Glossary of Scrum Terms

Agile the name coined for the wider set of ideas that Scrum falls within; the Agile values and principles are captured in the Agile Manifesto

Architect there is no architect role on a Scrum team, instead all team members are responsible for emerging the architecture

Burndown (see Sprint Burndown, Product Burndown) Backlog Item (see Product Backlog Item)

Chicken (arch.) term for anyone not on the team, the term offended some people so is now rarely used, cf. Pig

Daily Scrum a fifteen-minute daily team meeting to share progress, report impediments and make commitments

Done also referred to as "Done" or "Done Done", this term is used to describe a product increment that is considered releasable; it means that all design, coding, testing and documentation have been completed and the increment is fully integrated into the system

Emergence the principle that the best designs, and the best ways of working come about over time through doing the work, rather than being defined in advance, cf. Empiricism, Self Organization

Empiricism the principle of "inspect and adapt" which allows teams or individuals to try something out and learn from the experience by conscious reflection and change, cf. Emergence, Self Organization

Epic a very large user story that is eventually broken down into smaller stories; epics are often used as placeholders for new ideas that have not been thought out fully. There's nothing wrong with having an epic, as long as it is not high priority

Estimation the process of agreeing on a size measurement for the stories in a product backlog. Done by the team, usually using Planning Poker

Fibonacci Sequence the sequence of numbers where the next number is derived by adding together the previous two; the sequence has the quality of each interval getting larger as the numbers increase; the sequence is often used for Story Points, simply because estimates are always less accurate when dealing with epics

How "the How" is a term used to describe the domain of the team, as distinct for the product owner, cf. What. Can also be described as tactic (i.e. how to win the battle)

Impediment anything that prevents the team from meeting their potential (e.g. chairs are uncomfortable). If organizational, it is the Scrum Master's responsibility to eliminate it. If it is internal to the team, then they themselves should do away with it

Impediment Backlog a visible list of impediments in a priority order according to how seriously they are blocking the team from productivity

Pig (arch.) term for a team member, the term offended some people so is now rarely used, cf. Chicken

Planning see Sprint Planning

Planning Poker a game used to apply estimates to stories; it uses the Delphi method of arriving at consensus

Process simply the way someone works. Everyone has a process. It can be pre-defined, empiric or merely chaotic.

Product Backlog a prioritized list of stories that are waiting to be worked on

Product Backlog Item any item that is one the backlog list, which will include user stories, epics and possibly technical stories to deal with technical debt, etc.

Product Owner person whom holds the vision for the product and is responsible for maintaining, prioritizing and updating the product backlog

Release Burndown Chart a visible chart to show progress towards a release

Retrospective a session where the Team and Scrum Master reflect on the process and make commitments to improve

Roman Vote see Thumb Vote

Scrum Master a servant leader to the team, responsible for removing impediments and making sure the process runs smoothly so the team can be as productive as possible

Scrum Meetings Story Time, Planning, Review, Retrospective, Daily Scrum

Scrum Roles there are only three: product owner, Scrum Master, team

Glossary of Scrum Terms - *continued*

Self Organization the principle that those closest to the work best know how to do the work, so set clear goals and boundaries and let them make all tactical and implementation decisions, cf. Emergence, Empiricism

Spike a short, time-boxed piece of research, usually technical, on a single story that is intended to provide just enough information that the team can estimate the size of the story

Sprint a time boxed iteration

Sprint Burndown a visible chart that indicates on a daily basis the amount of work remaining in the sprint

Sprint Goal aka Sprint Theme, the key focus of the work for a single sprint

Sprint Planning a meeting between the Team and the Product Owner to plan the sprint and arrive at an agreement on the commitment

Sprint Task a single small item of work that helps one particular story reach completion

Stakeholder anyone external to the team with an interest in the product being developed

Story a backlog item usually using the template form: as a [user] I want [function] so that [business value], cf Product Backlog Item

Story Point a unit of measurement applied to the size of a story, cf. Fibonacci Sequence

Story Time the regular work session where items on the backlog are discussed, refined and estimated and the backlog is trimmed and prioritized

Task see Sprint Task

Task List the tasks needed to complete the set of stories committed to a sprint

Taskboard a wall chart with cards and sticky notes that represent all the work of a team in a given sprint; the task notes are moved across the board to show progress

Team the development team, responsible committing to work, delivering and driving the product forward from a tactical perspective

Team Member any member of the team, including developers, testers, designers, writers, graphic artists, database admins...

Thumb Vote a quick pulse to get a sense of where the team are in terms of commitment, or agreement on a decision, etc. thumb up generally means agree, yes, or good, and thumb down disagree, no or bad; the analog version of this allows the thumb to be anywhere on the half circle to indicate differing degrees of agreeability

Timeboxing setting a duration for every activity and having it last exactly that (i.e. neither meetings nor sprint are ever lenghtened - ever)

Velocity the rate at which a team completes work, usually measured in story points.

Vision Statement a high-level description of a product which includes who it is for, why it is necessary and what differentiates it from similar products

What "the What" is a term used to describe the domain of the product owner, as distinct for the team, cf. How. Can also be described as strategy (i.e. what's the best order for battles)

XP Practices the set of development practices, including pair-programming, test-first, or test-driven development (TDD) and continuous refactoring, which are drawn from the XP methodology; many Scrum teams find these practices greatly improve productivity and team morale