1 - Goal

An interesting phenomenon occurred during the occupy wall street (OWS) protests. In the absence of amplification through the microphone and speakers, when somebody addressed a spontaneously formed crowd, the people closest to the speaker for which their words were audible would repeat what was said by the people behind them, and so forth. As a personal project, I built a demo version of an app that combined this feature with the spatial audio used in the mural project.

2 - Innovation

When walking through the city, the app could automatically start pinging, using spatial audio to indicate where people gathered to protest a specific cause. These pings would be generated by the organizers or people already present at the rally. If this cause was important to you, you could move towards the rally to join the protest. And in doing so, you yourself would become an additional beacon to others in the area that might also want to join. Once close enough to those addressing the protesters, your phone would record the audio, convert it to text, and send it to phones (still) outside the range where they could adequately convert the audio to text, but still informing those with these phones what was being said. And the more smartphones get close enough, the better the audio quality of text will become and the better it can inform those who haven't been alerted to the protest, its cause, and its purpose. Perhaps best described as a technology-driven spontaneous flash mob.

3 - Impact

Ultimately, this methodology can inform people about ongoing protests they care about but did know where happening. In addition, the more 'voices' join, the better the message is spread, and (hopefully) the spontaneous crowd forming will be larger than if it was organized beforehand.

4 - Technologies Used

iOS

XCode

Swift