

Man with headphones on stops and looks at his phone on side of busy Tokyo street

BUBBLY

BUBBLY MODELS ITSELF AS VOICE-TWITTER.

Project URL: bubbly.net

Project Twitter: [@bubblyapp](https://twitter.com/bubblyapp)

- Community Engagement
- Audiovisual
- Data
- Mobile
- Social Software

It is unlikely you will have heard of Ryan Cepada, a 20-year-old architecture student from the province of Bukidnon on the island of Mindanao in the Philippines. Mindanao is remote: there is no airport and internet services are patchy. Yet Ryan has managed to attract a following of more than 200,000 fans who use their phones to listen to clips of him singing his own composition songs. He achieved all of that with little more than a standard Nokia phone.

Ryan's sudden popularity is due to Bubbly, a fast-growing platform for social networking, which in places like the Philippines and Japan has become a social network for singing. Bubbly has more than 30 million subscribers, mainly in Asia.

Bubbly started life as a simple tool to allow users to insert a voice message into an SMS. Now it is modelling itself as voice-Twitter. It allows users to record and then broadcast a short voice message to their followers. In India it is mainly used to provide short status updates. In Japan it is largely a service for people to sing to one another. The latest versions of the application come with a range of voice filters and background music.

It is not difficult to see the political and social potential of Bubbly: anyone armed with a smartphone could create the equivalent of a broadcast radio network for a small group. It points to a future in which we will be "socialcasting" as well as "broadcasting". In Asia in particular it could be used to spread information fast in areas where freedom of speech is limited, the internet is sparse and people want to organise to bring about social change.

Image 'On the phone | Ginza, Tokyo' courtesy of jamesjustin

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