

Promise is Debt

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QWAN - Quality Without a Name - www.qwan.eu

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IN

The story

We taught everybody agile but....

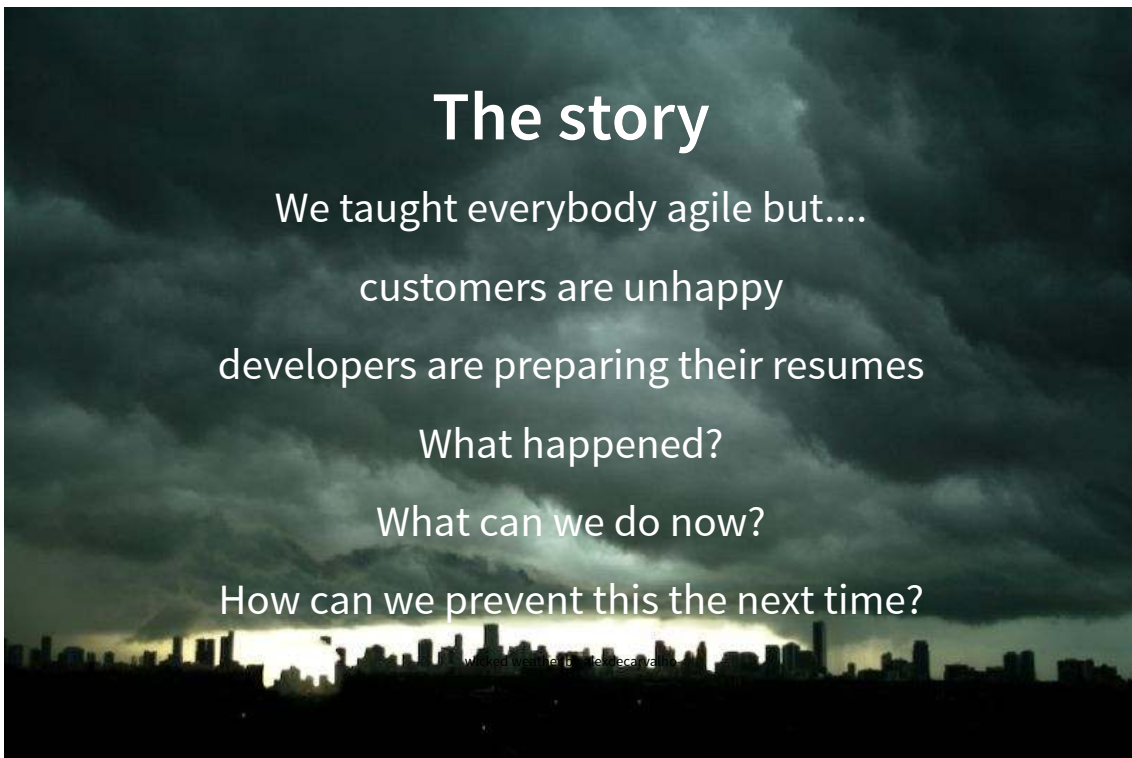
customers are unhappy

developers are preparing their resumes

What happened?

What can we do now?

How can we prevent this the next time?





The context

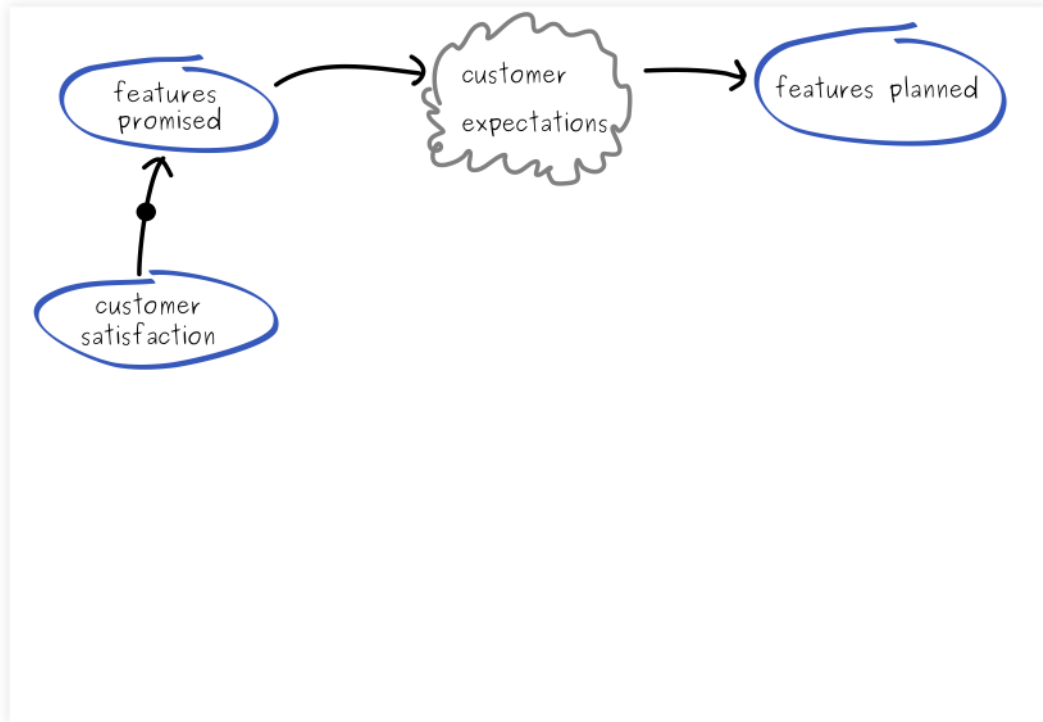
3 customers, 4 developers
1 manager, in the middle
one code base, one product
special features per customer

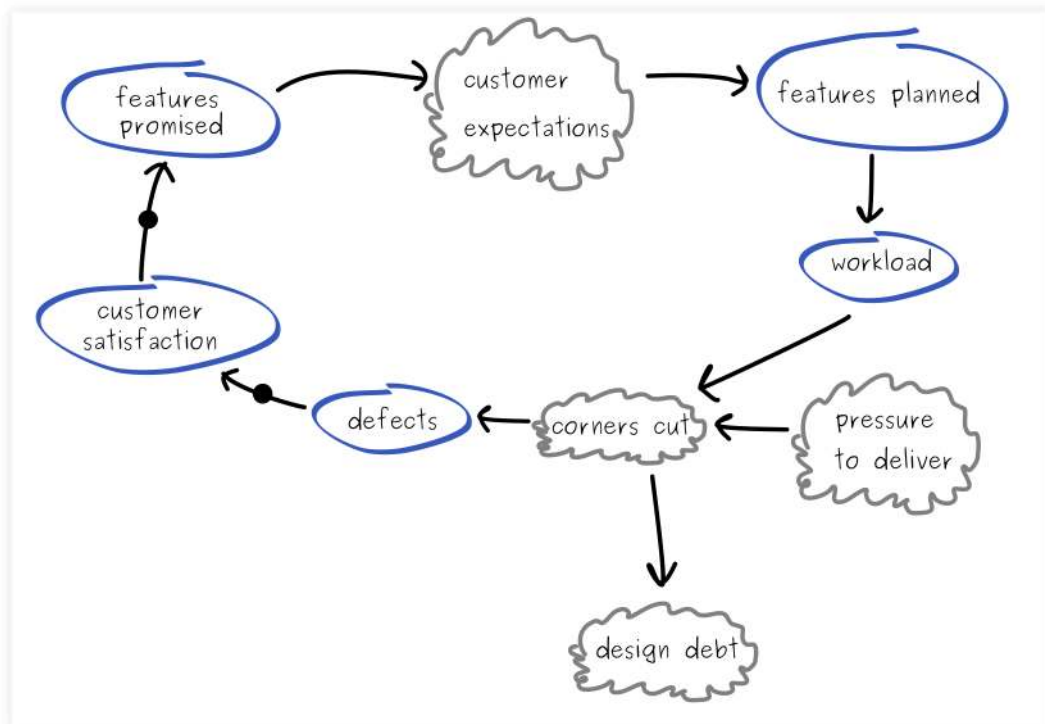
Triple Sheep by Per Ola Wiberg



The road to hell is paved with good intentions

Promise one more special feature
to show what we can do...







Technical debt makes each new feature more expensive

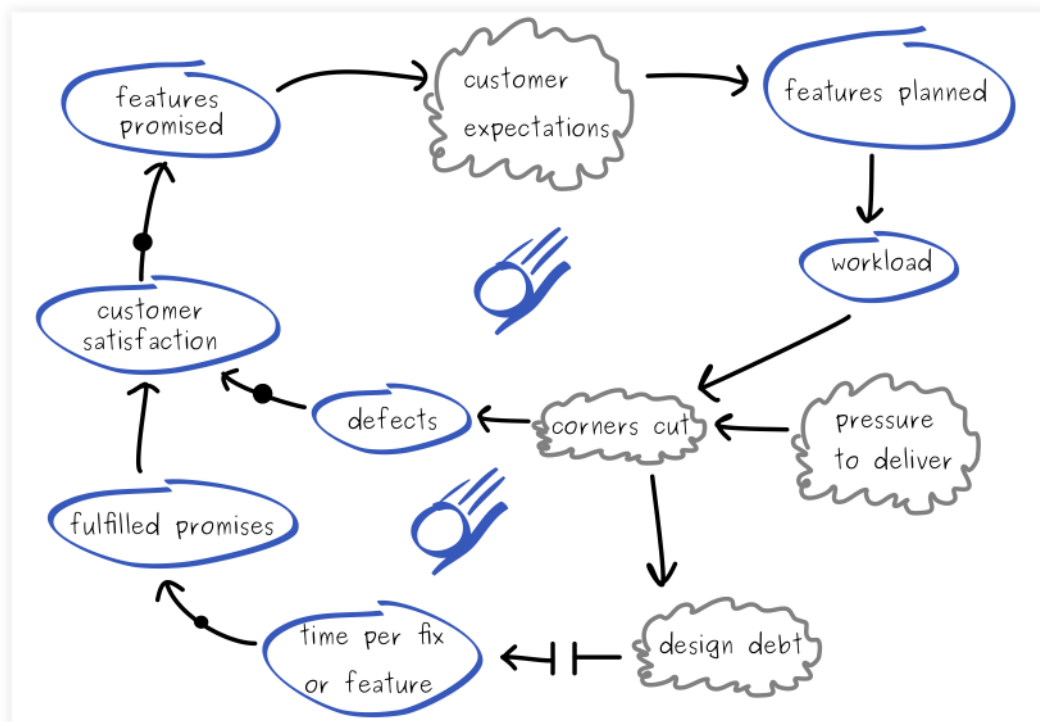
velocity goes down

...

dog on treadmill by Anne Norman

Technical Debt

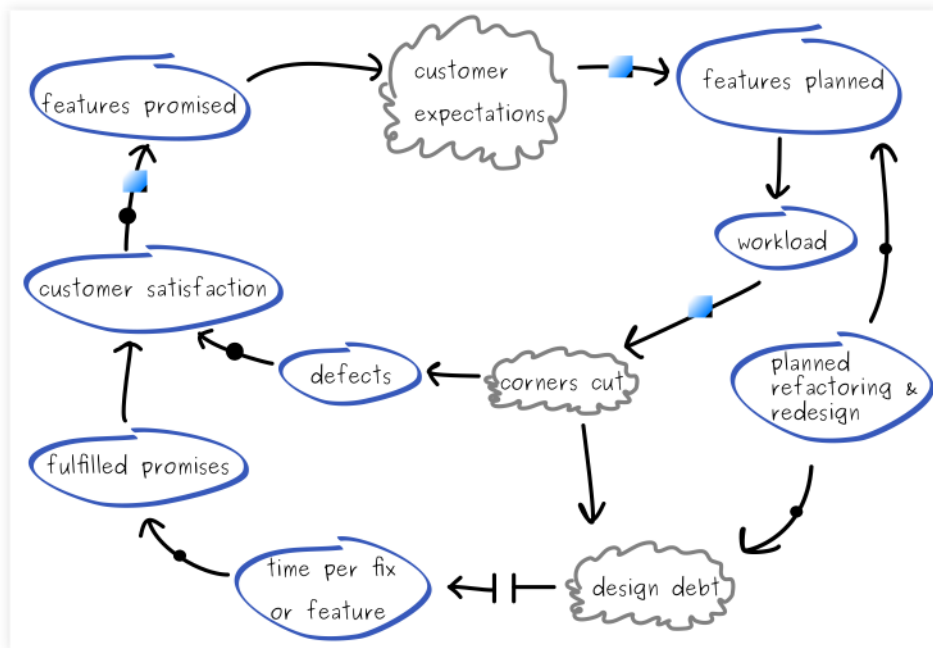
- Metaphor by Ward Cunningham
- Software development is discovery & learning
software reflects yesterday's knowledge
- *Debt* = learning that hasn't been put in the software yet
- *Interest you pay* = extra effort needed in future
- Hard to measure – you know it when you see it



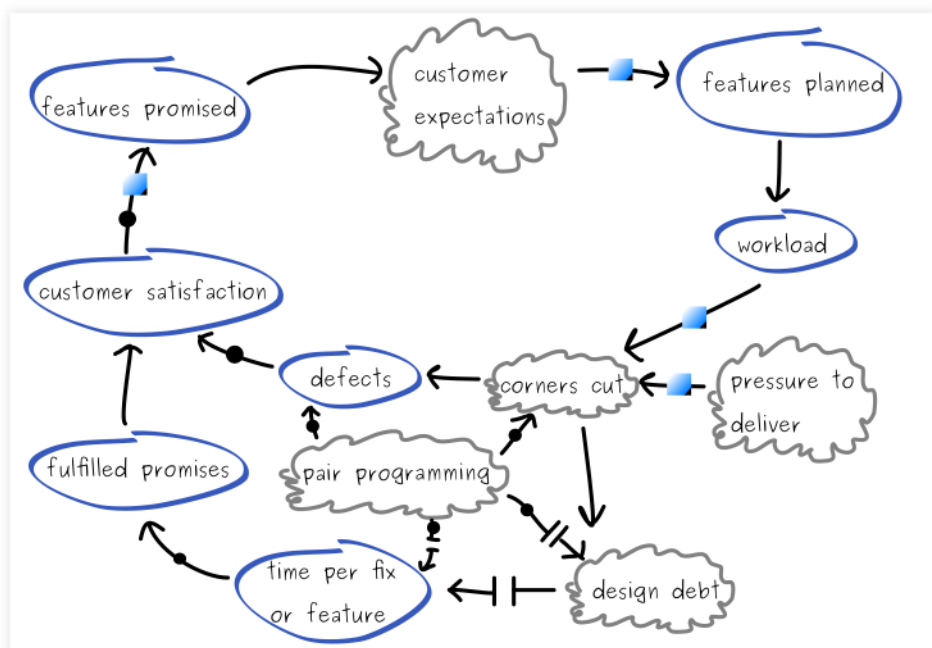
Forces

- Customers
 - believe they don't have a choice
 - are afraid to speak up
 - don't find the product that important
- Developers
 - try to make the best of it
 - take pride in their craft
- Managers
 - have huge ambition
 - are tied up in promises

Planned Refactoring



Pair programming



Systemic thinking

- Technical debt is inevitable: development = learning
- It's technical & organizational
- Not personal - blaming does not help
- No simple cause-effect, no best solution or practice
- Intuition support tool
- Build shared understanding, not exact model of reality
- From ideological debate to pragmatic action

Gerald M. Weinberg Quality Software Management series

leanpub.com/b/qualitysoftware

Linda Booth Sweeney & Dennis Meadows

Systems Thinking Playbook

Donella H. Meadows Thinking in Systems

Donella H. Meadows Places to Intervene in a System

donellameadows.org/archives/leverage-points-places-to-intervene-in-a-system

Peter M. Senge The Fifth Discipline

Arie de Geus The Living Company

Cynefin Sensemaking Framework - introduction

Image: Books in red by Benjamin Claverie