Agile Estimating

Mike Cohn
Norwegian Developer's Conference
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Agenda

- ☐ What is agile planning?
- ☐ Story points
- ☐ Ideal time
- ☐ Estimating with Planning Poker

Product Backlog

As a user...	3
As a user...	5
As a user...	5
As a user...	2
As a user...	2

Iteration Backlog

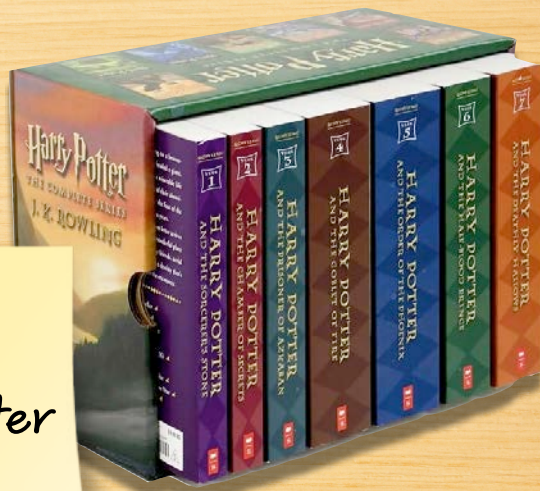|	
Code the UI	12
Write tests	8
Code middle tier	4
Update docs	6
A	5

We're talking about these right now

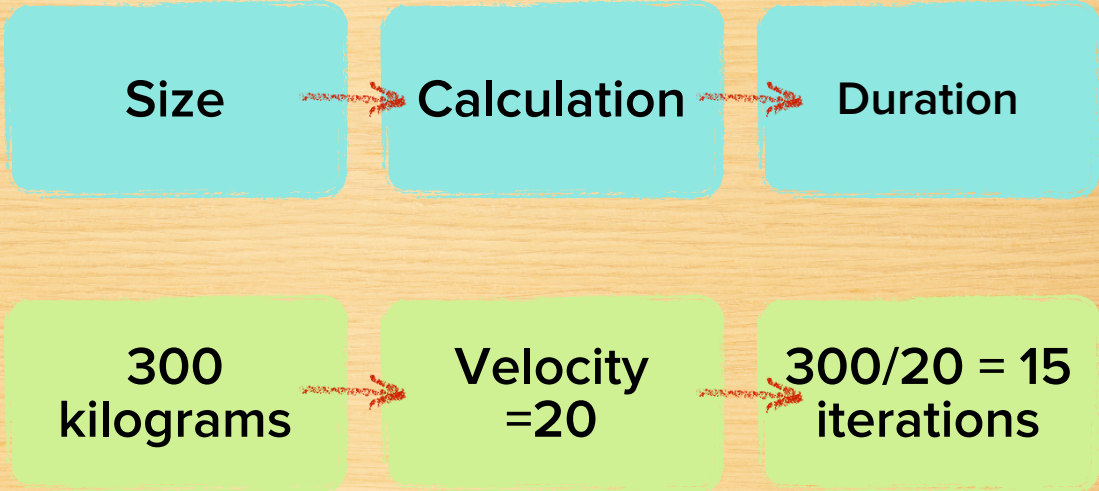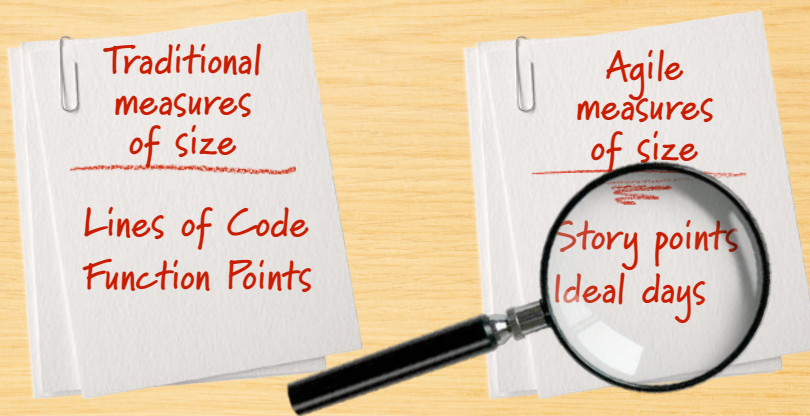# How long will it take...

...to drive to Paris?

...to read the last Harry Potter book?

Estimate size; derive duration

Size	Calculation	Duration

300 kilograms	Velocity =20	300/20 = 15 iterations

Measures of size

Traditional measures of size

Lines of Code
Function Points

Agile measures of size

Story points
Ideal days

Story points

- How long a user story will take (effort)
- Influenced by complexity, uncertainty, risk, volume of work, etc.
- Relative values are what is important:
  - A login screen is a 2.
  - A search feature is an 8.
- Basic math properties should hold
  - 5+5 = 10

Estimating in zoo points

Lion

Kangaroo

Rhinoceros

Bear

Giraffe

Gorilla

Hippopotamus

Tiger

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Ideal Time

How long something will take if:

- it's all you work on
- no one interrupts you
- and everything you need is available

Elapsed time vs. ideal time

Ideally

- Monday has 8 hours
- Each week has 40 hours

But instead

Each day has something like:
- 2 hours of meetings
- 2 hours of email
- 4 hours left for the project

"How long will this take?"
- Are you answering what is being asked?

Two big advantages to story points

1 Story points are additive; time-based estimates may not be

2 Story points help avoid problems with unit confusion

Confusing units

Product Backlog		Iteration Backlog	
As a user...	30	Code the UI	12
As a user...	50	Write tests	8
As a user...	50	Code middle tier	4
As a user...	20	Update docs	6
As a user...	20	Automate tests	5

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Planning Poker®

- An iterative approach to estimating
- Steps
  - Each estimator is given a deck of cards, each card has a valid estimate written on it
  - Customer/Product owner reads a story and it's discussed briefly
  - Each estimator selects a card that's his or her estimate
  - Cards are turned at the same time
  - Discuss differences (especially outliers)
  - Re-estimate until estimates converge

Planning Poker® – an example

Estimator	Round 1	Round 2
Ana	5	8
Trond	5	8
Maria	8	8
Johannes	20	13

Estimate these

Product Backlog Items	Estimate
Read (and understand) a high-level, 10-page overview of agile software development in a celebrity news magazine.	
Read (and understand) a densely written 5-page research paper about agile software development in an academic journal.	
Your uncle owns a clock store and wants to sell clocks over the internet. Write a basic product backlog for him covering what he'll need his website to do.	
Recruit, interview, and hire a new member for your team.	
Create a 60-minute presentation about agile software development for your coworkers.	
Wash and wax your boss' Porsche.	
Read (and understand) a 150-page book on agile software development.	
Write a 5-page summary of this conference for your boss.	

www.PlanningPoker.com

Free, or I wouldn't mention it

Upcoming courses in Oslo

Date	Course
3–4 September 5–6 September	Certified ScrumMaster Certified Scrum Product Owner
3–4 December 5–6 December	Certified ScrumMaster Certified Scrum Product Owner

Information and registration at www.programutvikling.no
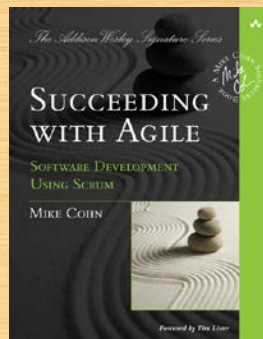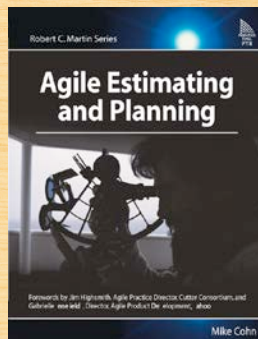

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