

Agile Goes to the Library



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Introductions - include titles and mention of any Agile certifications

CJM - Elizabeth and I were lucky enough to present a similar version of this talk last year at PLA in Philadelphia.

After that, Crystal reached out to us, Washington County was just at the beginning of their Agile journey.

So it's all come together, and today we're able to offer two different perspectives of implementing Agile in public libraries.

today's agenda

1. What is Agile?
 - history • manifesto • principles
2. Agile framework
 - scrum
3. Resources for continued learning

But first, a warm-up!

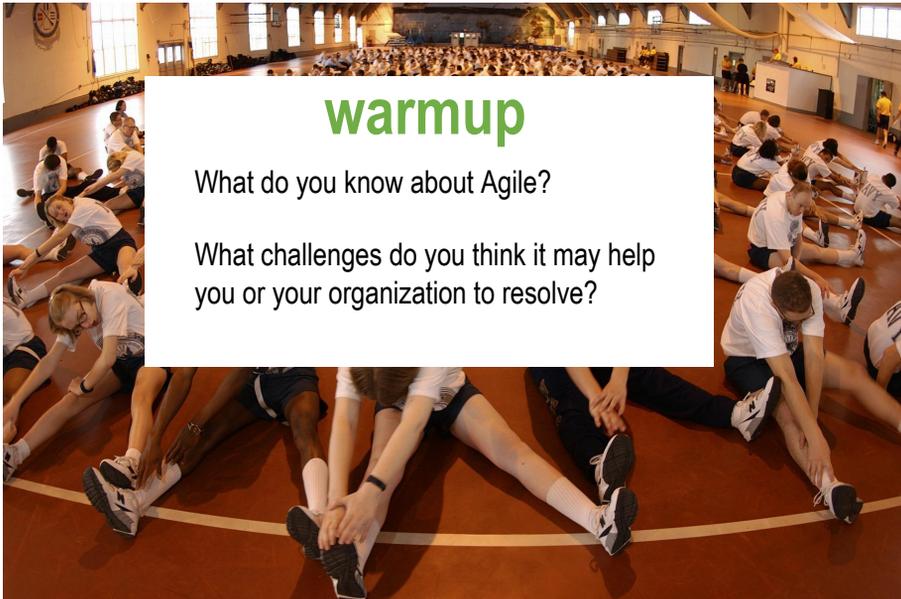


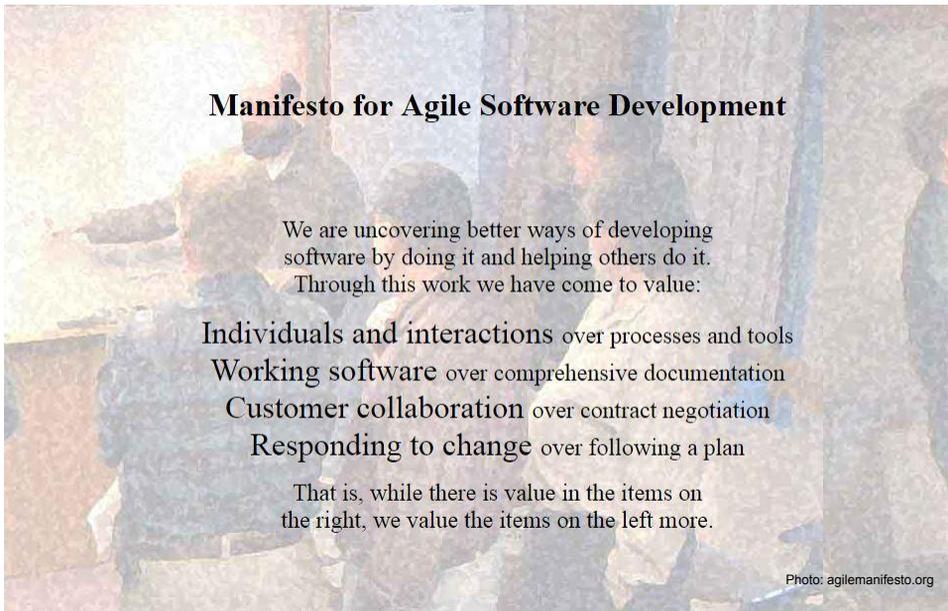
Photo: <https://pixabay.com/photos/great-lakes-illinois-men-women-80383/>

CT: 5 finger agile

Elizabeth: What challenges? (popcorn)

What is Agile?

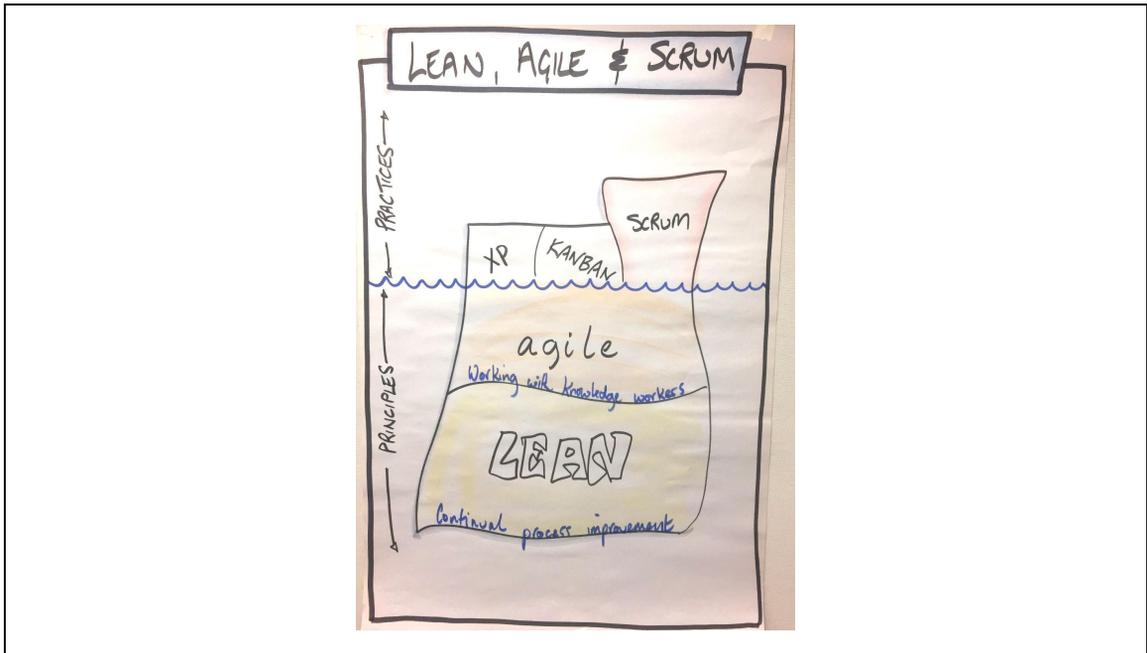
• History • Manifesto • Principles



CJM - Agile was created by a bunch of software developers in silicon valley years ago. They got together and said, these are the things that we agree on that make us good at what we do. So that is why this slide is so ugly, this is a screenshot of the web page that they have never changed since they agreed upon it, at agilemanifesto.org.

Note the preamble: “uncovering better ways . . . *by doing it*”—not theoretical, but practical, empirical knowledge based in actual experience.

Read through the rest, emphasizing last bit: we value the items on the left more. Also, “working software over comprehensive documentation.” Obviously we’re not software developers, but in our case we could say something like, making connections over comprehensive documentation.



CJM - I thought I'd share this diagram that I snagged from my Certified Scrum Master training, shows relationships between Lean and Agile, and scrum and kanban and xp.

Lean manufacturing is the foundation of Agile. Lean is a robust philosophy that can be summed up as “iterative and incremental design.” You can read all about the history of iterative and incremental design in our resource list, which we are sharing with everyone via Google Docs (the link is at the end of our presentation). For now, the fundamental thing to know is it’s about continuous process improvement, or “iterative and incremental development”

Agile builds on lean, is layer that addresses working with knowledge workers. Both are a set of principles.

Scrum often gets the most attention in talking about Agile, as this diagram makes clear, it’s a practice, or a tool. There are two similar practices called Kanban and XP that we are not going to delve into today, but you may see them mentioned as you read and learn more about Agile.

So now, Elizabeth and I are going to share some of the principles behind Agile, and specifically those that have really influenced our culture.

our highest priority is to satisfy our patrons



ET - Story of Service

Customer centered - removing barriers

Saying yes

Seeing Agile as a means for moving beyond some of our more challenging cultural norms and the belt and suspenders approach to our processes

Focus on the activities that deliver value to the people we serve

A opportunity to transform the heart of the library (Materials Management)



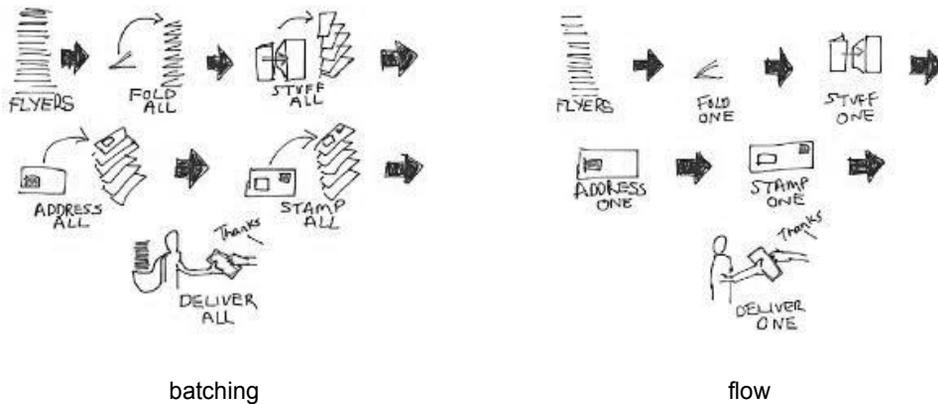
CJM -Other core principle of Lean: get rid of waste! Three types:

Muda: Non-value adding activities. Stickers, stamps, extra tape, the things you do that your patrons could care less about. Time audit and book drop.

Muri: overburden—can't be productive, respond to change, work as a team when there's too much on your plate. In an environment in which flat is the new up, and we're accustomed to "doing more with less," we may not be able to do too much about this except to be aware and to recognize how overburden manifests in our organizations and day to day. Once you've recognized overburden, you can at least ask for help!

Imbalance refers to uneven workloads—applies to people or machines. Great variance in workflow is disruptive.

deliver value early and often



CJM - human default setting; laundry example; how that applies to MM. So customers are receiving value throughout the day.

In our resource list you'll see two videos about batching versus flow, one of which uses the example of an elevator vs. escalator. In the elevator scenario, people are standing and waiting, whereas with the escalator, there is continuous flow, value of arrival on the upper floor is constant.

This is a good segue to one of our favorite Agile phrases, "stop starting, start finishing"-- I'll pass the mic to Elizabeth. :)

stop starting, start finishing



*"I can't worry about that now.
I'm worrying about something else."*

ET - Culture of Busy

Leaving space for creativity and innovation

We take one thing at a time until it's done. That may not mean a whole project, but smaller bites. Another relevant saying is we "eat the elephant one bite at a time."

Our team found that does include minimizing interruptions, where possible.

But mostly, it applies to work in progress. If we have lots of projects we've begun, and we're leaving that work undone or letting it change hands, all that WIP represents value not delivered to our customers. It's also wasteful energy.

To those ends, Agile is very Zen, or mindful: all of your attention to one thing at a time, preferably something you can finish.

This approach is iterative, welcoming of changing requirements and safe to fail

continuous attention to excellence



Photo: <https://www.manufacturing-operations-management.com>

ET -

Our customer service philosophy is driven by Reliability, Responsiveness and Relationship-building, while we have always been great with responsiveness and relationships, reliability has been more difficult.

Like a lot of organizations problem-solving was a challenge

We talk a lot about TOFU and how that relates to being reliable

In one of our initial meetings with our Agile coach we talked about the difference between Responsibility and Accountability

we welcome changing requirements

**PLANNING
IS GUESSING**

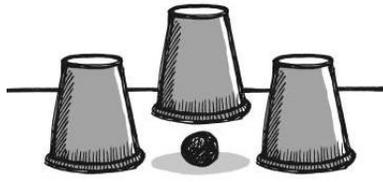


Photo: fieldsy.org <http://bit.ly/2CdpXru>

ET & WPL strat plan

CJM - Continuous process improvement, also called empirical process control, means trying something, learning from it, and then tweaking your approach, again and again. The opposite of this approach would be planning a whole project out from start to finish, also known as a waterfall.

We are not saying that planning is not merited ever; but in agile, we value space to change, space for unknowns, over planning. The idea is that you just start, and learn from it.

Libraries operate in an ever-changing environment, we have to be responsive to that change to remain relevant. Rather than resisting that change, how can we welcome it and respond?

**At regular intervals,
the team reflects
on how to become
more effective,
then adjusts
accordingly.**

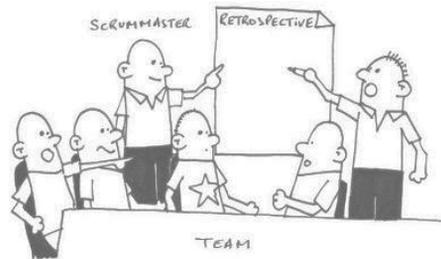


Photo: <http://emmanuelchenu.blogspot.com/2008/05/scrum-sprint-retrospective-meeting.html>

CJM - Ideally, Agile teams meet regularly and reflect. We typically ask three questions: What worked well? What's tricky? What would we change the next time? So this gets back to that continuous process control. In Agile, these meetings are called retrospectives, and include the whole team. They've become a part of our culture, so even in one-on-one coaching sessions, and in our daily stand-ups, we are thinking of these questions, we are welcoming this feedback, and we are hopefully capturing it and acting on it to get better.

Build projects around motivated individuals. Give them the environment and support they need, and trust them to get the job done.



ET - Flattening Utopian Dream

The most efficient and effective method of conveying information to and within a development team is face-to-face conversation.

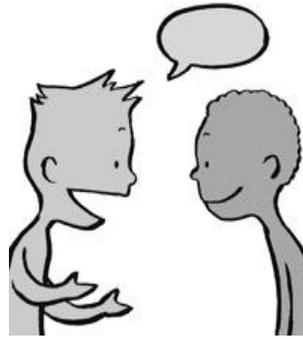


Photo: <https://www.talkingmats.com/about-talking-mats/>

ET - Cut down on emails

Power of stand-ups. and regular Agile coaching, and regular all-staff and departmental meetings.

Managers' meetings follow Agile template.

CJM - No more thank you emails!

make work visible



CJM - Make work visible! **Empirical process control, which we've mentioned a bunch as foundational to Agile and Lean**, relies on the three main ideas of transparency, inspection, and adaptation.

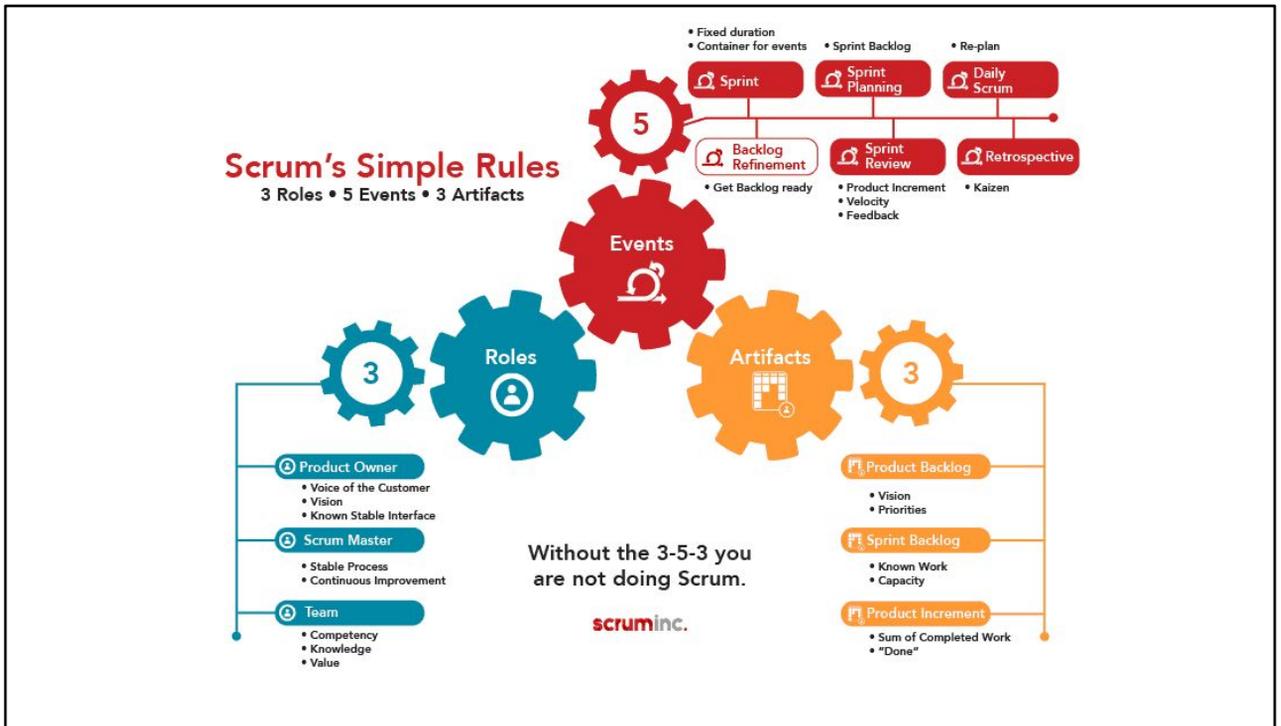
The words inspection and transparency can be scary, but in Agile, that's made possible through scrum boards, which show what work needs to be done, what's in process, and what's done. Versus a manager "inspecting," everyone can see, offer to help where it's needed. We no longer choose our favorite tasks, we pull in the work that needs to be done.

Making work visible can also help out with objective thinking versus perceived reality, stories. Perception that we're days, weeks behind on shelving. Let's track it. How far are we behind really?

Segue to WCCS to talk about scrum. Over to Crystal!



CT: Scrum is a framework that helps the Agile principles come to life. As a new projects coordinator, I didn't want to "make it up as I go along." I wanted to use a proven framework. And Scrum has proven itself to work for more than two decades... in software development, but also in airplane manufacturing, in education (in eduScrum students finish curriculum early, have better grades and test scores, and discipline problems virtually disappear), and in the CIO office of the state of Washington. Scrum is also great for organizations new to the Agile mindset. Doing the framework causes your team to live out Agile principles, without having to totally espouse them as an organization, in your own "Agile Bubble."



CT: Scrum is A LOT of new vocabulary terms, and some of them seem weird in the library world. But at its heart, it's simple: 3 roles, 5 events, and 3 artifacts. The whole framework is described in a 16 page document you can access online (resources slide). It's easy to start doing Scrum. It's harder to do it well.



Image: <https://img2.thejournal.ie/inline/3288316/original/?width=813&version=3288316>

CT: The word “Scrum” itself comes from Rugby - everyone pushing to the same goal (not against another team).



PJ:

Context for this project

- We started in spring 2018 and needed to rapidly implement a new BiblioCore catalog by the end of the year
- Two team members (myself and Maria) were new to WCCLS, and Crystal was new to her role as Project Coordinator.
- Using Scrum was a big risk, but such an ambitious timeline required trying something new -- and we had the full support of our manager
- Lisa invested in Crystal getting certified in Scrum and she helped create space for the team by communicating that this work would be a priority

What's happening in this photo?

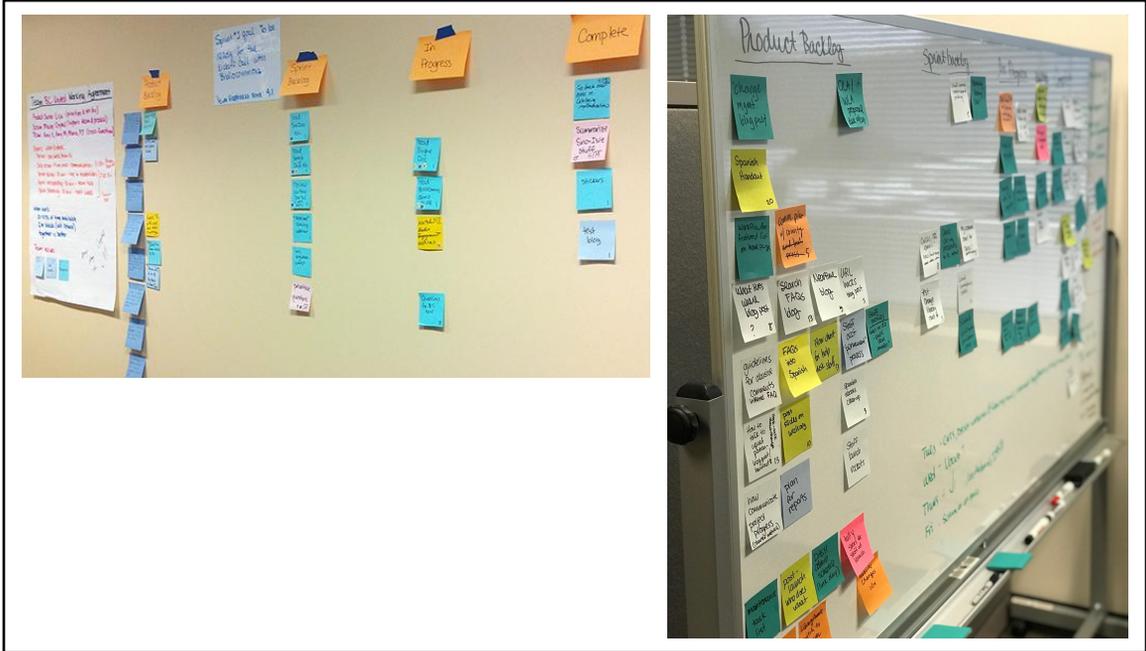
- Team kick-off! We learned Scrum basics, formulated "user stories" (purpose statements) for the project, and formulated team agreements
- We spent time coming up with team values: fun, kind honesty, and perspective -- these values ended up being really important throughout the project, centering us during rough patches
- I don't know about you, but formally doing a team kick off and following formal self-organizing practices was pretty new for me

How did we do as a team with these values? 1=the worst, 5=the best

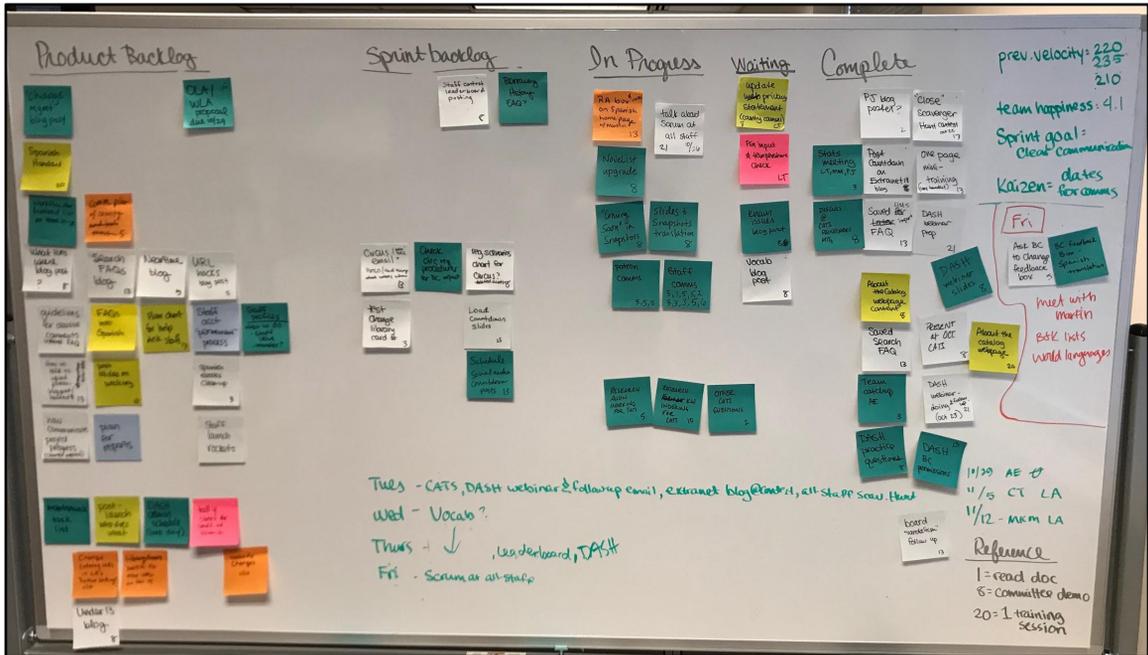
Fun!: 3.9 (Bananas Chocolate United - Team BCU)

Kind honesty: 3.5

Perspective: 3.3

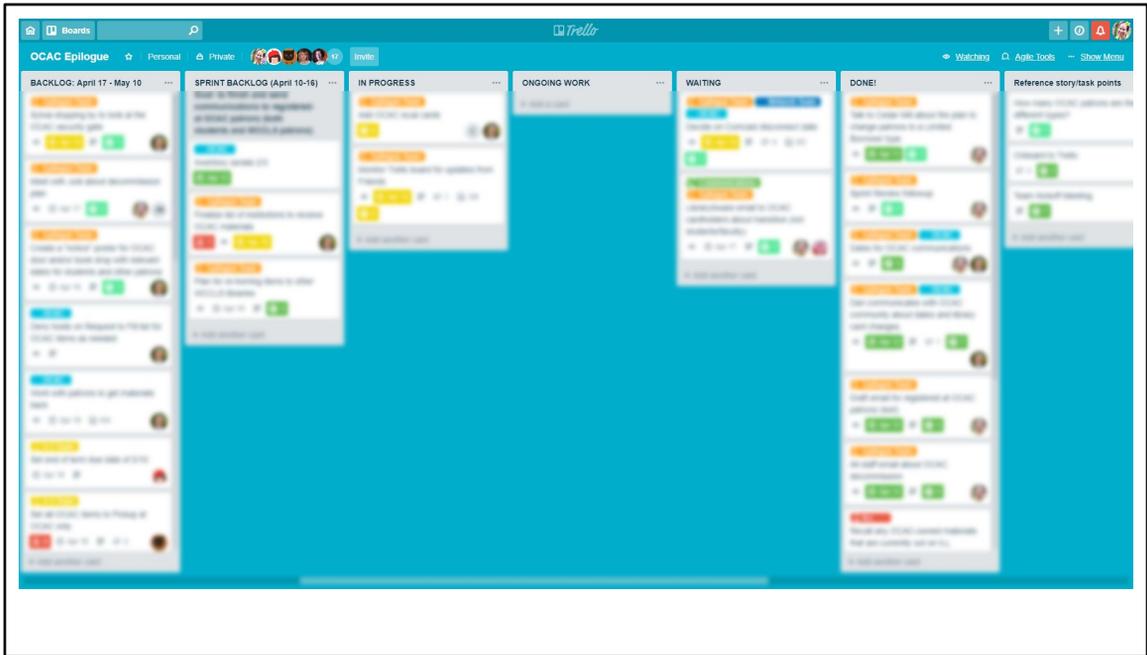


MKM: First scrum board was on the wall. Then we created an environment with intention: space with whiteboards, private, away from our desks. But still visible to the rest of the office.



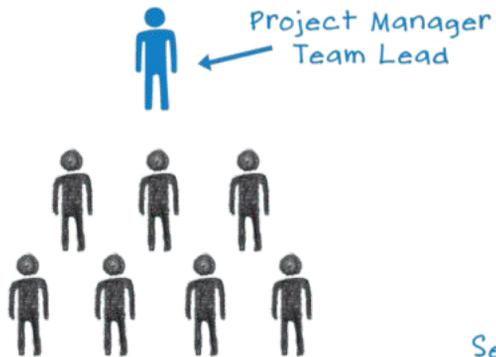
MKM:

- A scrum board has parts for prioritizing and tracking the work
 - Product backlog
 - Sprint backlog
 - In progress
 - Waiting (our own addition)
 - Complete
 - Various other aspects of the team that we track: velocity, team happiness, kaizen (one small improvement)
- Favorite kaizen: moving weekly sprint reviews from afternoon to morning



CT: We have started our second project using Scrum, and it's with a team of 5 in 3 locations. We are using conference software (GoToMeeting) and Trello for our Scrum board. Although we're missing the physical benefits of moving sticky notes and all working in the same office, Trello has other benefits. With Trello, we have a history of the work we've done, and it's easy to link to shared documents and resources to make everything more of a one-stop-shop. It's seemed easier to invite our friends of the team to have more insight into our work and offer help, too.

Traditional Teams



Agile Teams

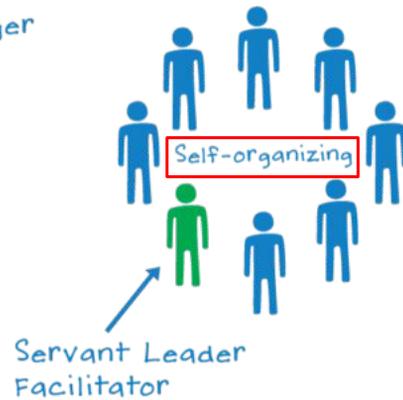


Image: <https://www.slideshare.net/Managewell/impact-of-agile-on-hr>

MKM (but jump in): Self-organizing takes time, and thoughtful effort at the beginning, with agreements. Be intentional from the outset. Everyone is an equal member, regardless of roles and reporting structure outside the team.

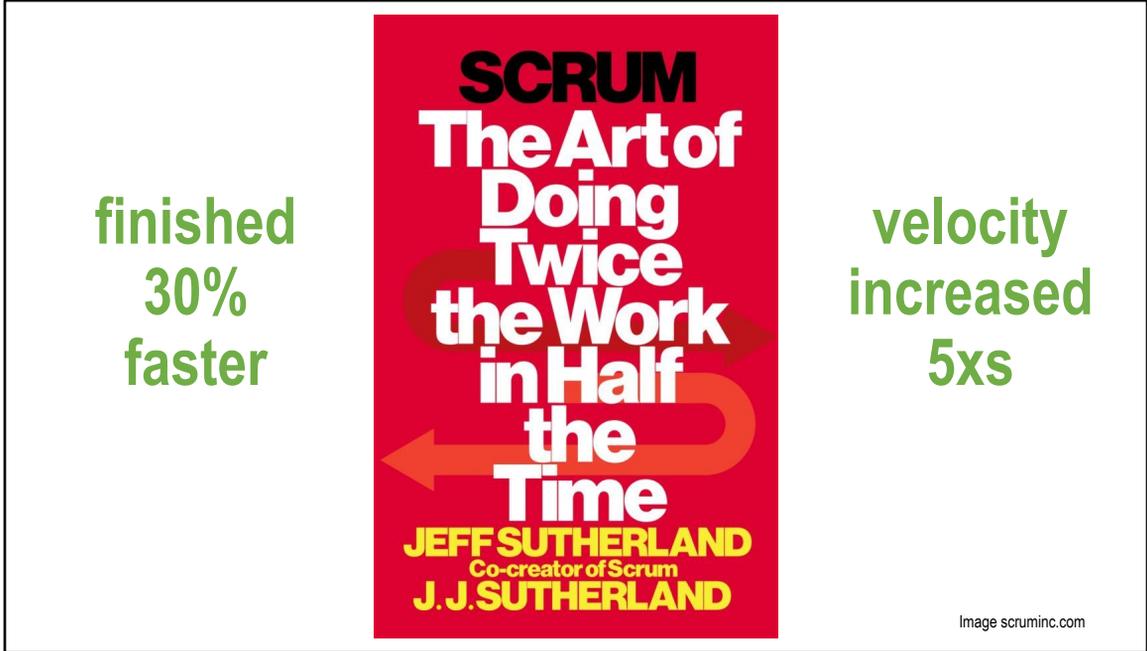


Image modified from: <http://soft4inventory.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/1698b11.jpg>

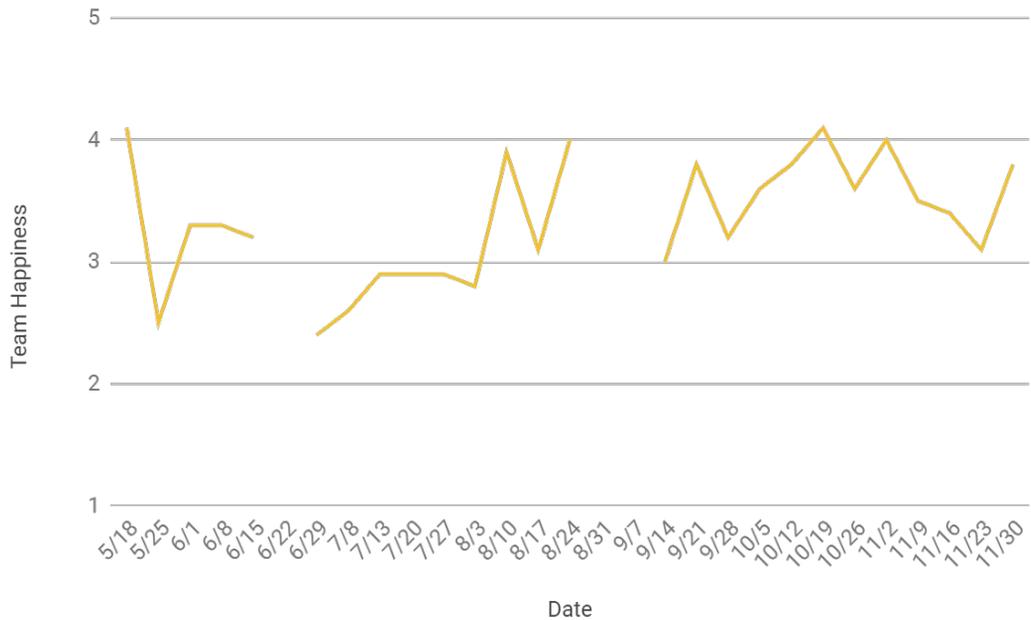
MKM: Team members are committed (on the honor system) to pull work. Ask for help.



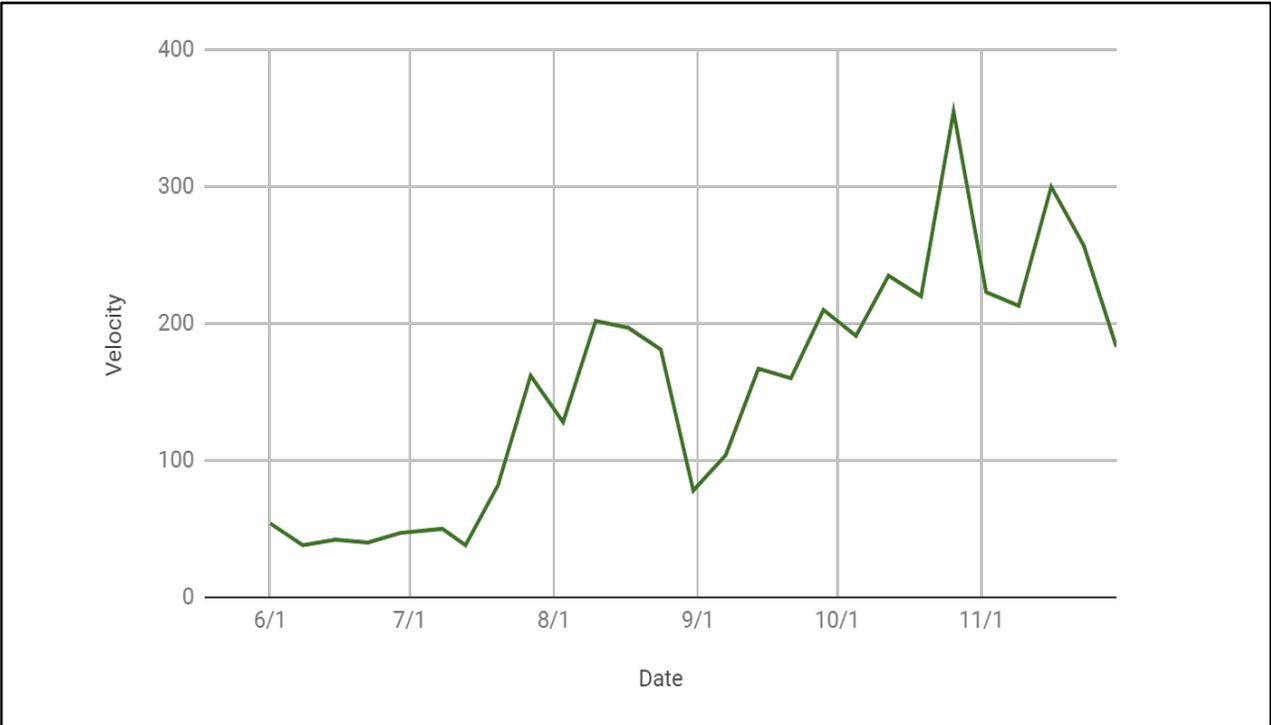
MKM: Friends are aware of the project and know they will be called on for their expertise.



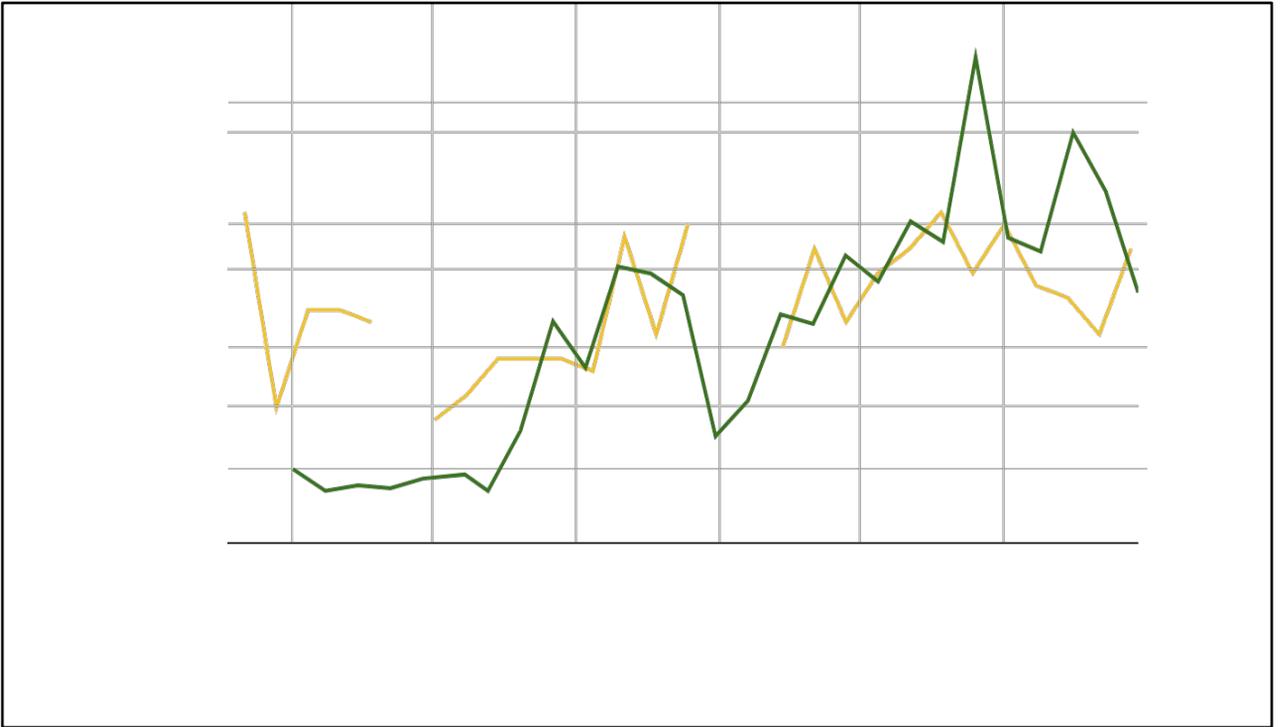
CT: The only other resource for Scrum that recommend is this book by Jeff Sutherland and his son. The title promises being able to do twice the work in half the time with Scrum... which is four times the work you've been doing. What were our results like for this project? We finished first phase one week early. Our overall implementation schedule was 30% faster than "normal," or two months earlier than predicted. Our implementation manager at BiblioCommons said, "I'm delighted by how on-the-ball your implementation team has been!" And our velocity increased by a factor of 5.



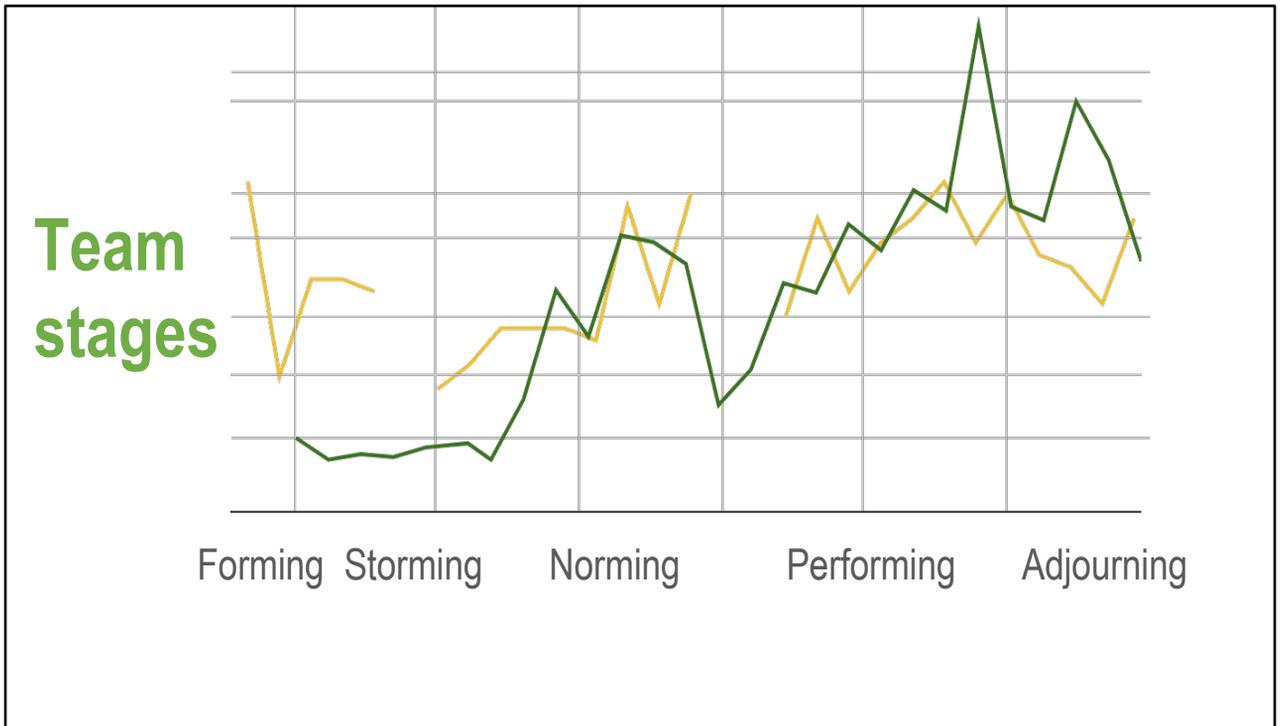
CT: In Scrum, we measure several things to keep track of how our team is doing. One is called team happiness. That sounds touchy-feely, but it is a key indicator for how much work the team can do. This is not just “warm and fuzzy”...happier people do better work, and are more effective. Gallup: Doctors in a positive mood show three times the intelligence and creativity and diagnose 19% faster. We filled out a survey each week on a scale of 1-5.



CT: The other thing we measured each week is called velocity. Each story, or task, has an estimated number of points for how much effort it takes to do that thing. At the end of the Sprint, or week, we tally those points up. (Note vacation at the end of August.)



When we overlay the two charts, we can clearly see the connection between happiness and work done.



PJ:

- It really helps to be open about this at the outset. It removes an emotional burden when we recognize that phases of awkwardness, angst, and sadness are normal for successful teams.

Forming phase: Why are we together? Purpose, tasks?

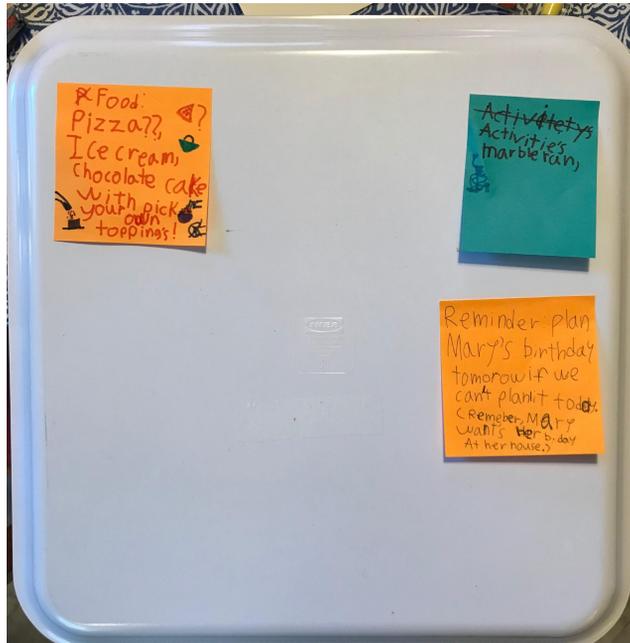
Storming: First conflicts about tasks or process (active or passive)

Norming: Agreeing on norms, feel part of the team

Performing: Work constructively, more flexibility, self-organization

Adjourning: Can be painful. Say goodbye ritual.

- That divergence at the end of the project? Like the last day of summer camp.



PJ:

- Scrum works best if you implement the entire process. Each component of the framework is dependent on the others.
- At the end of the project, we each met with the WCCLS Manager, our product owner, and the pain points team members expressed in that review were mostly because we never fully implemented important pieces like the Sprint Review. Things like the review help surface pain points and create a safe space for team members to evaluate what is and isn't working.
- But some scrum is better than no scrum. You'll find that practices and philosophies from agile and scrum will trickle into other parts of you life..
 - At home, we've used scrum for small projects, like buying a car. Our kitchen cupboards were our kanban board. My daughter Mary picked up on this, and will create her own version of a kanban board for projects like her 8th birthday party. :)



PJ: It takes courage to try something new!

- Sometimes it can feel silly and awkward to use such intentional practices and a formal framework, but you can fake it till you make it. Crystal can attest to this.
- Have the guts to try. You might fail, but you'll expose yourself and your organization to new, exciting ways of doing work through teams. The real risk is just throwing people into a room, telling them they're a "team," and hoping for the best.

Jeff Sutherland: Scrum is easy to use, difficult to master.

Resource list

Agile Goes to the Library resource list: <https://bit.ly/2PkhTIY>

Presentation slides: <https://bit.ly/2IA5MGF>

Acknowledgements

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Thank you!



Questions?



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Feel free to email us with more questions after the session!