

# Planning with the Big Picture in Mind – User Story Maps



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**COMP3120/8110**

**Thursday 25 March 2021**

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## Assignment #1 due tomorrow

You (in your groups) have now created initial key message(s) and in workshops this week you are learning more about how to improve them.

Assignment #1 is due Friday Week 5 (26 March) at 5pm.

Submission link for Assignment #1 will open at the beginning of Week 5.

***One submission [per group](#).***

Peer assessment will be done through Wattle.

Peer assessment are due on Tuesday 9am Week 6 (30 March).

Submission link will open at 6pm Friday Week 5.

***One submission [per student](#).***



## Assignment #2 topics now available

Assignment #2 is due Friday Week 7 (23 April) at 5pm.

Submission link for Assignment #1 will open at the beginning of Week 7.

***One submission **per group**.***

Peer assessment will be done through Wattle.

Peer assessment are due on Tuesday 9am Week 8 (27 April).

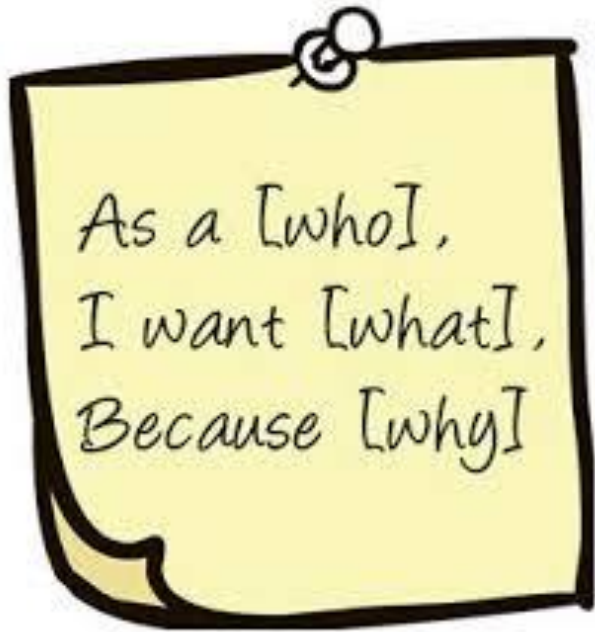
Submission link will open at 6pm Friday Week 7.

***One submission **per student**.***



## Agile Project Management: Key Scrum Concepts

- **outcomes vs outputs**
- documenting the scope -- the **product backlog**
- agile requirements using **user stories**
- using a **visual mapping tool** to provide an overview of the total scope of the project



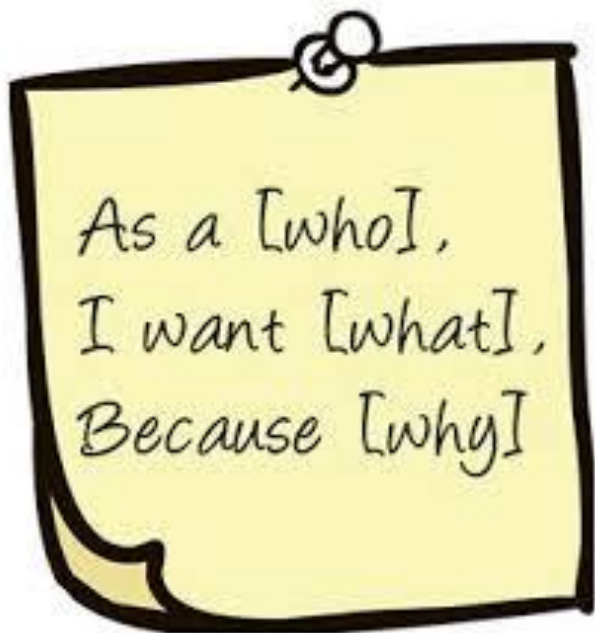
The predominant way for a Scrum team to express features on the agile product backlog is in the form of user stories.

User stories are short, simple descriptions of the desired functionality told from perspective of the user.

An example: “**As a** shopper, **I can** review the items in my shopping cart before checking out **so that** I can see what I've already selected.”

**User stories = requirements**

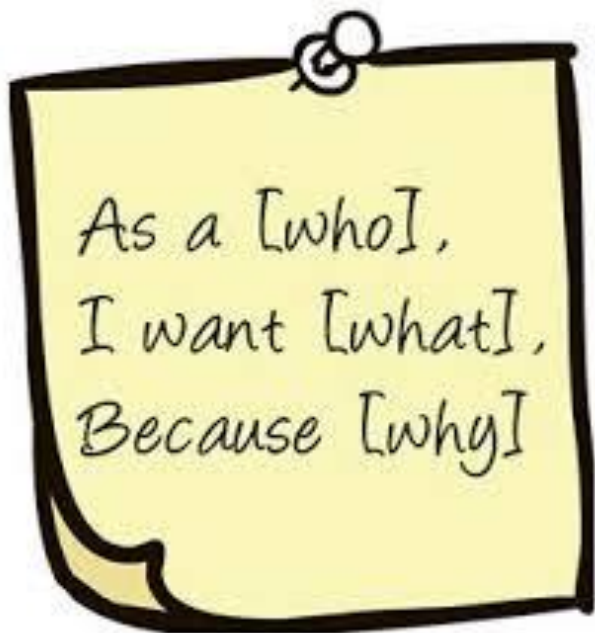
Well, sort of.



## Too formal / too much detail

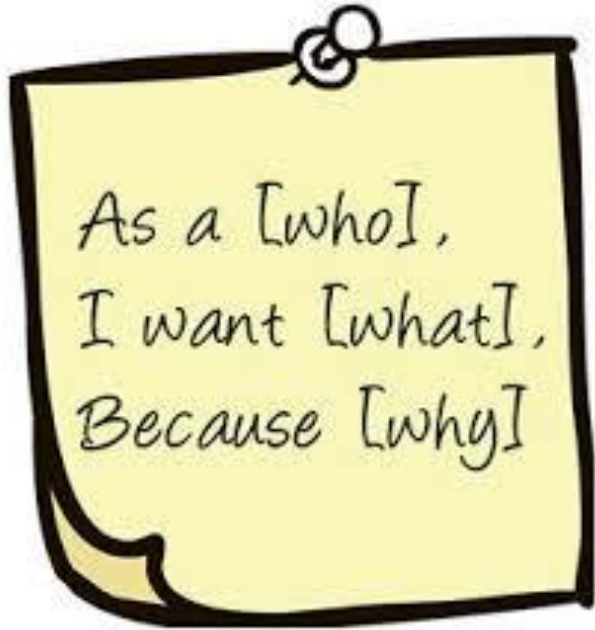
Product owners with good intentions often try to write extremely detailed user stories.

If a team sees a story at iteration planning that looks like it is fully 'spec'ed out' then they may assume it doesn't need to be discussed!



## Technical tasks masquerading as stories.

A lot of the power of Agile comes from having a working increment of software at the end of each iteration. If your stories are really just technical tasks, you may not end up with working software at the end of the iteration, and you lose flexibility.

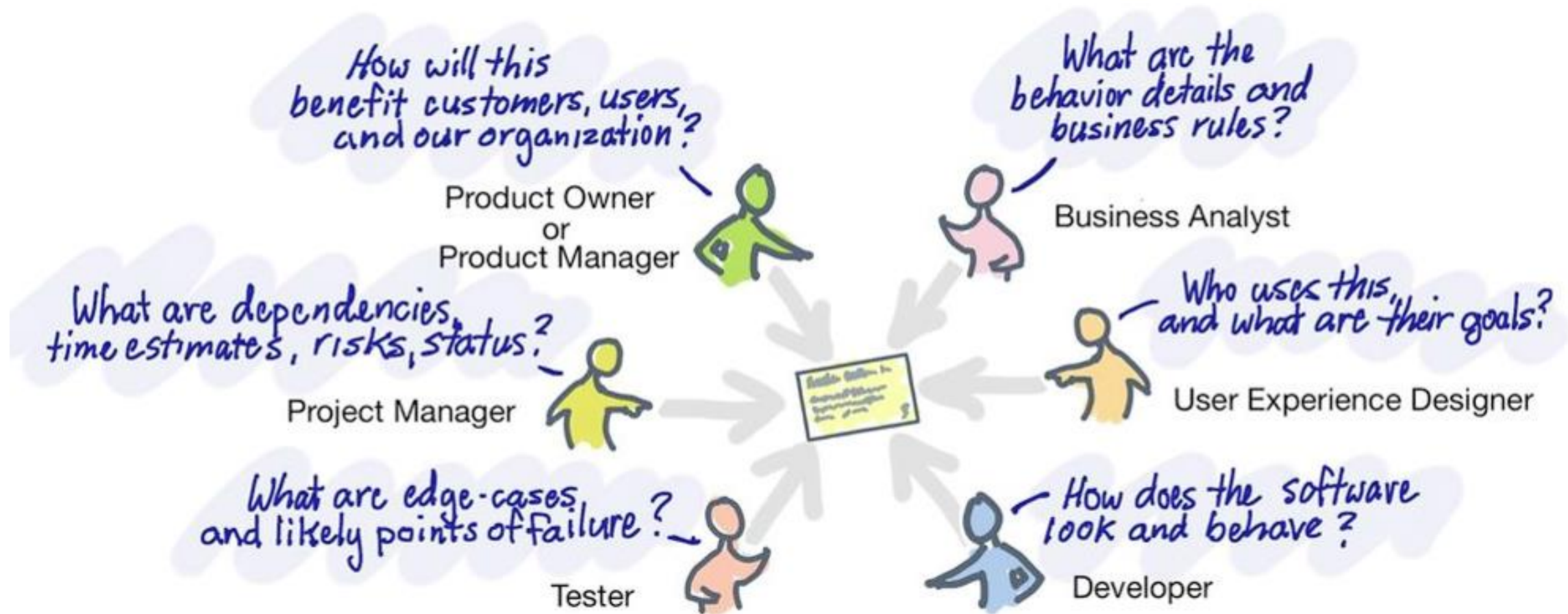


## Skipping the Conversation

Stories are INTENTIONALLY vague before iterations planning. If you skip the acceptance criteria conversation, you'll risk moving in the wrong direction, missing edge cases or even overlooking customer needs.



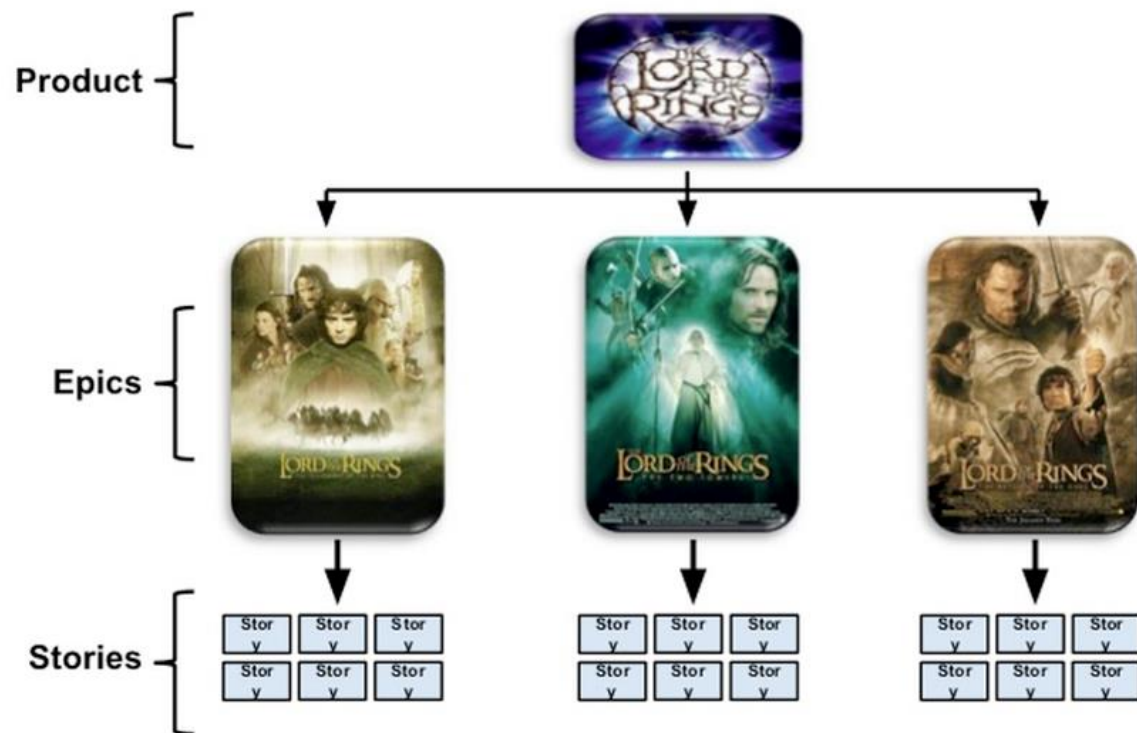
## The big picture





Why would you express the product backlog visually rather than textually?

## Product, Epics & Stories



When decomposing user stories following the INVEST guideline will help you create good user stories.

**I** – Independent - User story should be self-contained - no inherent dependency on another user story.

**N** – Negotiable - User stories, up until they are done, are part of an iteration (Sprint in Scrum), can always be changed and rewritten.

**V** – Valuable - User story must deliver value to the end user.

**E** – Estimable - You must always be able to estimate the size of a user story.

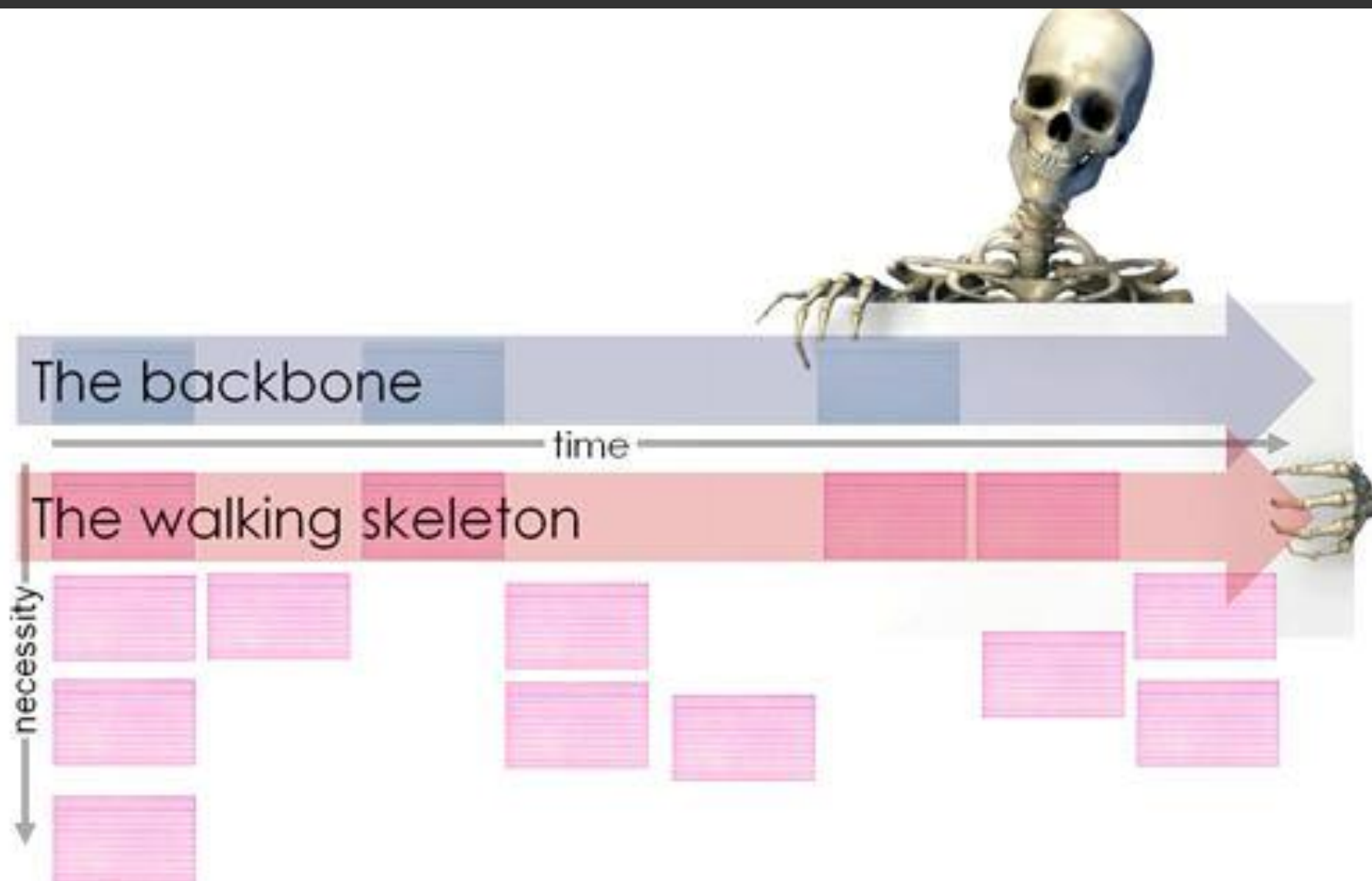
**S** - Sized appropriately - User stories should not be so big as to become impossible to plan/task/prioritise with some certainty.

**T** – Testable - The user story or its related description must provide the necessary information to make test development possible.



How does the creation and use of a User Story Map help manage a project so that it delivers real, measurable value?

Be prepared, skeleton on next page...





## Activities are the **backbone**

The essential activities required to deliver minimum viable product (MVP)

Do not prioritise - without any of these you do not have an MVP

## The **walking skeleton** consists of

The highest priority tasks immediately below the backbone

**The smallest possible system that provides end to end functionality**

Prioritize tasks below the backbone

Move activities up or down

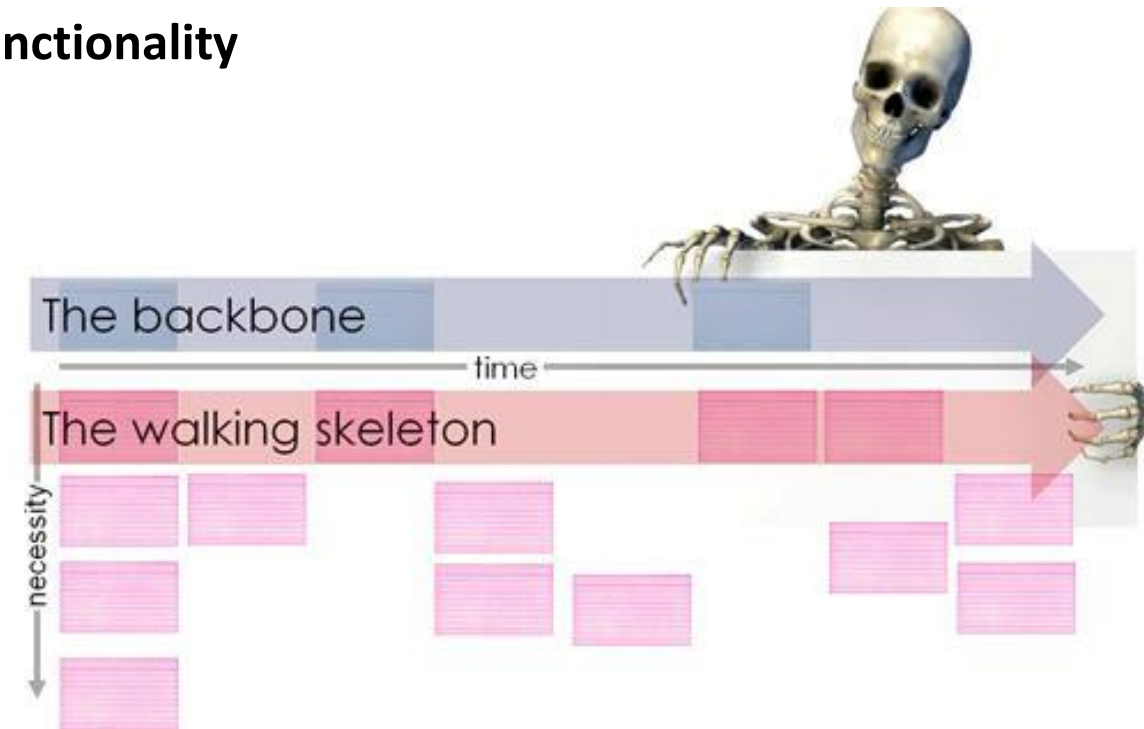
Releases can be marked out in “swim lanes”

Stories can be moved in or out of releases

Stories can have different heights within a release

**Build all the major features a little at a time**

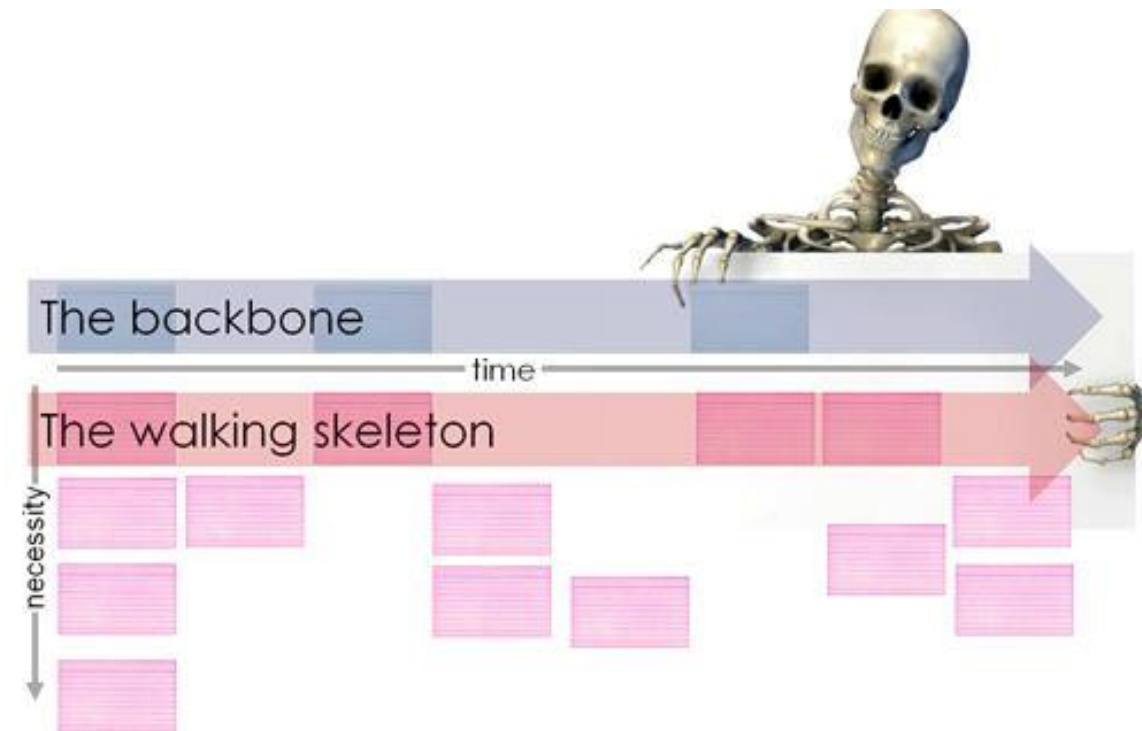
Each release **always** adds value



## Benefits of User Story Maps

### User story maps

- big picture in your backlog,
- better tool for making decisions about grooming and prioritizing the backlog
- promote brainstorming and a collaborative approach to generating user stories

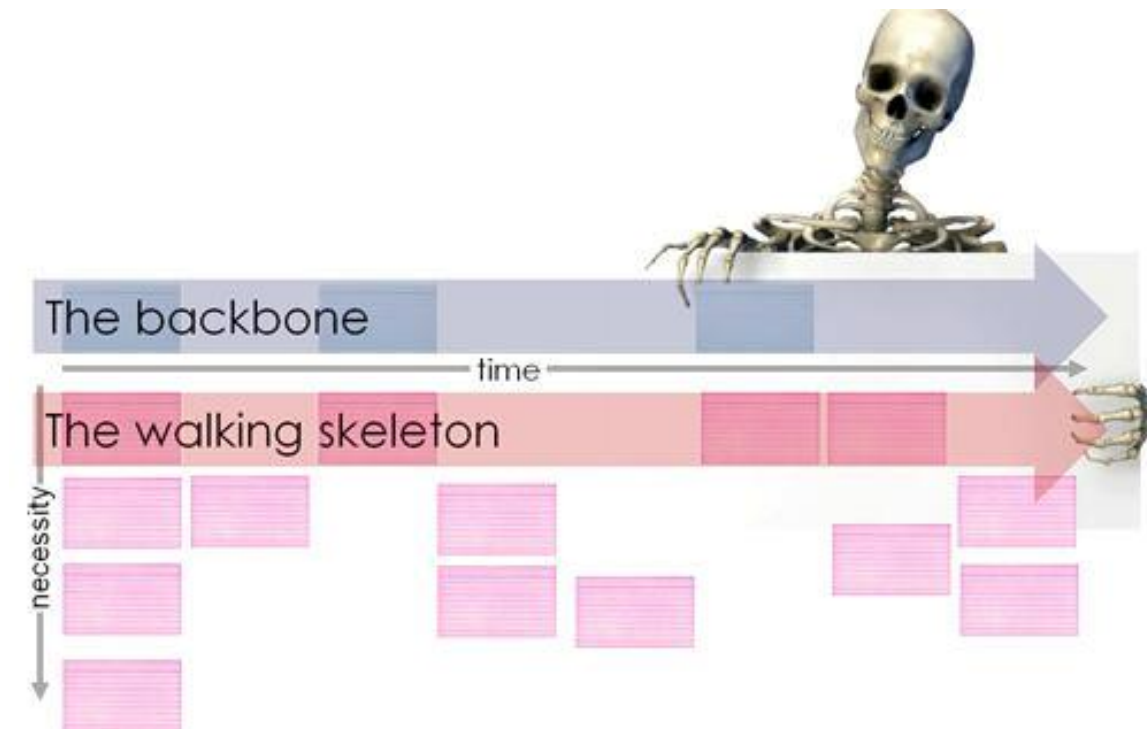




## Benefits of User Story Maps

### User story maps

- encourage an iterative development approach where early deliveries validate your architecture and solution
- a great visual alternative to traditional project plans
- a useful model for discussing and managing scope
- visual dimension to planning, & real options for your project/product



## To construct a User Story Map you

Move from left to right and top to bottom

Arrange stories in the logical order in which they would be completed – grid form

Test your map

- Talk / walk it through

- Find things you have missed

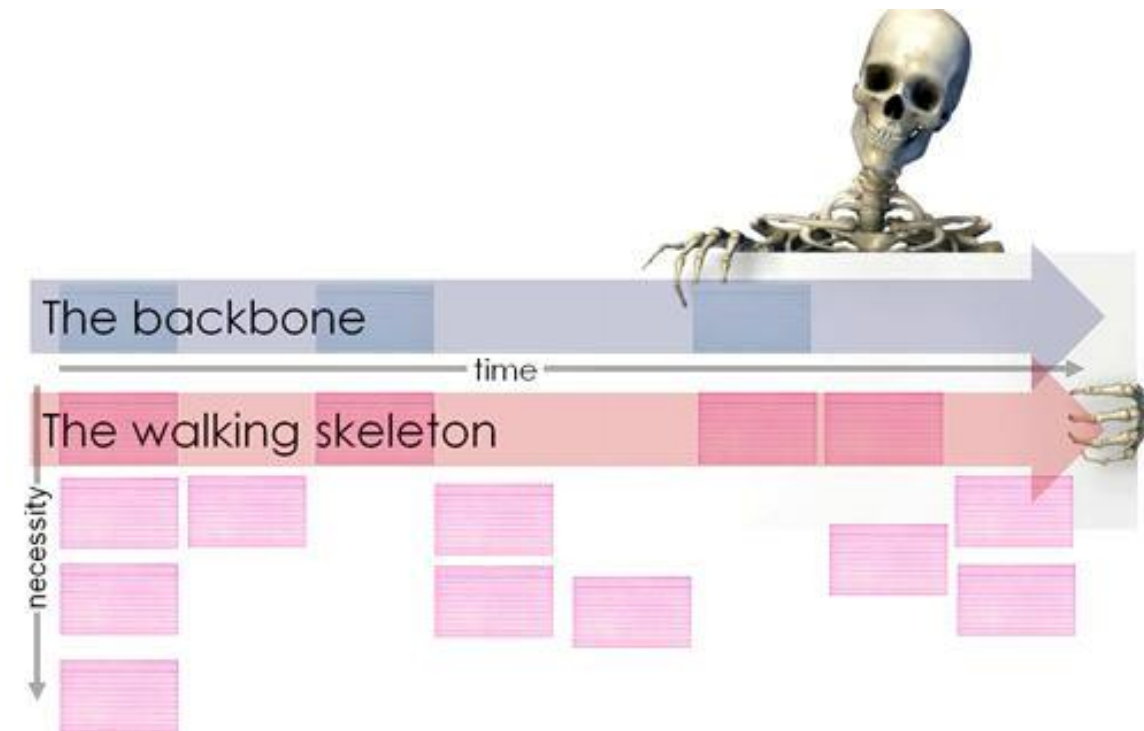
Annotate it

Use different colours for different levels

Display it as an information radiator

- Use for sprint or iteration planning

- Mark of progress



## To construct a User Story Map you

Place activities – big user stories (UX),  
epics at the top

An epic activity is something people do –  
has lots of steps, and  
doesn't always have a precise workflow

Eg. Building an email system

managing email

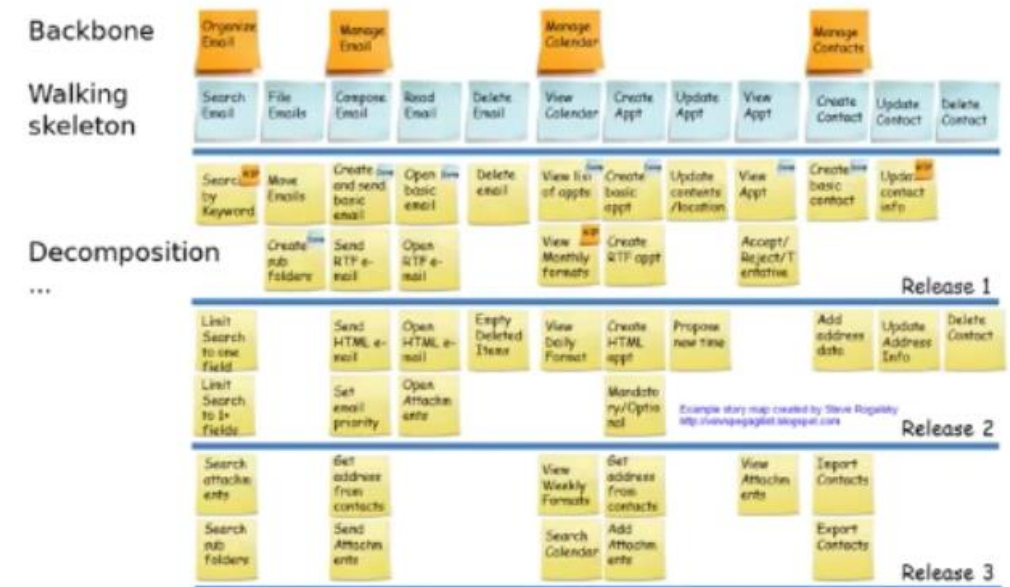
configuring email servers

Setting up out of office responses

Activities provide the context, then break activities down  
into user tasks i.e. smaller stories

Eg. send message, read message, delete message

A user task is something that someone  
does to reach a goal



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## Next week

On Tuesday I will be talking to you about Assignment #2.

In the meantime, check your group's topic on Wattle. You may want to read the report from Assignment #1 for that topic as a starting point.

On Thursday, I will be talking to you about hints and tips for the midterm.

