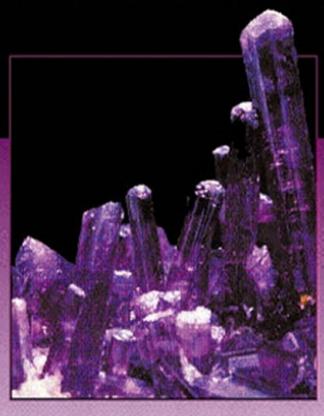
# Writing Effective Use Cases



**Alistair Cockburn** 

# The Writing Process

- 1. Name the system scope and boundaries.

  Track changes to this initial context diagram with the in/out list.
- 2. Brainstorm and list the primary actors.

  Find every human and non-human primary actor, over the life of the system.
- 3. Brainstorm and exhaustively list user goals for the system. *The initial Actor-Goal List is now available.*
- 4. Capture the outermost summary use cases to see who really cares. *Check for an outermost use case for each primary actor.*
- Reconsider and revise the summary use cases. Add, subtract, or merge goals.
   Double-check for time-based triggers and other events at the system boundary.
- 6. Select one use case to expand.

  Consider writing a narrative to learn the material.
- 7. Capture stakeholders and interests, preconditions and guarantees.

  The system will ensure the preconditions and guarantee the interests.
- 8. Write the main success scenario (MSS). *Use 3 to 9 steps to meet all interests and guarantees.*
- 9. Brainstorm and exhaustively list the extension conditions. *Include all that the system can detect and must handle.*
- 10. Write the extension-handling steps. *Each will end back in the MSS, at a separate success exit, or in failure.*
- 11. Extract complex flows to sub use cases; merge trivial sub use cases. *Extracting a sub use case is easy, but it adds cost to the project.*
- 12. Readjust the set: add, subtract, merge, as needed.

  Check for readability, completeness, and meeting stakeholders' interests.

# **Writing Effective Use Cases**

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