

**User Story Standard**

**Version 5.0**

**Document Revision History**

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# **1. Introduction**

The user story standard document describes the qualifications a story must meet to be considered valid, and defines the hierarchical relationship between story types (Epic -> Story -> Task & Test). It also provides estimation and sizing guidance.

# **2. Traceability**

Traceability is achieved through association from least to most granular: Epics, stories, and tasks or tests. This represents the minimum standard of traceability.

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# **3. User Story Definition**

## **3.1 Structure**

User stories will be written in a consistent format describing the stakeholder, the business need, and the intended value that will be achieved from the execution of the story.

The format of the user story must conform to this format:

As a <stakeholder>, I want <business need> so that <business value>.

Examples of bad user stories:

* I want to be able to login to the system
  + no stakeholder
  + no business value
* As a product owner, I want to have a checkbox for newsletter signup
  + unclear stakeholder
  + no business value
* As someone who reports up to management, I need metrics
  + unclear need/value

Examples of good user stories:

* As an external user, I want to be able to log in securely to keep my information private.
* As a site visitor, I want content to appear in tiles to be easily browseable.
* As a content manager, I would like to update content on a page to keep our site relevant in the marketplace.

## **3.2 Task Classification**

Tasks should be classified based on the type of task and type of resource will be involved in the effort, specifically:

* **Development** — a coding or architecture task involving a technical resource (developer/architect)
* **Designer** — UI/UX Task, which is a visual, graphical, or information delivery style-related task involving a front-end designer
* **Tester** — an automated or manual testing task or feature validation involving a tester or developer
* **System Admin** — an infrastructure design or deployment task involving servers, environments, or release process with a system administrator
* **Project** — a catch-all for project-related tasks (including documentation, communication, and meetings with clients/team) and ad hoc tasks that do not fit into one of the aforementioned classifications; may involve a project manager, or any other team member

# **4. Sizing/Estimation Guidance**

Guidance pertaining to sizing and estimation of user stories can be found in the User Story Estimation Standard.

# **5. Prioritization Guidance**

The product owner (either the customer or a CTAC project manager representing the client’s goals) performs prioritization of epics/stories. User stories will be worked in the dependency order: from highest to lowest business value.

## **5.1. Business Value**

Business value is rated on a scale of high, medium, and low.

* High: Must-have functionality
* Medium: Should-have functionality
* Low: Nice-to-have functionality

# **6. Validation**

CTAC maps user stories to criteria to determine sprint readiness.

## **6.1. Criteria**

I.N.V.E.S.T. :

* **Independent** — The user story is self-contained, and there is not an inherent dependency on another user story. The user story can be completed in the sprint.
* **Negotiable** — The user story can be rewritten and updated as needed.
* **Valuable** — The user story delivers value to the end-user.
* **Estimable** — The user story has a size that can easily be estimated.
* **Sized** (Appropriately) — The user story has a size that is not impossible to plan/task/prioritize with a high level of certainty. It will fit into a sprint.
* **Testable** — The user story provides the necessary information to make test development possible.

## **6.2. Examples**

Examples of bad user stories:

* I want to be able to login to the system.
  + Not independent
  + Unclear value
  + Not estimable
  + Not sized
* As a product owner, I want to have a checkbox for newsletter signup.
  + Not independent
  + Not estimable
  + Not testable
* As someone who reports up to management, I need metrics.
  + Not independent
  + Unclear value
  + Not estimable
  + Not sized
  + Not testable

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