HOW TO SPLIT A USER STORY

1 PREPARE THE INPUT STORY

- Does the big story satisfy INVEST? (except, perhaps, small)?
  - NO: Combine it with another story or otherwise reformulate it to get a good, if large, starting story.
  - YES: You're done. Continue. You need to split it.

- Is the story size 1/3 to 1/6 of your velocity?
  - NO: You're done.
  - YES: Proceed to the next step.

2 APPLY THE SPLITTING PATTERNS

- Can you split the story so you do the beginning and end of the workflow first and enhance with stories from the middle of the workflow?
- Can you take a thin slice through the workflow first and enhance it with more stories later?
- Can you split the story to just make it work first and then enhance it to satisfy the non-functional requirement?
- Does the story describe a workflow?
- Does the story include multiple operations? (e.g., is it about "managing" or "configuring" something?)
- Does the story get much of its complexity from satisfying non-functional requirements like performance?
- Does the story get the same kind of data via multiple interfaces?
- Does the story have a simple core that provides most of the value and/or learning?
- When you apply the obvious split, is whichever story you do first the most difficult?
- Can you group the later stories and defer the decision about which story comes first?
- Does the story have a complex interface?

3 EVALUATE THE SPLIT

- Can you split the operations into separate stories?
- Can you split the story so you do a subset of the rules first and enhance with additional rules later?
- Does the story have a variety of business rules? (e.g., is there a domain term in the story like "flexible dates" that suggests several variations?)
- Can you split the story so you do a subset of the rules first and enhance with additional rules later?
- Does the story have multiple operations? (e.g., is it about "managing" or "configuring" something?)
- Does the story include multiple business rules? (e.g., is there a domain term in the story like "flexible dates" that suggests several variations?)
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- Are there stories you can de-prioritize or delete?
- Is there an obvious story to start with that gets you early value, learning, risk mitigation, etc.?
- Is each story about 1/3 to 1/6 of your velocity?
- Do each of the stories satisfy INVEST?

- Are the new stories roughly equal in size?
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- Try another pattern on the original story or the larger post-split stories.
- Try another pattern.

- You probably have waste in each of your stories.
- Try another pattern to see if you can get this.
- You're done, though you could try another pattern to see if it works better.

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- Can you find a small piece you understand well enough to start?
- Can you define the 1-3 questions most holding you back?

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VARIATIONS

- Interface
- Operations
- Business Rule
- Variations

SIMPLE/COMPLEX

- Major Effort
- Simple/Complex

INVEST

1. Independent
2. Negotiable
3. Valuable
4. Estimable
5. Small
6. Testable


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