Constructing User Stories

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User Stories

• User stories are tools used in designing systems, but also focus research and assessment projects.

• User stories describe who the user is, what the user needs/wants to accomplish, and why that outcome is desirable.

• User stories can be formatted in a number of ways:
  – As [who], I want [what], so that [why].
  – As a [user], I want [goal] so that [reason].
  – As [stakeholder], I want [to be able to do an activity, to have an awareness, to take an action] in order to [achieve outcome, solve problem, meet need].
User Story Structures

- user or stakeholder
- do activity, build awareness, take action
- why, reason, or rationale
User Story Elements

• User stories describe what students, librarians, faculty, advisors, institutional researchers, administrators, and other stakeholders need to know in order to achieve goals or solve problems.

• In each user story, the “user” is followed by a “want” statement. Want statements focus on the ability to do an activity, build an awareness, or accomplish a task requiring library, institutional, or other data.

• To conclude each user story, a rationale for the “want” is included. Rationales articulate aims like achieving outcomes, solving problems, and meeting needs.
who — what — why

- librarian, student, administrator, faculty, advisor
- understand engagement or environment, make decisions, take action, realign resources
- support student learning, bolster faculty productivity, accelerate DEI work, demonstrate value/impact
• As a librarian, I want to know whether students who engage with library reference services earn better assignment grades so that I can encourage more faculty and students to interact with reference librarians and generally improve and customize reference services.

• As a librarian, I want to know whether students who participate in library instruction attain their goals with regard to retention to the following term, so that I can design effective professional development and training for instruction librarians and improve library instructional services and decision-making.

• As a librarian, I want to know whether the amount, degree, timing, or relative rank of student use of course readings impacts information literacy learning as assessed by an institutional rubric so that I can encourage faculty to require use of more library resources in their teaching content and assignment design.

• As a librarian, I want to know whether any relationships between the use of library services/resources vary by student population/status/characteristics so that I can tailor library services/resources to meet the needs of populations with specialized needs.
User Stories

• Like research questions, user stories connect library services, resources, spaces, etc. with intended outcomes that can lead to valued impacts.

• Like research questions, many set up correlations (not necessarily causation).

• Unlike (some) research questions, user stories articulate and emphasize the “why” (purpose) and intended use of a research or assessment project.
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