

Software Engineering

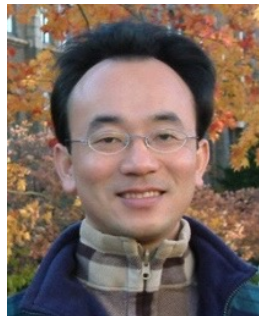
Features, Scenarios, and Stories

1112SE04

MBA, IM, NTPU (M5010) (Spring 2023)
Wed 2, 3, 4 (9:10-12:00) (B8F40)



<https://meet.google.com/ish-gzmy-pmo>



Min-Yuh Day, Ph.D,
Associate Professor

Institute of Information Management, National Taipei University

<https://web.ntpu.edu.tw/~myday>



Syllabus

Week	Date	Subject/Topics
1	2023/02/22	Introduction to Software Engineering
2	2023/03/01	Software Products and Project Management: Software product management and prototyping
3	2023/03/08	Agile Software Engineering: Agile methods, Scrum, and Extreme Programming
4	2023/03/15	Features, Scenarios, and Stories
5	2023/03/22	Case Study on Software Engineering I
6	2023/03/29	Software Architecture: Architectural design, System decomposition, and Distribution architecture

Syllabus

Week	Date	Subject/Topics
7	2023/04/05	Tomb-Sweeping Day (Holiday, No Classes)
8	2023/04/12	Midterm Project Report
9	2023/04/19	Cloud-Based Software: Virtualization and containers, Everything as a service, Software as a service
10	2023/04/26	Cloud Computing and Cloud Software Architecture
11	2023/05/03	Microservices Architecture, RESTful services, Service deployment
12	2023/05/10	Security and Privacy; Reliable Programming; Testing: Test-driven development, and Code reviews; DevOps and Code Management: DevOps automation

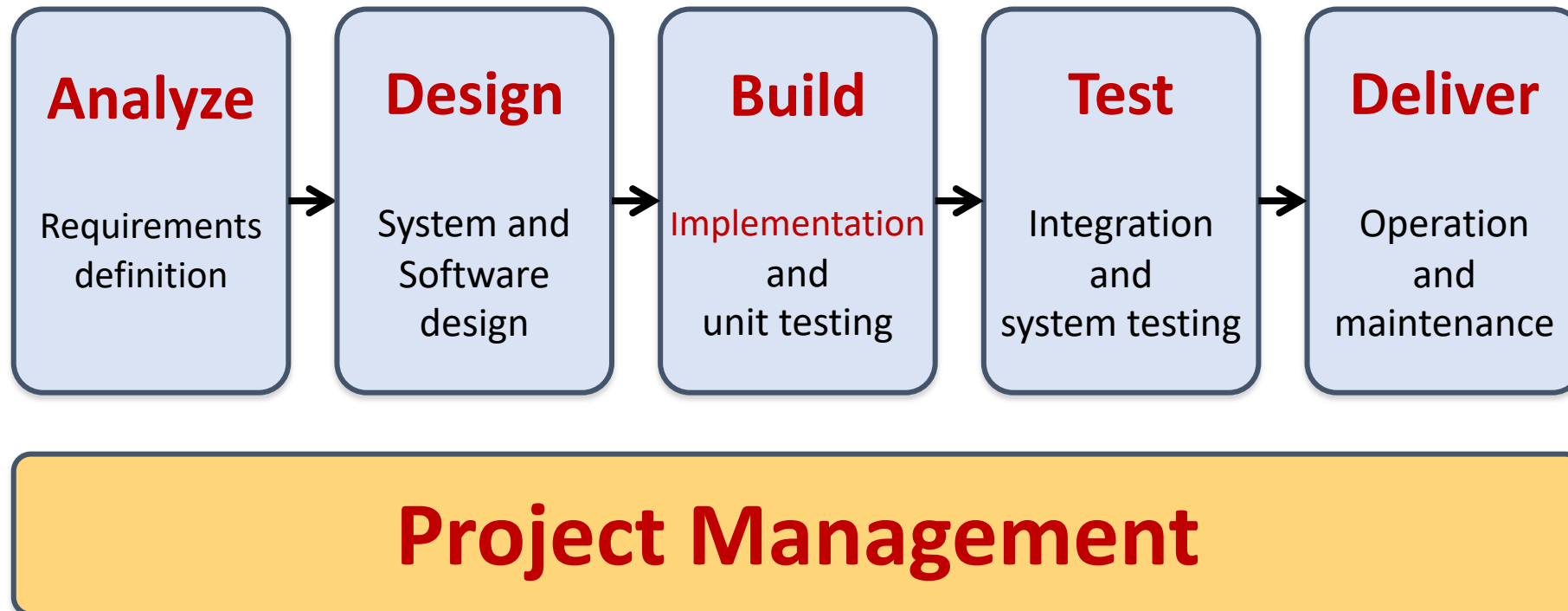
Syllabus

Week Date Subject/Topics

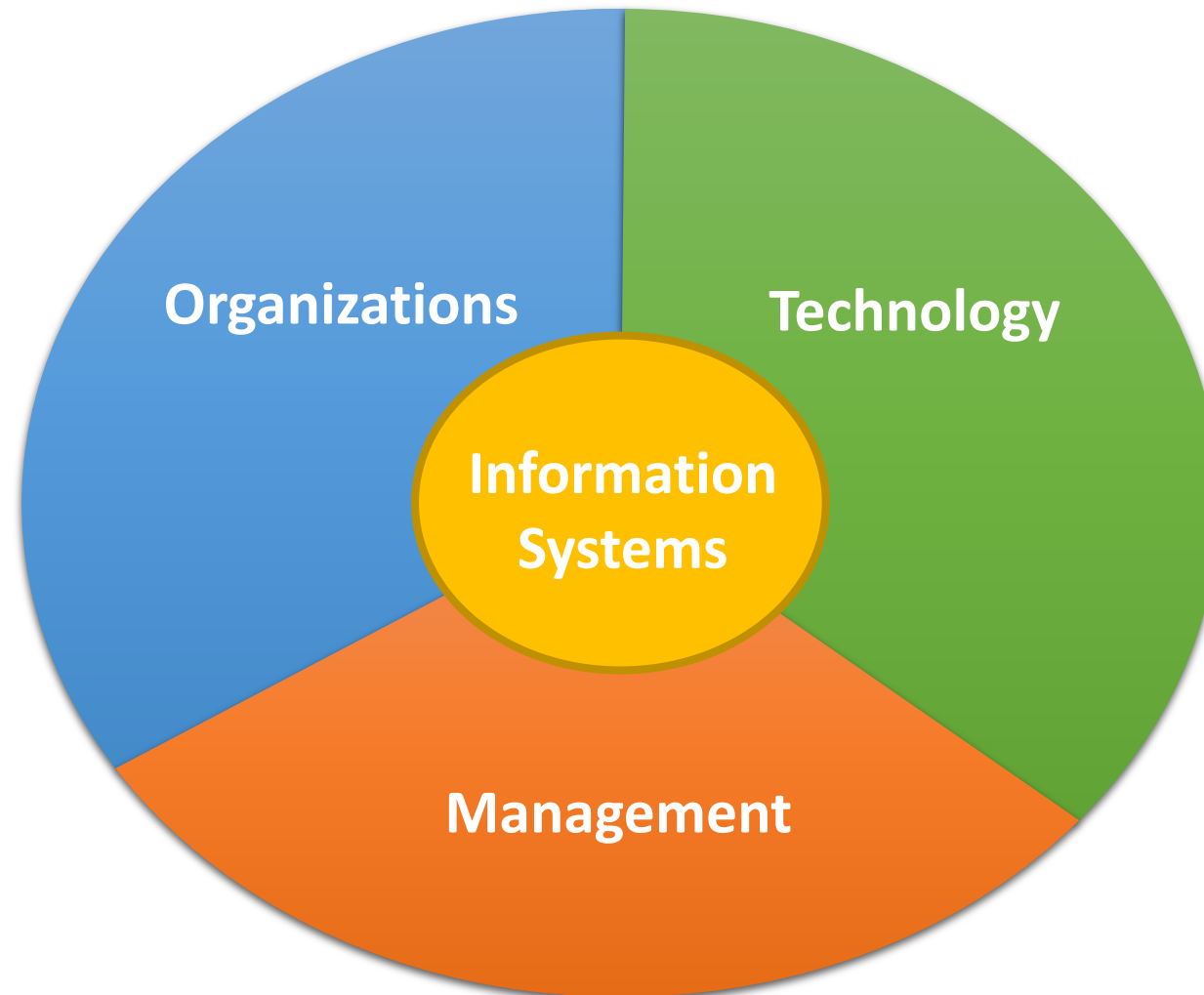
13	2023/05/17	Industry Practices of Software Engineering [Agile Principles Patterns and Practices using AI and ChatGPT, Invited Speaker: Shihyu (Alex) Chu, Division Director, Software Industry Research Center, Market Intelligence & Consulting Institute (MIC)]
14	2023/05/24	Case Study on Software Engineering II
15	2023/05/31	Final Project Report I
16	2023/06/07	Final Project Report II
17	2023/06/14	Self-learning
18	2023/06/21	Self-learning

Features, Scenarios, and Stories

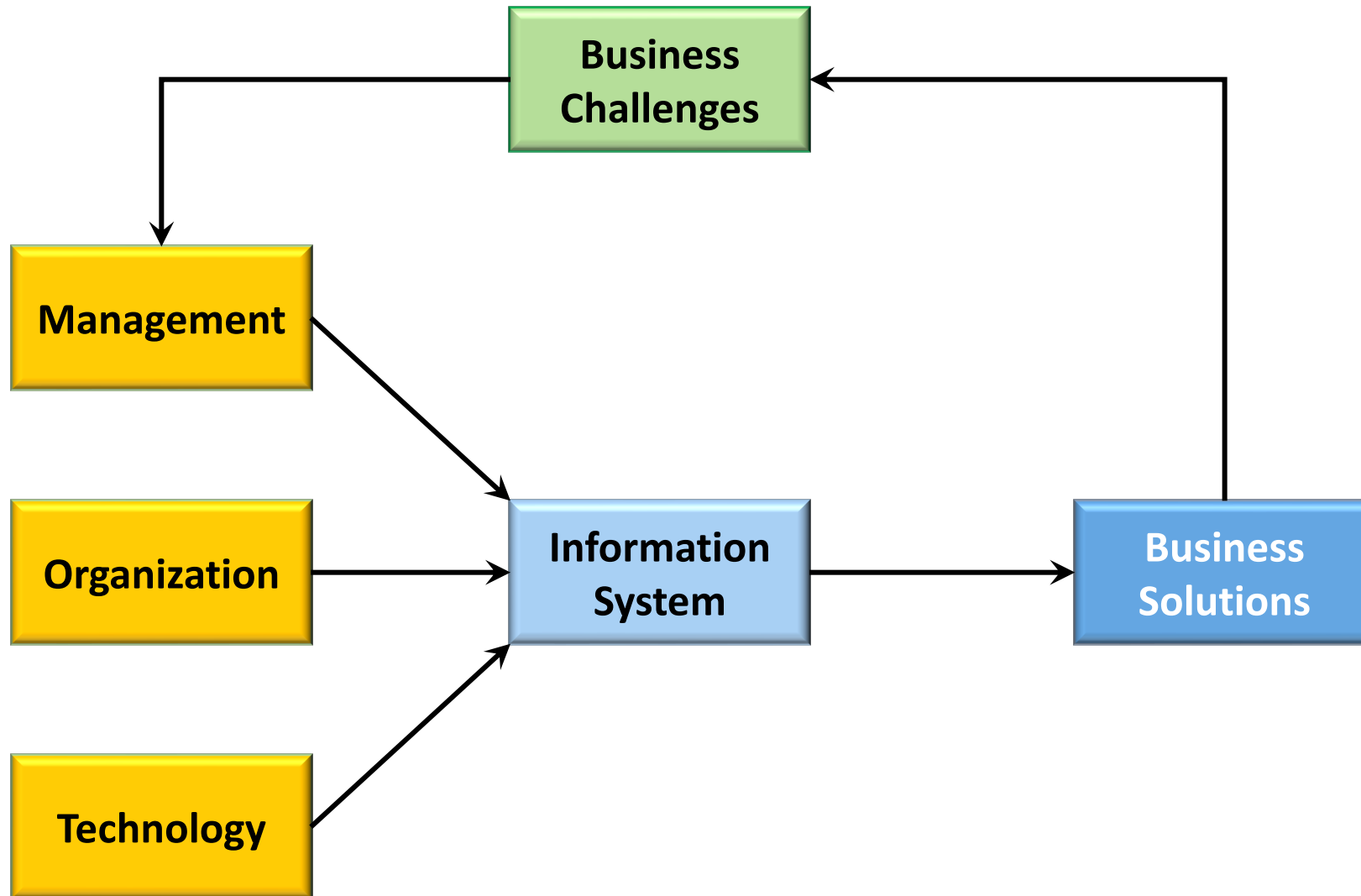
Software Engineering and Project Management



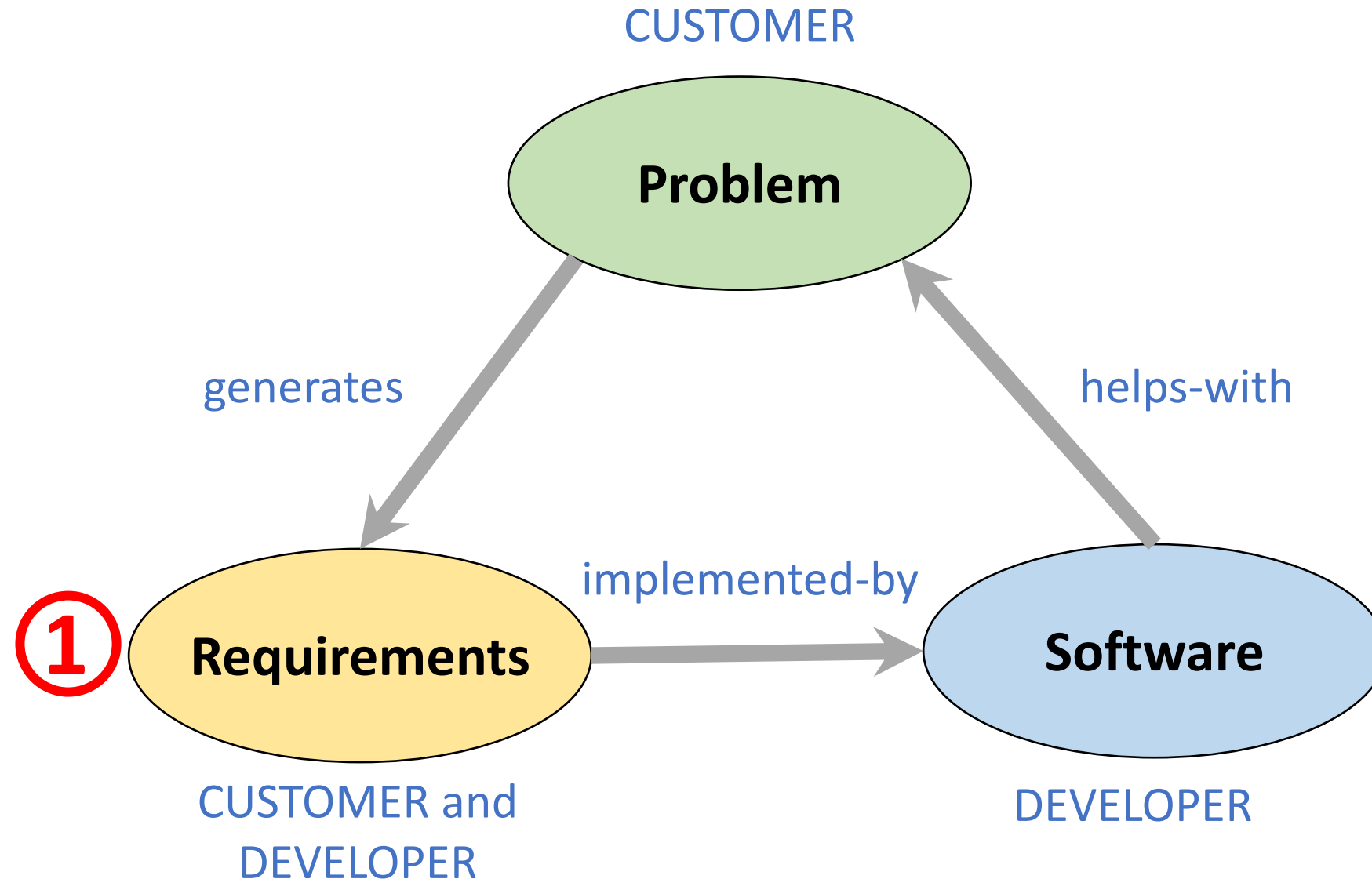
Information Management (MIS) Information Systems



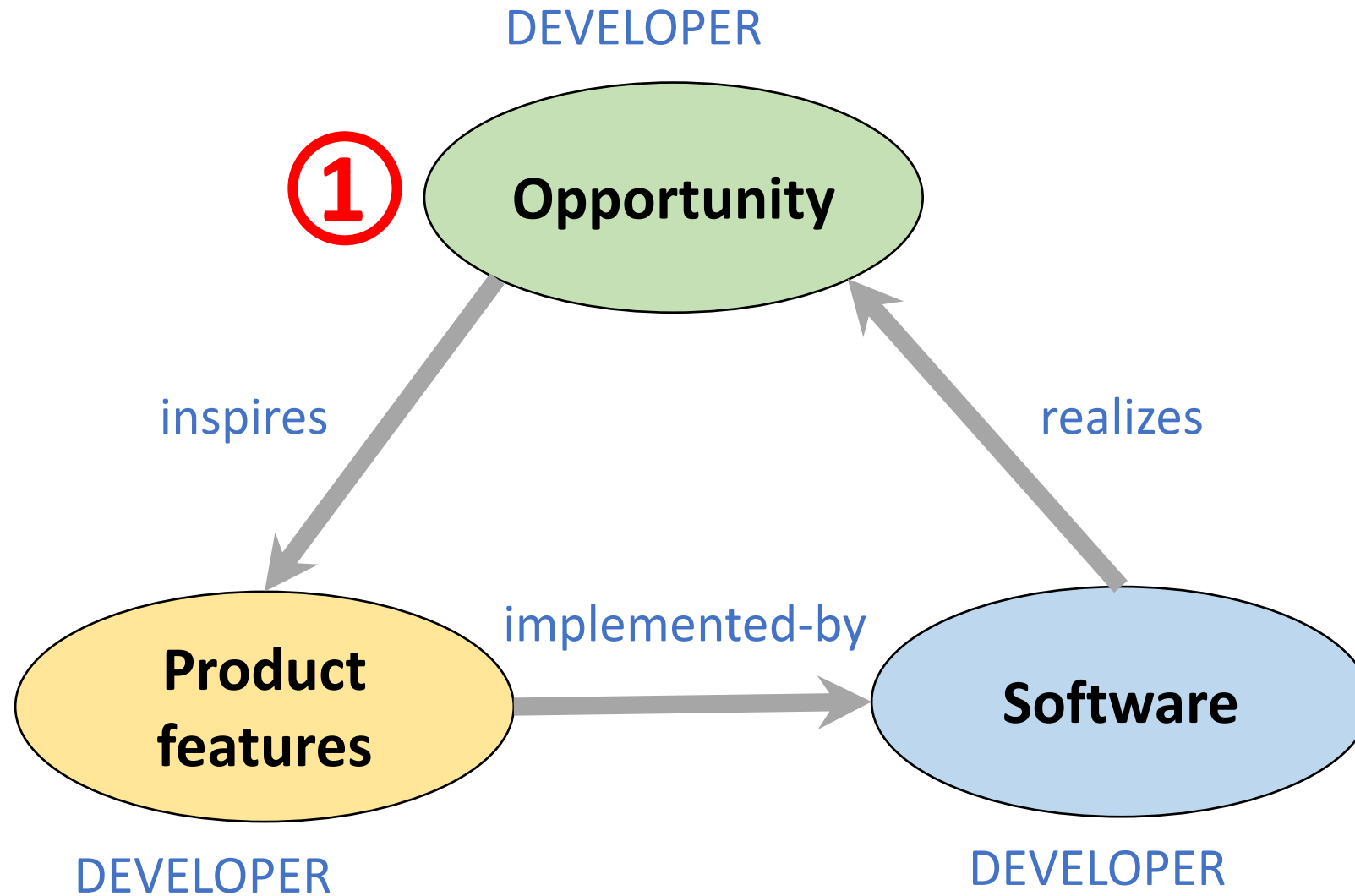
Fundamental MIS Concepts



Project-based software engineering

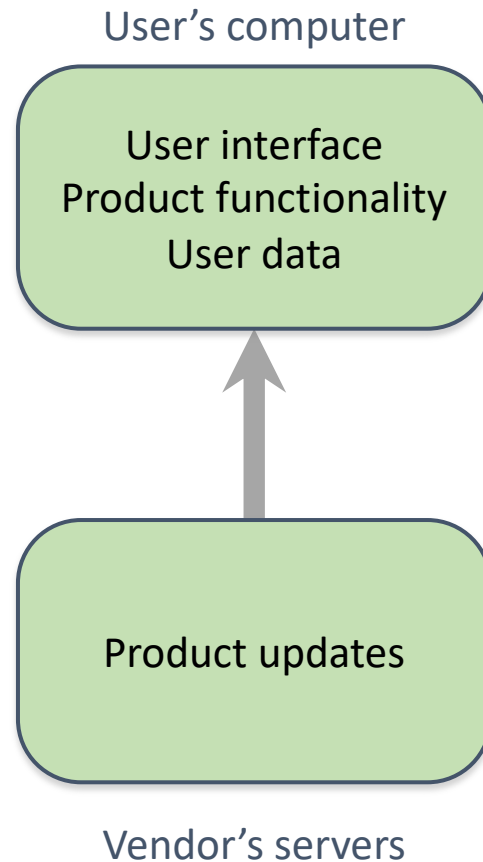


Product software engineering

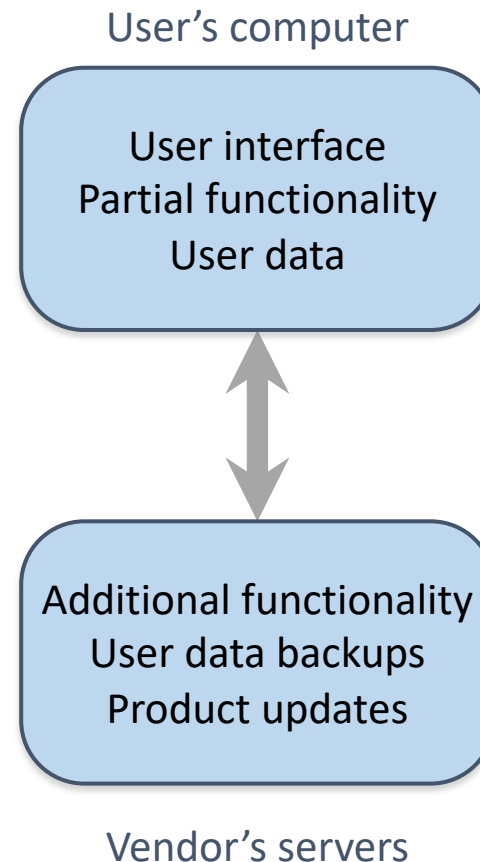


Software execution models

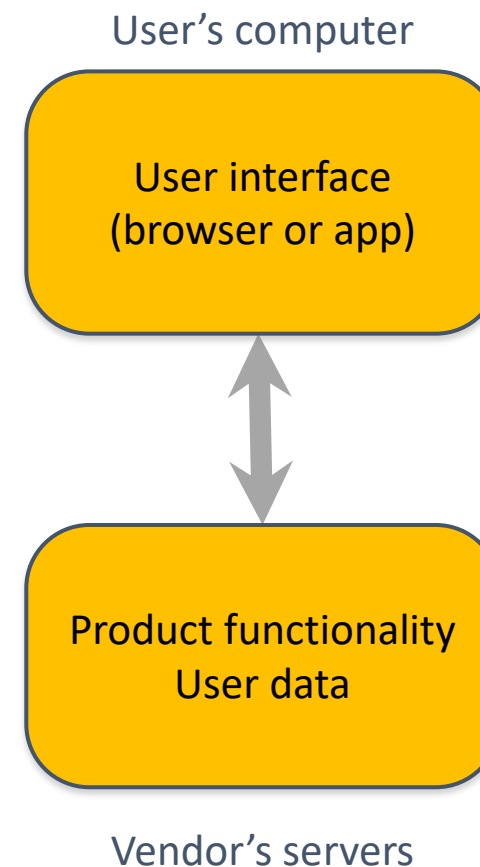
Stand-alone execution



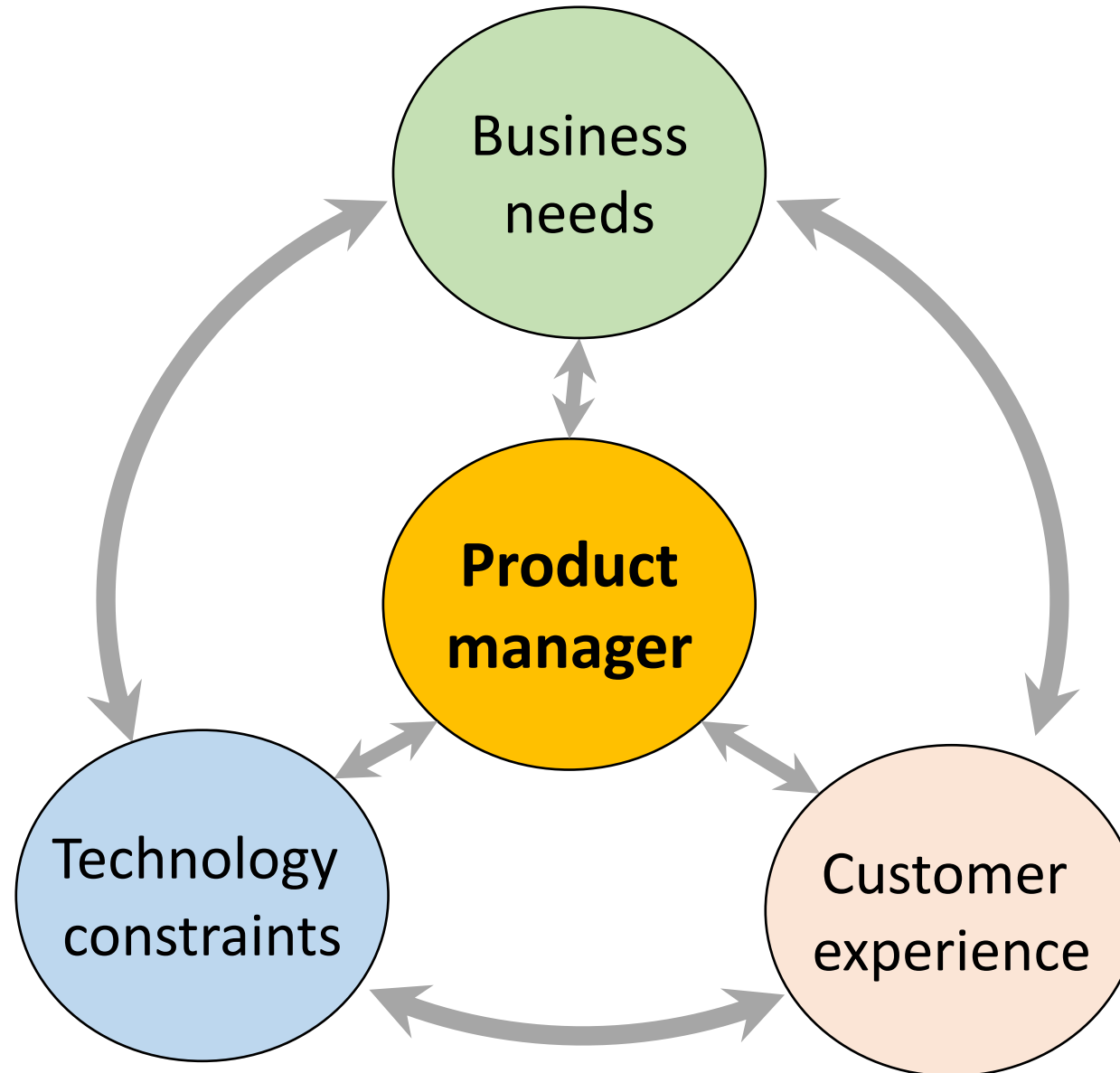
Hybrid execution



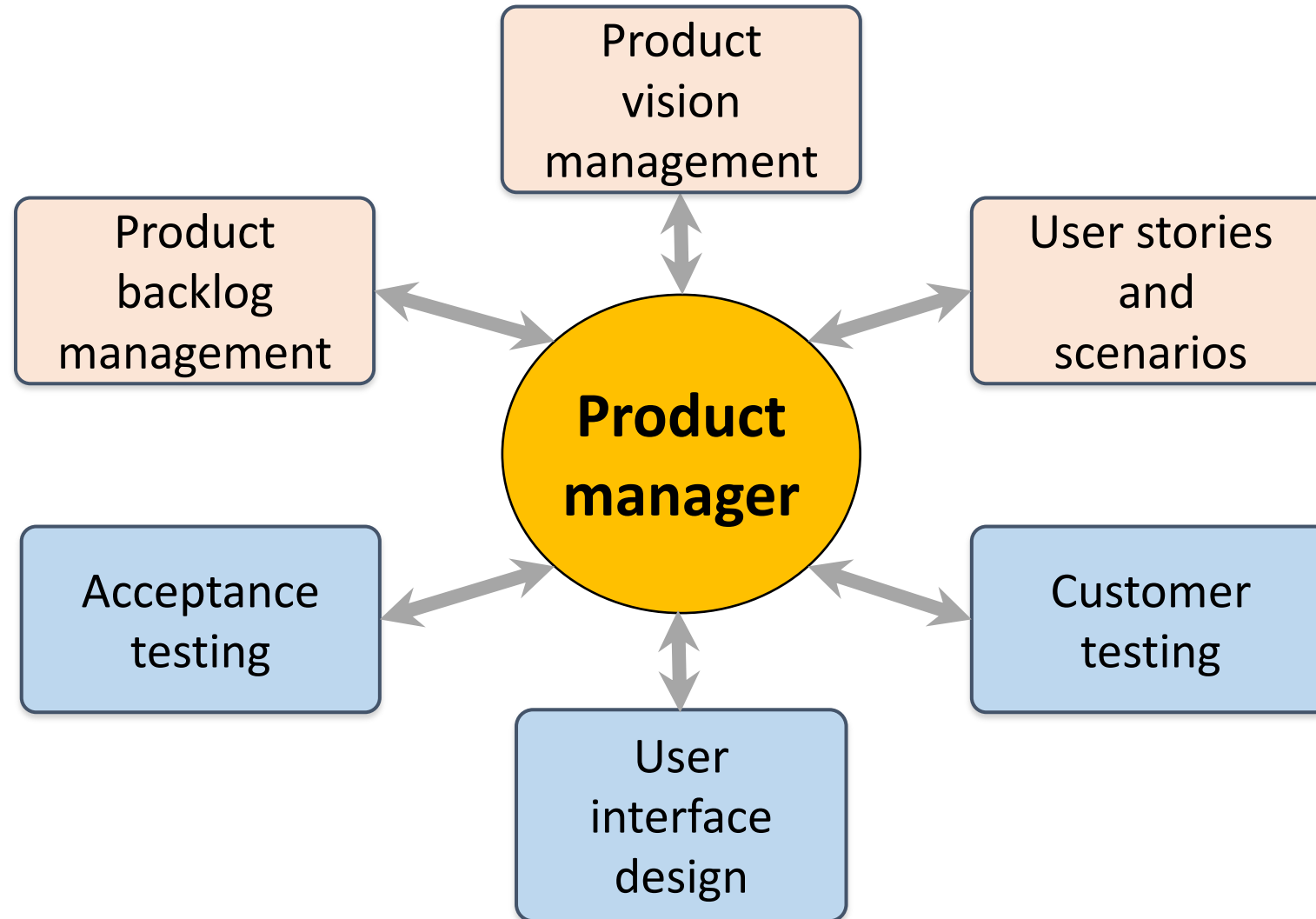
Software as a service



Product management concerns

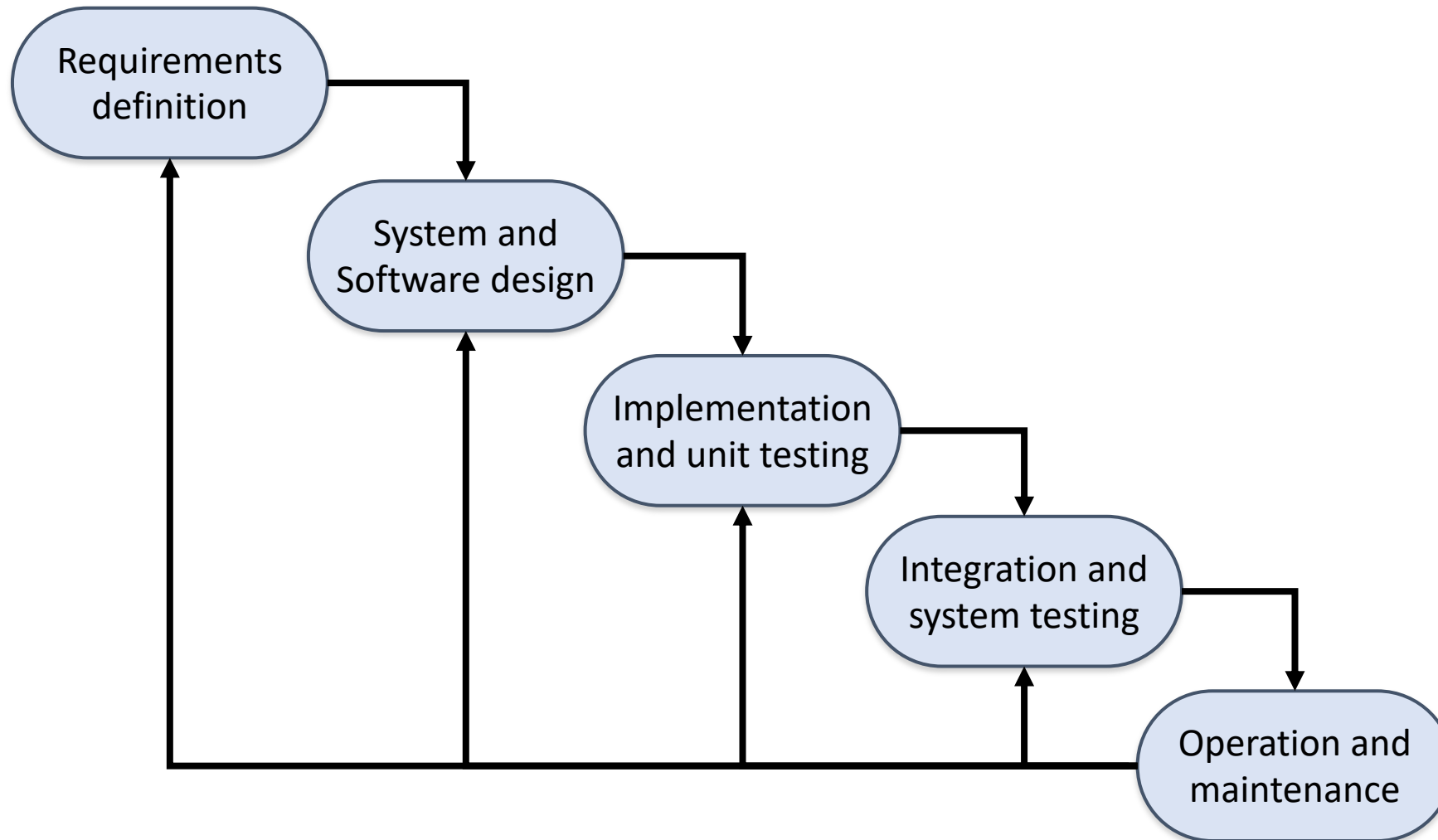


Technical interactions of product managers



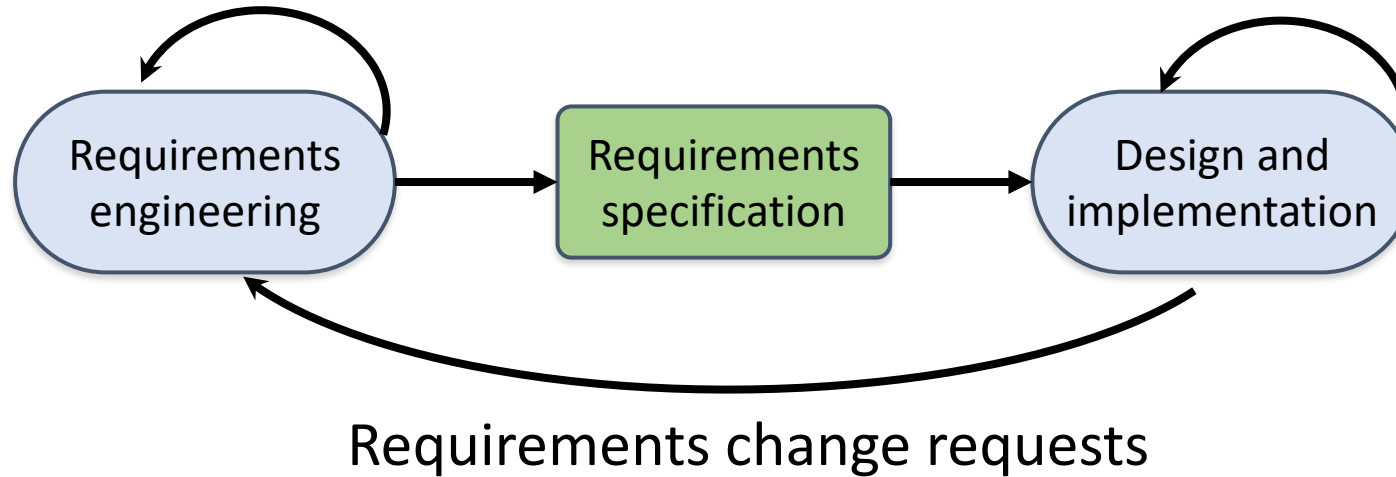
Software Development Life Cycle (SDLC)

The waterfall model

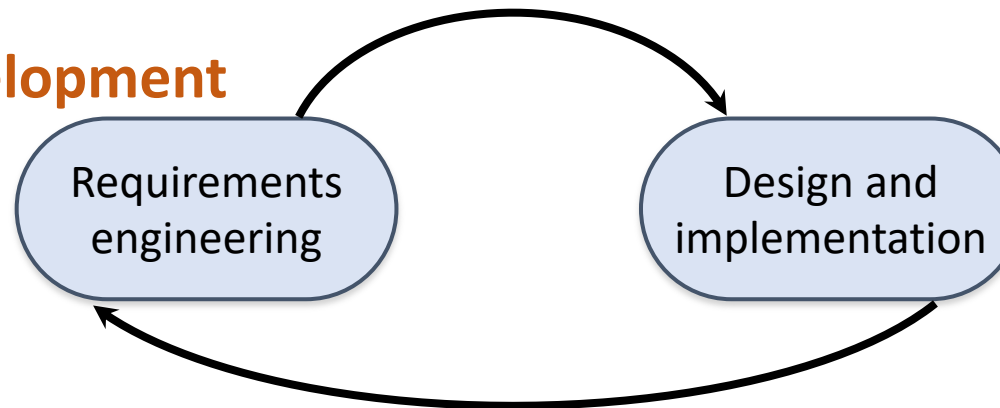


Plan-based and Agile development

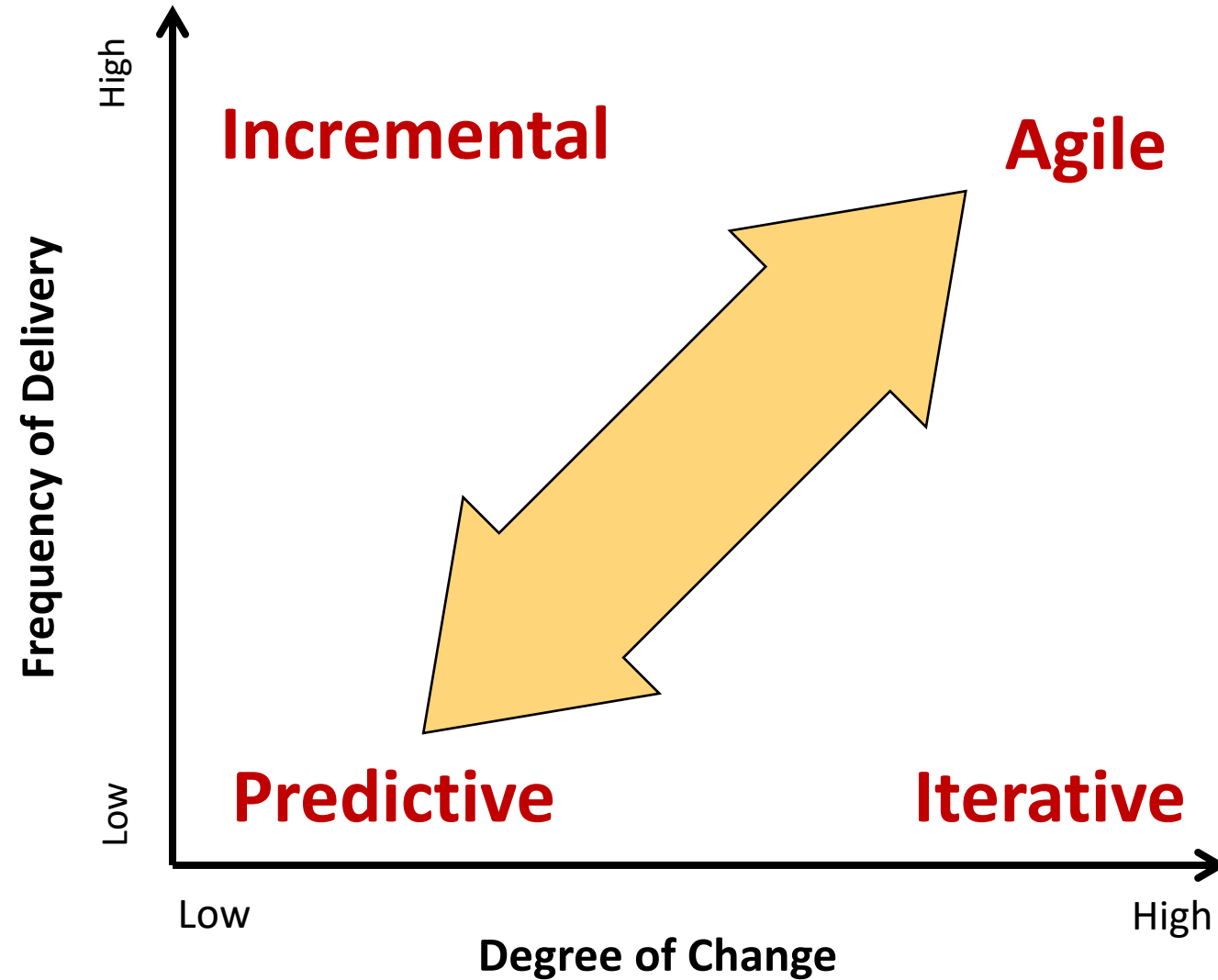
Plan-based development



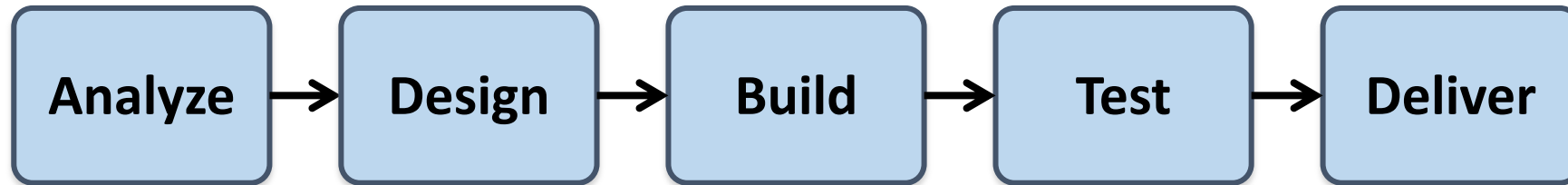
Agile development



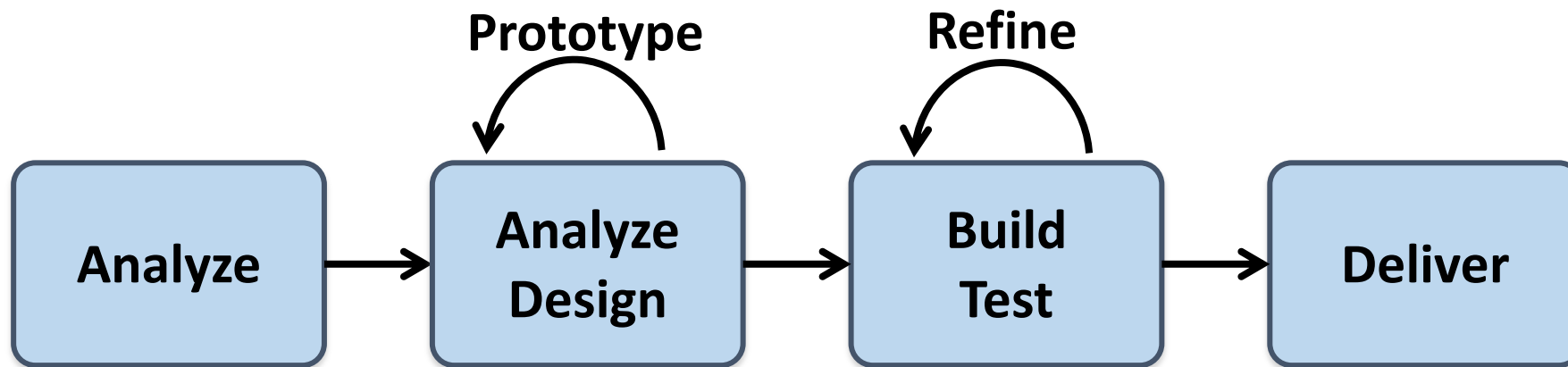
The Continuum of Life Cycles



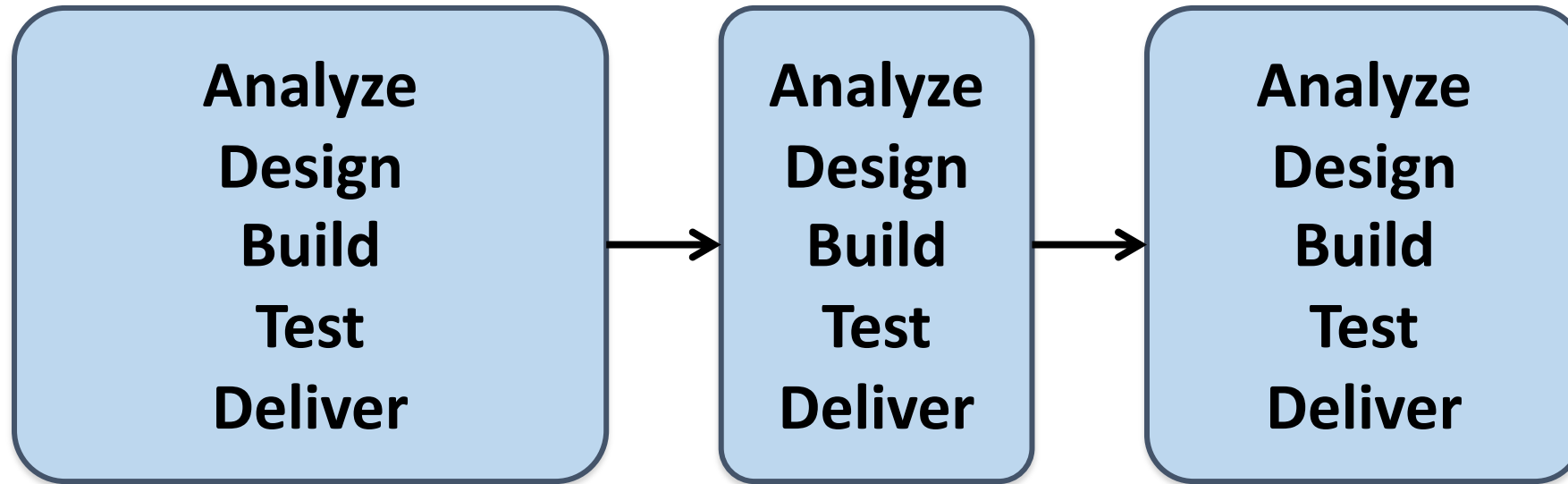
Predictive Life Cycle



Iterative Life Cycle

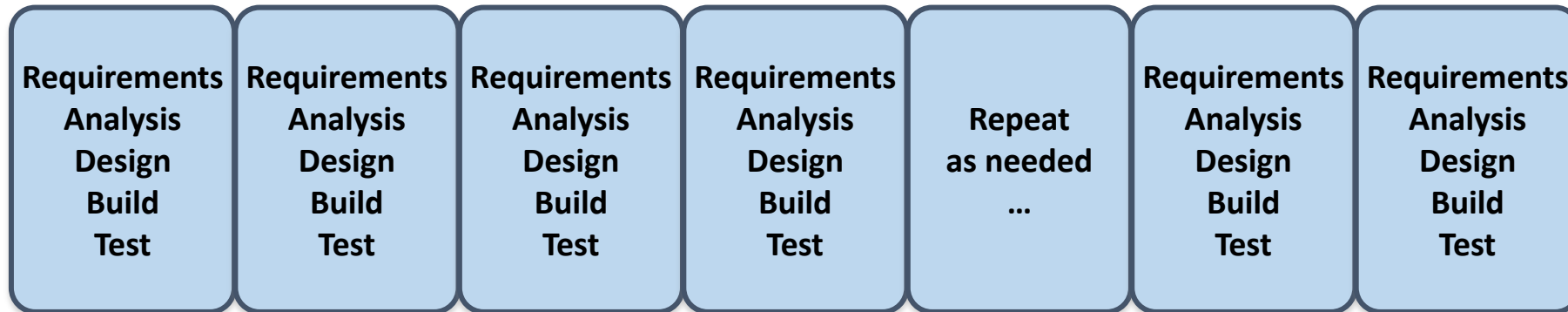


A Life Cycle of Varying-Sized Increments

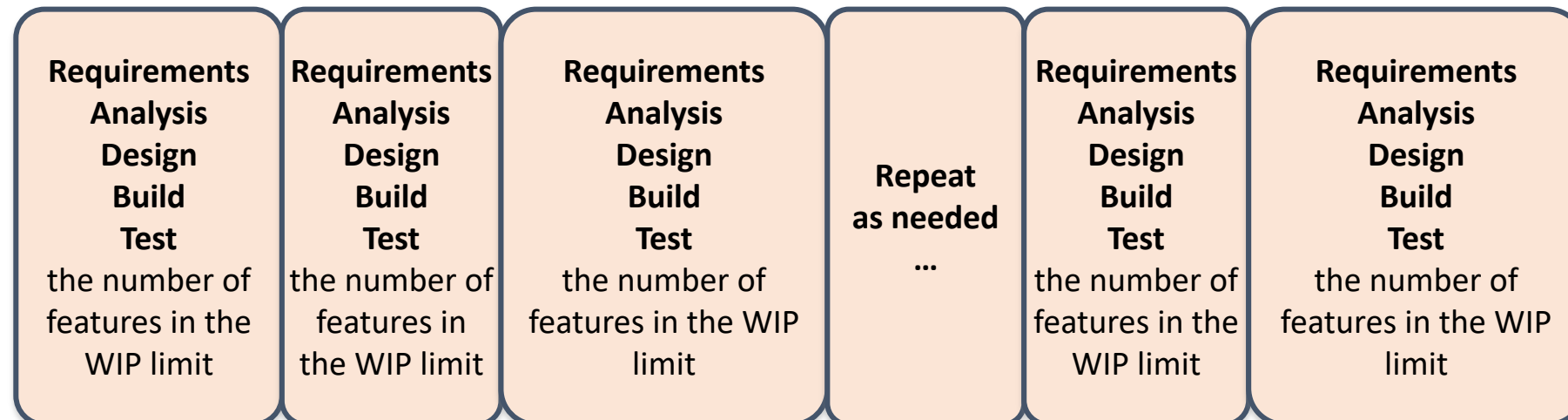


Iteration-Based and Flow-Based Agile Life Cycles

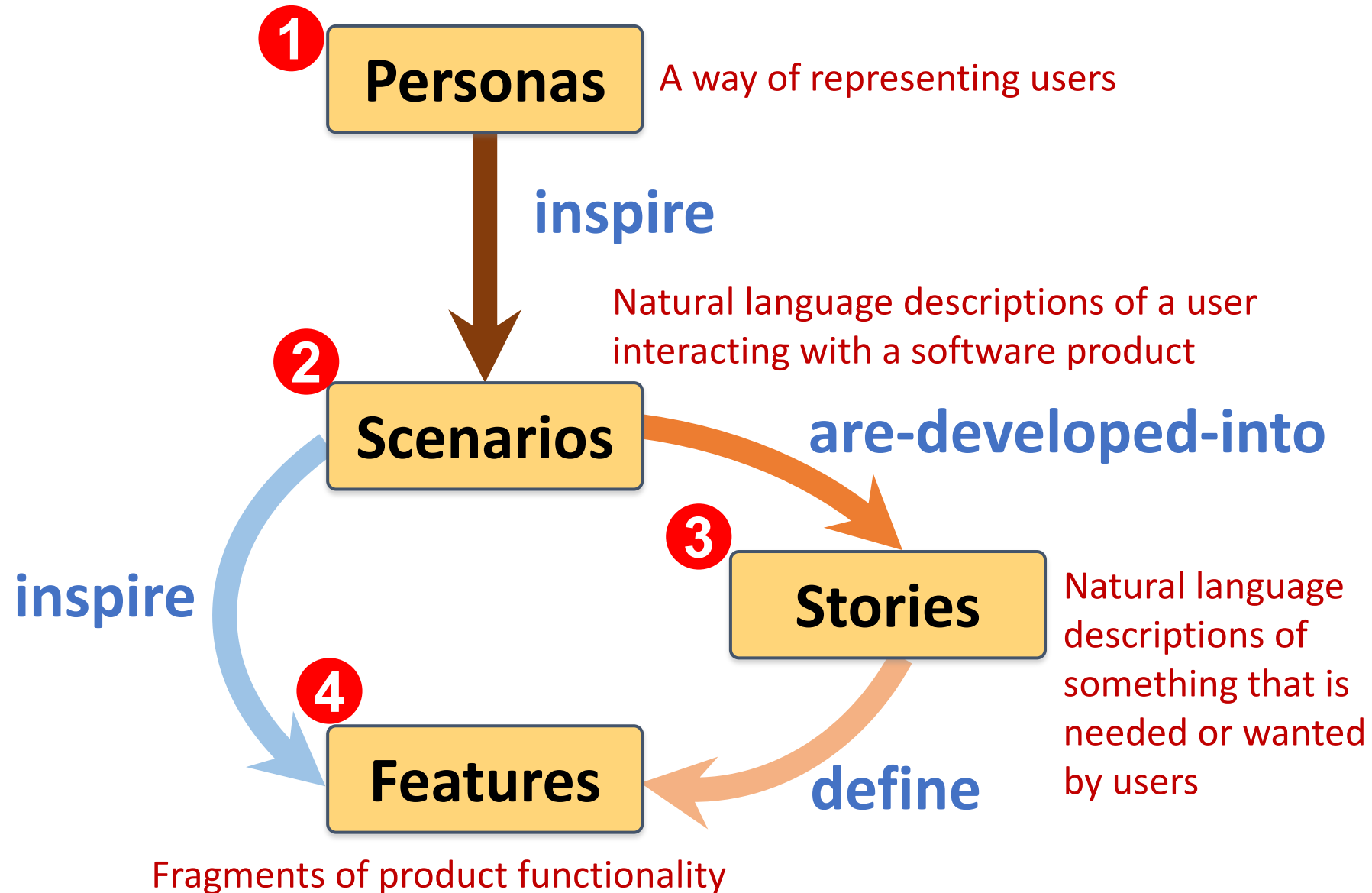
Iteration-Based Agile



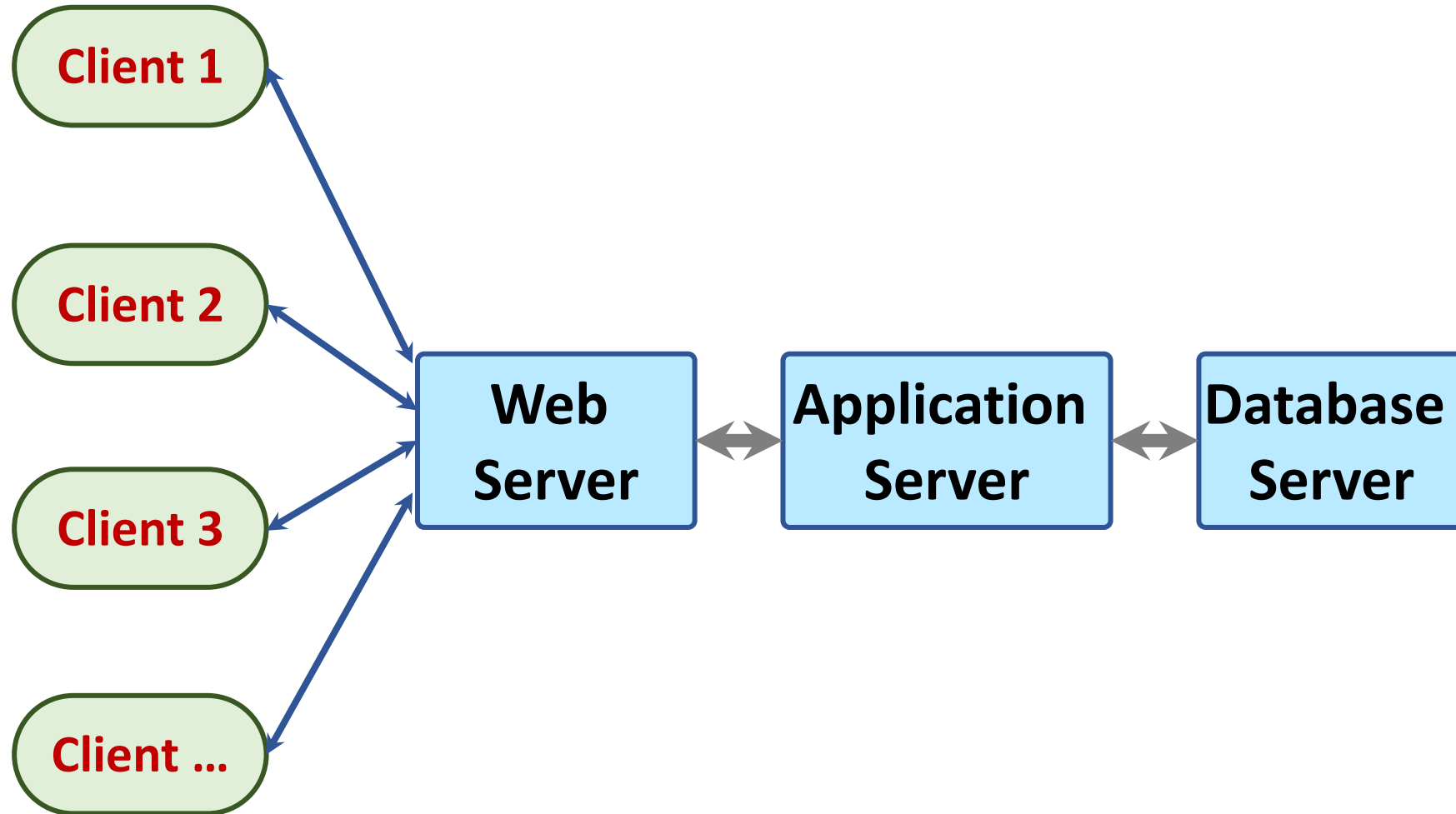
Flow-Based Agile



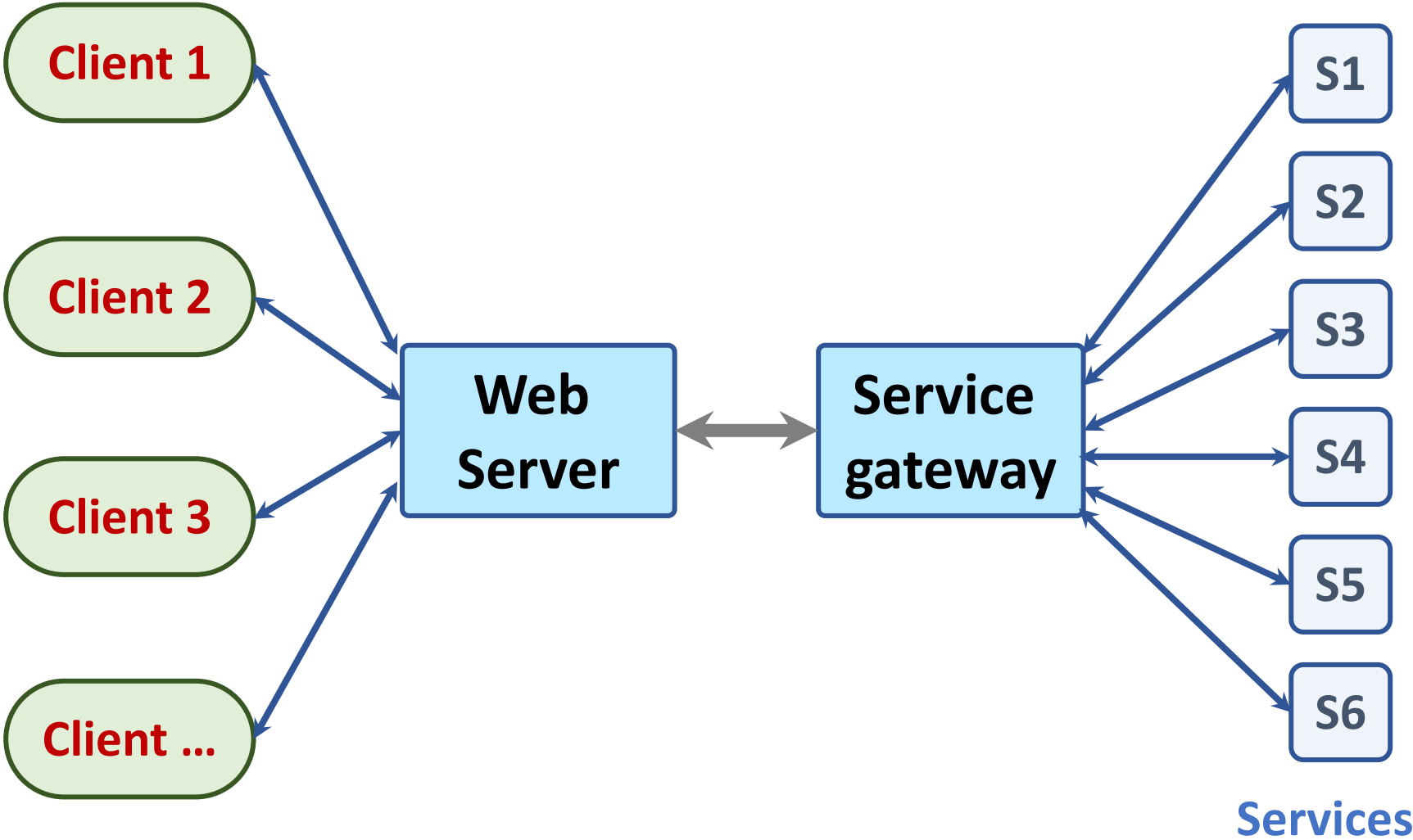
From personas to features



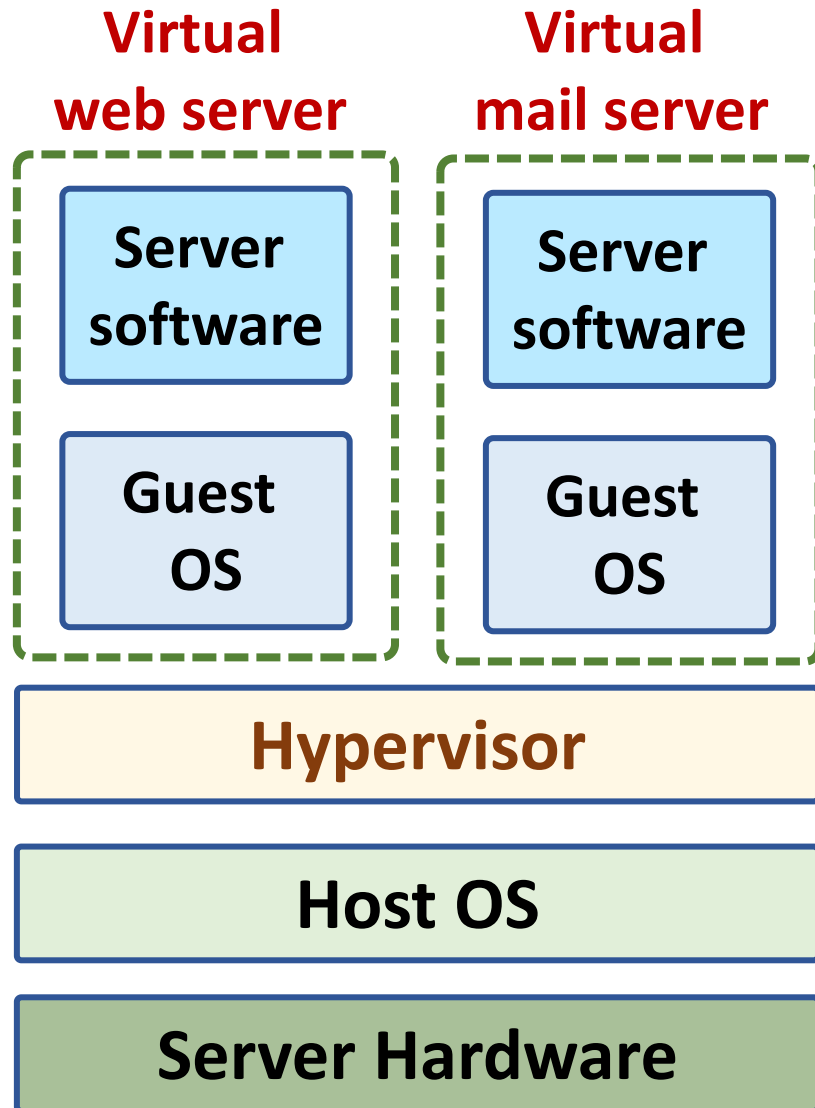
Multi-tier client-server architecture



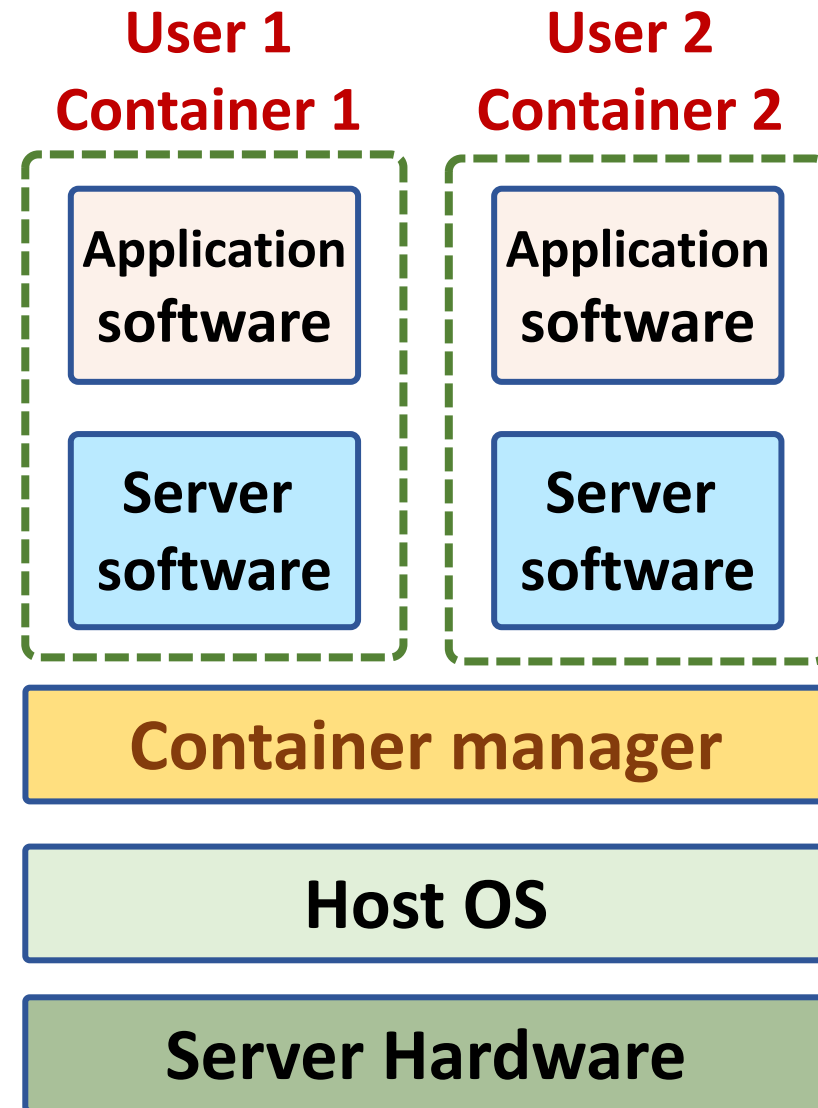
Service-oriented Architecture



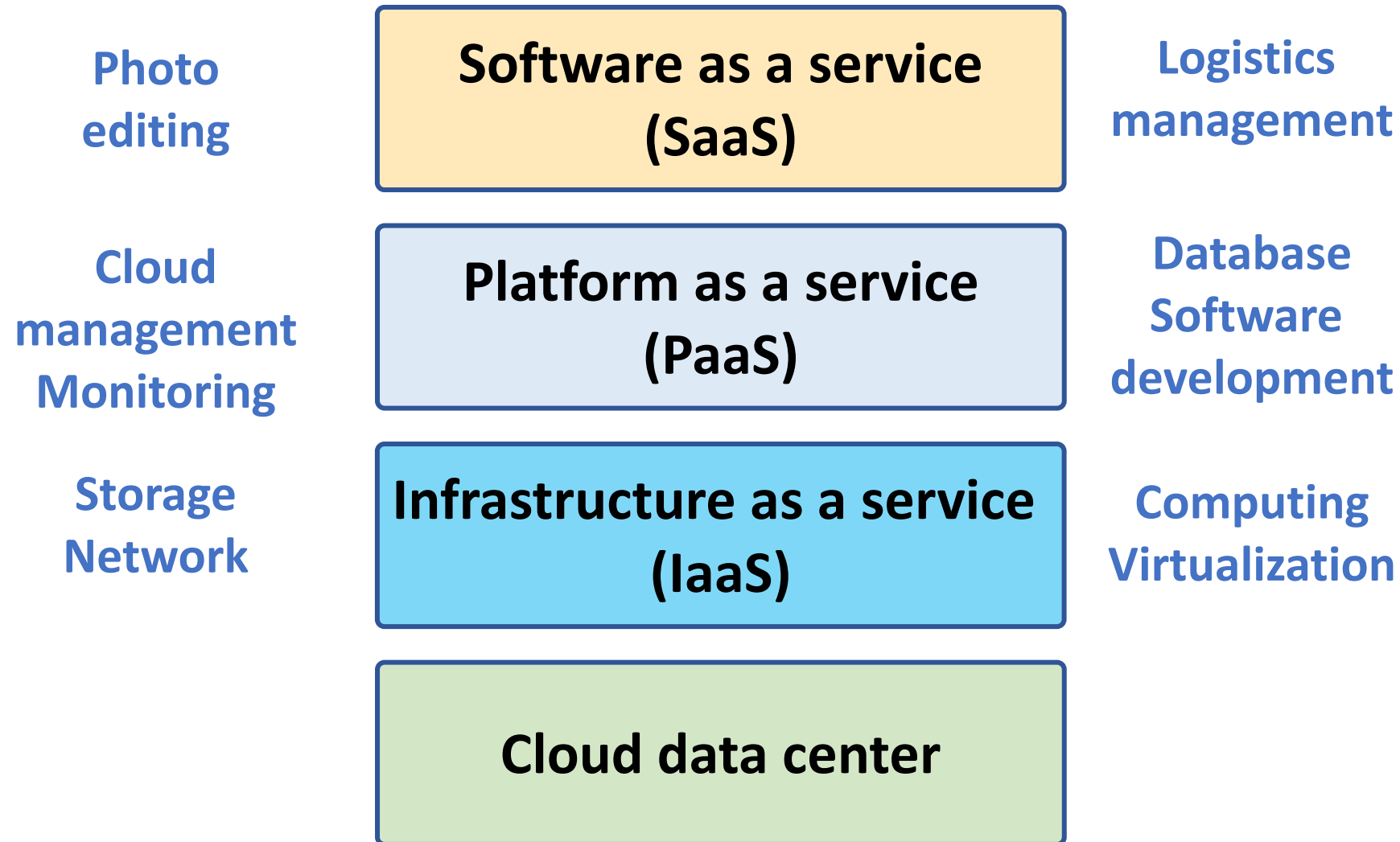
VM



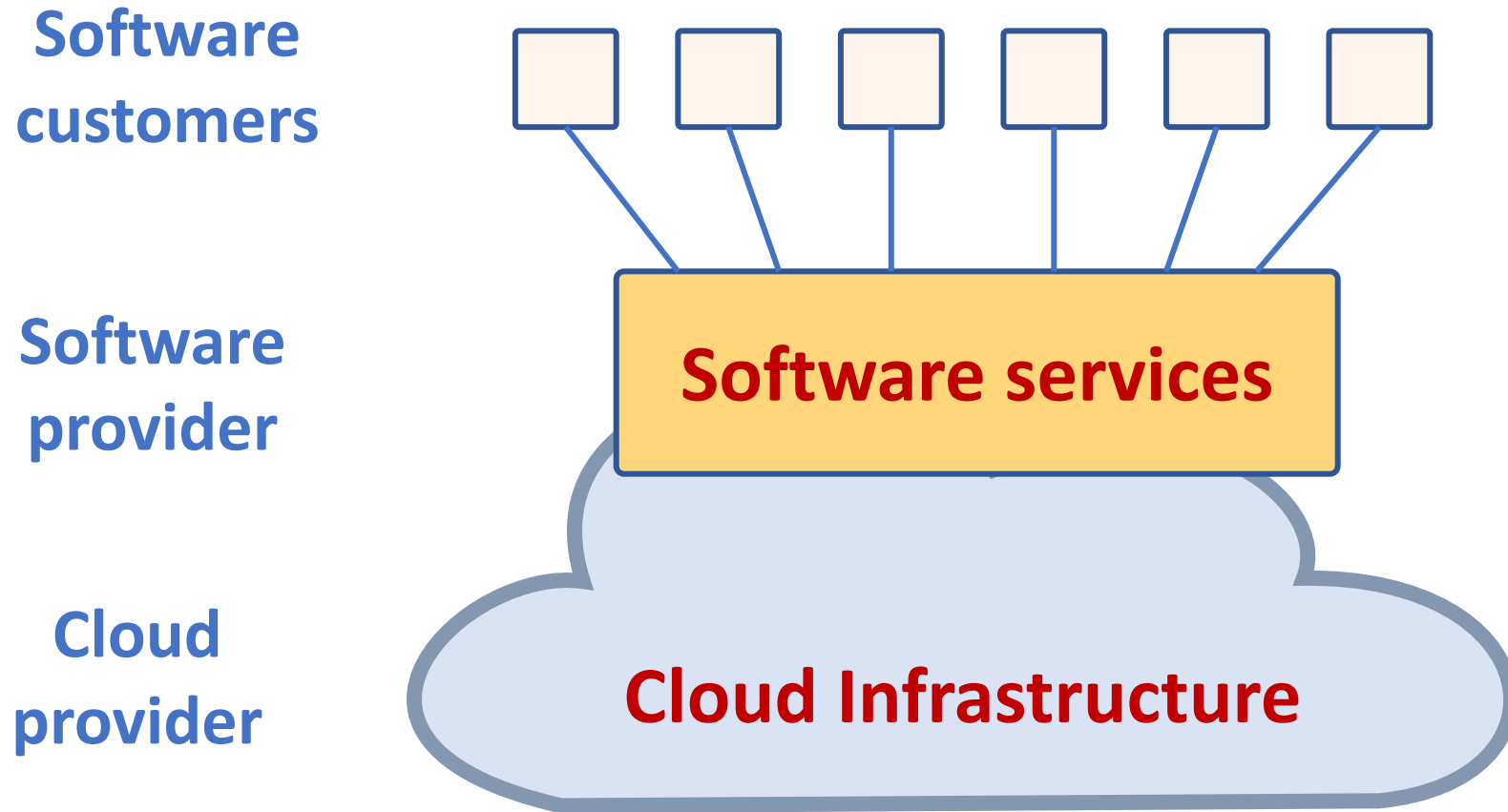
Container



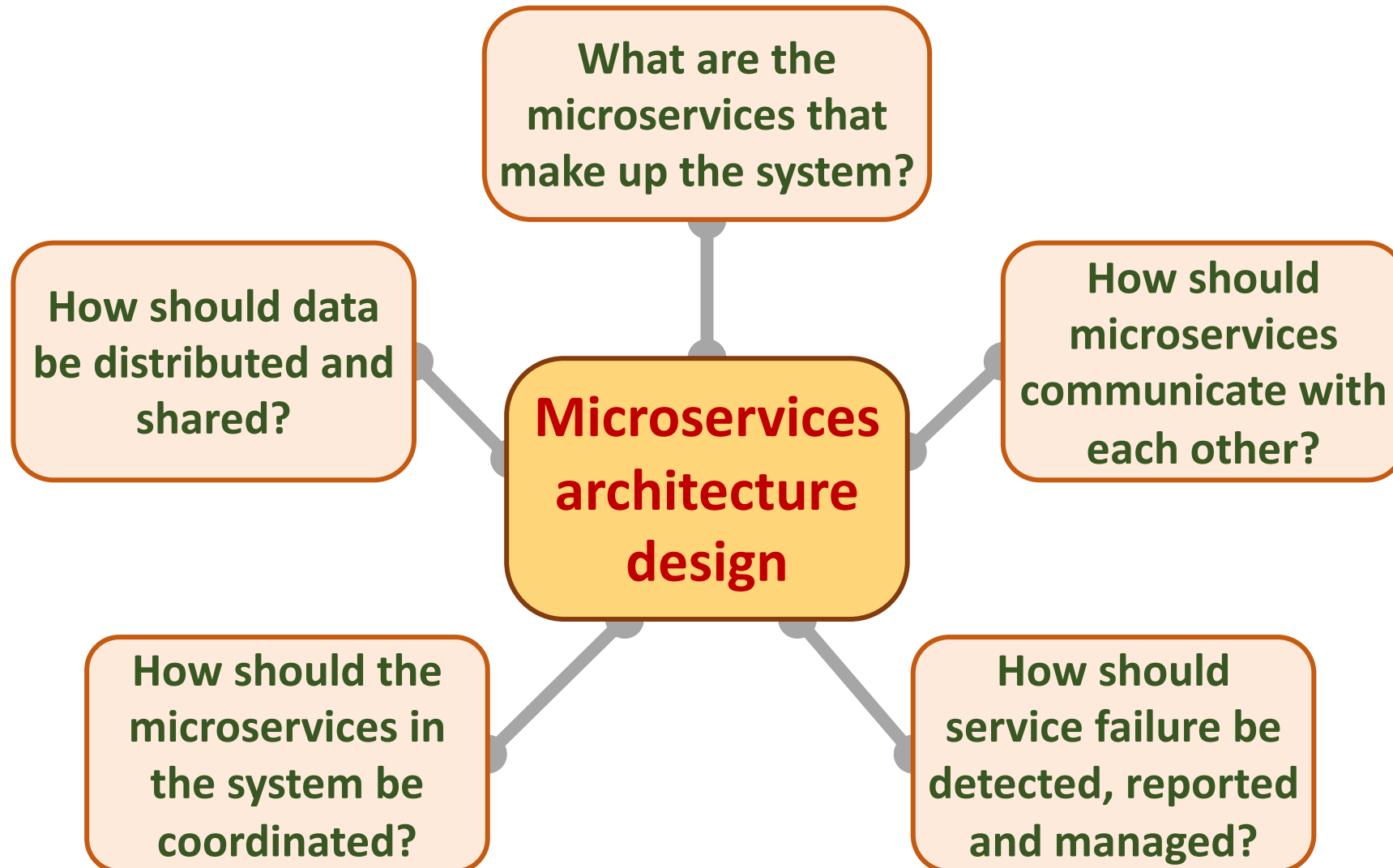
Everything as a service



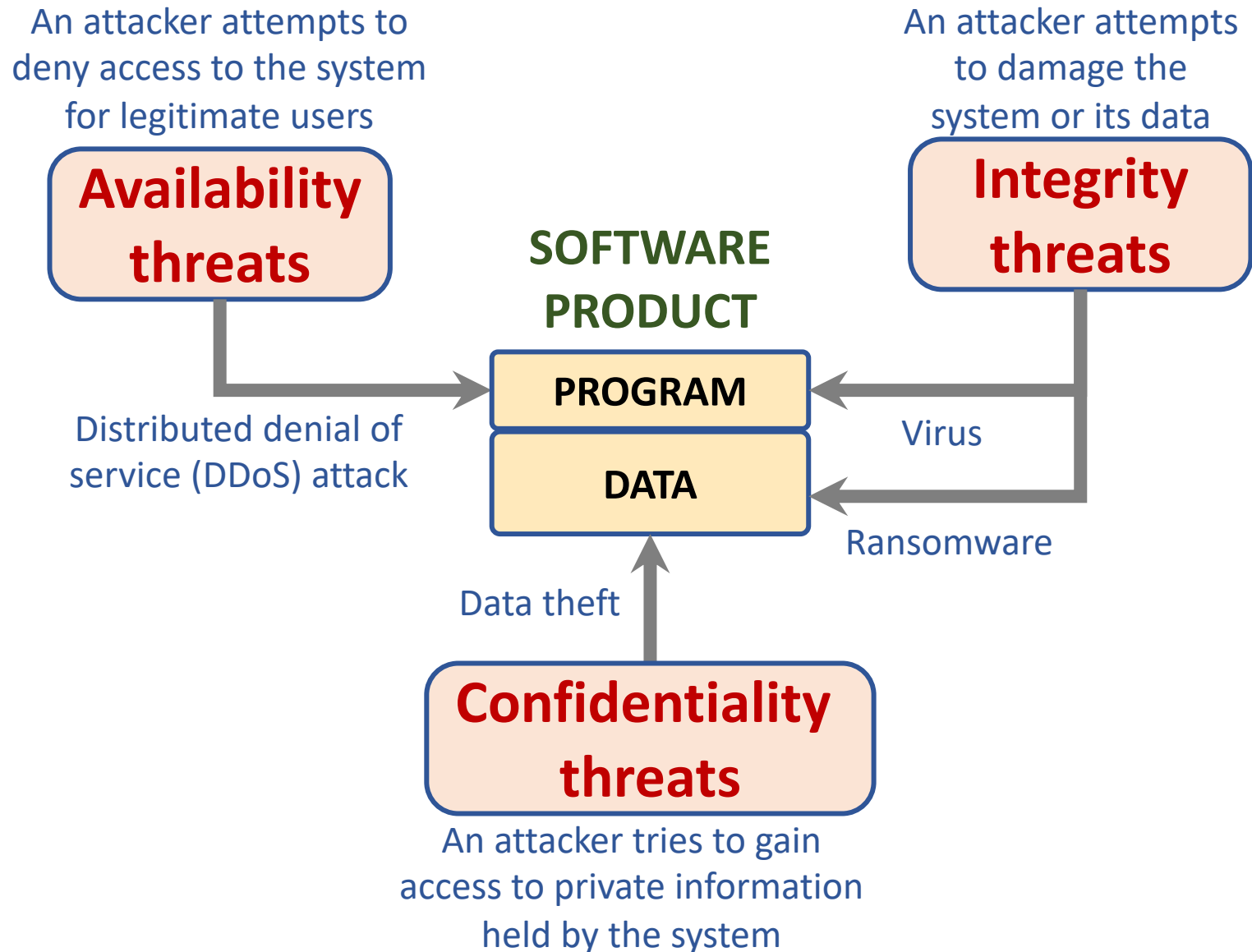
Software as a service



Microservices architecture – key design questions



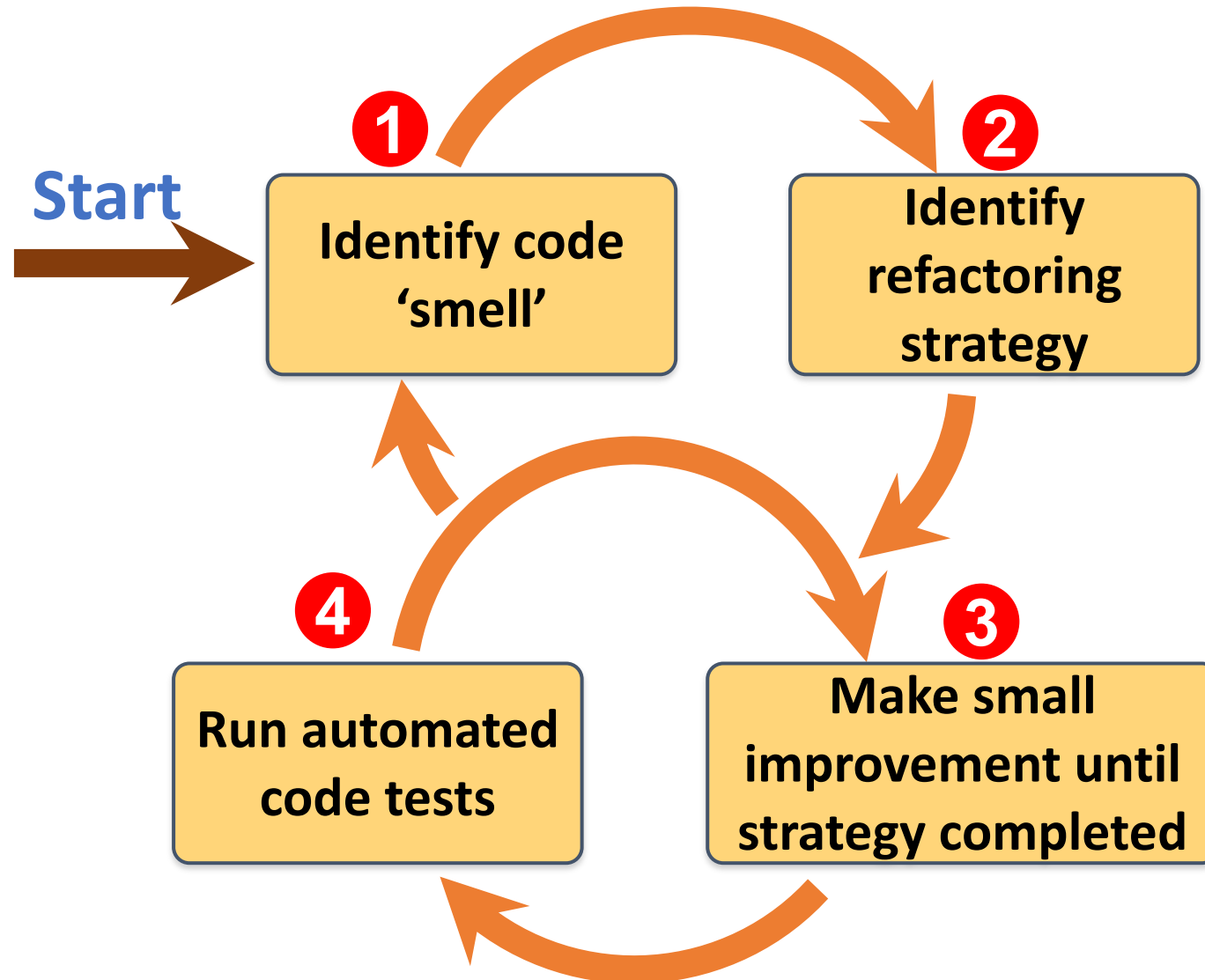
Types of security threat



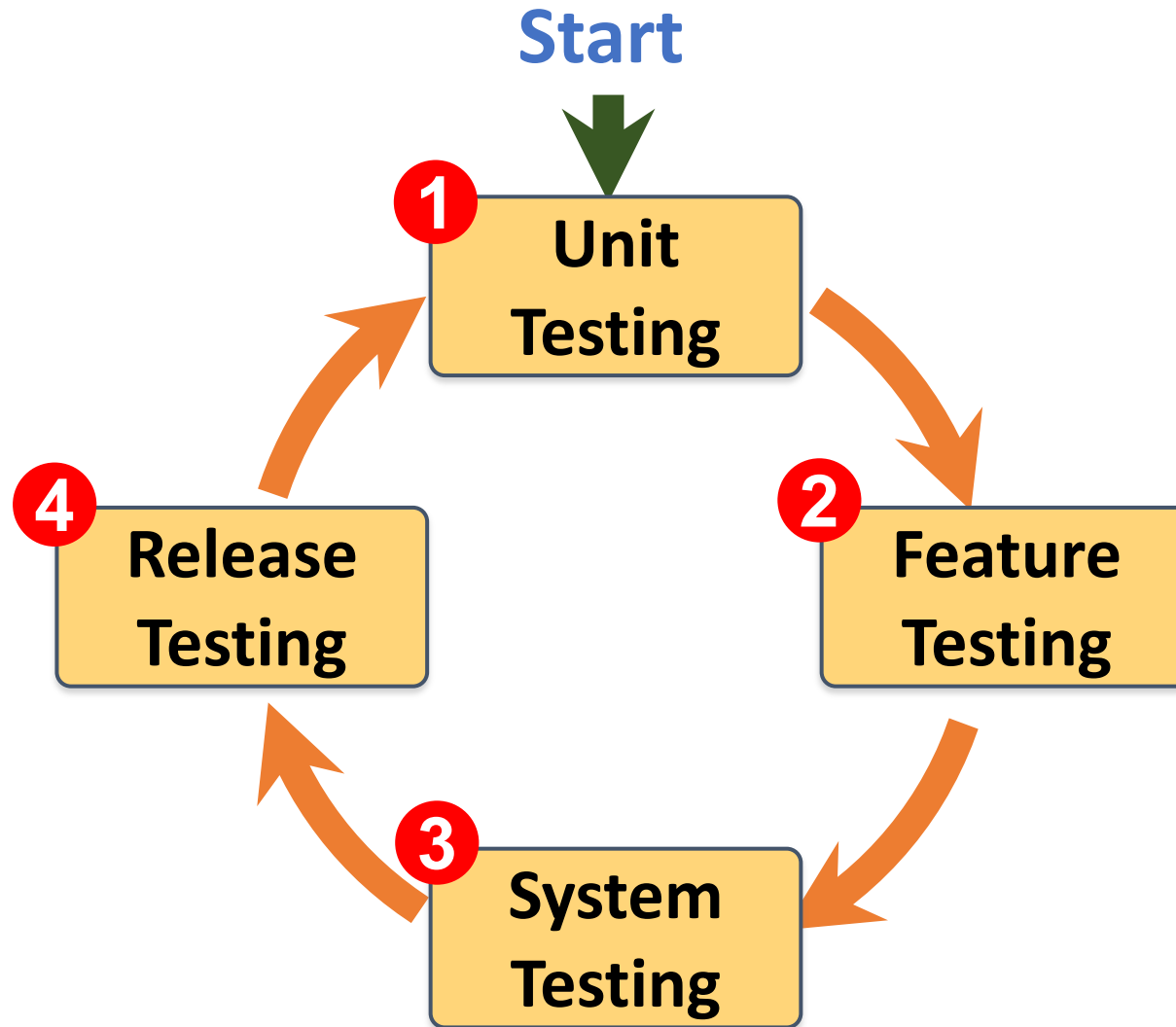
Software product quality attributes



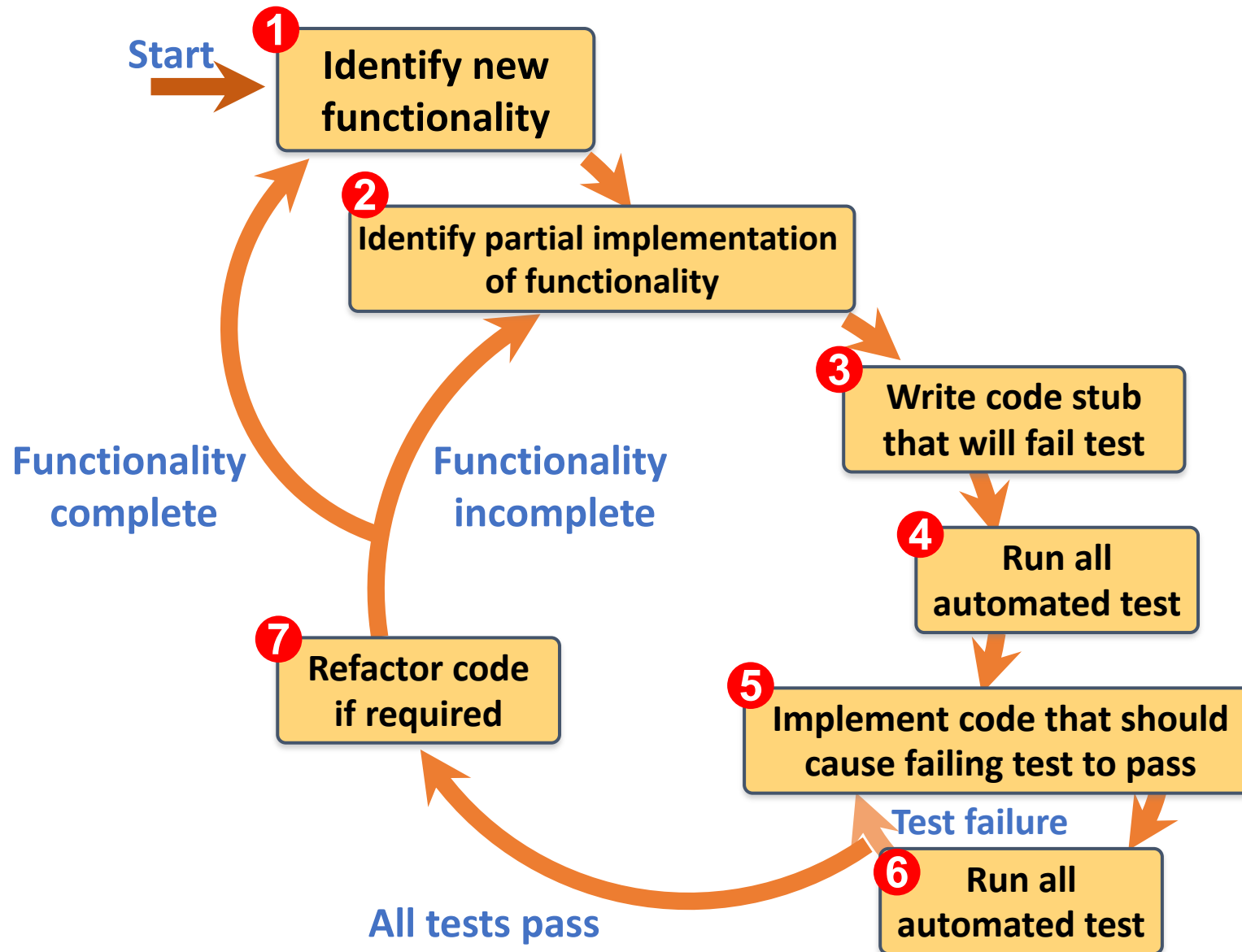
A refactoring process



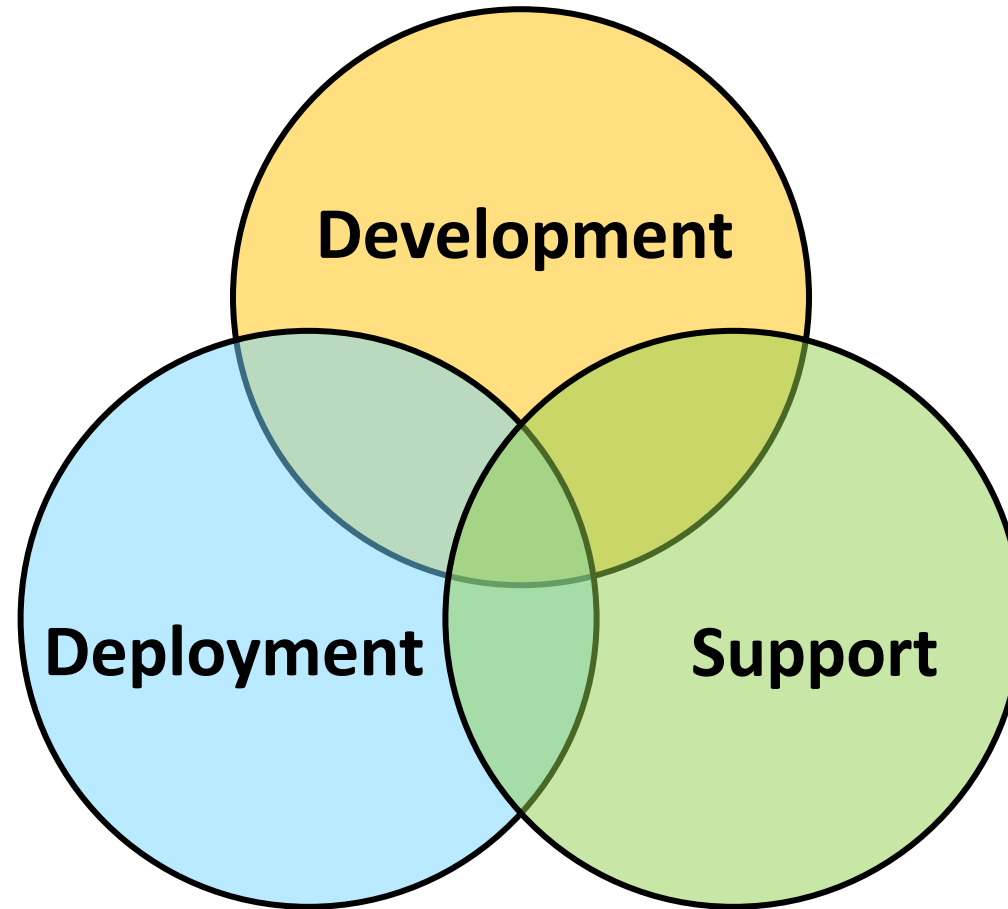
Functional testing



Test-driven development (TDD)

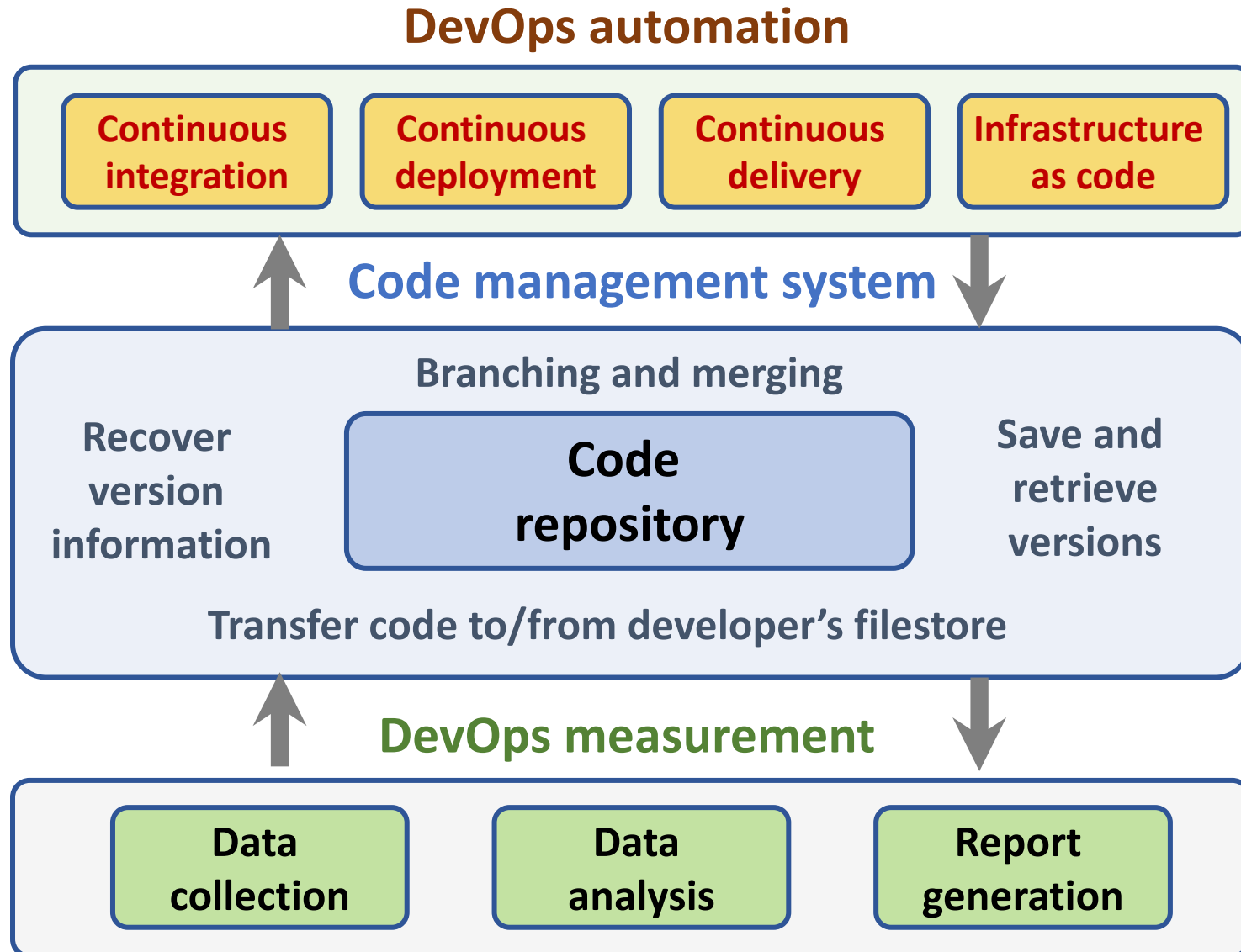


DevOps



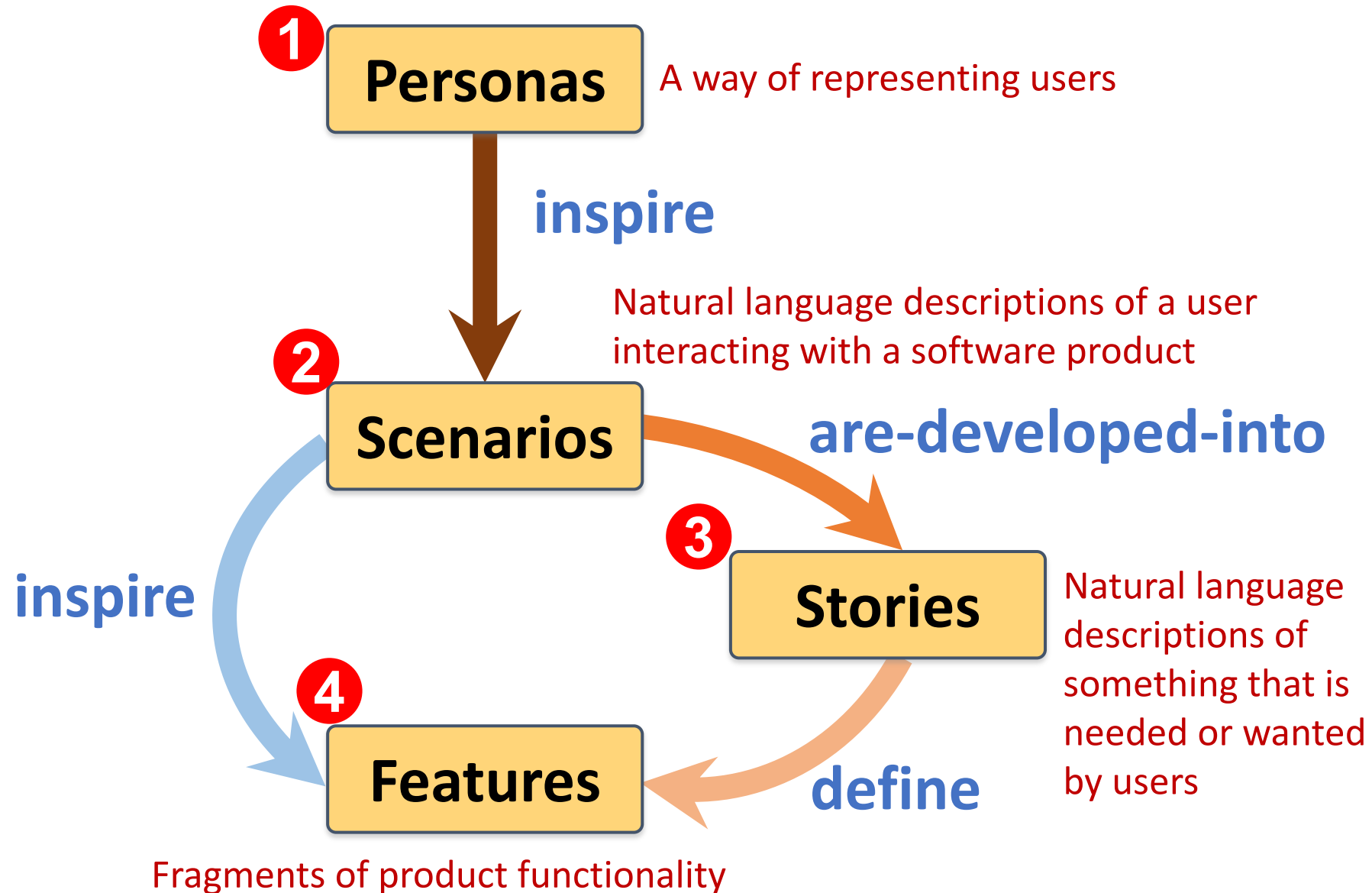
Multi-skilled DevOps team

Code management and DevOps



Features, Scenarios, and Stories

From personas to features



Software products

- **Three factors** that drive the design of software products
 - Business and consumer needs that are **not met by current products**
 - **Dissatisfaction with existing** business or consumer software products
 - **Changes in technology** that make completely new types of product possible
- In the early stage of product development, you are trying to understand, what product features would be useful to users, and what they like and dislike about the products that they use.

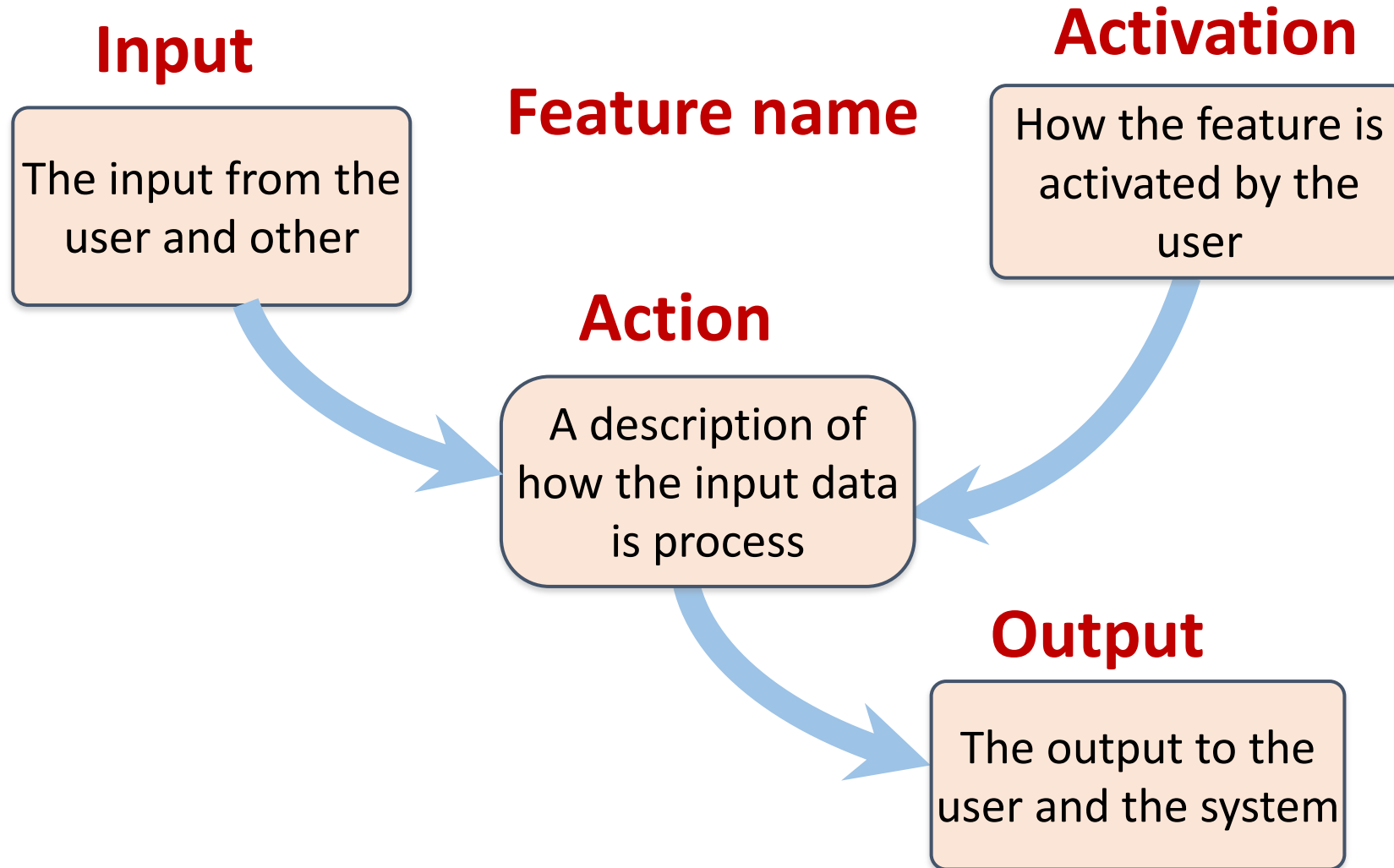
Software features

- A **feature** is a **fragment of functionality** such as a ‘print’ feature, a ‘change background feature’, a ‘new document’ feature and so on.
- Before you start programming a product, you should aim to create a **list of features** to be included in your product.
- The feature list should be your starting point for product design and development.

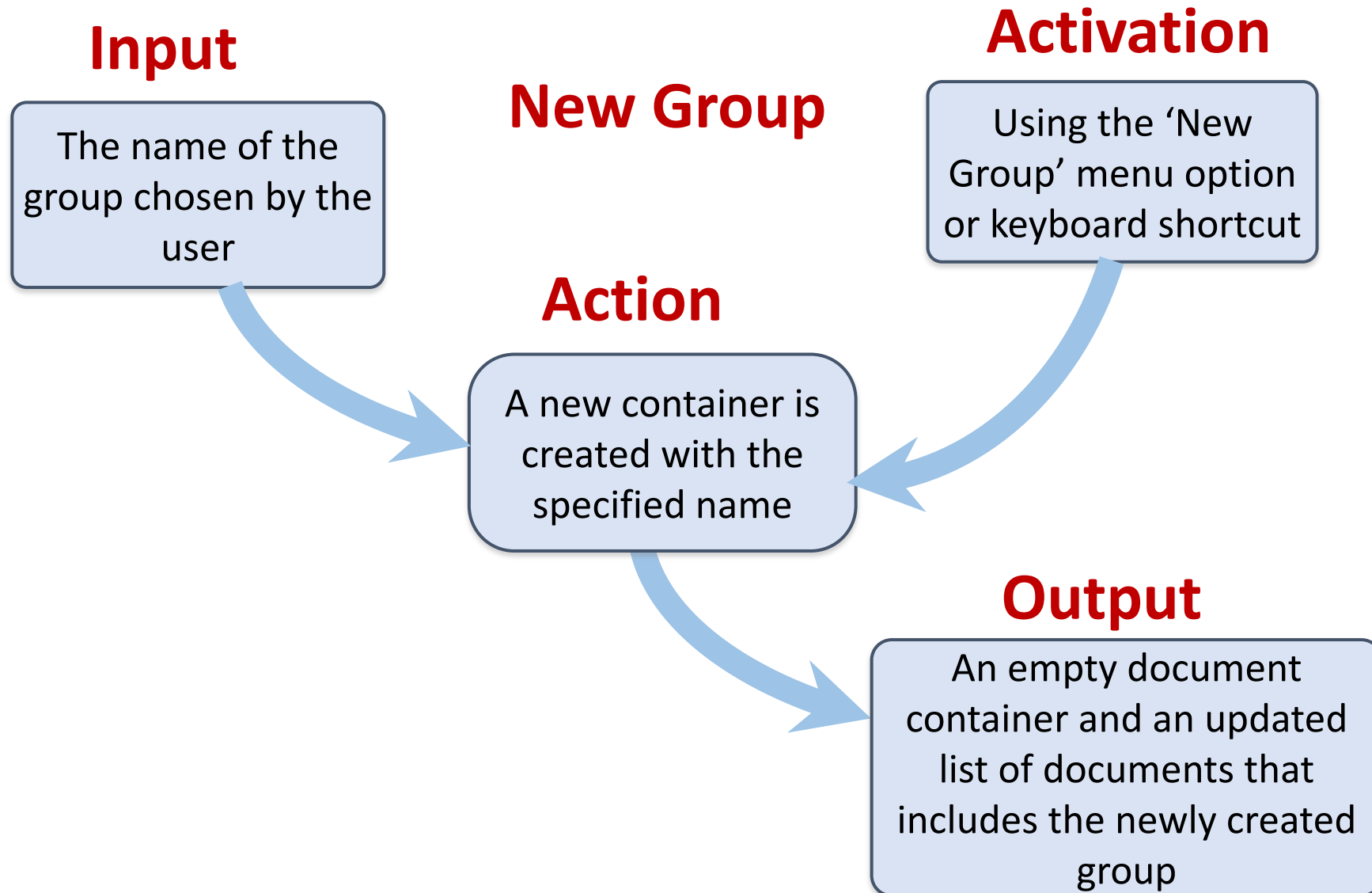
User understanding

- It makes sense in any product development to spend time trying to **understand** the potential users and customers of your product.
- A range of techniques have been developed for understanding the ways that people work and use software.
 - These include **user interviews, surveys, ethnography** and **task analysis**.
 - Some of these techniques are expensive and unrealistic for small companies.
- Informal user analysis and discussions, which simply involve asking users about their work, the software that they use, and its strengths and weaknesses are inexpensive and very valuable.

Feature description



The 'New Group' feature description



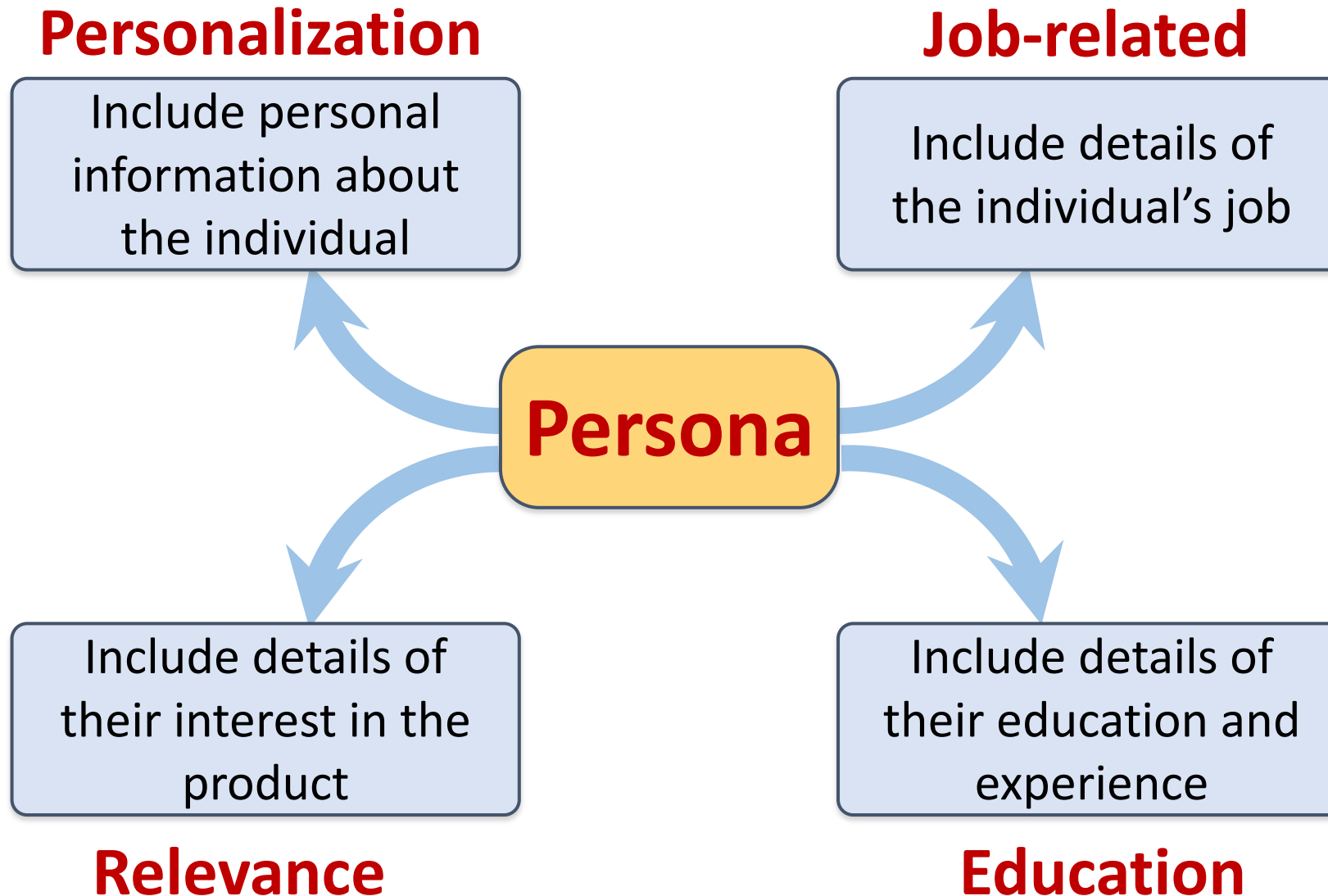
Personas

- You need to have an **understanding** of your potential users to design **features** that they are likely to find useful and to design a user interface that is suited to them.
- **Personas** are ‘**imagined users**’ where you create a character portrait of a type of user that you think might use your product.
 - For example, if your product is aimed at managing appointments for dentists, you might create a dentist persona, a receptionist persona and a patient persona.
- **Personas** of different types of user help you **imagine what these users may want to do with your software** and how it might be used. They help you envisage difficulties that they might have in understanding and using product features.

Persona descriptions

- A **persona** should **'paint a picture'** of a **type of product user**. They should be relatively short and easy-to-read.
- Describe their **background** and **why** they might **want** to use your product.
- Say something about their **educational background and technical skills**.
- These help you assess whether or not a software feature is likely to be useful, understandable and usable by typical product users.

Persona descriptions



Persona benefits

- **Personas** help you and other development team members **empathize with potential users** of the software.
- Personas help because they are a tool that allows developers to **‘step into the user’s shoes’**.
 - Instead of thinking about what you would do in a particular situation, you can **imagine how a persona would behave and react**.
- Personas can help you **check your ideas** to make sure that you are not including product features that aren’t really needed.
- They help you to **avoid making unwarranted assumptions**, based on your own knowledge, and designing an over-complicated or irrelevant product.

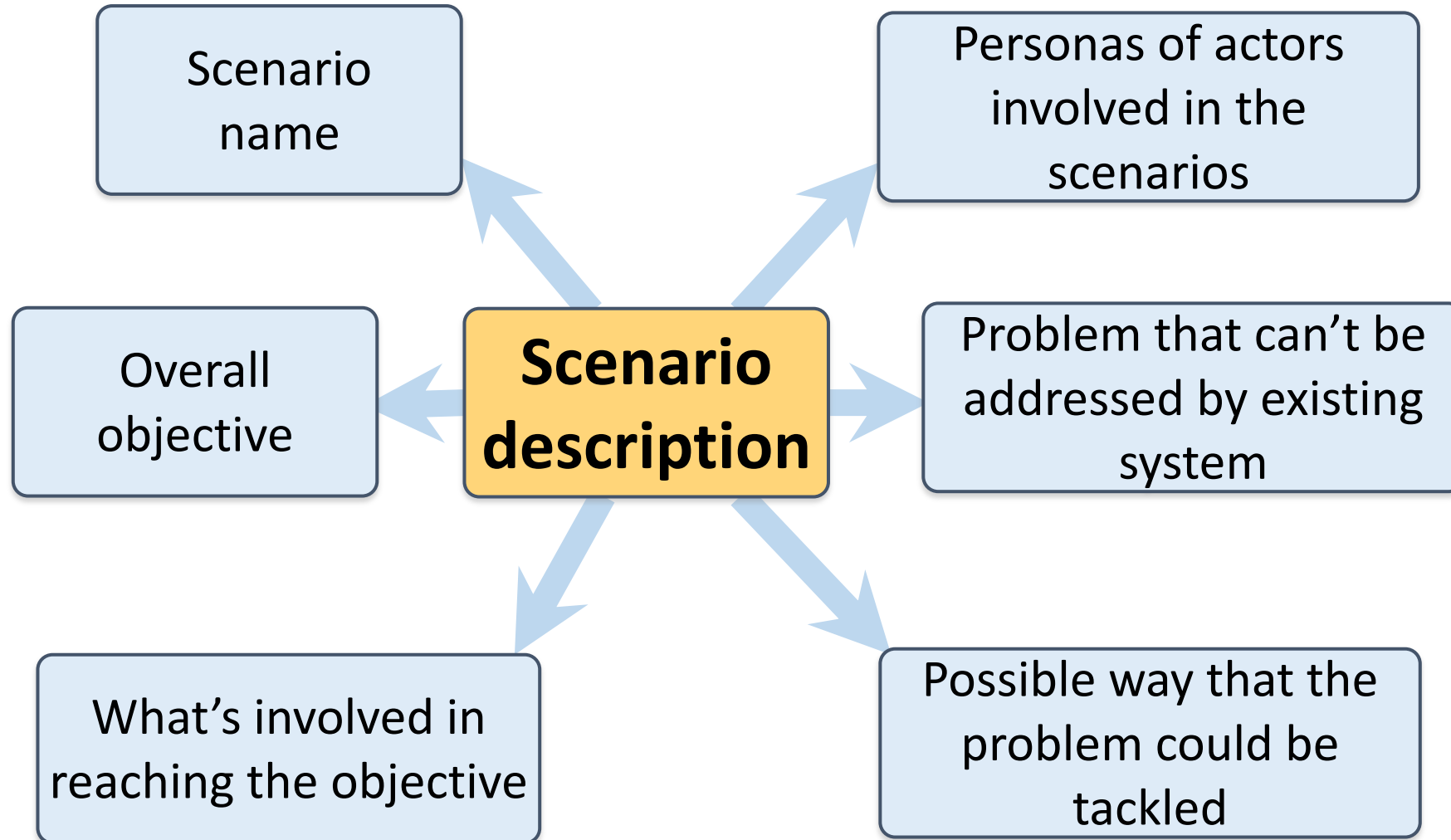
Deriving personas

- **Personas** should be based on an understanding of the **potential product users, their jobs, their background and their aspirations.**
- You should study and survey potential users to understand **what they want** and **how they might use the product.**
- From this data, you can then abstract the essential information about the different types of product user and use this as a basis for creating personas.
- Personas that are developed on the basis of limited user information are called **proto-personas.**
- **Proto-personas** may be created as a collective team exercise using whatever information is available about potential product users. They can never be as accurate as personas developed from detailed user studies, but they are **better than nothing.**

Scenarios

- A **scenario** is a narrative that describes **how a user, or a group of users, might use your system.**
- There is no need to include everything in a scenario – **the scenario isn't a system specification.**
- It is simply a description of a situation where a user is using your **product's features to do something that they want to do.**
- **Scenario descriptions** may vary in length from **two to three paragraphs up to a page of text.**

Elements of a scenario description



Writing scenarios

- **Scenarios** should always be written from the **user's perspective** and based on **identified personas** or **real users**.
- Your starting point for scenario writing should be the **personas** that you have created. You should normally try to imagine several scenarios from each persona.
- Ideally, scenarios should be general and should not include implementation information.
- However, describing an implementation is often the easiest way to explain how a task is done.
- It is important to ensure that you have coverage of all of the potential user roles when describing a system.

User involvement

- It is easy for anyone to read and understand **scenarios**, so it is possible to **get users involved** in their development.
- The best approach is to develop an **imaginary scenario** based on our understanding of how the system might be used then ask users to explain what you have got wrong.
- They might ask about things they did not understand and suggest how the scenario could be extended and made more realistic.
- Our experience was that users are not good at writing scenarios.
- The scenarios that they created were based on how they worked at the moment. They were far too detailed and the users couldn't easily generalize their experience.

User stories

1

WHO

As a <role>

2

WHAT

I <want | need> **to** <do something>

3

WHY

so that <reason>

User stories

- **As a** <role>,
I <want | need> **to** <do something>
 - **As** a teacher,
I want to tell all members of my group when new information is available
- **As a** <role>
I <want | need> **to** <do something>
so that <reason>
 - **As** a teacher,
I need to be able to report who is attending a class trip
so that the school maintains the required health and safety records.

User stories

- **Scenarios** are **high-level stories** of system use. They should describe a sequence of interactions with the system but should not include details of these interactions.
- **User stories** are **finer-grain narratives** that set out in a more detailed and structured way a single thing that a user wants from a software system.
 - **As** an author,
I need a way **to** organize the book
that I'm writing into chapters and sections.

User stories

- This story reflects what has become the standard format of a user story:
- **As** a <role>, **I** <want | need> **to** <do something>
 - **As** a teacher, **I want to** tell all members of my group when new information is available
- A variant of this standard format adds a justification for the action:
 - **As** a <role> **I** <want | need> **to** <do something> **so that** <reason>
 - **As** a teacher,
I need to be able to report who is attending a class trip
so that the school maintains the required health and safety records.

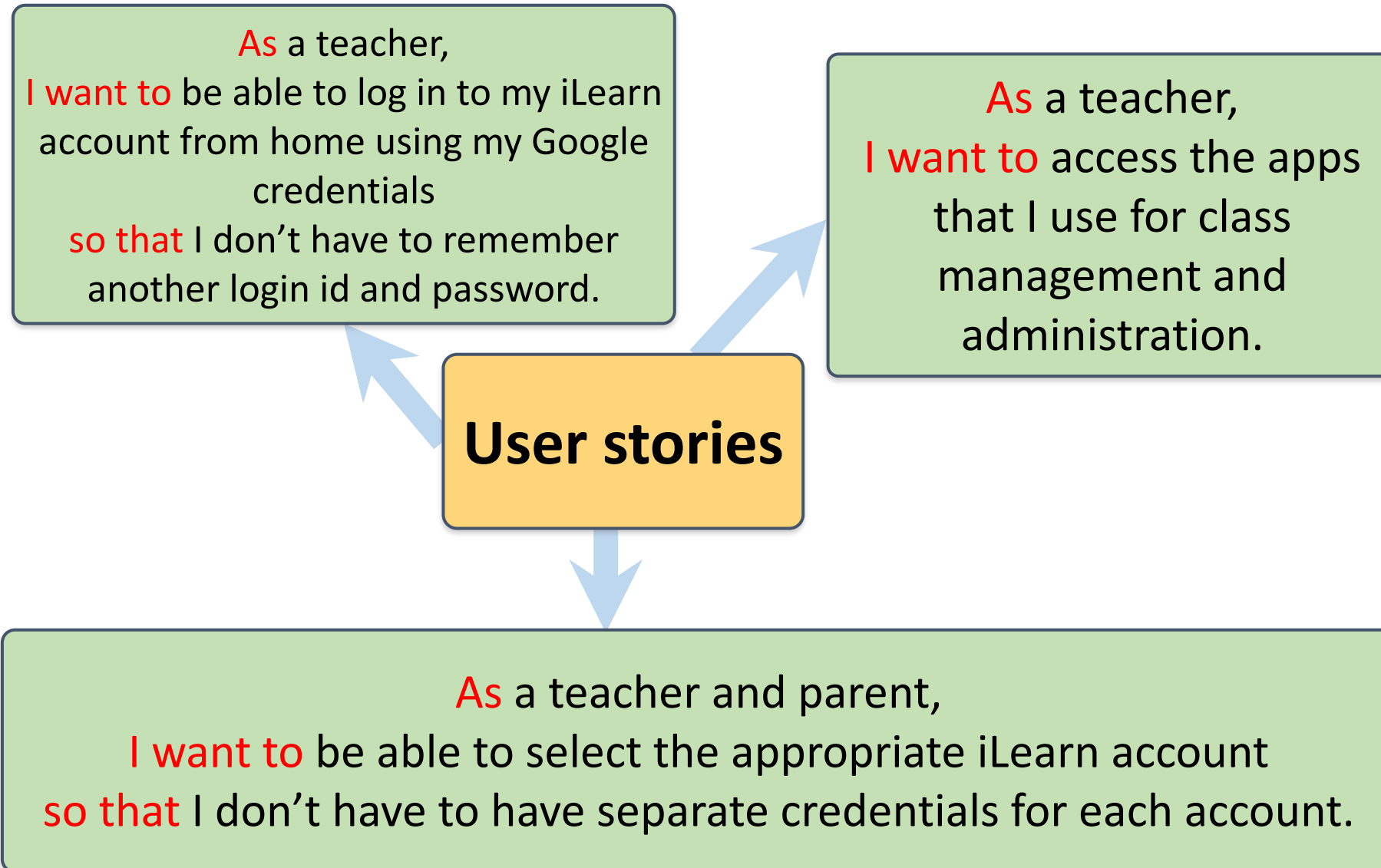
User stories in planning

- An important use of **user stories** is in **planning**.
 - Many users of the Scrum method represent the **product backlog** as **a set of user stories**.
- User stories should focus on **a clearly defined system feature or aspect of a feature that can be implemented within a single sprint.**

User stories in planning

- If the **story** is about a **more complex feature** that might **take several sprints** to implement, then it is called an **epic**.
 - **As** a system manager, **I need** a way to backup the system and restore either individual applications, files, directories or the whole system.
 - There is a lot of functionality associated with this user story. For implementation, it should be broken down into simpler stories with each story focusing on a single aspect of the backup system.

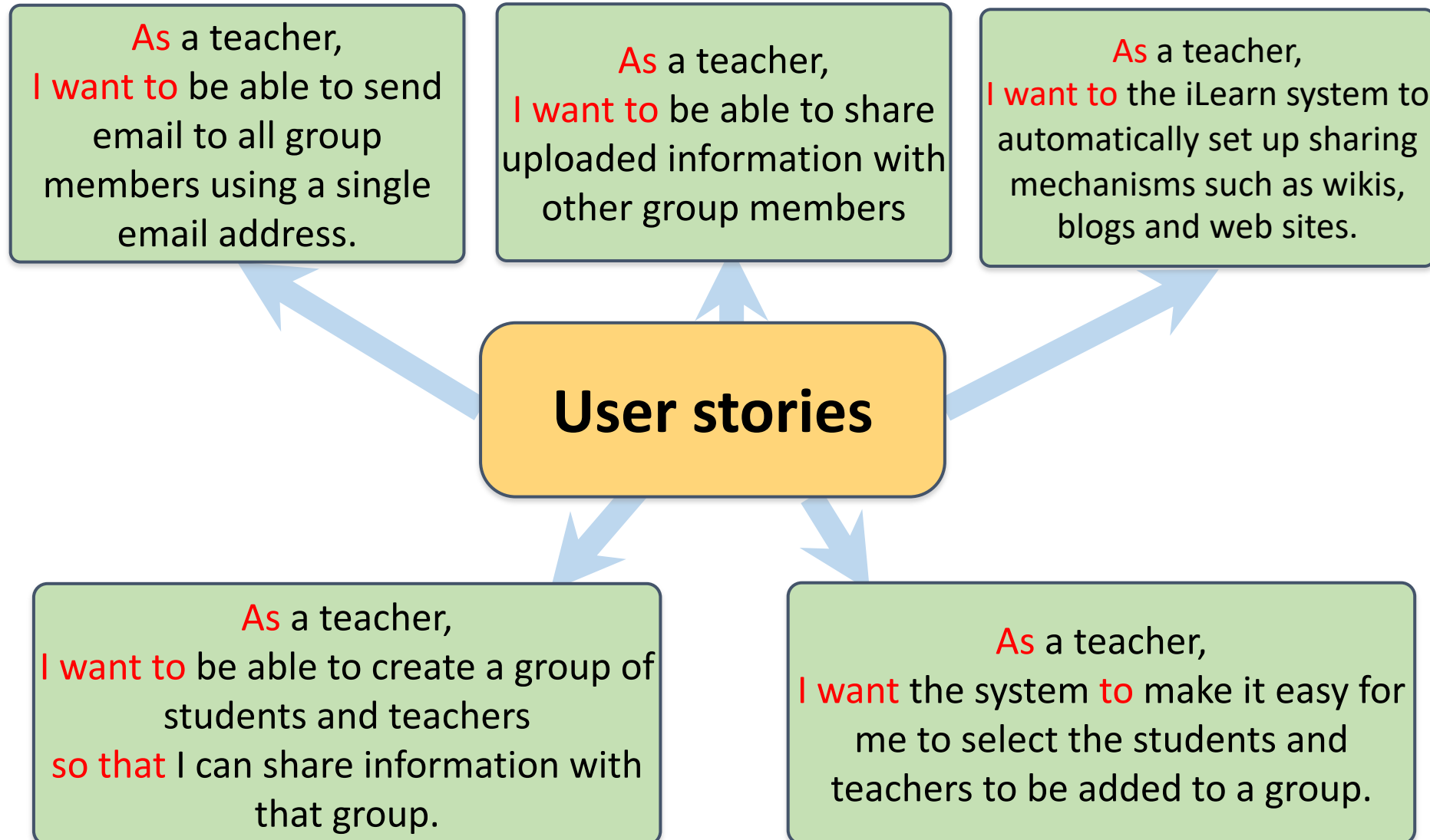
User stories from Emma's scenario



Feature description using user stories

- **Stories can be used to describe features in your product that should be implemented.**
- **Each feature can have a set of associated stories that describe how that feature is used.**

User stories describing the Groups feature



Stories and scenarios

- As you can express **all of the functionality** described in a **scenario** as user stories, do you really need scenarios?’
- **Scenarios** are more natural and are helpful for the following reasons:
 - **Scenarios** read more naturally because they describe what a user of a system is actually doing with that system. People often find it easier to relate to this specific information rather than the statement of wants or needs set out in **a set of user stories**.
 - If you are interviewing real users or are checking a scenario with real users, they don’t talk in the stylized way that is used in user stories. People relate better to the more natural narrative in scenarios.
 - **Scenarios** often provide **more context - information** about what the user is trying to do and their normal ways of working. You can do this in user stories, but it means that they are no longer simple statements about the use of a system feature.

Feature identification

- Your aim in the initial stage of product design should be to create a **list of features** that define your product.
- A feature is a way of allowing users to access and use your **product's functionality** so the feature list defines the overall functionality of the system.
- **Features** should be **independent, coherent and relevant**.

Feature identification

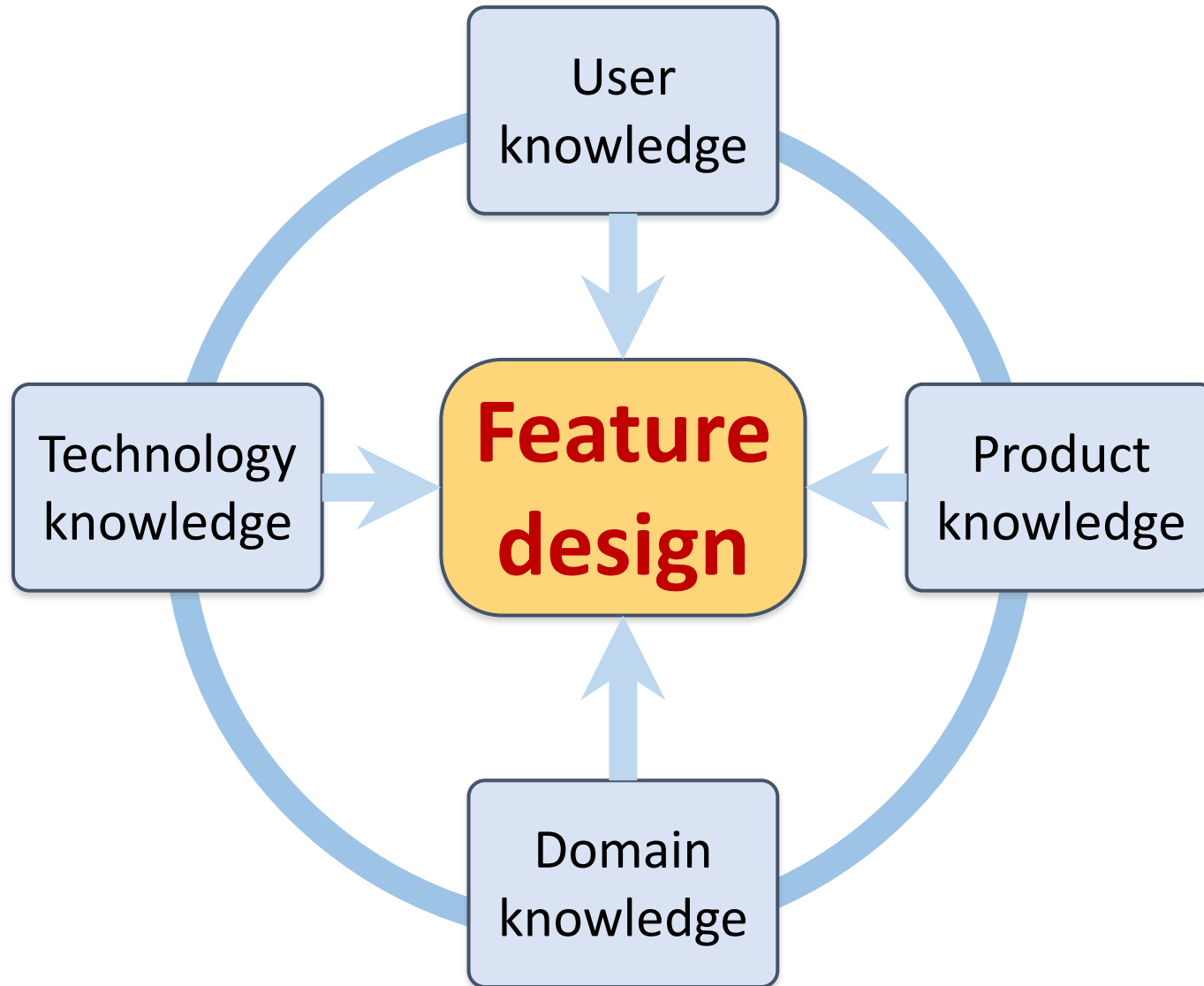
- **Features should be independent, coherent and relevant:**
 - **Independence**

Features should not depend on how other system features are implemented **and** should not be affected by the order of activation of other features.
 - **Coherence**

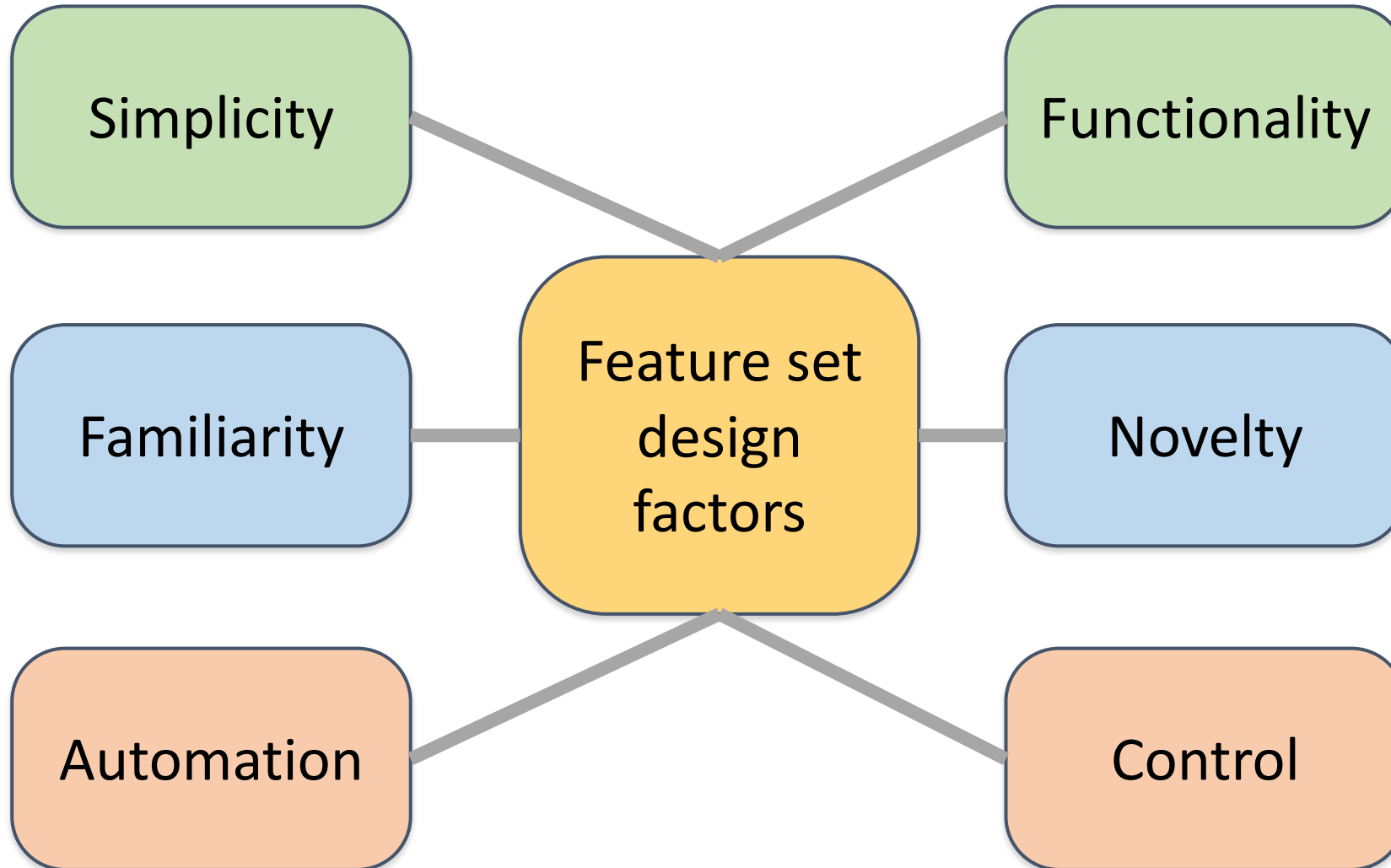
Features should be linked to a single item of functionality.
They should not do more than one thing and they should never have side-effects.
 - **Relevance**

Features should reflect the way that users normally carry out some task.
They should not provide obscure functionality that is hardly ever required.

Feature design



Factors in feature set design



Feature trade-offs

- **Simplicity and functionality**

- You need to find a balance between providing a simple, easy-to-use system and including enough functionality to attract users with a variety of needs.

- **Familiarity and novelty**

- Users prefer that new software should support the familiar everyday tasks that are part of their work or life.
To encourage them to adopt your system, you need to find a balance between familiar features and new features that convince users that your product can do more than its competitors.

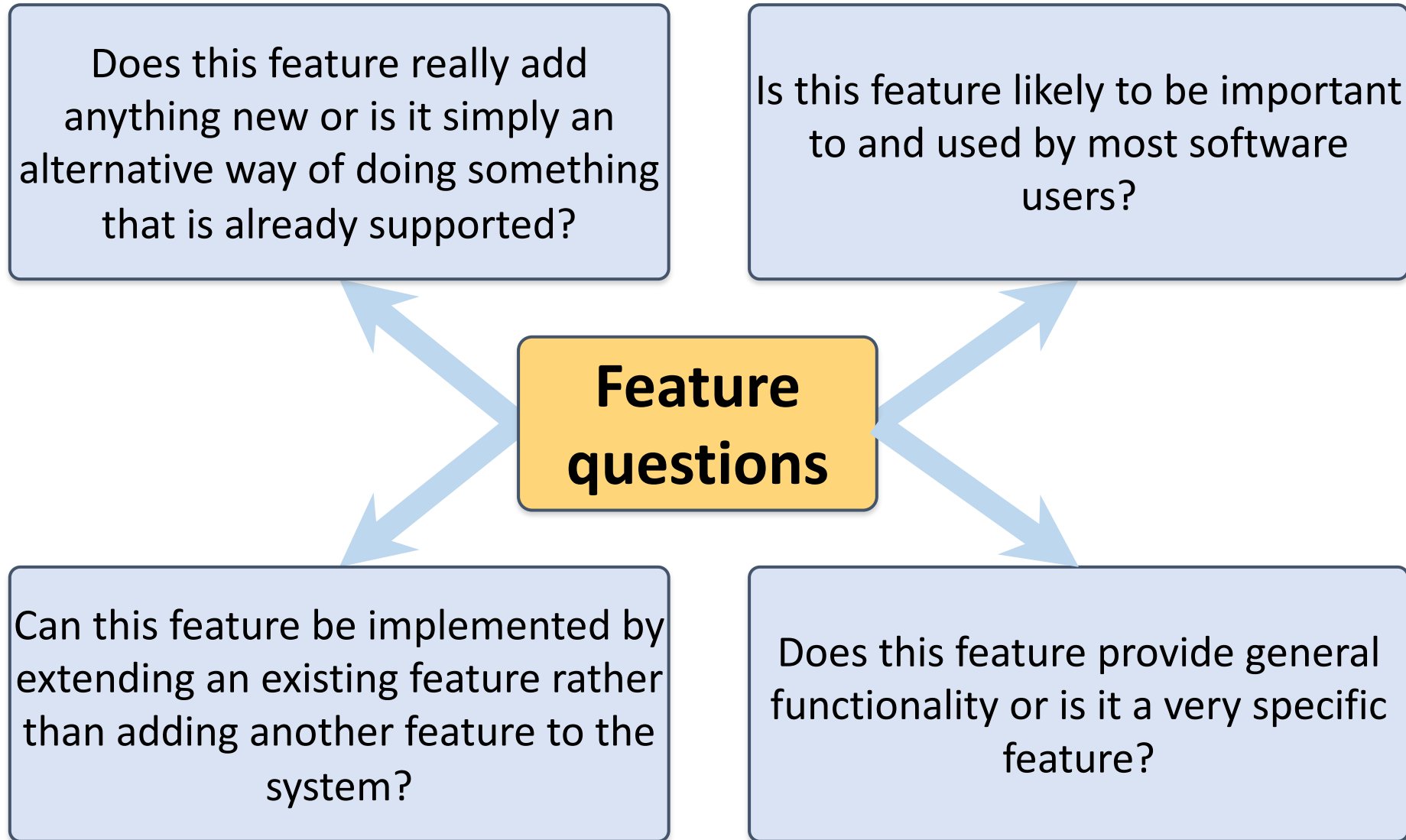
- **Automation and control**

- Some users like automation, where the software does things for them. Others prefer to have control.
You have to think carefully about what can be automated, how it is automated and how users can configure the automation so that the system can be tailored to their preferences.

Feature creep

- **Feature creep** occurs when **new features** are added in response to user requests **without considering whether or not these features are generally useful** or whether they can be implemented in some other way.
- **Too many features** make products hard to use and understand
- There are **three reasons why feature creep occurs**:
 - **Product managers are reluctant to say 'no'** when users ask for specific features.
 - **Developers try to match features in competing products.**
 - **The product includes features to support both inexperienced and experienced users.**

Avoiding feature creep



Feature derivation

- **Features** can be identified directly from the **product vision** or from **scenarios**.
- You can **highlight phrases** in narrative description to identify features to be included in the software.
 - You should think about the features needed to support user actions, identified by active verbs, such as use and choose.

The iLearn system vision

- **FOR** teachers and educators **WHO** need a way to help students use web-based learning resources and applications, **THE** iLearn system is an open learning environment **THAT** allows the set of resources used by classes and students to be easily configured for these students and classes by teachers themselves.
- **UNLIKE** Virtual Learning Environments, such as Moodle, the focus of iLearn is the learning process itself, rather than the administration and management of materials, assessments and coursework.
OUR product enables teachers to create subject and age-specific environments for their students using any web-based resources, such as videos, simulations and written materials that are appropriate

Features from the product vision

- **A feature that allows users to access and use existing web-based resources;**
- **A feature that allows the system to exist in multiple different instantiations;**
- **A feature that allows user configuration of the system to create a specific instantiation.**

Feature description using user stories

- **Description**

- **As** a system manager, **I want to** create and configure an iLearn environment by adding and removing services to/from that environment **so that** I can create environments for specific purposes.
- **As** a system manager, **I want to** set up sub-environments that include a subset of services that are included in another environment.
- **As** a system manager, **I want to** assign administrators to created environments.
- **As** a system manager, **I want to** limit the rights of environment administrators **so that** they cannot accidentally or deliberately disrupt the operation of key services.
- **As** a teacher, **I want to** be able to add services that are not integrated with the iLearn authentication system.

- **Constraints**

- The use of some tools may be limited for license reasons so there may be a need to access license management tools during configuration.

- **Comments**

- Based on Elena's and Jack's scenarios.

Innovation and feature identification

- **Scenarios** and **user stories** should always be your starting point for identifying product features.
- **Scenarios** tell you **how users work at the moment**. They don't show how they might change their way of working if they had the right software to support them.
- **Stories** and **scenarios** are '**tools for thinking**' and they help you gain an understanding of how your software might be used. You can identify a feature set from stories and scenarios.
- **User research**, on its own, rarely helps you innovate and invent new ways of working.
- You should also **think creatively** about alternative or additional features that help users to work more efficiently or to do things differently.

Summary

- A **software product feature** is a fragment of functionality that implements something that a user may need or want when using the product.
- The **first stage** of product development is to identify the **list of product features** in which you identify each feature and give a brief description of its functionality.
- **Personas** are **'imagined users'** where you create a character portrait of a type of user that you think might use your product.

Summary

- A **persona description** should **'paint a picture'** of a typical product user. It should describe their **educational background, technology experience** and **why** they might want to use your product.
- A **scenario** is a narrative that describes a **situation** where a user is accessing product features to do something that they want to do.

Summary

- **Scenarios** should always be written from the user's perspective and should be based on identified personas or real users.
- **User stories** are finer-grain narratives that set out, in a structured way, something that a user wants from a software system.

Summary

- **User stories** may be used as a way of extending and adding detail to a scenario or as part of the description of system features.
- The **key influences** in feature identification and design are **user research, domain knowledge, product knowledge, and technology knowledge**.
- You can **identify features from scenarios and stories** by **highlighting user actions** in these narratives and thinking about the features that you need to support these actions.

References

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