CookEase

Water you listening to?

Problem
Young professionals don't have time to cook long meals in the kitchen because they are busy with work. Cooking involves unproductive waiting periods while water boils and ingredients microwave or bake.

Target User
Young professionals in their mid-to-late twenties are tech-savvy multi-taskers, but are still inexperienced as cooks. Because they lead busy personal and work lives, they care deeply about efficiency.

Solution
CookEase enables users to attend to important tasks around the house during the waiting stages of cooking by using audio-based machine learning to detect kitchen events such as water boiling, microwaves finishing, and tea kettles whistling. The app then notifies users and their friends via custom alarm, text, or email so they know when to return to the kitchen.

Design Evolution
Over the course of the semester, we designed, prototyped, evaluated and iterated on our application interface. Our prototypes (pictured above) were implemented from low-fidelity to high, using paper, Balsamiq® Mockups, and android code. Each prototype was evaluated qualitatively by members of our target user group, and their feedback was crucial to streamlining our design.

Final Prototype
Our final prototype (at right) supports all of the functionality laid out in our initial design, except graphical analytics, which is still under development. Users can select kitchen tasks to listen for, then set up local notifications via sound or notify friends via text or email. Future work could enable users to train their own custom kitchen event sounds or add more sophisticated analytics such as comparisons across users.