Lean Software & Kanban

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Enterprise Platform and Integration Concepts
Lean Software’s Main Idea

Reduce Waste

Waste
- Anything not delivered to the customer
- Artifacts that do not deliver a business value

Lean software inspired by
- Toyota’s “lean manufacturing” industrial production
- Just-in-time production
Lean Software’s Principles

1. **Eliminate Waste**
   - Anything not delivering business value
   - E.g. requirements documents, partially done work, rarely used features (bloat), bugs, task switching, waiting

2. **Amplify learning**
   - “Try-it, test-it, fix-it” rather than “do it right the first time”
   - Short iteration cycles

3. **Decide as late as possible**
   - Avoid up front design decisions, make choices when information is available

4. **Deliver as fast as possible**
   - Working system at every iteration, fast feedback cycle
Lean Software’s Principles

5. **Empower the team**
   - Motivate the team, self-organization
   - “Find good people and let them do their own job”

6. **Build integrity in**
   - Maintain the consistency of a system’s design
   - E.g. through refactoring, automated tests, complete build system

7. **See the whole**
   - Focus on overall progress of the project
   - Strong common sense
Lean Software Summary

- **Idea:** Software development can benefit from industrial production recipes
- However, software has no production, only design
- “Lean” can be seen as more philosophy than method
- Reminder to look out for waste of any kind

“Lean” is applicable in many sectors, e.g. lean startups
Kanban

(看板)
At full capacity, there is little throughput (flow is constricted by bottlenecks)
Kanban’s Main Idea

Minimize Work In Progress

- Kanban: literally “signboard” or “billboard” in Japanese
- Inspired by Toyota
- Visual process-management approach (“Kanban boards”)
- “Stop Starting, Start Finishing”
- Ensure just-in-time production
Core Kanban Practices

1. Limit work in progress (Kanban Limits)
   - Limit amount of tickets per column
   - Focus on most productive task for the project
   - Pull work from previous columns
   - Reduce context switching (waste)

2. Visualize
   - Shared Kanban-Board with process steps as columns
   - Requirements (tasks, user stories,...) travel as notes from left to right.

3. Manage flow
   - Measure length of queue, average cycle time and throughput
   - Identify bottlenecks and allow planning
Core Kanban Practices

4. **Make policies explicit**
   - Create explicit shared understanding of rules and assumptions
   - E.g. what columns mean, Definition of Done, which ticket to pull next

5. **Implement feedback loops**
   - Process of continuous improvement ("kaizen" in Japanese)
   - Don’t wait for feedback, build it into the process

6. **Improve collaboratively, evolve experimentally**
   - Try things out, evaluate
Flow: from backlog to delivery

Pull

Kanban limits

4

4
Push vs. Pull Systems

- How a team handles the inventory & scheduling of work items
- **Push production**: based on forecasted demand, schedule
- **Pull production**: based on consumed products, take only what is needed, process immediately

**Scrum** Sprint Planning: **Push**
- Forecasted demand (business needs)
- Estimated capacity of team

**Kanban**: Pull
- No need for planning, no queue to push into
- Stories worked on based on actual demand and actual capacity

It can be argued that Scrum is a pull-based system as well, with work pulled in larger batches (the Sprint Backlog).
Subdivisions by subject / swim lanes
One day in Kanban Land

(A comic by Henrik Kniberg)
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1. We'll do D! No, wait... that would break the Kanban limit of 2!

2. I want F & G as well. But the Kanban limit stops me. Hmmm...

3. We don't need any more hands right now. But this is a recurring problem, so write a test for it to avoid the problem in the future!

4. Kis pretty urgent. I'll schedule it next.

5. How can we help? Get coffee. Then tell us what this #&@ stack trace means.

6. Is there anything I can do to help? I'm no techie but...

7. Sure! Get more coffee and protect us from disruptions.

8. A few days later...

9. Cis done!

10. Great, hope you start K soon!

11. Sure, as soon as we sort out the problem with A.

12. Don't you miss the old days? All-night integration hell? Big-bang releases?

13. LOL

14. M or H. Definitely M! No, HI Hmmm. No wait, MI! M or H am H or HI?
Metrics — Cumulative Flow Diagram

**Lead Time:**
Time from ticket being placed on board to ticket delivered

**Cycle Time:**
Time from starting work on ticket to finishing
Discussion

- Main differences between Scrum and Kanban?
- What could be the biggest challenges when employing Kanban?
- What would be a "Kanban Master's" tasks? Is this a necessary role?
- What domains/contexts is...
  - Kanban better suited for?
  - Scrum better suited for?
References