

CSE 593

# Contextual Inquiry (part 1)

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# Logistics

- Required Reading due today.
- Communications with groups: regarding members and Overleaf template
- Assignment 1 (Individual) due tomorrow!
- Assignment 1 (Group) due next week.
- Quiz 3 assigned Thursday and due on Friday.

# Assignment 1 (individual)

- Pilot the questionnaire that you design in your groups
- Follow the think-aloud protocol
- Observe and take notes
- Rarely intervene
- Document pain points
- Submit your observations

# Assignment 1 (group)

- Revise your questionnaire based on findings from the pilot
- Your report will include both the initial and the revised questionnaire
- You can revisit your focus once you get the results

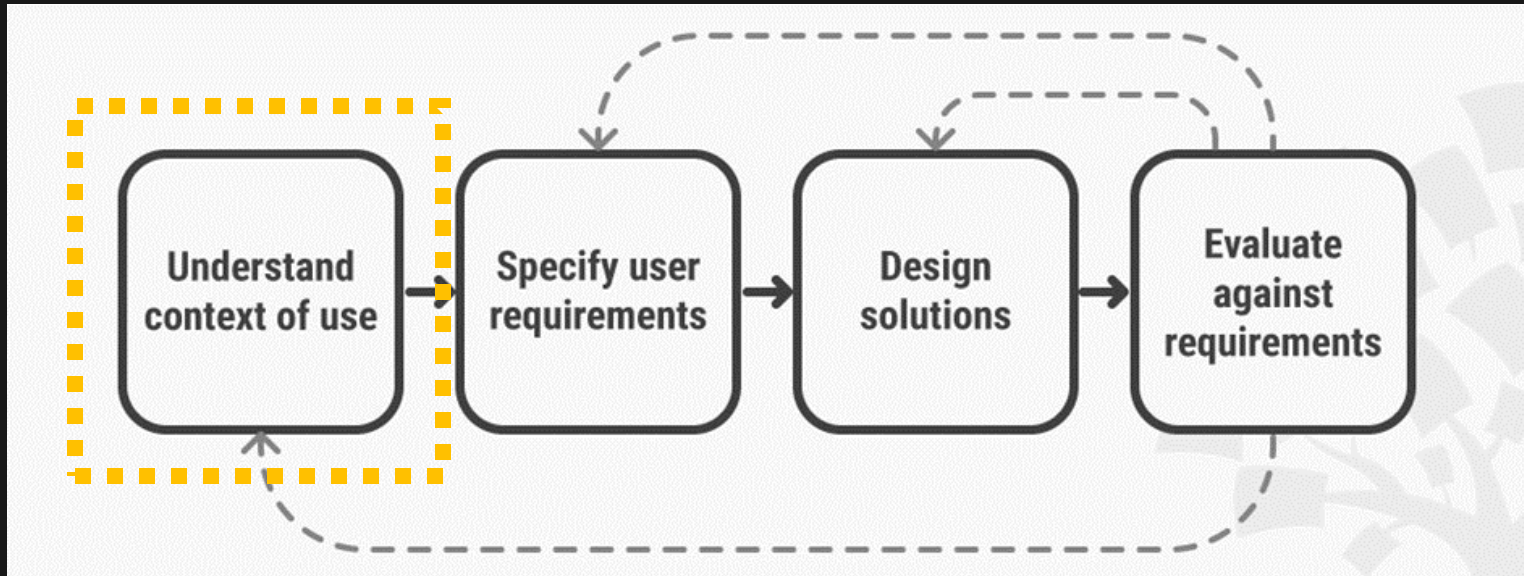
# Learning goals (over two lectures)

Learn how to study the current context of use.

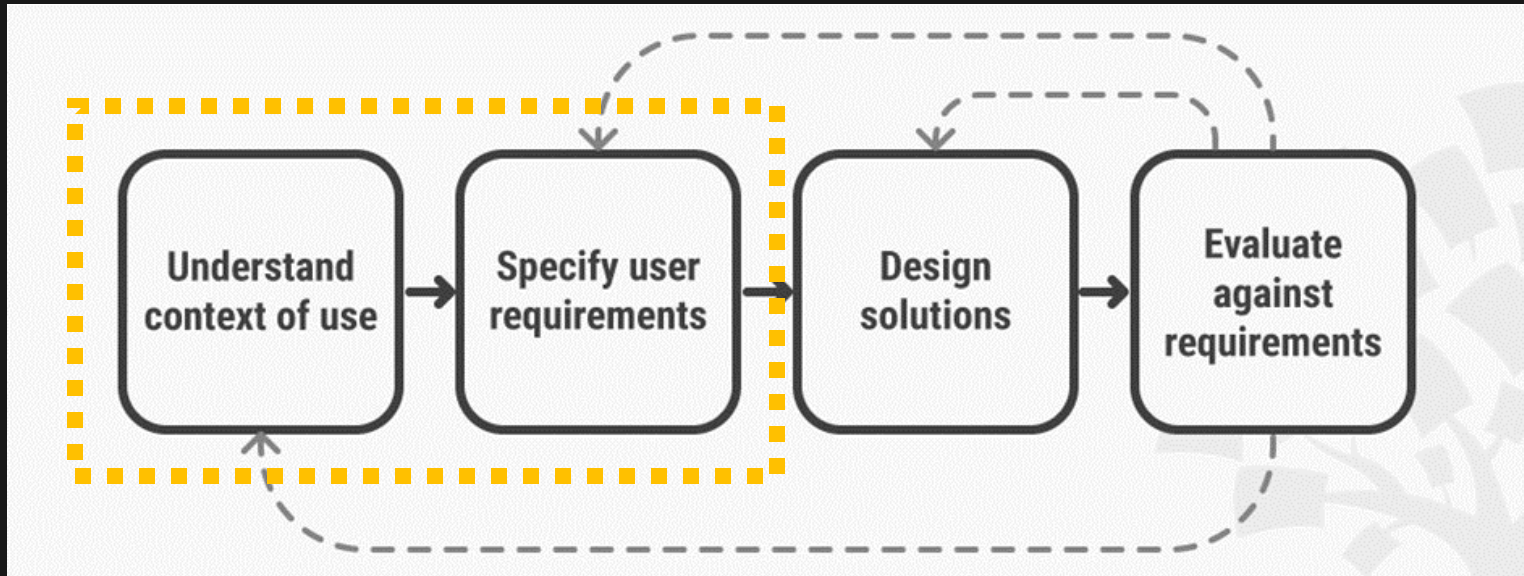
Learn to apply observations and interviews to identify gaps and breakdowns with existing interactive systems.

Learn how to elicit information relevant to functional and technical requirements and constraints.

# User-centered design process



# User-centered design process



# Identifying user requirements

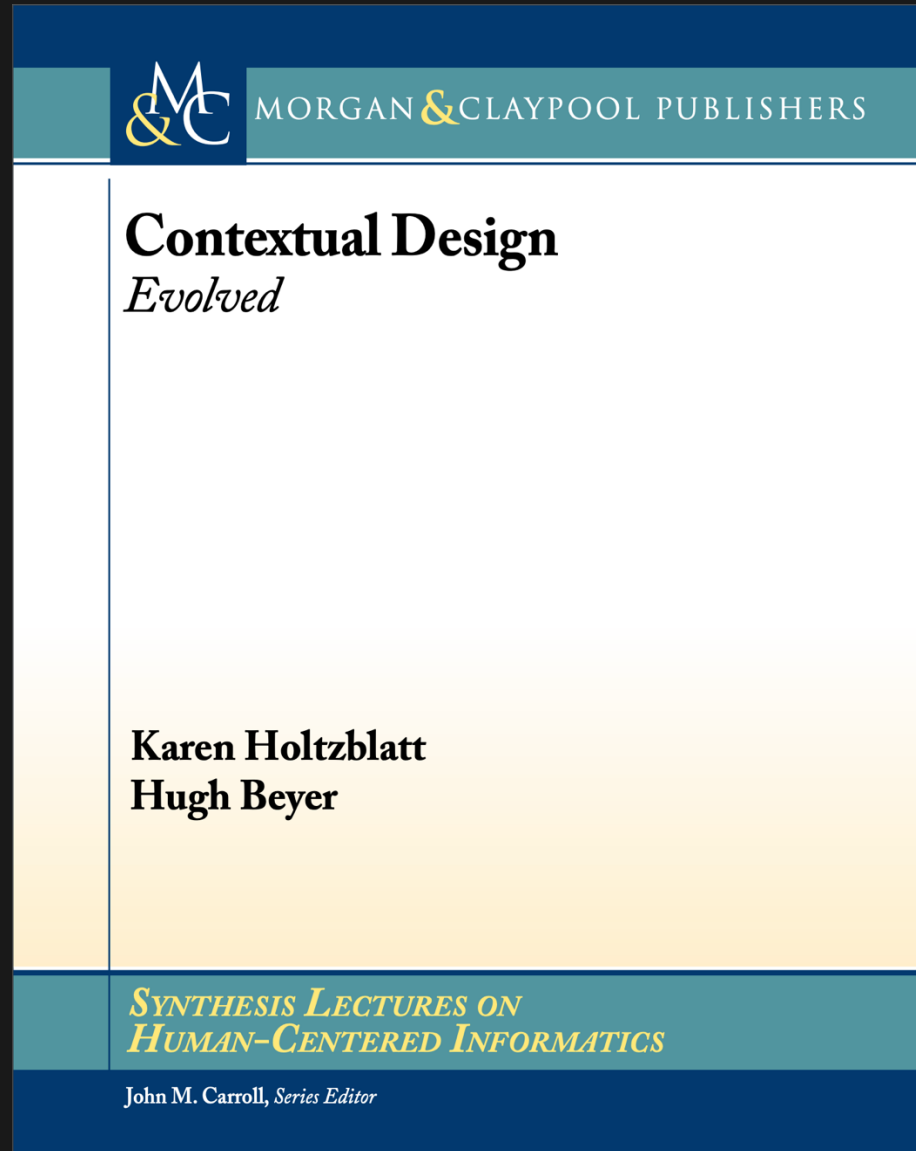
Cannot simply ask stakeholders what they need

Stakeholders may not be aware of what is possible with existing and future technology

Stakeholders may not know all aspects of different tasks required to accomplish their goals



# Contextual Design



# Contextual Design

“Contextual Design is a step-by-step process for collecting field data and using it to design any sort of technical product.”

# Contextual Design

Contextual Inquiry

Interpretation

Consolidation

Design

# Contextual Design

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# Contextual Design

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# Please answer this question in Canvas

What best describes Contextual Inquiry? Select all that apply.

- ☐ It is an informal method for collecting field data
- ☐ It is a principled method for collecting field data
- ☐ It is a quantitative method for collecting field data
- ☐ It is a qualitative method for collecting field data

You have 120 seconds...

**DONE!**

“The field data gathering  
technique of  
Contextual Design.”

# Contextual Inquiry

Brings the designer into the field

Combines interviews and observations

Each session lasts approximately 1.5 to 2 hours



# Contextual Inquiry



# Why in the context?

Contextual cues to help the participant remember:  
recognize rather than recall

Participant can show rather than tell

# Why retrospective scenarios?

Narratives of “Usual” or “hypothetical” experiences are not reliable

# Contextual Inquiry



# Why in the context?

Contextual cues to help the participant remember:  
recognize rather than recall

Participant can show rather than tell

Helps the researcher observe configurations of the  
environment

# Contextual inquiry

Similar, but unlike other formal observation methods

Similar, but unlike other formal interview methods

# Principles of contextual inquiry

Context

Partnership

Interpretation

Focus

# Principles of contextual inquiry

Context

Partnership

Interpretation

Focus



# Principles of contextual inquiry

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Focus

# Principles of contextual inquiry

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# Principles of contextual inquiry

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Focus

# Please answer this question on Canvas

What is true about focus of a Contextual Inquiry? Select all that apply.

- ☐ The investigator performs Contextual Inquiry with a fixed focus.
- ☐ The investigator starts Contextual Inquiry with an existing focus.
- ☐ The focus of Contextual Inquiry can shift during the interview.
- ☐ The focus of Contextual Inquiry can broaden during the interview.

You have 120 seconds...

**DONE!**

# Structured vs semi-structured vs unstructured interviews

- Contextual inquiry involves unstructured interviews
- Structured interviews: fixed set of questions
- Semi-structured interviews: list of questions + follow-ups at the researcher's discretion

# Contextual inquiry

Similar, but unlike other formal observation methods

Similar, but unlike other formal interview methods

# Why opt for contextual inquiry as opposed to interviews?

- Understanding real-world contexts
- Uncovering unspoken behaviors
- Exploring interactions with physical or virtual objects
- Identifying hidden pain points

# Contextual inquiry

Similar, but unlike other formal observation methods

Similar, but unlike other formal interview methods



# Contextual inquiry vs other observation methods

- Other observation methods: ethnography, logging users' interactions in controlled settings, etc.
- Contextual inquiry is a “discount method”
- Contextual inquiry gets at “stated” intentions

# Interpretation

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| T04-14 | When planning a trip, one of the considerations is whether or not they can use their timeshare points.             |
| T04-15 | Wherever they go on vacation has to be comfortable—and within their budget.  |
| U04-16 | Trip planning doesn't excite her husband. He gets too stressed out about the budget. She likes it, so she does it. |

# Concepts to look for

Accomplishment

Connection

Identity

Sensation

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Accomplishment

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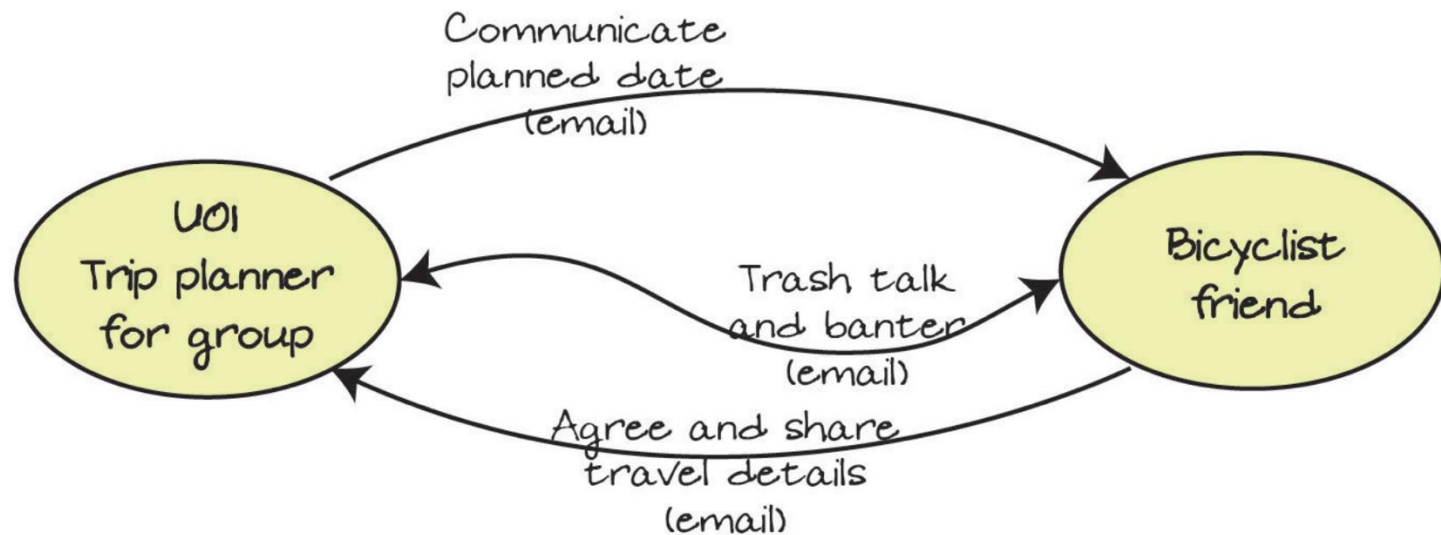
Identity

Sensation

# Contextual inquiry

## Collaboration Model UOI

Coordinating and planning yearly bike trip



# Concepts to look for

Accomplishment

Connection

Identity

Sensation

# Concepts to look for

Accomplishment

Connection

Identity

Sensation



# Please answer this question in Canvas

What is true about Contextual Interview? Select all that apply.

- ☐ It requires the participant to be in their context in which they perform their tasks.
- ☐ It requires that the participant performs their tasks.
- ☐ It requires that the participant grounds their responses in actual experiences.
- ☐ It requires that the participant reflects on how they perform their tasks in general.

You have 120 seconds...

**DONE!**

# Example: communicating with friends



Example: communicating with friends

Interviewer: “Could you please describe the last time you texted a friend?”

Describe last time you texted a friend

U01: “This was just last Friday. I wanted to check what time they wanted us over for dinner.”

# Example: texting a friend

Code	Interpretation
U01-01	They texted their friend to check on existing plans.

Describe last time you texted a friend

U01: “I was at home, but I couldn’t find my phone. I had to ask my partner to call my phone to find it.”

# Example: texting a friend

Code	Interpretation
U01-01	They texted their friend to check on existing plans.
U01-02	To text a friend they had to first find their phone that is not always on them.
U01-03	They had to ask their significant other to call their phone to be able to find it.

# Example: texting a friend

Code	Interpretation
U01-01	They texted their friend to check on existing plans.
U01-02	To text a friend they had to first find their phone that is not always on them.
U01-03	They had to ask their significant other to call their phone to be able to find it.
U01-04	To text a friend they located an old SMS thread and simply "replied" to an unrelated message. It does not matter what the previous message was about.
U01-05	They then typed a message asking about dinner plans later that weekend. They read the message a few time before sending to make sure it was free from errors and that it "made sense."
U01-06	The friend does not always respond right away; that is fine as long as they hear back in time.



Example: texting a friend

Interviewer: “Could you please describe the last time you had your phone handy when you texted a friend?”

# Example: texting a friend

Code	Interpretation
U01-01	They texted their friend to check on existing plans.
U01-02	To text a friend they had to first find their phone that is not always on them.
U01-03	They had to ask their significant other to call their phone to be able to find it.
U01-04	To text a friend they located an old SMS thread and simply "replied" to an unrelated message. It does not matter what the previous message was about.
U01-05	They then typed a message asking about dinner plans later that weekend. They read the message a few time before sending to make sure it was free from errors and that it "made sense."
U01-06	The friend does not always respond right away; that is fine as long as they hear back in time.
U01-07	When phone is handy, they can text right away.

# Contextual Design

Contextual Inquiry

Interpretation

Consolidation

Design

The background is a dark collage of three images. On the left, a woman with curly hair is looking down at a smartphone. In the center, a hand holds a smartwatch with a blue band. On the right, there is a two-story house with a garage.

# Questions, comments, and/or concerns?

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