

Activity: 15 Ways to Split an Epic

Your Scrum Team has been hired by a physical fitness expert to develop a mobile device application to prescribe daily personalized exercise routines and diets for a wide range of people. The app should adapt the routines to users' fitness goals, current health, age, gender, preferences, food allergies, lifestyle, etc.

The fitness expert is excited about all the possibilities of this app but promised a key user a working system in 30 days.

The main feature of the system will be the "Generate Anyone's Exercise Routine and Diet" epic.

Extract stories from the "Generate My Routine" epic and write them clearly enough for a visitor to read. For now it's OK for the stories to overlap or contradict each other. In each case, be prepared to explain why the extracted story is smaller than the original epic.

1. Extract a smaller story by focusing on a particular user role or persona. ("Prioritize your users first, then your user stories." -- Jeff Patton) E.g.: "first time user," "social networker," "my mom," etc.
2. Extract a smaller story by substituting basic *utility* for *usability*. (First make it work, *then* make it pretty.)

3. Extract a smaller story by splitting on CRUD (Create, Read, Update, Delete) boundaries.
4. Extract a smaller story by focusing on distinct *scenarios*, such as the "happy path" (main success scenario) vs. alternate (exception) flows.
5. Extract a smaller story by focusing on a simplified data set.
6. Extract a smaller story by focusing on a simplified algorithm.
7. Extract a smaller story by buying some component(s) instead of building everything yourself.
8. Extract a smaller story by discarding technologies that increase hassle, dependency, and vendor lock.
9. Extract a smaller story by substituting some manual processes for full automation.
10. Extract a smaller story by substituting batch processing for online processing.
11. Extract a smaller story by substituting generic for custom.
12. Extract a smaller story by reducing supported hardware/OS/client platforms.
13. Extract a smaller story from the acceptance criteria of another story.
14. Extract a smaller story by substituting "1" for "many."
15. Extract a smaller story by scanning for keywords such as "and," "or," periods, and other kinds of separators.

* This exercise uses ideas by Bill Wake, Lasse Koskela, Mark Levison, and Jeff Patton. More info:
<http://xp123.com/articles/twenty-ways-to-split-stories/>
<http://radio.javaranch.com/lasse/2008/06/13/1213375107328.html>
<http://agilepainrelief.com/notesfromatooluser/2010/09/story-slicing-how-small-is-enough.html>
<http://www.amazon.com/User-Story-Mapping-Jeff-Patton/dp/1449304559>