the S.P.I.D.R.
approach to splitting stories

SPIKES

Make a large story smaller by pulling out a spike, which is a research activity after which the team will know more.

- Sometimes just doing a spike makes the remaining work a manageable size.
- Other times, the new knowledge creating by the spike makes it easier to see ways to split the story.

RULES

Sometimes a story is large because of the business rules, technology standards, or such that must be supported.

- Consider relaxing support for these rules in an initial story.
- Add support for additional rules in subsequent stories.

PATHS

Consider the paths through a story and split each path into its own story.

- Draw a simple flowchart of what happens in a story. Each sequence of steps can be a story.
- Expand one big step of the flowchart into a story.

DATA

Look for ways to split the story based on the type of data that must be supported.

- Can a first story support valid data and a later story add support for invalid data?
- How about frequent types of data and less frequently seen types of data?

INTERFACES

Split a story across multiple interfaces if supporting those interfaces makes the story take significantly longer to develop.

- Split out stories by browser type or version, or by different hardware.
- Consider building a minimal user interface first or leave styling out of an interface initially.

Better User Stories

MOUNTAIN GOAT SOFTWARE