#noestimates

why *going against the tide* cannot bring you *anything good!*

Massimo Iacolare

@iacoware

info@massimoiacolare.it

Estimating sucks!

Estimating sucks!

End of story

Estimating sucks!

End of story

Questions?

#noestimates

▸ nothing new, just a new (bigger) wave

▸ lot of buzz, lately

▸ Woody Zuill started the hashtag on twitter

If you found estimates bring no value what would you do?

Why so interested?

Why so interested?

I *struggled* against them for a long time

Why so interested?

I *struggled* against them for a long time

I still see a lot of *energy & morale wasted*

Part 1

Software development

...and why estimating (really) sucks!

Software development is...

...a complex beast!

no best practices

learning activity

integration

external factors

social interactions
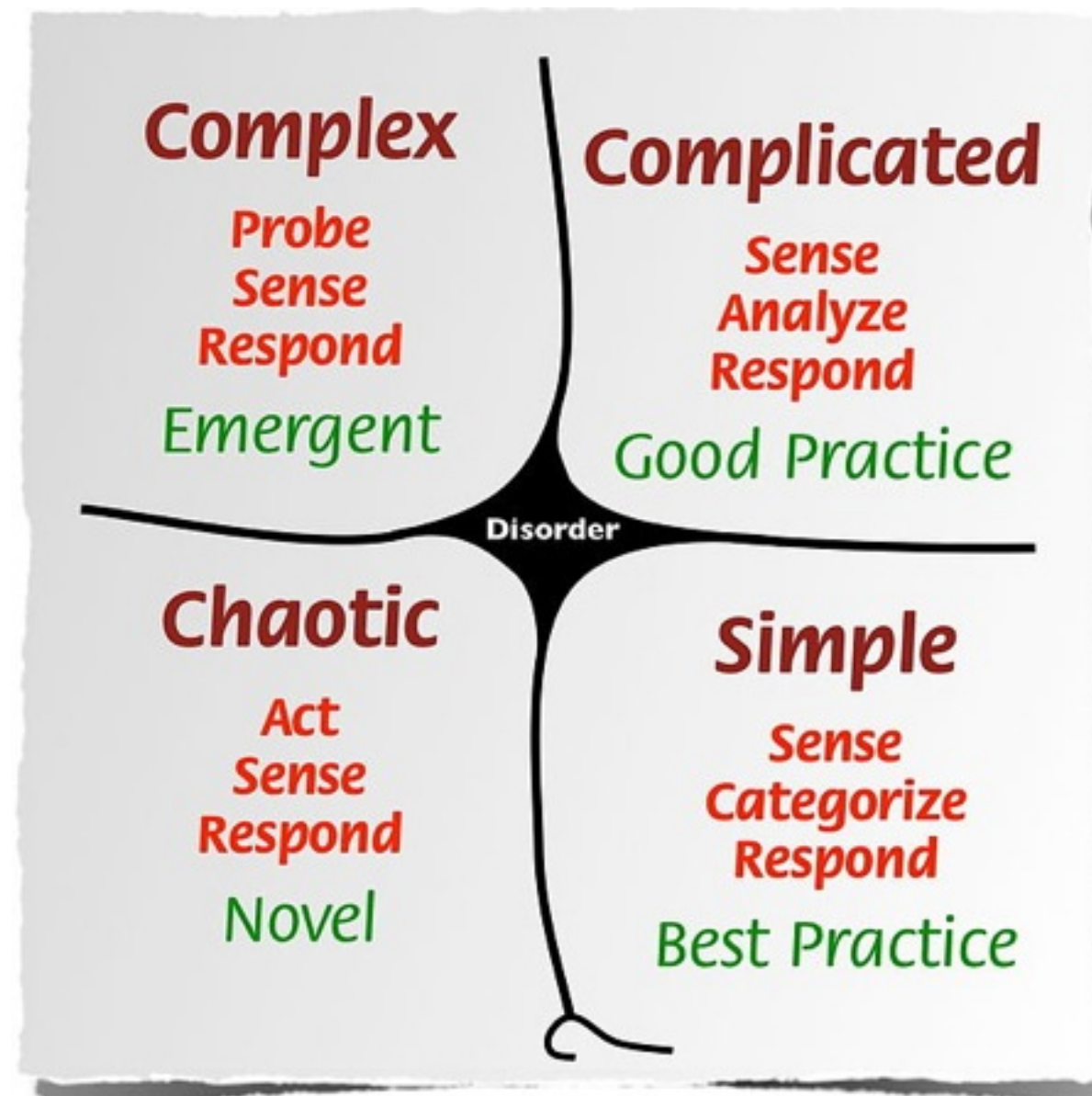
no best practices

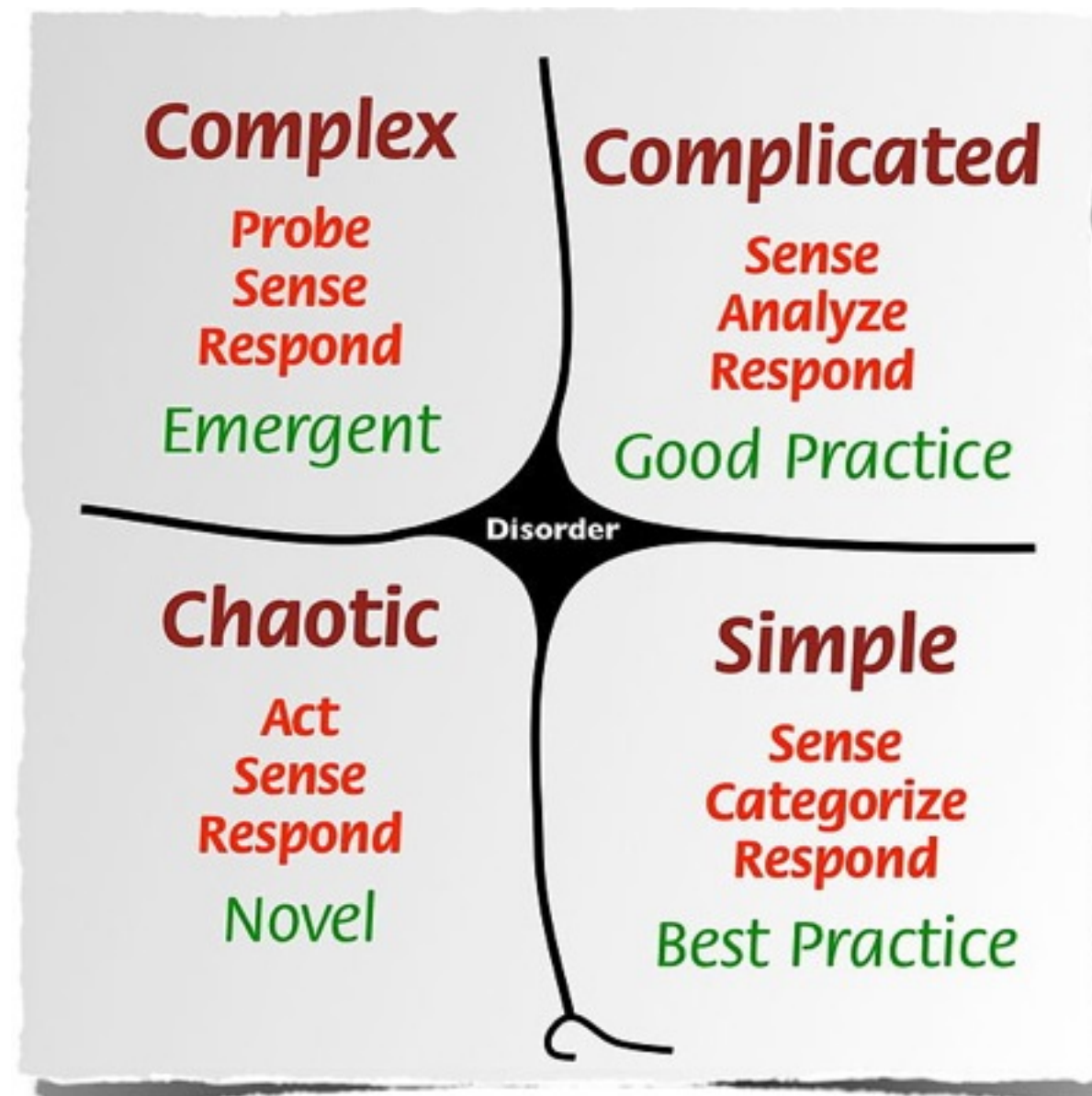learning activity

integration

external factors

social interactions

non deterministic

Cynefin framework

Cynefin framework

Emergent vs Predictable

ok, understood!

lets get back
to *estimates*

Unreliable: adj
not able to be
relied upon,
untrustwhorty
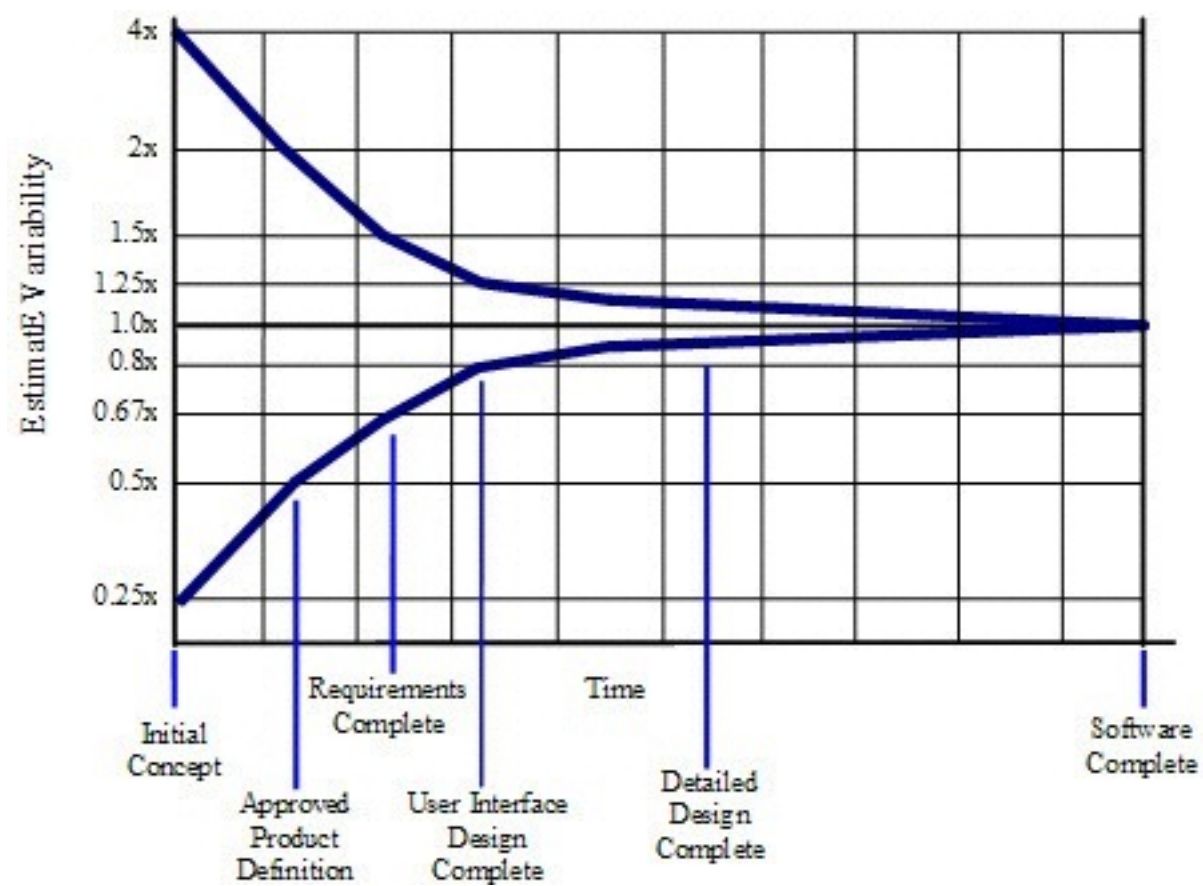
How useful is a metric with *400%* variance?

Let's see what makes estimates unreliable...

Let's see what makes estimates unreliable...

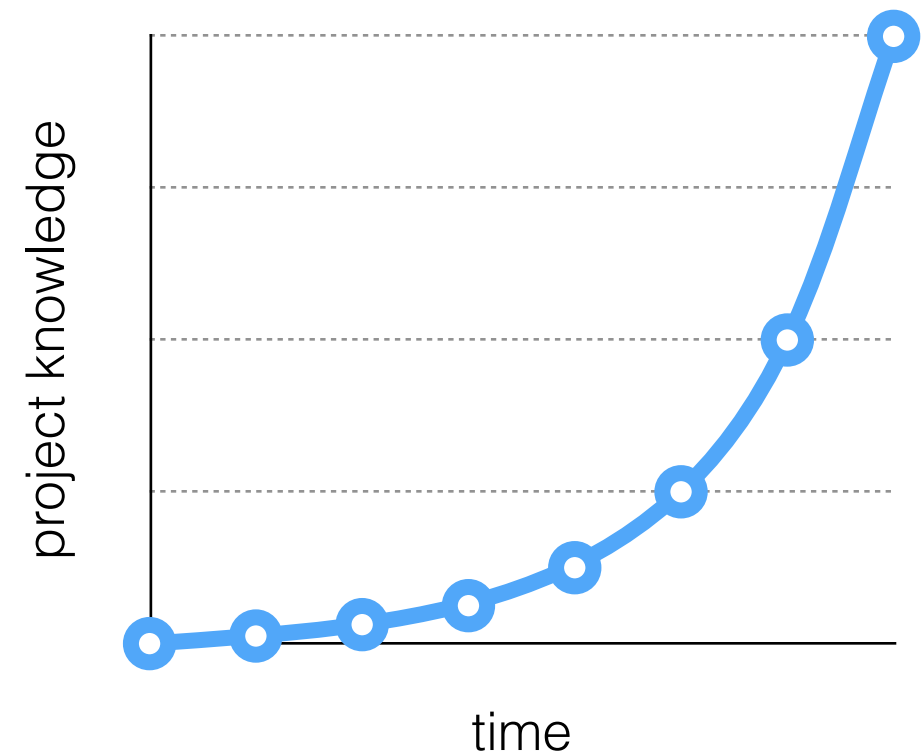*as if being in a complex domain wasn't enough...*

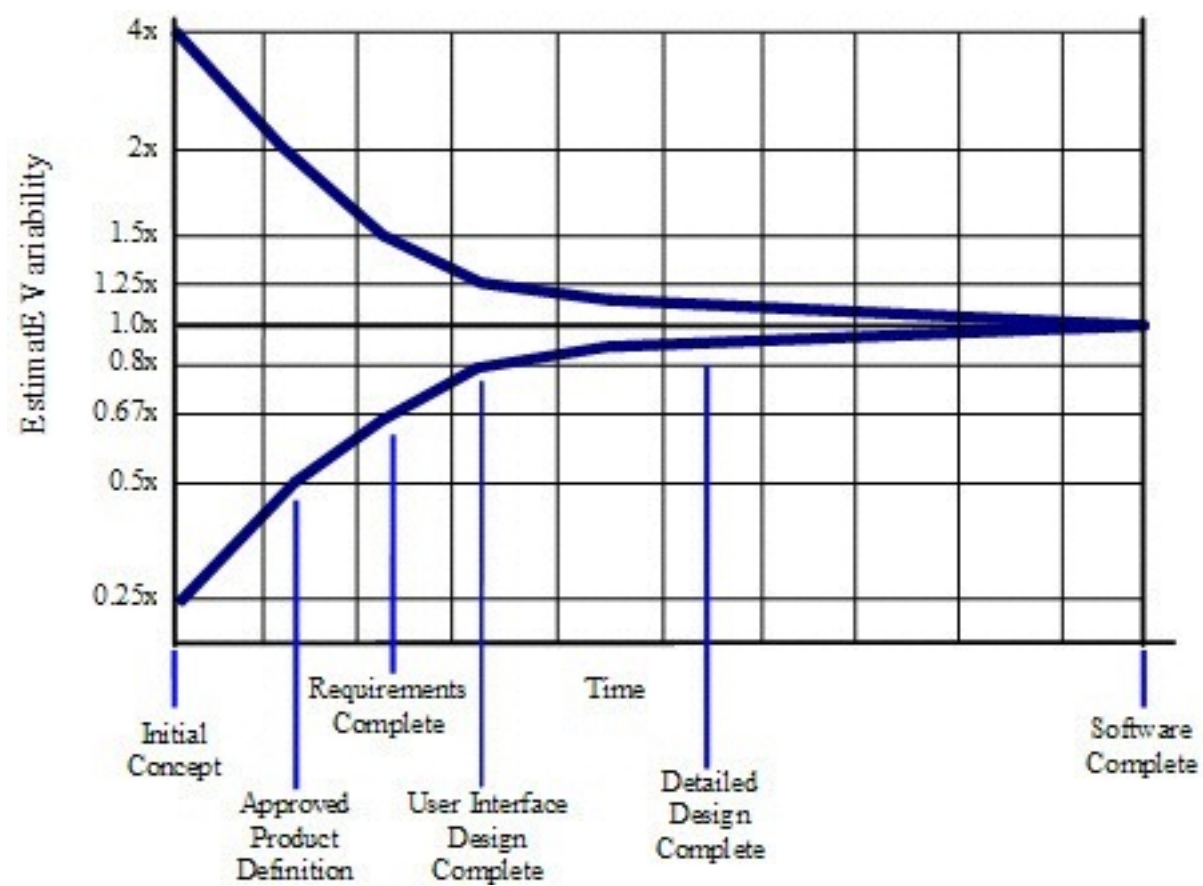# Asked at the beginning of a project

Asked at the beginning of a project

Someone said cone of uncertainty?

Asked at the beginning of a project

Someone said cone of uncertainty?

cone of uncertainty

Cost of a feature =

Cost of a feature =

Essential complexity +

Cost of a feature =

Essential complexity + Accidental complexity

from "No silver bullet" Fred Brooks, 1995

Cognitive biases

Cognitive biases

Optimism bias

Cognitive biases

Optimism bias

Anchoring bias

Cognitive biases

Optimism bias

Anchoring bias

Availability bias

Cognitive biases

Optimism bias

Anchoring bias

Availability bias

Selective perception

Cognitive biases

Optimism bias

Anchoring bias

Availability bias

Selective perception

Loss aversion

oh wait, we have a cure...

oh wait, we have a cure...

estimate effort not duration!

oh wait, we have a cure...

estimate effort not duration!

all issues are still valid, plus we lost the only metric business care about... duration

sorry dude, estimates are incurable...

oh wait, we have a cure...

estimate effort not duration!

all issues are still valid, plus we lost the only metric business care about... duration

sorry dude, estimates are incurable...

My point is...

if you're rigorous and determined
you can make them work
(someway, somewhere), but...

My point is...

if you're rigorous and determined
you can make them work
(someway, somewhere), but...

very easy to get derailed

My point is...

if you're rigorous and determined
you can make them work
(someway, somewhere), but...

very easy to get derailed

insist on a wrong mindset

Ask yourself...

Ask yourself...

Worth the *effort?*

Ask yourself...

Worth the *effort?*

Are they a *a mean or a goal?*

Part 2

Why?

Historical reasons

Historical reasons

management techniques derived from *traditional businesses*

The impossible quest for *predictability*

Prioritization

Prioritization

estimates == prioritise on costs

Prioritization

estimates == prioritise on costs

learning should be your *first priority*

Introducing deliberate discovery

Delivery date

Delivery date

order-of-magnitude estimates *are enough*

Delivery date

order-of-magnitude estimates *are enough*

fixed-time *fixed-budget* more common and useful

Ship steering

Ship steering

How far are we from the *target?*

Ship steering

How far are we from the *target?*

You're asking the wrong question...

Part 3

the way
out

Few assumptions

Few assumptions

▶ Relevant parts sits in the Complex Domain

▶ Unpredictable business

▶ Detailed planning won't save us

Few assumptions

▶ Relevant parts sits in the Complex Domain

▶ Unpredictable business

▶ Detailed planning won't save us

Few ideas...

Establish a tight feedback loop

at all levels: *tdd*, *continuous delivery*, *customer*

Establish a tight feedback loop

at all levels: *tdd*, *continuous delivery*, *customer*

only thing that works in emergent domains

Plan based on value

Plan based on value

Hint: there's no value in *sticking* to the plan

Just enough planning

Just enough planning
Just-in-time planning

Just enough planning
Just-in-time planning

more knowledge

assumptions debunked

context changed

Just enough planning
Just-in-time planning

more knowledge

assumptions debunked

context changed

explore new options

Iterate like there is no *tomorrow*

Iterate like there is no *tomorrow*

working in iterations doesn't mean iterating

Embrace uncertainty

Become a master in slicing scope

Become a master in slicing scope

Login

Catalog

Add to cart

Checkout

Become a master in slicing scope

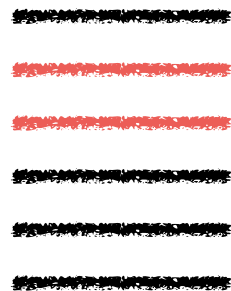Login   Catalog   Add to cart   Checkout

Become a master
in slicing scope

Login   Catalog   Add to cart   Checkout

you'll meet deadlines too!

Massimo Iacolare
@iacoware

Estimates are just a symptom, detailed planning is the disease #noestimates

↩ Reply   🗑 Delete   ★ Favorite   ⧉ Buffer   ••• More

FAVORITE
1

5:59 AM - 6 Mar 2014

estimate less
code more

Thanks!

Questions?

Massimo Iacolare
info@massimoiacolare.it
@iacoware

I stand on the shoulders of giants

Woody Zuill blog

Vasco Duarte blog

Neil Killick blog

AgileCamp perfect flow - Gabriele Lana part1 - ITA

AgileCamp perfect flow - Gabriele Lana part2 - ITA

Estimation is the root of most software project failures

Stop using story points

The perils of estimation