CMPS 312

State Management with

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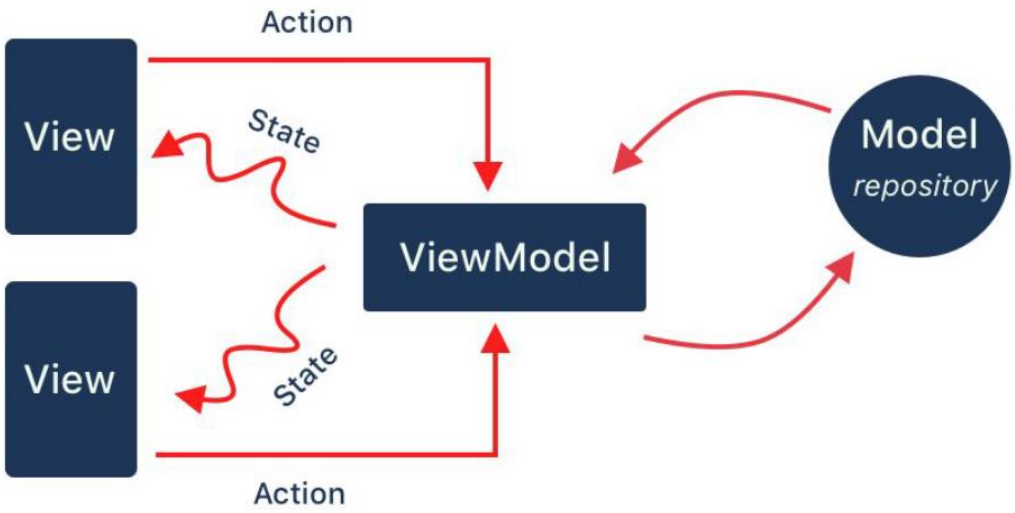
CSE@QU

Outline

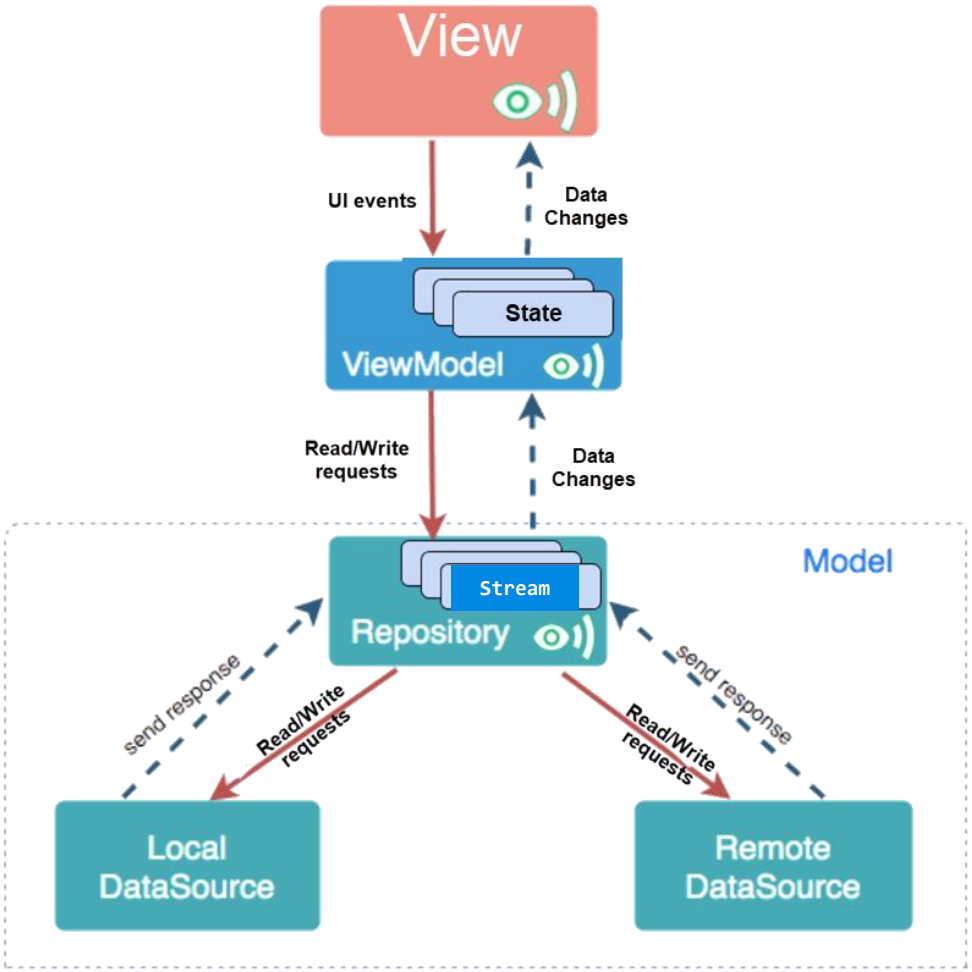
1. Model-View-ViewModel (MVVM)
2. Riverpod Providers (ViewModel)

MVVM Architecture



Back

Model-View-ViewModel (MVVM) Architecture



View = UI to display state & collect user input

- It **observes** state changes from the ViewModel to update the UI accordingly

- Calls the ViewModel to handle events such as button clicks, form input, etc.

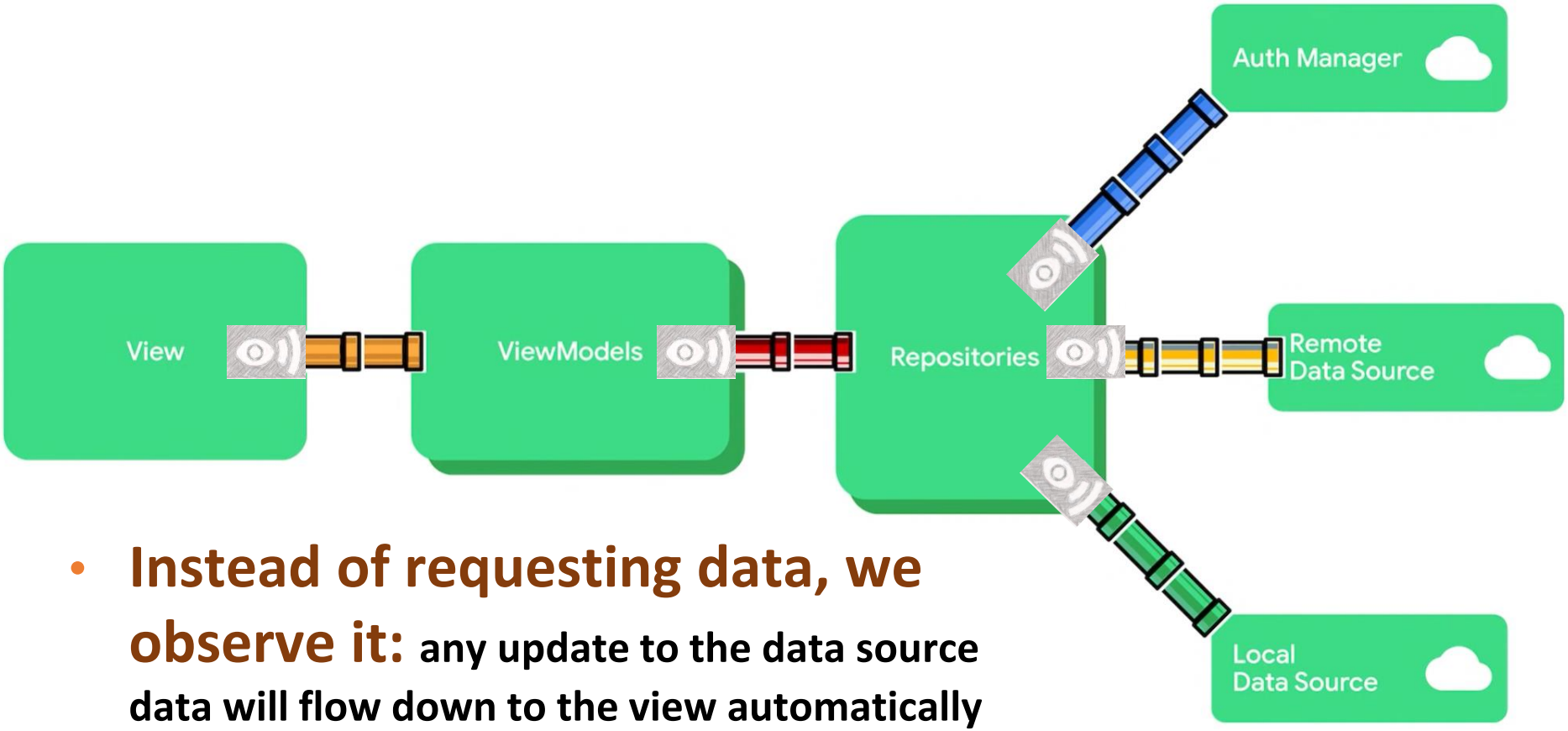
ViewModel

- Manages **state** (i.e, data needed by the UI)
  - Interacts with the Model to read/write data based on user input
  - Expose the state as **Observables** that the UI can subscribe-to to get data changes
- Implements UI logic / computation (e.g., data validation)

Model - handles data operations

- Model has **entities** that represent app data
- **Repositories** read/write data from either a Local Database or a Remote Web API
- Implements data-related logic / computation

Notifiers are used to keep the View in synch with the data sources



- **Instead of requesting data, we observe it:** **any update to the data source data will flow down to the view automatically**
- Repo observes data changes from data sources
- ViewModel observes data changes from the Repo
- View observes data changes from the ViewModel

MVVM Key Principles

- Separation of concerns:
  - View, ViewModel, and Model are **separate components** with distinct roles
- Loose coupling:
  - ViewModel **has no direct reference to the View**
  - View never accesses the model directly
  - Model unaware of the view
- Observer pattern:
  - View observes the ViewModel (to get data changes)
  - ViewModel observes the Model (to get data changes)

Advantages of MVVM

- ***Separation of concerns* = separate UI from app logic**
  - App logic is not intermixed with the UI. Consequently, code is cleaner, flexible and easier to understand and change
  - Allow changing a component without significantly disturbing the others (e.g., View can be completely changed without touching the model)
  - Easier **testing** of the App components

MVVM => Easily maintainable and testable app

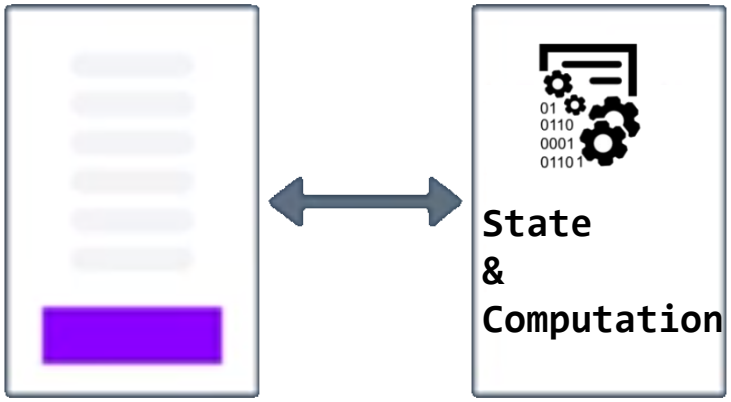
Riverpod Providers (ViewModel)

Riverpod

- Allows you to efficiently create, manage, and share states across the app
- Promotes clean code by **separating** business logic from UI, which simplifies testing and maintenance
- It provides different types of providers to manage various kinds of state
- Allows data caching

Provider

- Provider acts as the ViewModel is used to **store and manage state** (i.e., data needed by the UI)
- A **State** variable is an **observable data holder** whose reads and writes are observed by Flutter to trigger UI rebuild
- Provider exposes **State** variables that the View observes and update the UI accordingly
  - This decouples the Provider from the View: the Provider does NOT have any direct reference to the View
  - The View can observe the Provider State variables for changes then update the UI

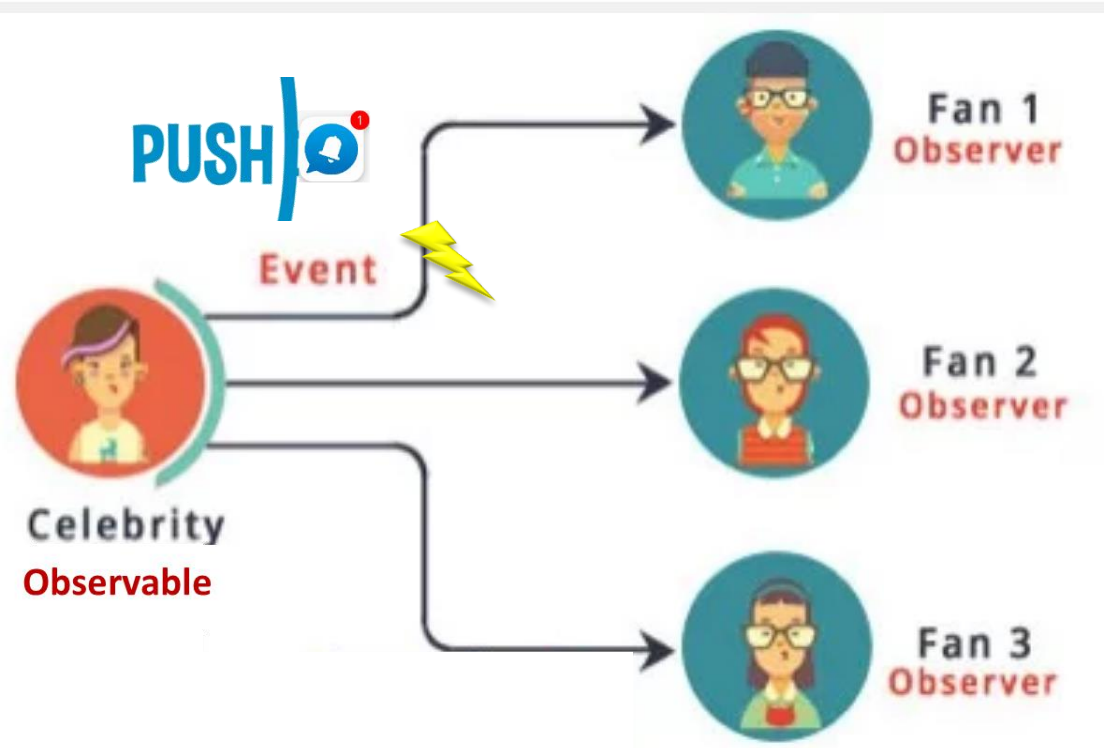


Use **Provider**:

- Manages state
- Read/write data from a Repository

Observable - Real-Life Example

- A celebrity who has many fans on Instagram. Fans want to get all the latest updates (photos, videos, posts etc.). Here fans are **Observers** and celebrity is an **Observable**



“no contexts in ViewModels” rule

- ViewModel should **not be aware of the View** who is interacting with
  => It should be decoupled from the View

  - ViewModel should not hold a reference to Widgets
  - Should not have any Flutter framework related code
  - As this defeats the purpose of separating the UI from the data
  - Can lead to memory leaks and crashes (due to null pointer exceptions) as the ViewModel outlives the View
    - if you rotate a screen 3 times, 3 three different screen instances will be created, but you only have one ViewModel instance

Main Providers in Riverpod

Provider Type	Description	Key Features	Typical Usage
Provider	Provides immutable data that doesn't change over time.	- Used for static, read-only values. - Ideal for objects created once and shared across the app. - No reactivity or updates.	- Providing configuration data, constants, or dependencies that don't change. - Example: API base URLs, theme settings.
NotifierProvider	Provides a stateful object that extends `Notifier<T>`.	- Allows state management logic with an object. - Use `Notifier` to create a class with business logic.	- Managing complex state logic such as authentication state, form validation, or application settings.
FutureProvider	Handles asynchronous data	- Automatically rebuilds when the `Future` completes. - Returns a loading/error state while waiting. - Useful for fetching async data.	- Fetching data from an API. - Asynchronous initialization like loading user data, preferences, or remote configuration at startup.
StreamProvider	Handles continuous asynchronous data from a `Stream`.	- Provides real-time data updates. - Useful for data that continuously changes. - Returns a loading/error state while waiting for updates.	- Real-time data streams like a chat application. - Listening to database changes or sensor data. - WebSocket connections.

Providers - Example Usage Scenarios

- **Provider**: Static configurations like app themes or localization settings
- **NotifierProvider**: Managing user authentication or managing a counter in state management
- **FutureProvider**: Fetching weather data or API responses
- **StreamProvider**: Listening to Firebase Firestore document updates or real-time messaging

Notifier class

- Declare shared state to be able to access it from anywhere in the app
  - E.g. CounterNotifier class holds the counter state and provides methods to increment and decrement the counter. Listeners get notified whenever the state changes
- Notifier must override the build method to initialize the state
- Must extend the Notifier<T>
- Notifiers should provide methods to allows modifying the state of the provider
- Public methods on this class are accessible to consumers using:

```
ref.read(yourProvider.notifier).yourMethod()
```

NotifierProvider

- **NotifierProvider** allows you to create and manage state classes that extend Notifier
  - When using NotifierProvider, you can easily listen to changes in the state and automatically rebuild your UI when the state updates
- Key Features:
  - State Management: Manages and exposes mutable state
  - Automatic Rebuilds: UI components automatically rebuild when the state changes
  - Encapsulation: Keeps state management logic encapsulated within the notifier class

Consuming Providers from the UI

- For widgets to be able to read providers, we need to wrap the root widget in a **ProviderScope** widget
  - This is where the state of the app providers will be stored

```
void main() {
  runApp(
    ProviderScope(child: MyApp())
  )}
```

- Widgets should extend **`ConsumerWidget`** instead of StatelessWidget to get a **WidgetRef** object to access the declared providers
  - **`ref.read`** / **`ref.watch`** enables reading/watching providers

```
class CounterScreen extends ConsumerWidget {
  const CounterScreen();
  @override
  Widget build(BuildContext context, WidgetRef ref) {
    final counter = ref.watch(counterProvider);
    ...
```

How to read provider state

- `ref.watch()`: Any widget that is listening to this provider will rebuild whenever the provider's state changes
- `ref.read()`: Typically used for accessing a provider's current state without listening to it
  - Whenever possible, prefer using ref.watch over ref.read to yield a reactive UI
  - Use ref.read when logic is performed in event handlers such as "onPressed"