

HOW TO SPLIT A USER STORY

1 PREPARE THE INPUT STORY



* INVEST - Stories should be:
 Independent
 Negotiable
 Valuable
 Estimable
 Small
 Testable

WORKFLOW STEPS

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?

DEFER PERFORMANCE

Could you split the story to just make it work first and then enhance it to satisfy the non-functional requirement?

Does the story get much of its complexity from satisfying non-functional requirements like performance?

Could you split the story to do that simple core first and enhance it with later stories?

SIMPLE/COMPLEX

Does the story have a simple core that provides most of the value and/or learning?

Could you group the later stories and defer the decision about which story comes first?

MAJOR EFFORT

When you apply the obvious split, is whichever story you do first the most difficult?

Does the story get the same kind of data via multiple interfaces?

Can you split the story to handle data from one interface first and enhance with the others later?

INTERFACE VARIATIONS

Is there a simple version you could do first?

OPERATIONS

Can you split the operations into separate stories?

Does the story include multiple operations? (e.g. is it about "managing" or "configuring" something?)

BUSINESS RULE 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 a variety of business rules? (e.g. is there a domain term in the story like "flexible dates" that suggests several variations?)

VARIATIONS IN DATA

Can you split the story to process one kind of data first and enhance with the other kinds later?

Does the story do the same thing to different kinds of data?

BREAK OUT A SPIKE

Are you still baffled about how to split the story?

Can you find a small piece you understand well enough to start?

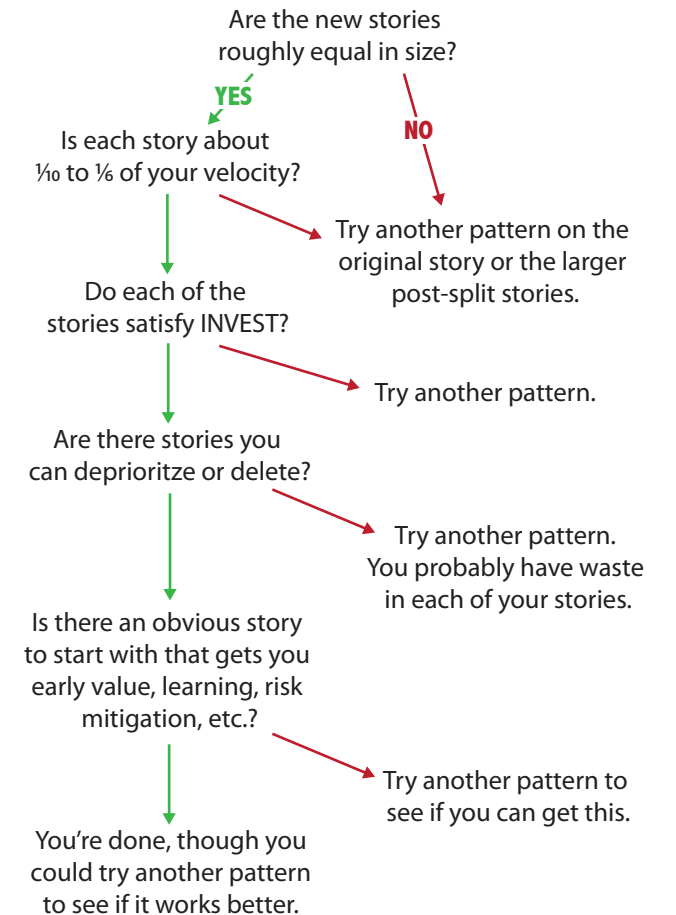
Write that story first, build it, and start again at the top of this process.

Can you define the 1-3 questions most holding you back?

Write a spike with those questions, do the minimum to answer them, and start again at the top of this process.

Take a break and try again.

3 EVALUATE THE SPLIT



2 APPLY THE SPLITTING PATTERNS

start here

last resort



Story Splitting Cheat Sheet

The INVEST Model

Stories should be: Independent, Negotiable, Valuable, Estimable, Small, and Testable.

Patterns for Splitting Stories

Workflow Steps

As a content manager, I can publish a news story to the corporate website.

...I can publish a news story directly to the corporate website.
...I can publish a news story with editor review.
...I can publish a news story with legal review.

Business Rule Variations

As a user, I can search for flights with flexible dates.

...as “n days between x and y.”
...as “a weekend in December.”
...as “± n days of x and y.”

Major Effort

As a user, I can pay for my flight with VISA, MasterCard, Diners Club, or American Express.

...I can pay with one credit card type (of VISA, MC, DC, AMEX).
...I can pay with all four credit card types (VISA, MC, DC, AMEX).

Simple/Complex

As a user, I can search for flights between two destinations.

...specifying a max number of stops.
...including nearby airports.
...using flexible dates.
...etc.

Variations in Data

As a content manager, I can create news stories.

...in English.
...in Japanese.
...in Arabic.
...etc.

Data Entry Methods

As a user, I can search for flights between two destinations.

...using simple date input.
...with a fancy calendar UI.

Defer Performance

As a user, I can search for flights between two destinations.

...(slow - just get it done, show a “searching” animation).
...(in under 5 seconds).

Operations (e.g. CRUD)

As a user, I can manage my account.

...I can sign up for an account.
...I can edit my account settings.
...I can cancel my account.

Break Out a Spike

As a user, I can pay by credit card.

Investigate credit card processing.
Implement credit card processing (as one or more stories).