

Week 3 Online Group Activity: Writing User Stories

The main group activities this week focus on how we use user stories to capture requirements in agile software engineering.

Before You Start

You'll be using the following tools for this task:

- [Google Sheets](#): An online spreadsheet tool.
- [Microsoft Teams](#): You should use this tool to communicate with your team.

Activity 1

To get your team ready for the task you should:

1. First have everyone join the "Team X" channel in Microsoft Teams (where X is your team number) and say "hi". Make sure everyone can participate in text/audio/video discussion in the team channel.
2. Open the [Google Sheet](#) for this first activity, and select your team's tab from the options at the bottom-left.

The project brief

Your team must brainstorm features for a software system to help undergraduate students maximise the marks they get for coursework and exams, over the course of their 3/4 years of study.

The system is for a university department that does not yet have any standardised way to manage coursework submission or return of marks and feedback.

You are a focus group of undergraduate students from the university department commissioning the software. You will have to use this system for the whole of your third year.

Writing our first user stories (10 min)

Your team has been asked to help brainstorm ideas for features for this new software

system.

Write each feature idea you come up with in your Team's tab of the [Google spreadsheet](#). Use the "Proposed Software Feature" column (you can ignore all other columns for now).

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Proposed Software Feature	Team 2	Team 3	Team 4	Team 5	Team 6	Team 7
2	I can find out which course units I'm signed up for.						
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							
13							
14							
15							

Make sure you say enough about each feature so that someone from outside the team can understand more or less what you mean.

You have 10 minutes to identify and list out your features.

Valuing our first user stories (10 min)

Next we're going to look at the features suggested by other teams and put a value on them.

Look at the features suggested by at least two other teams

Have a discussion in your team to agree the amount that you would be prepared to pay to have access to each feature

Write the amount in your Team's column of the other Team's tab

If you wouldn't pay anything for it, write 0.

Maximising ROI

Add up the amount of money people would pay for each of your team's features. What are the most/least profitable ideas?

Does this change how you think about the features?

Given what you now know about how others value your suggestions, identify one new feature that will increase the ROI from your project. Post the new feature into the chat in the

Live Sessions channel.

Activity 2

In this activity we're going to start to move towards having our first story map with stories in the Connextra format.

We'll continue with this next week, so make sure you're happy with your project choice!

Step 1: Identify project and value Step 2: Story mapping Step 3: Writing user stories
(continued next week)

Step 1 (10 min)

As a team, you're going to agree on one project that you'll use as the basis for your story map and user stories.

You have ten minutes to select that project and identify associated impacts/value.

Choosing a project: We've covered a couple of different project examples in this and the previous lecture. E.g.,

- Week 2: A major UK logistics company wishes to offer a high-speed delivery service for individual parcels, alongside its current bulk transportation services.
- Week 3: A department that does not yet have any standardised way to manage coursework submission or return of marks and feedback has asked for a software system to help undergraduate students maximise their assessment marks.
- Week 3: A supermarket wants to implement a price-match scheme. Under the scheme, a shopper purchasing products that could have been bought cheaper elsewhere should be issued credit for the difference.

You can use one of the above, or you can choose a recent project implemented by one of your team members (e.g. a 3rd year project or something worked on during an industrial placement).

Identifying impact/value: For your chosen project, you should work together to identify the business value that successful completion of the project is trying to achieve:

- Whose behaviour will change?
- What aspect of their behaviour will change?
- How will it change?

Step 2

To realise your identified impact, you now need to develop one simple happy path story that describes how the system will be used. The story should be temporal (i.e. a series of steps

that unfold over time).

Identify the set of steps that make up your happy path (don't worry about complicated conditionals). Check that everyone in the team is happy that successful progression through the story steps would lead to at least one of the impacts identified in the previous step.

Order your story steps and type them into the first row of your team's tab on [this Google Sheet](#).

Step 3

Next we'll write user stories that describe how the software will support the story map. We'll probably not start this until next week, but if you have a bit of spare time after developing your initial story map then feel free to make a start.

Each story will be on one "virtual card" ([a cell in the spreadsheet](#)) below the story map step it supports.

You should write your stories in Connextra format. Make sure that:

- * Each story is an end-to-end slice.
- * The "As a..." part of the story represents a specific stakeholder. Avoid generic terms like "user", "customer".
- * The level of detail in the "I want..." bit of the story is just enough to act as a meaningful prompt for future conversation.
- * The "so that..." part of the story contributes to the overall impact/value that the story map is trying to realise.

Don't worry about ordering the stories in a column just yet.