Splitting Epics and User Stories

Using Micro Milestones to Boost Momentum
35+ years
Software development experience

200+
Software and quality assurance engineers

5
Development centers
(US and Eastern Europe)

3,000 hours
Typical project effort

7 months
Typical project duration

$500,000
Typical project value

480%
3 year revenue growth

114%
1 year revenue growth

+20%
Net income

(US and Eastern Europe)
Don’t Fit Into a Sprint
Scrum Rule

• One or more stories must be **shippable** by the end of the sprint
• Part of a story doesn’t count
• Problem: Stories are too big to get done in one sprint
• Solution: Make smaller stories
Only split what you need for the next sprint. Involve the whole Scrum team.

Example:
Average Velocity = 15
5 story points or smaller

25% - 33% of Average Velocity

3 to 4 Minimum
You can’t ship a layer!
Every story is shippable
Avoids YAGNI
Splitting Strategies

1. Data boundaries
2. Operational boundaries
3. CRUD operations
4. Cross-cutting concerns
5. Performance
6. Different priorities
1. Data Boundaries

• Group related data together into separate stories

• Example: Banking app
  • View recent transactions
  • View details for a check
  • View statements
2. Operational Boundaries

• Start with simple functionality
• Then make it more fancy
• Example: Streaming music app
  • Listen to a random selection of music
  • Create my own playlist
  • Share my playlist with others
3. CRUD Operations

- Create/Read/Update/Delete
- Example: Word processing app
  - View a Microsoft Word document
  - Modify and save existing document
  - Create new document from template
4. Cross-cutting Concerns

• Functionality that applies to most or all stories
• Examples:
  • Security
  • Validation
  • Error handling
  • Logging
  • Encryption
4. Cross-cutting Concerns

- Example: Human resources web app
  - Anyone can see/modify salary information
  - Only specific users can see/modify salary information
  - Only users with specific security role permissions can see/modify salary information
5. Performance

• “Make it work, then make it fast.”
• Start by focusing on functionality
• Then worry about meeting performance requirements
• Example: Internet of things web service
  • Process location updates from devices
  • Handle 1,000 location updates per second
6. Different Priorities

• Split out less-important functionality
• Move it down the product backlog
• Example: Social media app
  • Upload photos
  • Tag friends
• Facial recognition for auto-tagging friends
User Story: Spell Checker

As an author I want to check my spelling so I can avoid spelling errors

- I can check spelling in English
- **I can check spelling in Spanish**  Priority
- I can see a wavy line under misspelled words
- I can get suggestions for a misspelled word
- I can ignore all instances of a misspelled word
- I can add a word to the dictionary
Split Spell Checker Stories

• As an author I want an **indication** of misspelled words so I can prevent spelling errors in my document
• As an author I want to get **suggestions** for each misspelled word so I don't have to look it up
• As an author I want to **ignore** certain misspelled words so I can avoid an indication for special words I use
• As an author I want to **add** a word to the dictionary so I can make the spell check more accurate
• As an author I want to check spelling in **Spanish** so I can check spelling when I write in that language
Summary

• Split stories and epics that are too big to fit into a sprint
• Split just enough to fit into the next sprint
• Involve the whole Scrum team
• Maximum size guideline for a story entering a sprint: 25% to 33% of average velocity
• Multiple splitting strategies to choose from
THANK YOU!

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