Contextual Inquiry

Theory and Application

A lecture with:
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Who are these guys?

- **Members of last term's grad HCI class**

- **Performed a pseudo contextual inquiry analysis of a system in development.**

Motivations: Why Contextual Inquiry?

- **To identify differences in workplaces that are seemingly very similar.**

- **Taking users out of context separates them from familiar cues, tools, and environmental aspects of their normal work environment.**

- **To efficiently gather information relevant to product development.**

- **To gather context sensitive information that is relevant and helpful.**

- **When asked questions out of context, users tend to speak in generalities.**

Basic Steps to Contextual Inquiry

- **Select Users to be Interviewed**

  Ideally people representative of all classes of users (managers, operators, technical support crew, etc.) should be involved in the interview process.

- **Interview users and record discussion**

  Interview is performed during a typical work session. Questions are asked in order to create an atmosphere of idea sharing.

- **Transcribe notes**

  Clarification of notes should be made soon after the interview is performed.

- **Analyze transcripts**

  Team analysis of transcribed notes in order to atomize concepts from interview.

- **Structuring of understanding**

  Group concepts into hierarchy. Organization of concepts if very important!

- **Implementation of learned concepts**

Our Work

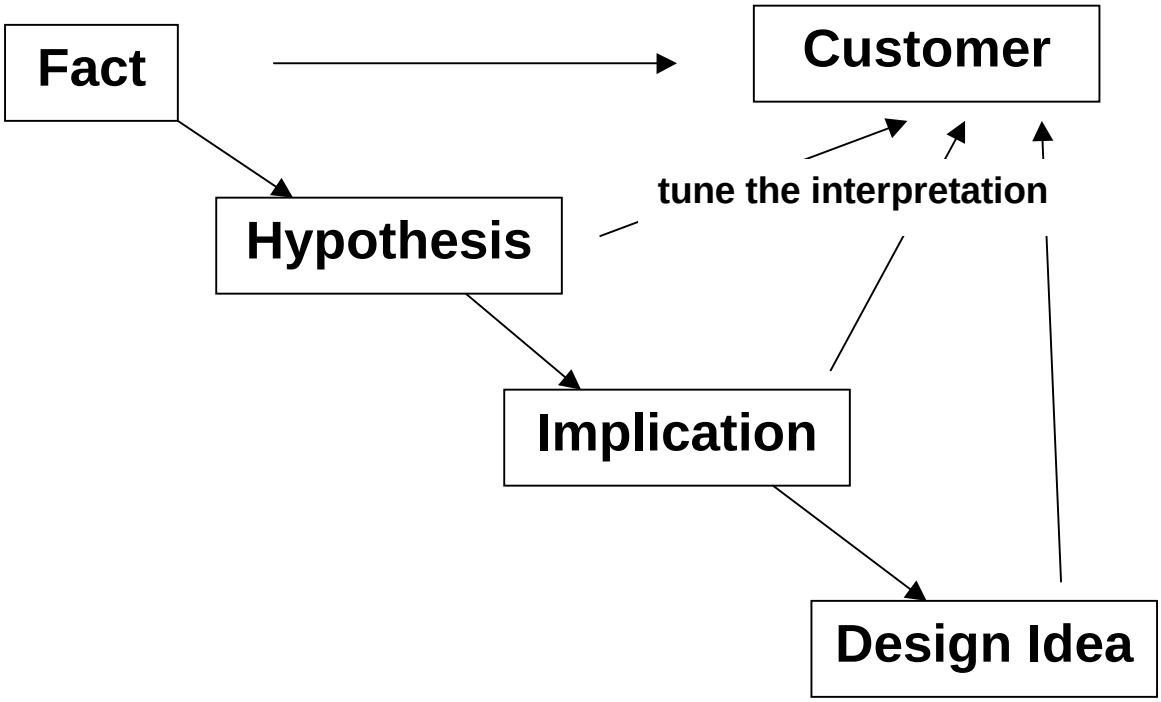
What we looked at:

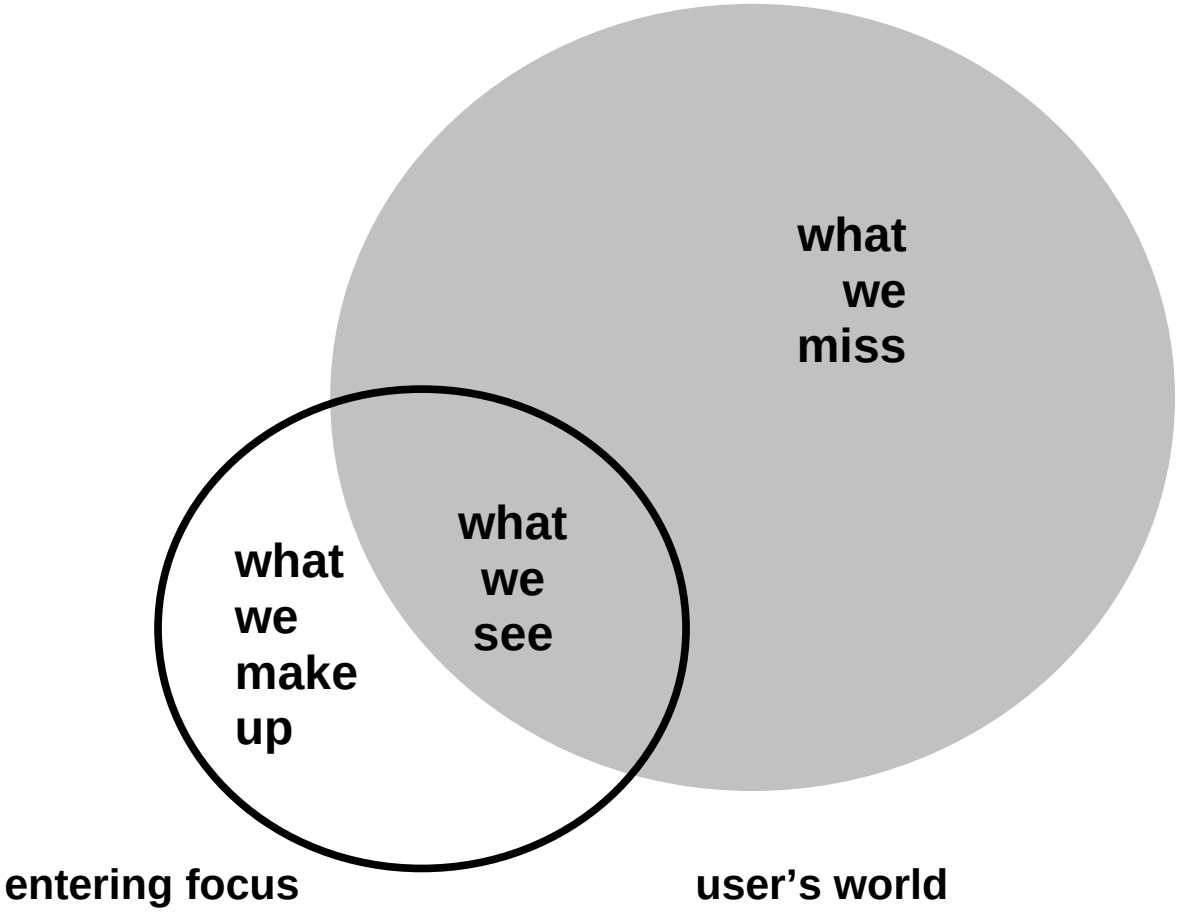
• PIE (Prototype information extractor) search engine: Developed by natural languages lab. Performs searches using popular commercial search engine tools, parses and reformats results for user.

What we did:

• Analysis of existing PIE search engine system using pseudo contextual inquiry technique.

• Analysis and development of possible prototypes using participatory design technique.


Fact
Customer
tune the interpretation
Hypothesis
Implication
Design Idea


what
we
miss
what
we
see
what
we
make
up
entering focus
user's world