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Guest Editors Introduction: Context for Software Developers

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1. Introduction

Software Developers routinely work on complex development tasks that require a wealth of detailed support information, such as the change history of the source code, the software architecture, the task assignments of other team members, and so on. All of this information provides the context for the development task. Today, the context that software developers work with comes from many sources; as such, it is multi-faceted and increasingly large in scale. Having many sources of context causes a considerable amount of context switching during the developers' work activity and increases the cognitive load of the developers. Thus, recent research has begun to investigate ways to provide this contextual information to developers when it is needed in order to minimize the amount of time developers must spend looking for this information on their own (e.g. [1, 2, 3, 4]).

The context of a task can provide rich information that can also be used to gain insights on other aspects of software development. Another line of research on this topic is how to mine and leverage this contextual information as it is created to gain insights to support software developers. For example, recent research mined developers' activities within their IDEs to facilitate developer

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