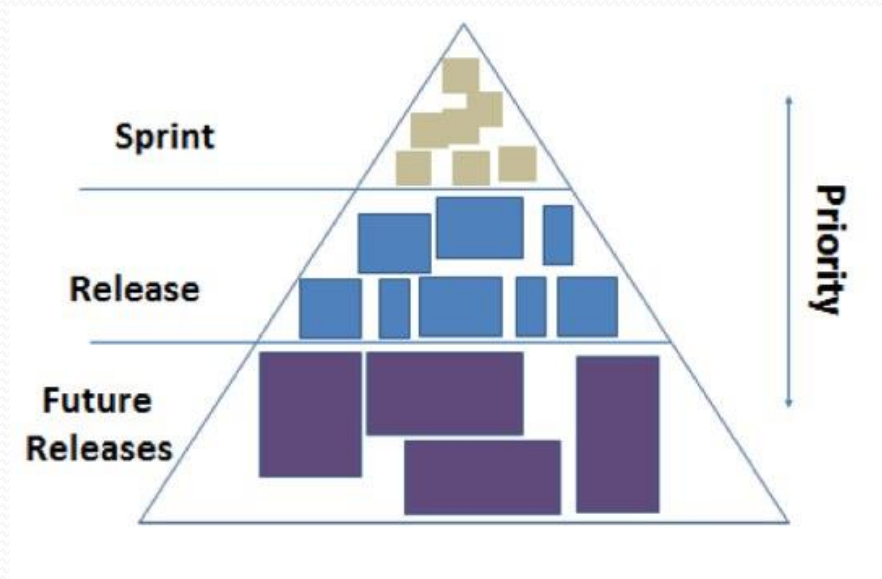
How Small Should Stories Be?

- At least 5 - 9 stories / iteration
- Ideally 0.5 - 3 days / story
- Establish threshold for iteration

Planigle

Barriers to Small Stories

- Get past all or nothing – What is the next step?
- Look at team practices – Do they still make sense?
- Get used to breaking stories down

Planigle

Creating Smaller Stories

- When splitting a story, each "slice" should add incremental user value
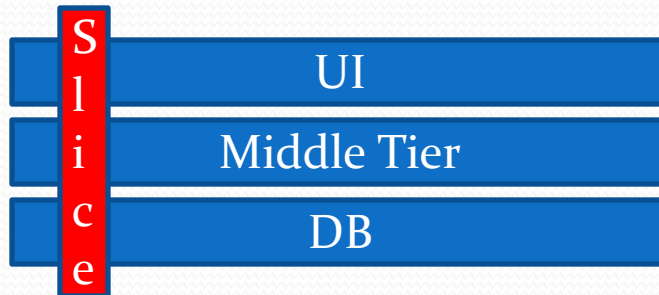- Reprioritize and resize after splitting

Planigle

Who Does the Splitting?

- Product Owner
- Team Members

More on Splitting

- Do:
  - Split vertically (end to end)
  - Ensure each story adds value / allows feedback
  - Ensure each story is releasable

S l i c e	UI
	Middle Tier
	DB

- Don't:
  - Split horizontally (DB, Middle Tier, UI)
  - Split Dev vs. QA
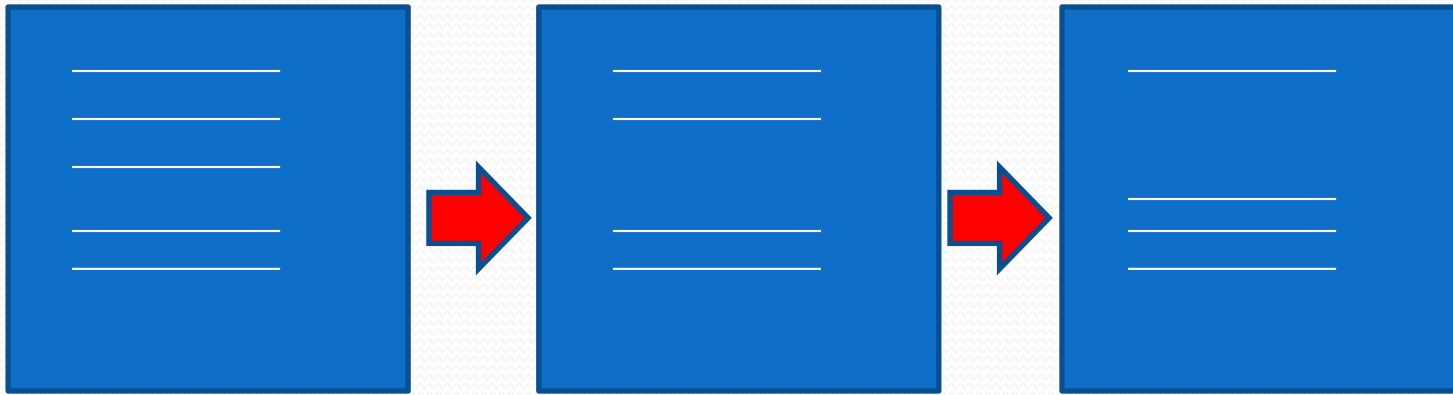 - Introduce work that will need to be backed out if you don't continue

Questions to Ask Yourself

- Does this meet our size threshold?
- Is this the next most important part?
- Are any aspects lower priority?
- How will we test this?
- Could we release this?
- If we go no farther, will we have to back something out?

Splitting Example - Wizard

- Complex wizard:

Might become:
- Essential part of wizard (first half of page 1)
- Refinement (rest of page 1 plus page 3)
- Refinement (page 2)

Planigle

Splitting Example – Buy a Book

- Buy a Book

Might become:

- View List of Books
- Buy Book w/ Credit Card
- See Book Details
- See Other User Comments

Other Ideas for Splitting

- Market segments
- Acceptance criteria
- CRUD
- Happy path first
- Simple version first
  - Rules
  - Data
  - UI
- Manual vs. automated
- Buy vs. build
- Transient vs. persistent
- Make it work, make it work fast
- Spike

Planigle

Exercise

- Get into groups of 3-4
- Each Person:
  - Identify 1 or 2 stories that are too big
  - Identify any team constraints
- As a group:
 - Identify how you might split the story(s)

Dependencies Between Stories

- Order matters
- Ex. Credit card
- If one story for each type, first is most difficult
- Could split into First card and then All x Cards
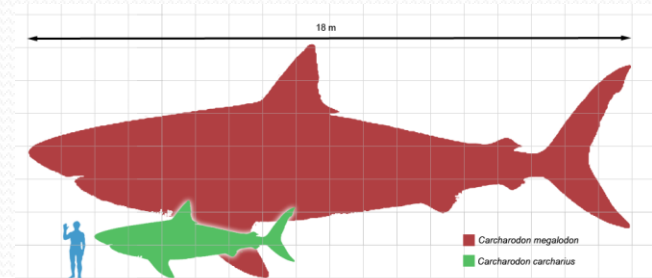
Why Small Releases?

- Earlier revenue opportunity
- More opportunity for feedback
- More opportunity to pivot
- More responsive
- More visibility
- Clearer focus
- Less at risk
- Less disruption
- Easier to predict
- Easier to track down issues
- Easier to defer to next release

Revenue By Release Length
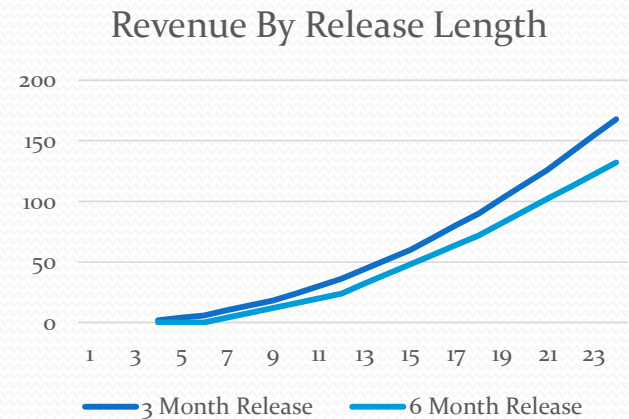
Our highest priority is to satisfy the customer through early and continuous delivery of valuable software
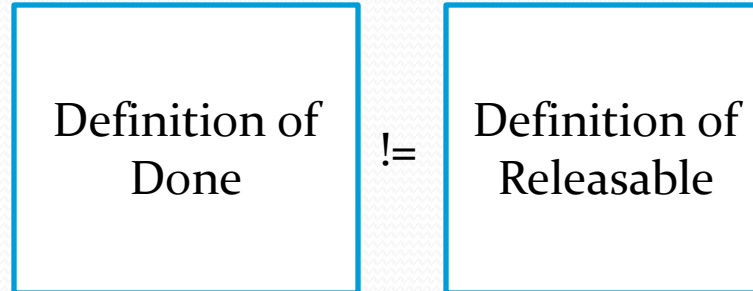
How Small Should Releases Be?

- Depends on your context
- Annually?
- Semi-annually?
- Quarterly?
- Monthly or Semi-Monthly?
- Daily?
- Continuously?

Deliver working software frequently, from a
couple of weeks to a couple of
months, with a
preference to the shorter
timescale

Barriers to Small Releases

- Things only done once / release

Definition of Done	!=	Definition of Releasable

- Difficulty of deployment

Creating Smaller Releases

- Smaller Epics
- Reduce cost of the release
  - Releasable throughout
  - Easy to deploy / install
- More communication
- Limited / internal release
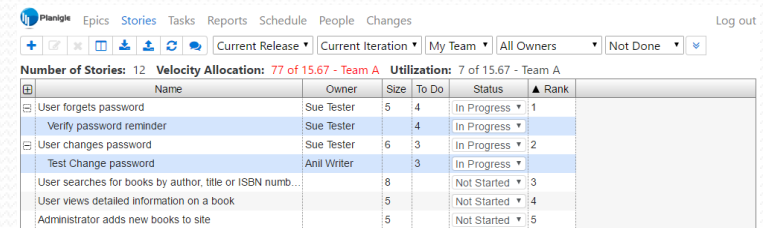- Market aggregation of releases

Example: Code Rewrite

- Both versions available
- Focus on satisfying market segments
- Most critical / often used features first
- Much easier to validate / less risk

References

- Story Slicing: How Small is Too Small - https://agilepainrelief.com/notesfromatooluser/2010/09/story-slicing-how-small-is-enough.html#.WQJDhNIrKUk

- 20 Ways to Split a Story - http://xp123.com/xplor/xp0512/index.shtml

- Patterns for Splitting User Stories - http://agileforall.com/patterns-for-splitting-user-stories/

- Story Splitting Flowchart - http://agileforall.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/01/Story-Splitting-Flowchart.pdf

- Frequent Small Releases - http://www.agileacademy.com.au/agile/sites/default/files/Frequent%20Small%20Releases%202011.pdf

Planigle

Resources

Walter Bodwell
Planigle
wbodwell@planigle.com
Twitter: @wbodwell
www.planigle.com
www.walterbodwell.com

Planigle