Product Backlog & Intro to User Stories

June 28-29, 2005

Idea
Features/Capabilities
Product Backlog
Product Plans & Strategies
Capability
Sprint Backlog
Increment of Product
Activity & Artifacts
Source Code
Documentation
Tests
Database Schema
Executables
Etc., Etc., Etc...
Release

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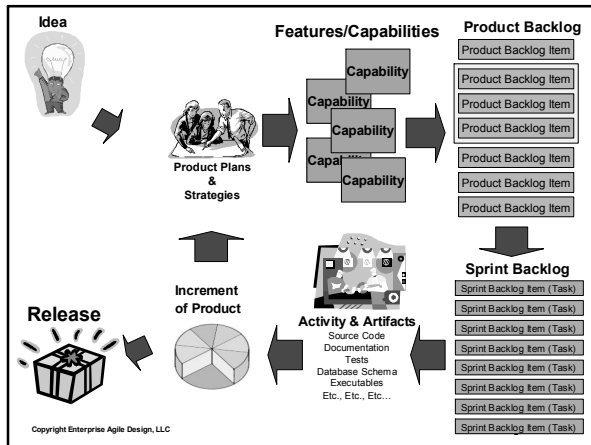
Product Backlog

- List of functionality, technology, issues
- Issues are placeholders that are later defined as work
- Emergent, prioritized, estimated
- More detail on higher priority backlog
- Product Owner responsible for priority
- Anyone can contribute
- Maintained and posted visibly
- Derived from Business Plan or Vision Statement, which sometimes have to be created with customer

Adapted from: Ken Schwaber (ADM, Inc. www.controlchaos.com)

Table Dialogue – Product Backlog

Take 5 minutes to answer the following questions with the people at your table:

• What makes a **good** product backlog item?
• What makes a **bad** product backlog item?
• What are the consequences of beginning an iteration with a bad backlog item?

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Sample Product Backlog

Priority (1-9)	Function	Full Description	Raw Dev. Effort
1	General	Setup development environment	4
1	General	Confirm use of zope as development environment	2
1	Membership	Ability to sign up for various level of membership	4
1	Membership	Ability to use credit card to pay for membership	15
1	Membership	Provide extract from database to external sources	3
1	Membership	Notify members with membership data	5
1	Membership	Generate receipts and certificates	5
1	Membership	Tie membership program to bank accounts	5
1	Membership	Implement open access database (MySQL?)	6
2	News	Authoring environment for news	8
1	Website	Website look, feel, navigation, initial pages	10
3	Founders Page	Include agilealliance.org founders page	10
3	Sponsors	Display sponsors and link to web sites	6
4	Articles	Authoring environment for articles	10
4	Articles	Organizing and sorting capability for articles	4
4	Articles	Library catalog for articles	8

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User Stories

User stories are simple, clear, brief descriptions of functionality that will be valuable to either a user or purchaser of a product.

Samples – travel reservation system

A user can make a hotel reservation.

Users can see photos of the hotels.

A user can cancel a reservation.

Users can restrict searches so they only see hotels with available rooms.

Placeholders for Conversation

User stories are ideal for the Agile development process because they:

• Emphasize verbal rather than written communications

• Developers and customers understand them

• Are the right size for planning

• Encourage deferring detail until you have the best understanding you are going to have about what you really need

The Downside of requirement specs

• Assume everything is knowable in advance

• Time consuming to write and read; tedious to read

• Treats learning as a "Change of Scope"

• Don't lend themselves to iterative, incremental development process

User Story Template

As a <user role>, I can <story> so that <benefit>

User Stories on PAM Project

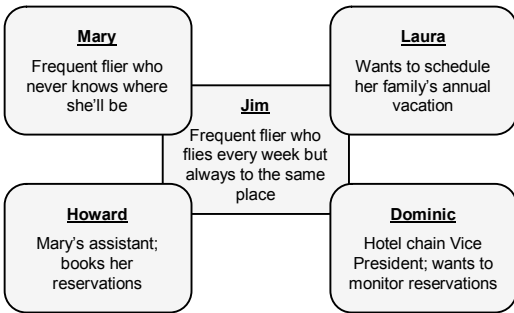| Story (Business Requirement)	*Points Planned	**Points Validated
As a Data Analyst, I can view pre-activation data/results for the inbound segmentation process for PAY so that I can evaluate the effectiveness of a new campaign	10	15
As a Decisioning System (Capstone), I can receive data from the CCV vendor for PAY sales so that I can update the customer system of record	6	10
As a live app agent I can see the new copy for eligible customers so that I can offer PAY to applicants who have pounded out of the VRU	4	1
As a DA, I no longer have any manual involvement in the automate fulfillment/enrollment process for PAY. (Capstone to Unisys)	4	3
Total	32	33

User Role Modeling

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"The User"

- **Many projects mistakenly assume there's only one user:**
  - **"The user"**
- **Write all stories from one user's perspective**
- **Assume all users have the same goals**
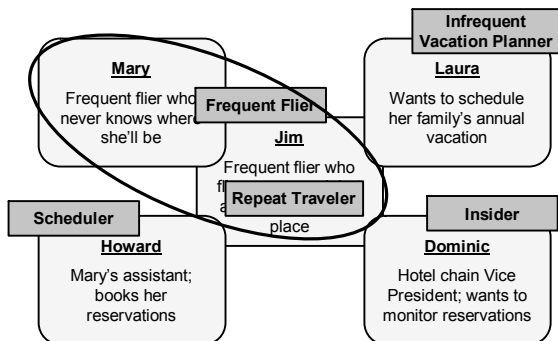- **Leads to missing stories**

Travel Site—Who's the user?

Mary
Frequent flier who never knows where she'll be

Jim
Frequent flier who flies every week but always to the same place

Laura
Wants to schedule her family's annual vacation

Howard
Mary's assistant; books her reservations

Dominic
Hotel chain Vice President; wants to monitor reservations

Common attributes

Infrequent Vacation Planner

Mary
Frequent flier who never knows where she'll be

Frequent Flier

Jim
Frequent flier who flies every week

Repeat Traveler

place

Laura
Wants to schedule her family's annual vacation

Scheduler

Howard
Mary's assistant; books her reservations

Insider

Dominic
Hotel chain Vice President; wants to monitor reservations

User role modeling

Identify attributes that distinguish one user role from another

- How often the software will be used
- Level of domain expertise
- General level of computer proficiency
- Level of proficiency with this software
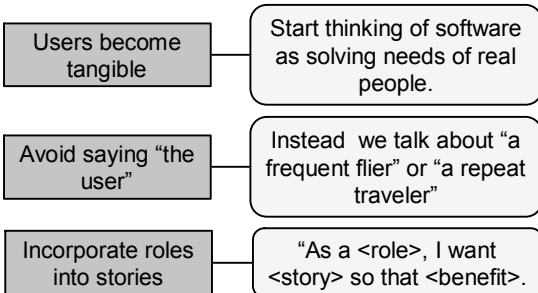- General goals for using the software

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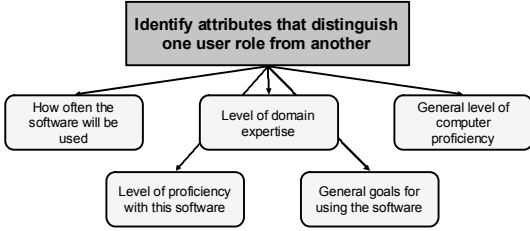
Document the user role

User Role: Infrequent Vacation Planner
Not particularly computer-savvy but quite adept at using the web. Will use the software infrequently but intensely (perhaps 5 hours to research and plan a trip). Values richness of experience (lots of content) over speed. But, software must be easy to learn and also easily recalled months later.

Advantages of using roles

Users become tangible	Start thinking of software as solving needs of real people.
Avoid saying "the user"	Instead we talk about "a frequent flier" or "a repeat traveler"
Incorporate roles into stories	"As a <role>, I want <story> so that <benefit>.

Practice!!!

Sample Product Backlog

Product Area	Description	Priority		Estimate	Target Sprint
Catalog	Customer can browse catalog categories with basic navigation.	H		5.0	1
Catalog	Customer can select a category and browse products with basic navigation.	H		3.0	1
Catalog	Sales can add products with category and basic information.	H		5.0	1
Profile	Customer can create a new profile with basic information.	H		5.0	2
Log In	Customer with profile can log into the site.	H		2.0	2
Shopping Cart	Customer can add a product to their shopping cart.	H		3.0	2
Shopping Cart	Customer can view the contents of their shopping cart.	H		3.0	2
Customer Support	Support Rep can view customer's current order and get shipment status.	L			