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# Don't Feel Like Talking? "Good Times" Can Tell

What do you get when you combine a pair of plush kitty ears, M2M, an Arduino development board, and cloud-based call management? If you're neuroscientist Ruggero Scorcioni (<http://www.linkedin.com/pub/ruggero-scorcioni/1/b39/372>), you get a mobile app called Good Times and the \$30,000 first prize in the Fast Pitch competition at the 2013 AT&T Developer Summit.

Scorcioni poured his twin careers in neuroscience and software engineering into the AT&T and Axeda M2M (<http://www.business.att.com/enterprise/Family/mobility-services/machine-to-machine/>) Challenges at the recent Summit Hackathon. The resulting Good Times app performs inbound filtering to let callers know, based on the mobile user's current mental state, whether or not it's a good time to talk.

### There's really an App for That?

Scorcioni was among the first 100 developers to arrive at the two-day Hackathon on Saturday morning, January 5, which entitled him to a free pair of Necomimi Brainwave Cat Ears from NeuroSky that wiggle when you're interested in something and fold down when you're relaxed.

To most, it looked like the kind of quirky gadget you'd expect to see at a hackathon, but Scorcioni looked at it through his background in neuroscience and saw it for what it is: a mobile electroencephalogram (EEG).

The Necomimi electrode on the forehead picks up electrical signals from your brain and transmits them by wire. A microcontroller discards electrical noise and uses NeuroSky's algorithms (<http://support.neurosky.com/kb/necomimi/how-does-necomimi-work-what-do-the-ear-movements-mean>) to interpret the brainwave data, then translates your mental state – relaxed, focused, both, neither – and sends it to servomotors that rotate the ears like a cat's ears.

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Scorcioni started getting the idea to do something fun with the signal from the electrode.

"I thought about how addicted I'm becoming to my smartphone," he explained, "and how much easier it would be to focus on a project – reading an article, painting a picture, writing software – if my phone were smart enough to know when I'm 'in the zone' and hold my calls automatically. Like a personal assistant who knows when it's a 'Good Time' to reach me."

### Seeding an idea in fertile ground at the hackathon

At the hackathon, Scorcioni began fitting his concept to all the free resources at his disposal to bring his vision to life:

- Necomimi Brainwave Cat Ears (<http://en.necomimi.com/>): He tapped into the cable going from the microcontroller to one of the ears, and sent the person's mental state to the Arduino board. When the Necomimi ears droop, the person wearing them is relaxed, signaling that it's a good time take a phone call; all other times are not.
- Arduino Leonardo board (<http://arduino.cc/en/Main/ArduinoBoardLeonardo>) with 3G shield: He saw an opportunity to tinker with 3G without worrying about SIMs and data plans.
- AT&T M2M Application Platform powered by Axeda (<http://att.m2m.com/>): He moved his data onto the Arduino board and uploaded it onto an M2M platform to work on.
- AT&T Call Management API (<http://developer.att.com/developer/forward.jsp?passedItemId=12700025>): He determined that telling this API it was not a good time to talk would make it hold the call and play a message to the caller.
- Experts, experts, experts: He mined the gold at the hackathon – human expertise. "With almost any technology, platform or API you wanted to use, the person who developed it was in the room for consultation," Scorcioni explained.

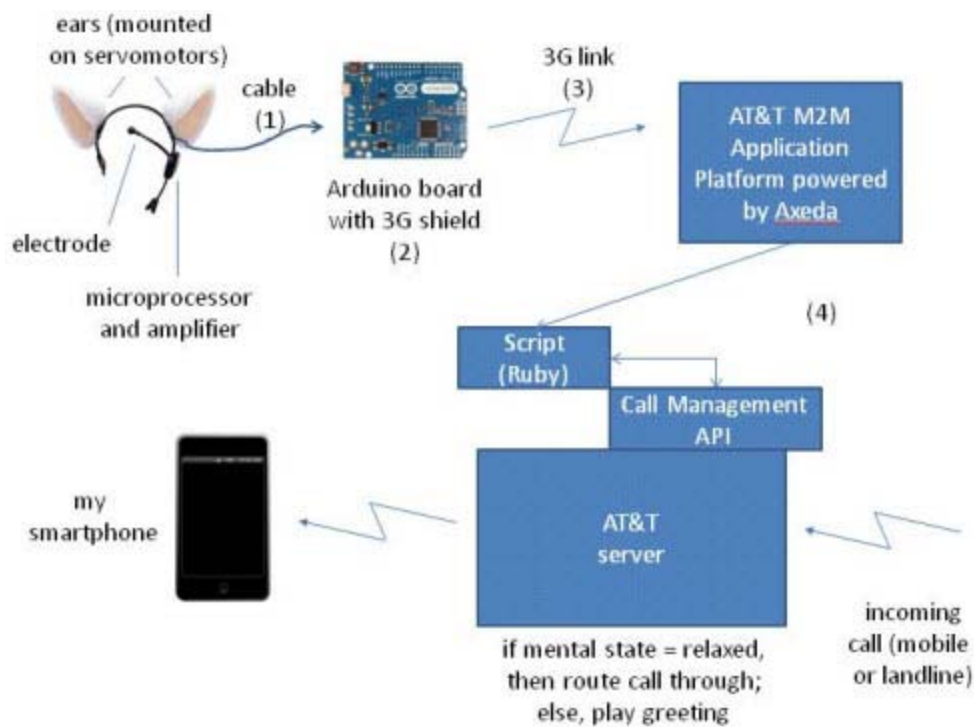
### Good Times is born – Are you ready to talk?

By Sunday, Scorcioni had mapped out Good Times, as shown in the accompanying diagram.

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The resulting app automatically screens each call based on your mental state. If you're not relaxed, your phone will not even ring because the AT&T Call Management API intercepts the call before it reaches your cell phone. The API works on the call in the cloud, before the call goes to the 3G link to your cell phone.

### Making Good Times great

As a contestant in the M2M Challenge of the Hackathon, Scorcioni won third place – and went on to take home the grand prize of \$30,000 at the Developer Summit. But Scorcioni sees additional potential in the AT&T Call Management API.

"How many things can we do when we have the ability to intercept a call?" he asks. "Good Times is a tiny step toward pausing the distractions from email, text and phone calls that keep us from focusing."

It's a cool M2M hack, too.

What can you do with tools like these? What would you like to try? Have a look at all the tools on the Links & Resources tab in the Enterprise Toolbox (<http://www.enterprisetoolbox.com/>). or join us at our next Hackathon (<http://hacksxsw.eventbrite.com/>) happening March 9-10 at SXSW. We'll be co-hosting a travel/location-based challenge with American Airlines.

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