Frog knows how to estimate and octopus doesn't want to do it

Introduction

#noestimates is a misnomer. The term was probably coined by an octopus when he was trying to estimate the trajectories it's tentacles will make when it has a successful hunt so that he can keep up with his food habits and survive longer. But the frog understands that he can have his food as long as it keeps growing its four legs while keeping his weight in check.

On the world wide web the proponents and opponents are debating. Opponents are the frogs and proponents are the octopus. In this article we will see why I support octopuses who do estimations like a frog and teach that to other octopuses.

Background

Based on the illustrations below and other resources on the world wide web, here is a short background on #noestimates.

http://noestimatesbook.com/ says:

"Project completion schedules are the bane of the technology industry. But they don't have to be. Armed with #NoEstimates principles, you will be able to effectively predict the completion schedule of any projects, knowing ahead of time when your project will be ready for deployment."

Ron Jeffries says

As per the article by "Ron Jeffries" :

"it is possible to do small chunks of work incrementally, leading as rapidly as possible to a desired shippable product, and that when you do that there is no need to do much of anything in the way of estimating stories or the project."

Twitter says:

"https://twitter.com/hashtag/noestimates?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Ehashtag"

[

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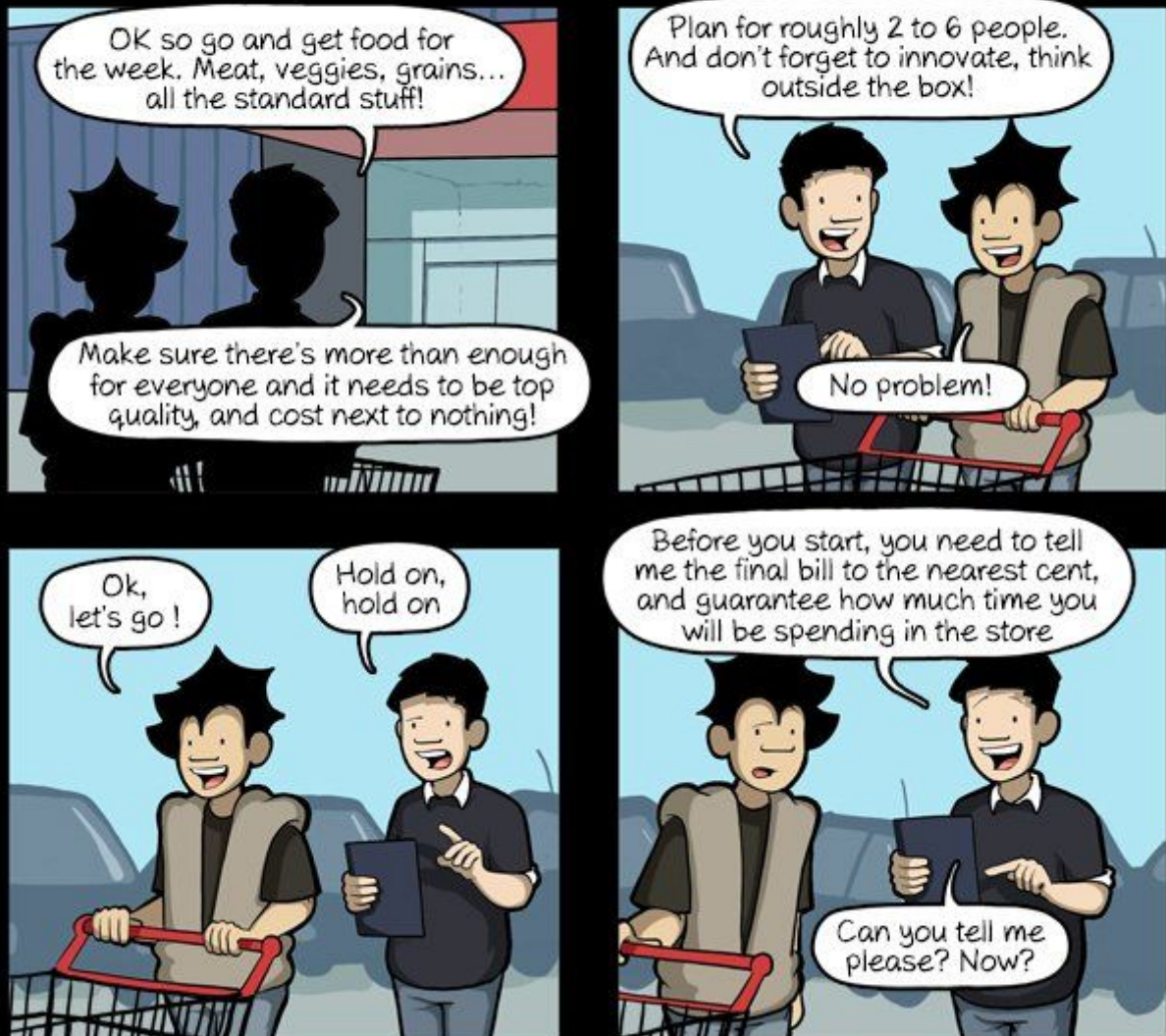
My Opinion : I want to state my opinion in order to challenge it and improve it...

My open thought after just being aware of this, plus what I learnt in the most basic introduction on the topic in my "Software Project Management" class:

Some Facts

Estimation tells a story that is projected based on the historical observation. Estimates go wrong and yet estimators keep reinforcing the feedback into their estimation mechanism to build a better estimate for the next quarter or year based on the general accepted granularity by the organization. "Reality is stranger than fiction", as anecdotal as that might sound it has some truth to it. And this is my main take-away idea from the proponents of #noestimates. Here is what I propose: "Estimates are good as long as they are done by serious people who want to beat their own estimates and prove themselves wrong by doing better at work than being dragged around by their estimates".

Frog croaks: Estimate sets a lower bound. One must define lower bound but only to aim for the upper bound;dream estimate.

Business processes are fundamentally the same. An entity that wants to improve the business process must estimate how much it can improve the fundamentals of the business. For instance, if I were a bigger and skinnier frog I could jump farther than how far I can jump now.

In my organization it's very difficult to estimate. I have so many processes that are very different from each other. Estimating the reality drags me down in terms of expenses so I just do the minimal amount of estimation and prefer to spend a large amount of time being in the moment and hunting for resources right when I need it.

I see! You are dealing with a lot of moving parts. I hope you're deploying your estimation exercises to estimate the core fundamentals(Figure below : Fundamentals of The Frog) that you want to improve rather than the variables that change too often to be estimable. #noestimates do not oppose estimation of fundamentals it does oppose estimations of randomness:
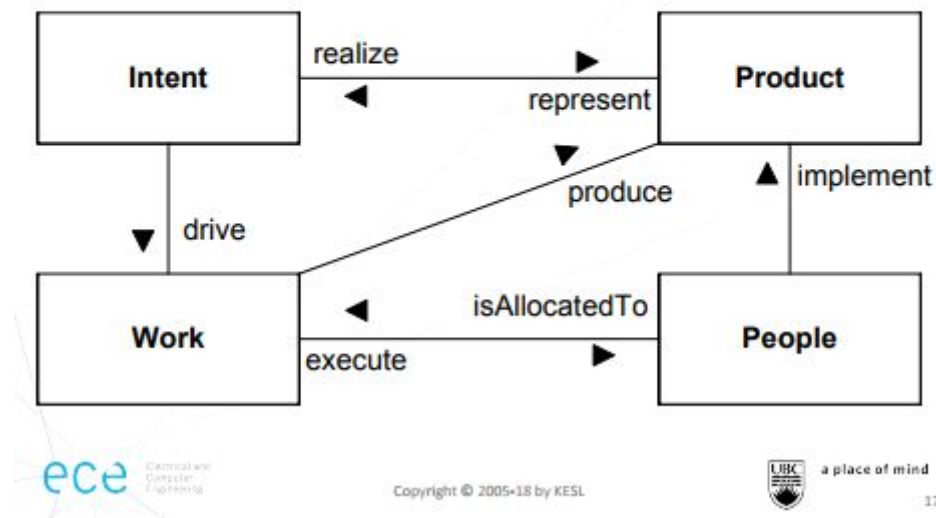
Intent, Work, People, Product

Figure : Fundamentals of The Frog

The frog later writes down this blog:
Businesses always have similar challenges. Most of the challenges are handled by the people working in an organization. People are the fate of the organization. The quality of staff of the organization decide whether the organization will eat and sleep or work and earn.

If the staff decides to eat and sleep they will not work and earn. If an organization decides to estimate their course of action, the estimation must be done by the serious people of the organization who like to work and earn and not eat and sleep. Because the quality of the estimates is governed by the integrity of the estimator (The person who is responsible for the work of publishing the estimates).

This ideal estimator will learn eventually about the extent to which he can build the projected estimate based on modification of the business process. So long story short: " One must create a control system for estimation, follow the standards of estimation theory given by the industry experts and keep it as an important artifact to compare against the reality(measurements) of the organization.

Conclusion : Build your "Dream Estimates"

Iteration after iteration this gap between an estimate and the reality will converge as per the fundamentals of control systems. In the second iteration the estimator will take an additional task of preparing a dream estimate. In this dream estimate the estimator will precisely state the changes in business process that could be incrementally brought into the next iteration. For instance, the estimator might propose a training program for the employees who could have done better, or any other factor targeting a business module that is complex and might need some expert opinion. After these maneuvers the estimator can publish a real estimate and a dream-estimate based on the new changes proposed. Furthermore it's important to realize that the goal of the company is to achieve the dream estimate and perform much better than the real estimate.