Context isn't just information, It's the interconnected tangible and intangible relationships with our enviornment, people, and our experiences.


Full Context is a futile endeavor, The more context a system has the more it needs to form a clear picture.
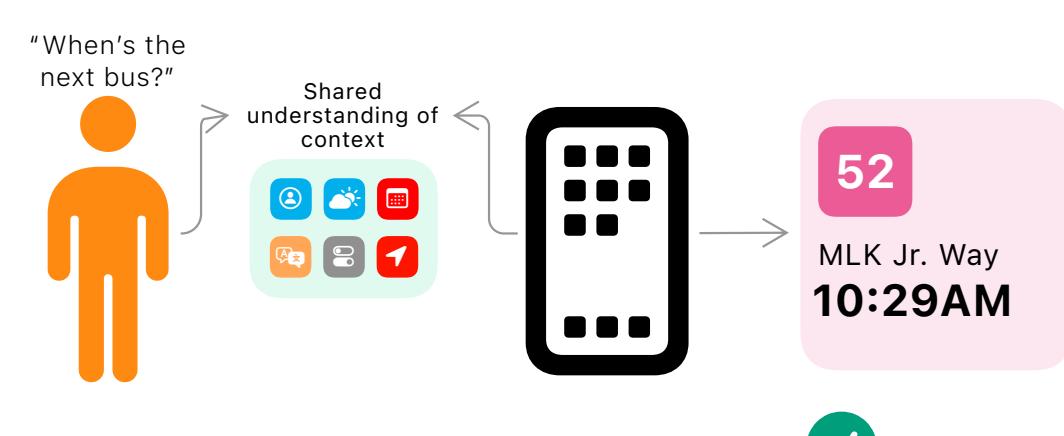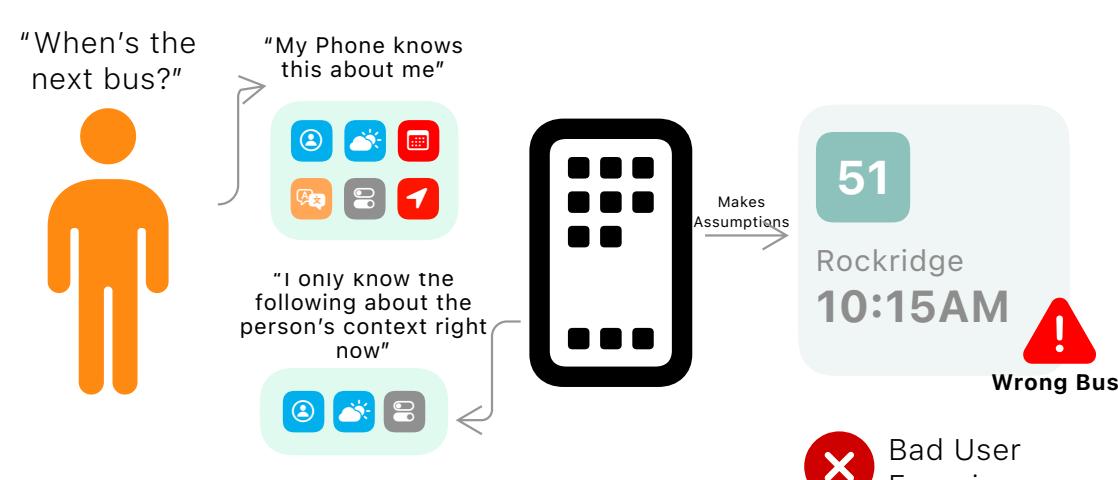

Bad Contextual Computing Happens not because there isn't enough context but because there's a lack of a shared understanding of context
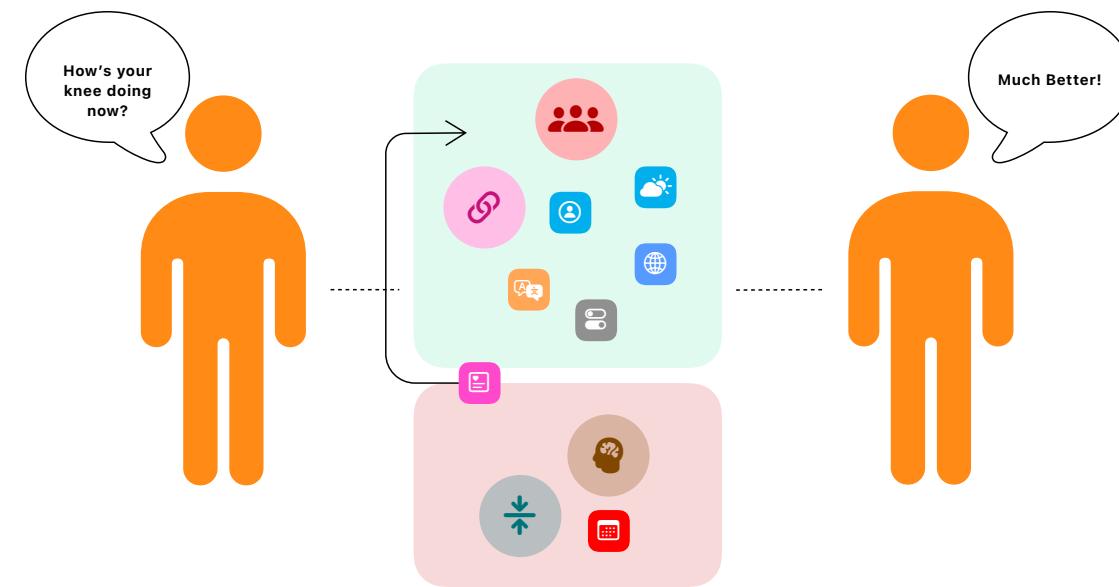
Context is negotiated through conversation Just like with people, context in human - computer interaction is negotiated by asking follow ups and failing gracefully.
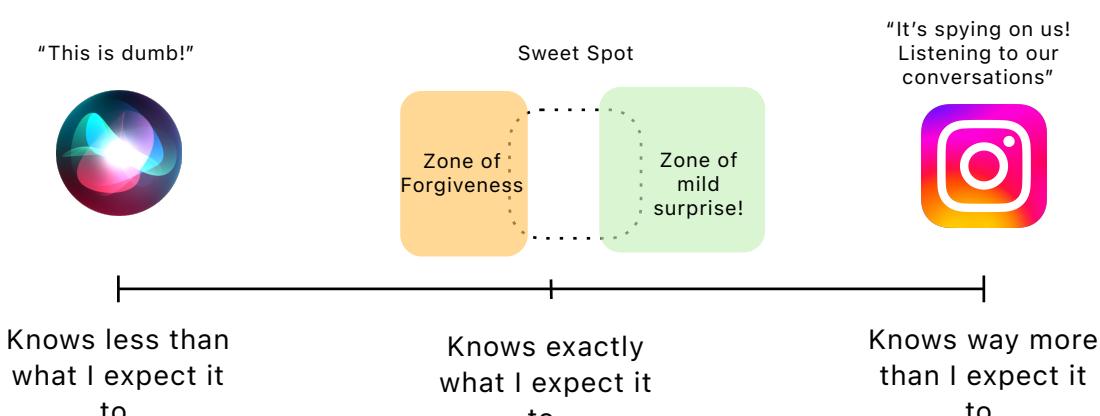
Shared Context maps people's mental models of what computers know about them.

A framework to Design for Context
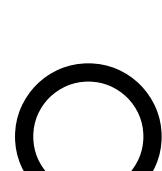
Context should be bounded
Interfaces must clearly show the bounds of a system's context

Ask Follow-Ups
When there's not enough context, ask before making assumptions
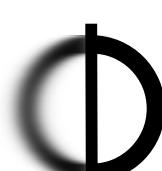
Context should be clear
Clearly display what lead to a certain decision.

Fail Gracefully
Everyone makes mistakes. It's important to provide clear pathways of resolving them.

Designing Good Contextual Computing Experiences

Vidit Bhargava

Contextual computing experiences don't fail because there's not enough context.

They fail because there's not enough shared understanding of context.

If the person using the computer knows and understands what the computer knows about them to perform an action, or in design lingo, "the UI's mental models match the user's mental models" the experiences are better.

The answer to contextual-computing is not more context. It's precise, limited and mutually understood context, it's about getting affordances and mental models of a UI right.

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