

# Crowdsourcing Impossible Search Tasks

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## The Task

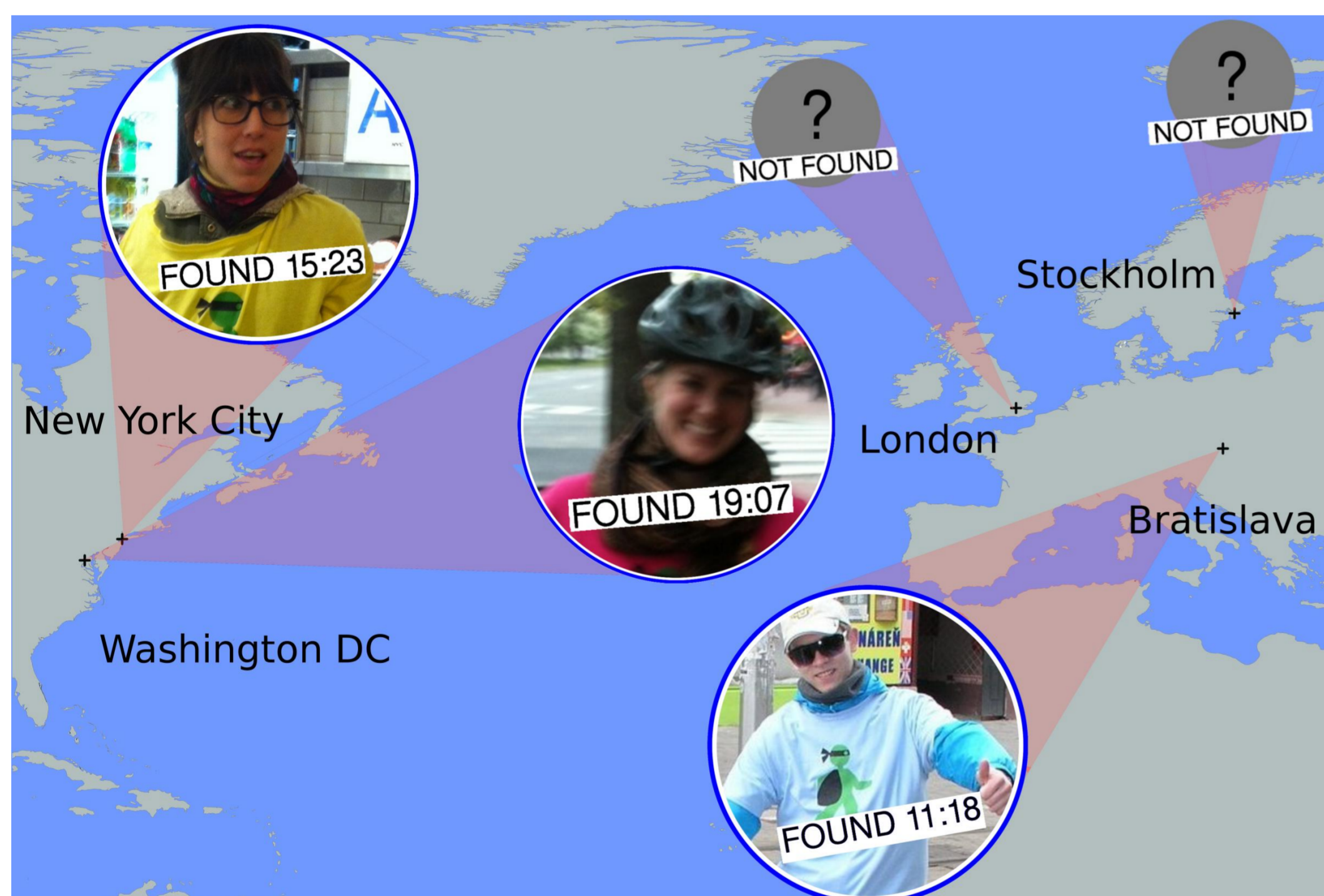
Here is a photo. Can you find this person in London today?  
...and do the same in New York, DC, Bratislava, and Stockholm

## The Tag Challenge

“Determine whether and how social media can be used to accomplish a realistic, time-sensitive, international law enforcement goal.”

## Lessons Learnt

- This can be done!
- Our team, CrowdScanner, found 3 targets and won the challenge



- reaching people with affinity for the task
  - 2 out of 3 targets found by people interested in crowdsourcing
- social networks (Facebook and Twitter) are not enough. Need publicity through more traditional online media
  - Slashdot posts, CNET, ZDNet, university press releases
- fair incentive scheme
  - all prize money goes to the crowd
  - incentives to recruit others as well as to search
- credibility
  - users believed us because of university affiliations and good track record in crowdsourcing

## Broader Context and Open Questions

### 2 years earlier: The Red Balloon Challenge

- 10 balloons discovered within 9 hours



- verification of information
  - how to filter our false reports?
- sustainability
  - how to generate interest for similar projects?
- role of competition
  - how does presence of competing teams affect completion of the task?