

Telling Technical Stories

Fred's Story Shapes

Before we start...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ocwnns57cYQ>

Agile is about bringing stories to life

- **Agile relies on stories**, but how much do we really know about how stories work?
- Everyone uses stories to understand the world
- **Aristotle** described the principles of rhetoric (circa 350 b.c.)
- **Kurt Vonnegut** described shapes for fiction (as early as 1947)
 - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oP3c1h8v2ZQ>

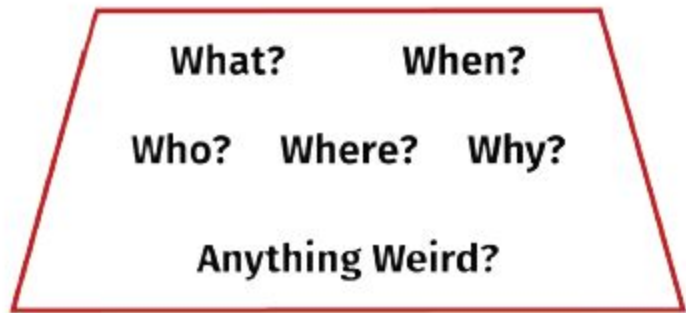
Proof of story shapes in fiction

- **Professor Andrew Reagan, et al**, confirmed 6 fiction shapes with sentiment analysis (2016)
 - <https://arxiv.org/pdf/1606.07772.pdf>

But what about technical stories?

1. **Lamps** for illumination (tech writing)
2. **Tornados** for stories (2x Man in a Hole)
3. **Balloons** for persuasion (Steve Denning)

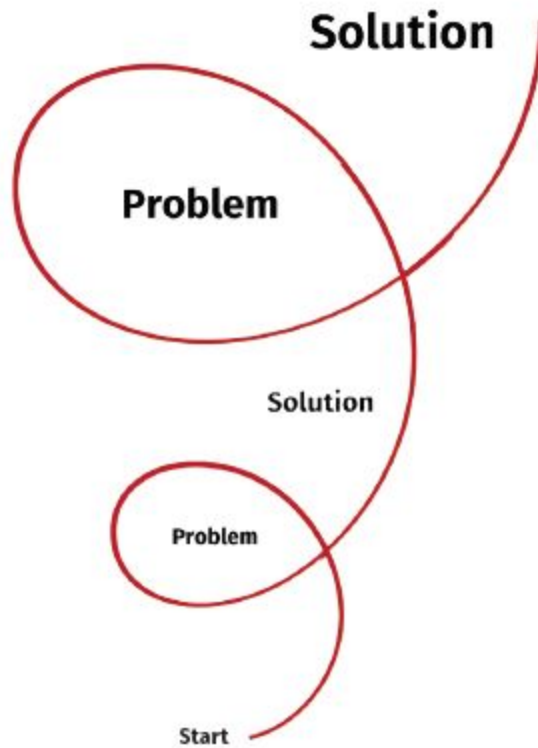
Illumination



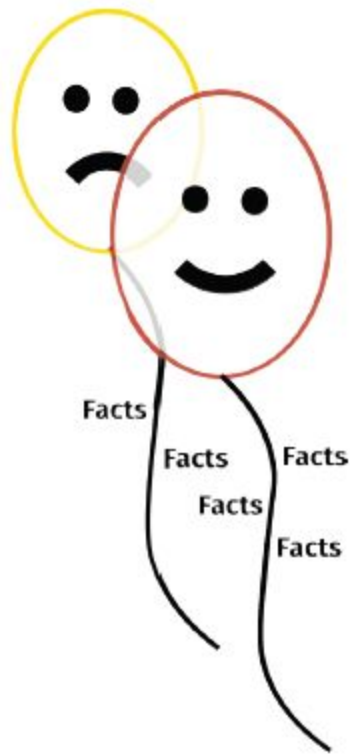
- Step 1
- Step 2
- Step 3
- Step 4
- Step 5
- Step 6
- Step 7

Results

Invention



Persuasion



Results of using story shapes

- Faster to plan and write
- Easier to understand
- Creates the effect on the audience that you want

How did Fred learn about this?

- Public speaking and debate
- Politics and campaign consulting
- Technical writing
- Training developers and writers at Showmax
- Training technical speakers
- Applying story shapes to Agility
- Getting feedback early and often (like I did for this talk)
- Skeptical Agile blog, www.skepticalagile.com

Why you should try story shapes

- Better results...it really works
- Strong, memorable messages
- Teaching and instruction, technical documentation
- Share your experiences with others
- Find investors and partners
- Convince users to try your product
- Write better user stories

Thank you! Any questions?

fred@williamstechnical.com

www.williamstechnical.com

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/fredwilliams/>

