

# Black Mirror development team

## Agile practices

Various agile practices are presented in the video:

1. The use of a per-project backlog (detailing the upcoming, in progress, and done work), in combination with user stories
2. The role distribution with a Product Owner (whose role includes prioritizing the backlog; here the Project Manager), a Scrum Master (whose role includes organizing a daily standup meeting), and a team. [Note that this role distribution is typical of a Scrum workflow, not really an “agile practice” per se. Maybe the expected agile practice is rather the standup meeting itself.]
3. Pair programming, that is working in pairs of programmers where one actually codes while the other reviews the code in real time.
4. Poker planning, which is a technique for estimating the effort necessary to develop a feature, using a gamified (somewhat poker-like) framework and deck of cards.
5. Continuous integration, which means verifying at each modification of the source code that there is no regression in the product.

## Agile workflow

Based on the points raised in the previous section, we can safely assume the agile workflow used here in the Scrum workflow (at least partly). This is strongly supported by the distribution of roles, as well as poker planning.

## What could be improved

There are a number of points that could be done differently to improve the workflow:

- The main point I would work on is sprints. A crucial part of the agile method is working in quick, small iterations that are designed to quickly bring to the client the features asked. This makes the team responsive to change, able to integrate immediate feedback, and engages the customer into deeper collaboration. Since sprints are not mentioned in the video, I would say that is an essential part missing in their workflow.
- Related to the previous point, the agile approach advocates following the “Ship it!” motto, where working features are deployed as soon as possible, to get quick feedback and see

bugs. There is no indication that the dev team actually does that, so I would bring that point to the discussion.

- Regarding customer collaboration, a linked consideration is that the customer does not seem to be frequently included in the planning or feedback on the developed software. I think that going with the client through a project brief and a list of features, plus mock-ups if needed, early in the project is a great thing that allows everyone to see what the general direction is; but it is a “predictive” and “before-the-code planning”. However, a more agile workflow would ideally involve the client in the development process, because her/his feedback is very valuable and his/her goals may vary with time or along the development of the project.
- The weekly meeting does not seem to be a source of satisfaction or efficiency for the team members. The Agile Manifesto puts individuals and interactions over processes; it sounds like discussing this issue would improve the workflow. Moreover, this long meeting could be replaced by a short focus on the project’s roadmap, animated by the Product Owner.
- According to Scrum roles, the team should be cross-functional, which was not obvious in the Skype presentation. I would make sure that, despite the specializations, each team member is able to help to some point, where help is needed.