User Story Essentials

User Stories are a powerful and popular way to express user needs

Customer Team	Identify User Stories	Story Writing Workshop	User Story
Story Card	Elaborate User Stories	Test Case	Accept User Story
Types of User Story	Standard User Story	Job Story	Team Story
Technical Story	Story Creation	INVEST	The Three C's
User Story Mapping	User Story Splitting	Good-Better-Best	SPIDR
Resources			
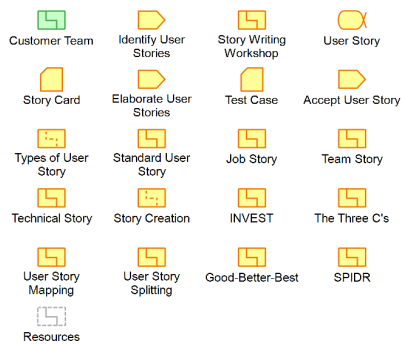
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Customer Team

The set of stakeholders that 'own' the product or service being developed. Ideally represented by a single person who is available to support the team on a daily basis.
The Customer Team includes those who ensure the solution will meet the needs of its intended users, so may include testers, product manager, real users and interaction designers.
Responsible for writing the User Story and Acceptance Tests.

owns: User Story
involved in : Identify User Stories,
Elaborate User Stories and Accept User Story
Ref: User Stories Applied

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Story Writing Workshop

An approach to finding and elaborating user stories. Attended by stakeholders, customers, users and the team.
It runs frequently (at least prior to starting each planned release) and focusses on how to achieve either a single significant objective or a small number of smaller objectives.
It takes from an hour to a full day. In most cases, aim for 4-5 hours.
Suggested Agenda:
• Customer Team presents significant objective
• Discuss user roles and personas
• Story generation
• Story selection
• Schedule follow-up sessions if needed

can result in : User Story
a technique for: Identify User Stories and Elaborate User Stories
Ref: User Stories Applied

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Identify User Stories

Identify candidate user stories that will add value to the system, product or service being developed.

Understand the Requirements

3 Stakeholder Representation   3 Analysis   ... and all other competencies

User Story: Candidate Story or beyond
Story Card: Story Expressed or beyond
Test Case: Test Ideas Captured or beyond (optional)

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INVEST

An acronym of the quality criteria for a User Story based on an original idea from Bill Wake. Although the S stands for 'small', it is important not to make stories too small or split them prematurely.

I - Independent
N - Negotiable
V - Valuable
E - Estimable
S - Small
T - Testable

helps describe: User Story
Ref: INVEST

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User Story

User Stories are an agile requirements approach that helps shift the focus from writing about requirements to talking about them. User Stories include a written sentence or two and, more importantly, capture a series of conversations about the desired functionality.

Candidate Story
Ready to Implement
Accepted
Available for Use

Relates to: Requirements

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Story Card

The physical manifestation of a User Story. Traditionally a paper index card but can also be a digital record in a software tool.

Story Expressed
Conditions of Satisfaction Described
Conversations Captured
All Conversations Captured

Describes: User Story

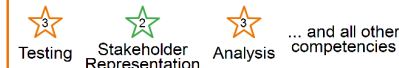Designed using IJI Essence in Practice Workbench™   2.2

Elaborate User Stories

User stories are best elaborated through conversations.
Use these conversations, together with structured workshops or customer demonstrations to iteratively refine, improve and perhaps split User Stories, increasing understanding until a Story is available for use.

User Story: Candidate Story

Understand the Requirements

2 Testing   2 Stakeholder Representation   3 Analysis   ... and all other competencies

User Story: Ready to Implement or beyond
Story Card: Story Expressed or beyond
Test Case: Test Ideas Captured or beyond

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Test Case

A set of actions to be performed on the solution to determine if the conditions of satisfaction are met correctly.
There is often more than one Test Case for each User Story. Test Cases include acceptance tests (which the Customer Team is responsible for) plus additional tests defined by the developers.

Test Ideas Captured
Executable
Automated

Describes: User Story

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Accept User Story

The Customer Team is responsible for writing and executing the acceptance Test Cases that will determine that the User Story is complete and can be released.
The Customer Team may work with developers or testers to create the tests, but as a minimum will specify them.

User Story: Ready to Implement
Test Case: Executable

Implement the System
3 Testing
3 Stakeholder Representation
2 Development

User Story: Accepted

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Standard User Story

A Standard User Story is focusssed on the User. It is a short, simple description of a feature told from the perspective of the person who desires the new capability, usually a user or customer of the system. This the most common form of User Story and typically follows a simple template:
"As a... **I want**... **so that**..."
For Example: "As an Investor, I want to place a trade so that I can invest in a company"

a format for: Story Card
Ref: Standard User Story Format

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Job Story

A Job Story is focused less on the user performing some function than on the job to be done by that story. It has three parts:
- **Situation** -The context or perhaps what triggered the story.
- **Motivation** - The first order goal of the user.
- **Expected Outcome** - The result of the story.

They typically follow the template:
"When... I want to ... so I can"
For example: "When an order is submitted, I want to see a warning message, so I can avoid resubmitting the order."

a format for: Story Card
Ref: Job Story

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Team Story

A Team Story is focussed on the needs of the team. It is created by the team but must always be prioritized alongside the other types of story.
May take the form: **"We want to ... so that ..."**
For example, "We want to replace the database technology so that it is more secure and easier to maintain."

a format for: Story Card
Ref: Team Story

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Technical Story

A Technical Story is focussed on technical detail (such as back-end development or non-functional requirements) rather than user need.
It may use the Feature Driven Development format of:
[Action] the **[result]** [by|for|of|to] a(n) [**object**]

For example, "Estimate the closing price of a stock."

a format for: Story Card
Ref: Technical Story

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The Three C's

Three critical aspects of a User Story - Card, Conversation and Confirmation.
Card - User Stories are written on small index cards that do not contain all the information that makes up the requirement. The card is a token representing the requirement.
Conversation - The requirement itself is communicated from the customer through conversartion: an exchange of thoughts, opinions and feelings.
Confirmation - This is the acceptance test used to confirm that the developers have done what the Customer Team needed.

describes: User Story and Story Card
Ref: Three C's

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User Story Mapping

A powerful technique for finding, splitting, organizing and discussing User Stories by arranging them on a structured 'map'.
Described in Jeff Patton's book, 'User Story Mapping'.
User Story Mapping helps drive shared understanding of the problem by encouraging telling stories, not just writing them down.

can result in: User Story
a technique for: Identify User Stories and Elaborate User Stories
Ref: User Story Mapping

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User Story Splitting

User Stories are great for capturing what a system should do to delight its customers but aren't always the right size to be easily implemented by a development team.
As part of getting a User Story 'Ready to Implement' it may need to be split into multiple smaller User Stories that each still provide value for the user.
There are many techniques and patterns that can help such as SPIDR and Good-Better-Best.
The original User Story may be deleted once split, or alternatively new User Stories may be sliced off, leaving the original User Story still present.

a technique for: Identify User Stories and Elaborate User Stories
generates: User Story
implemented by: Good-Better-Best and SPIDR

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SPIDR

Five robust but simple approaches to splitting stories to be both valuable to the customer, and easy enough to be delivered by the team.

S - Spikes. A spike is a short, timeboxed research activity intended to build knowledge about a User Story. This can help you see ways to split the story, but takes time, so try other approaches first.

P - Paths. Consider the paths through a User Story and split each path into its own User Story.

I - Interfaces. Split a User Story across multiple user or data interfaces.

D - Data. Develop an initial User Story that supports a subset of the data. Incrementally add more data sets.

R - Rules. Relax business rules or technology standards and iterate.

a technique for: User Story Splitting
generates: User Story
Ref: SPIDR

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

Good-Better-Best

A way to split a story into multiple smaller stories, with at least one story in each of three categories:

Good Enough for Now - Barely sufficient characteristics. Probably not good enough for users to love it, but still offering some value.

Better - Additional value that would make it better.

Best - Things that would make it really fabulous. Don't be afraid to go crazy, these are all just options!

a technique for: User Story Splitting
generates: User Story
Ref: User Story Mapping

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Resources

- This practice has been developed by IJI with support and guidance from Mike Cohn and Mountain Goat Software LLC
- User Stories are part of XP: See extremeprogramming.org/rules/userstories.html
- Described in Mike Cohn's book User Stories Applied (Addison-Wesley 2004)
- The **3 C's** was originally created by Ron Jeffries: https://ronjeffries.com/xprog/articles/expcard conversationconfirmation/
- The **Standard User Story** originated at Connextra in 2001 and is described at https://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/agile/user-stories

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Resources

- **Job Stories:** https://www.intercom.com/blog/using-job-stories-design-features-ui-ux/ and https://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/blog/job-stories-offer-a-viable-alternative-to-user-stories
- Using **Feature Driven Development** for 'technical' stories. https://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/blog/not-everything-needs-to-be-a-user-story-using-fdd-features
- **Team Story** - Developed from an idea from Ian Spence.
- **User Story Mapping** described in Jeff Patton's book: User Story Mapping (O'Reilly 2014). Image © 2022 Agile from First Principles by Lynda and Simon Girvan (BCS, 2022)

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Resources

- **SPIDR**- An approach to splitting stories. A poster can be downloaded from Mountain Goat at this link: https://www.mountaingoatsoftware.com/exclusive/spidr-poster-download
- **INVEST** acronym orignally proposed by Bill Wake: see http://xp123.com/articles/invest-in-good-stories-and-smart-tasks/ and modified slightly
- **Essence Standard**: This product uses the Essence standard which is available from the Object Management Group, Inc. at: https://www.omg.org/spec/Essence/.
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