



# SUKEY

Open Source Junction 2011

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## *Introduction*

**Sukey** is a web and smartphone app that is designed to keep people safe, mobile and informed during demonstrations. We crowdsource updates from twitter and other online sources in order to provide our users with a timely overview of what is going on at a demonstration. We also provide our users with a map view, a compass view and the ability to send us reports and updates through the app itself.



## Who are Sukey?

**We** are a not-for-profit organisation made up of volunteers who work on the platform in their spare time. The main three members are Samuel Carlisle and Sam Gaus, who are the two programmers that came up with the original concept. Matthew Gaffen - the third member - is a design graduate who has helped with communicating the idea to the masses.

## Why Sukey?

**The** name Sukey stems from the popular children's nursery rhyme 'polly put the kettle on', the following line being 'Sukey take it off again'. The 'kettle' and the term 'kettling' is a reference to a legally questionable police tactic officially known as "enforced containment". The dubious nature of kettling and its use as a means of dissuading young people from taking part in protests helped inspire the creation of Sukey.



## *What is kettling?*

**"The** term "Kettling" describes a police tactic where cordons are formed that trap a large group in a specific area. This cordon is maintained for a number of hours without food, water or toilet facilities, tightening and reducing the space occupied by the protesters. The idea is that after many hours in a cramped space they are too tired to do anything but go home. It has been criticised for detaining innocent bystanders and human rights violations."





## *The Student Movement*

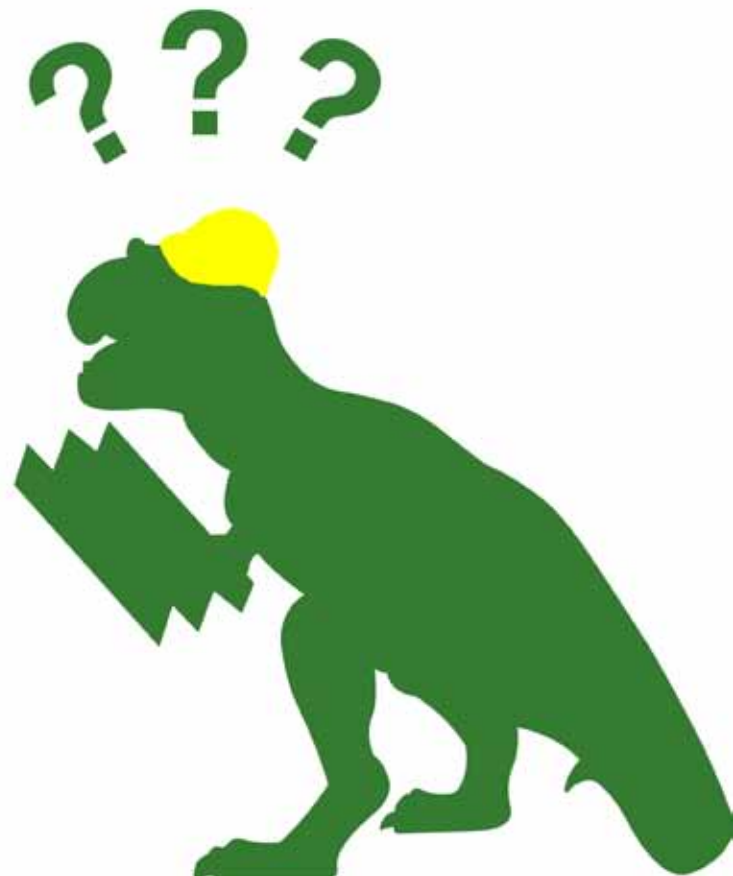
**Sukey** was born out of the student protest movement that stood in opposition to the raising of tuition fees. Large, self-organising groups of students throughout the country began to occupy rooms in universities, holding sit-ins, as well as their own alternative lectures and talks. They drew up lists of demands and held rallies against cuts in the public sector and are continuing to do so.



## The Live Protest Map

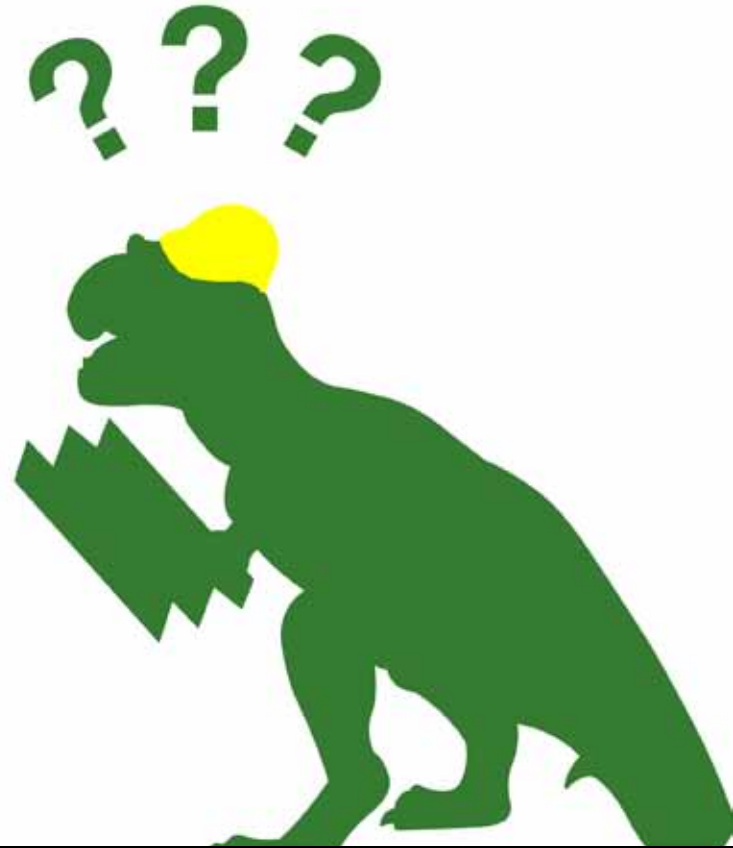
**While** we were at the UCL Occupation, the two Sams made a crowdsourced, collaboratively edited 'Live Protest Map' to help cover the protest on the 9th December. On that day we received about 60,000 hits on the map in about 3 hours. It was nothing more than a simple google form and a google map which were both wrapped up in bit.ly links that linked to each other in their descriptions. The idea is that people would submit updates to the form which we would receive and then update the map.





## *A brief overview*

**Sukey** is a combination of a message grading and cross-referencing system inspired by Ushahidi's swiftriver technology. This information is used to update a live map, which is the result of a custom mapping system. Combined with a twitter feed and a compass view, Sukey gives realtime data on the current status of a protest.



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## *Receiving data*

**We** scrape Twitter for messages on the day of a protest and use them to train a set of filters and we also score individual users on the relevancy of their information. This helps our system to learn which tweeters are bone fide and which give high-quality information and also helps us to quickly flag up and subsequently ignore trolls. Messages are not only scraped from twitter feeds- we also use other social networks, blogs and other live news sources.



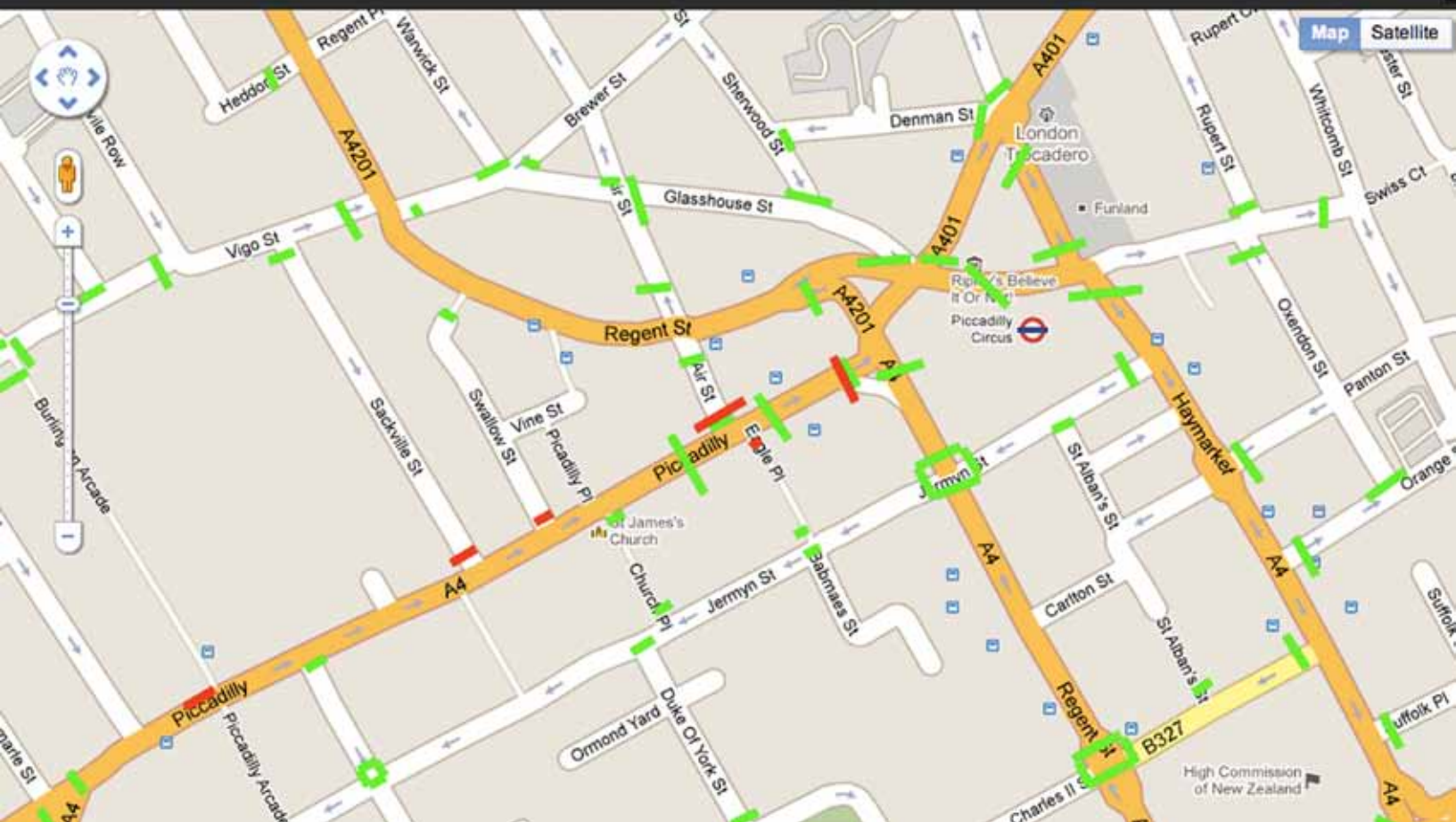


## Processing Data

**Once** data has been verified it is then condensed into a series of tweets that are sent back out to those using the app. This information is also used to update a live map of the protest and displays which exits have been blocked by police cordons and kettles.

## Crowd sourced mapping

**Before** Sukey's mapping feature can be deployed the protest area needs to be mapped. This is achieved through a mapping tool we have produced allows users to create 'zones' which mark out areas (often roads), and 'exits' - the intersections between zones. These exits are updated in realtime and displayed as an overlay to the map view.



## Map View

On the front end the exits come up in the map view as coloured lines. The line can be one of three colours which is used to indicate it's status. It works like a traffic light system; green indicates that an exit is passable and red indicates that we have had reports of a police cordon or kettle and so the route is blocked. Yellow is used in rapidly changing situations or where we feel we should report information on the map but the exit it is not actually blocked.

## Compass View

The compass view is a feature of the app that will be included in the next release. It uses the digital compass, accelerometers and GPS on a smartphone to localise the user and, having determined their current position and orientation, telling them which direction they might find the nearest clear exit.





## Inside the anti-kettling HQ

A group of young computer geeks is wielding a new weapon in the fight against controversial police tactics at demonstrations



Patrick Kingsley  
The Guardian, Thursday 3 February 2011  
[Article history](#)

“Cairo, it wasn't. But at about a quarter to four last Saturday afternoon, on a crowded backstreet in central London, something happened outside the Egyptian embassy that deserves at least a footnote in the annals of protest history. A crowd of students weren't kettled.”

## *Field-testing Sukey*

It can be difficult to measure the effectiveness of the app, mostly because it can be hard to measure the absence of a police kettle. However on January the 29th we saw what could be considered to be our first victory. In a situation outside the Egyptian embassy, the Police used our hashtag to inform us that they would **not** be kettling. We believe that good communication, enabled by Sukey, may have been responsible for this.

## *Deployment of webapp*

The most recent version of the app was deployed as a web app and can be found at [sukey.org/webapp](http://sukey.org/webapp) - essentially a web page that was optimised for being viewed on a smart phone and it includes our twitter updates, map view and reporting tool.





# SUKEY NEEDS YOU!

## *HELP!*

**Sukey** has come a long way, but we have only really taken our first baby steps. I would like to take this opportunity to invite you to get involved any way you can. Please get in contact via e-mail, twitter, make pull requests on git or offer your services as a translator. Also cash donations are always appreciated as they help us maintain our server, host hack days, and buy equipment for development.

Thanks for reading.