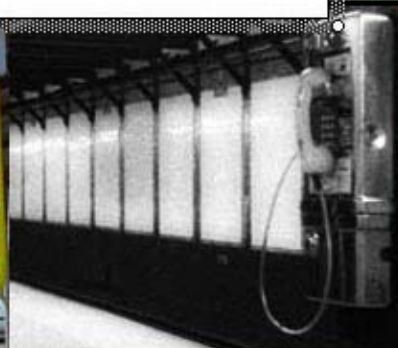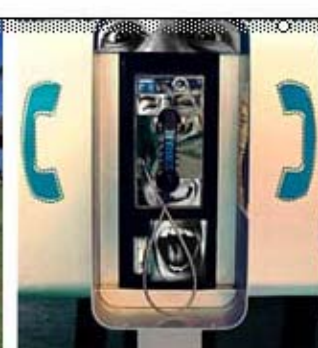# Alternate Reality Learning

pervasive & persistent game design,
massively multiplayer learning

Jane McGonigal

Community Lead/Designer @ 42 Entertainment
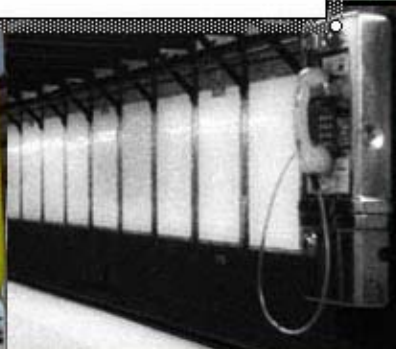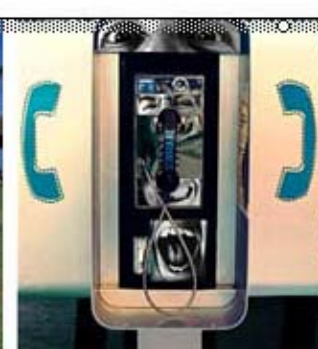Department of Performance Studies @ UC Berkeley

Alternate Reality Learning

pervasive & persistent game design, massively multiplayer learning

"Life imitates ARG."

– an alternate reality gamer

Jane McGonigal

Community Lead/Designer @ 42 Entertainment

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What is **Alternate Reality Gaming**?

An **interactive drama** played out online and in real-world spaces… taking place over several weeks or months… in which dozens, hundreds, or thousands of players come together online… form collaborative social networks… and work together to solve a mystery or problem… that would be absolutely *impossible* to solve alone.

THE EDUCATION ARCADE

Jane McGonigal
www.avantgame.com
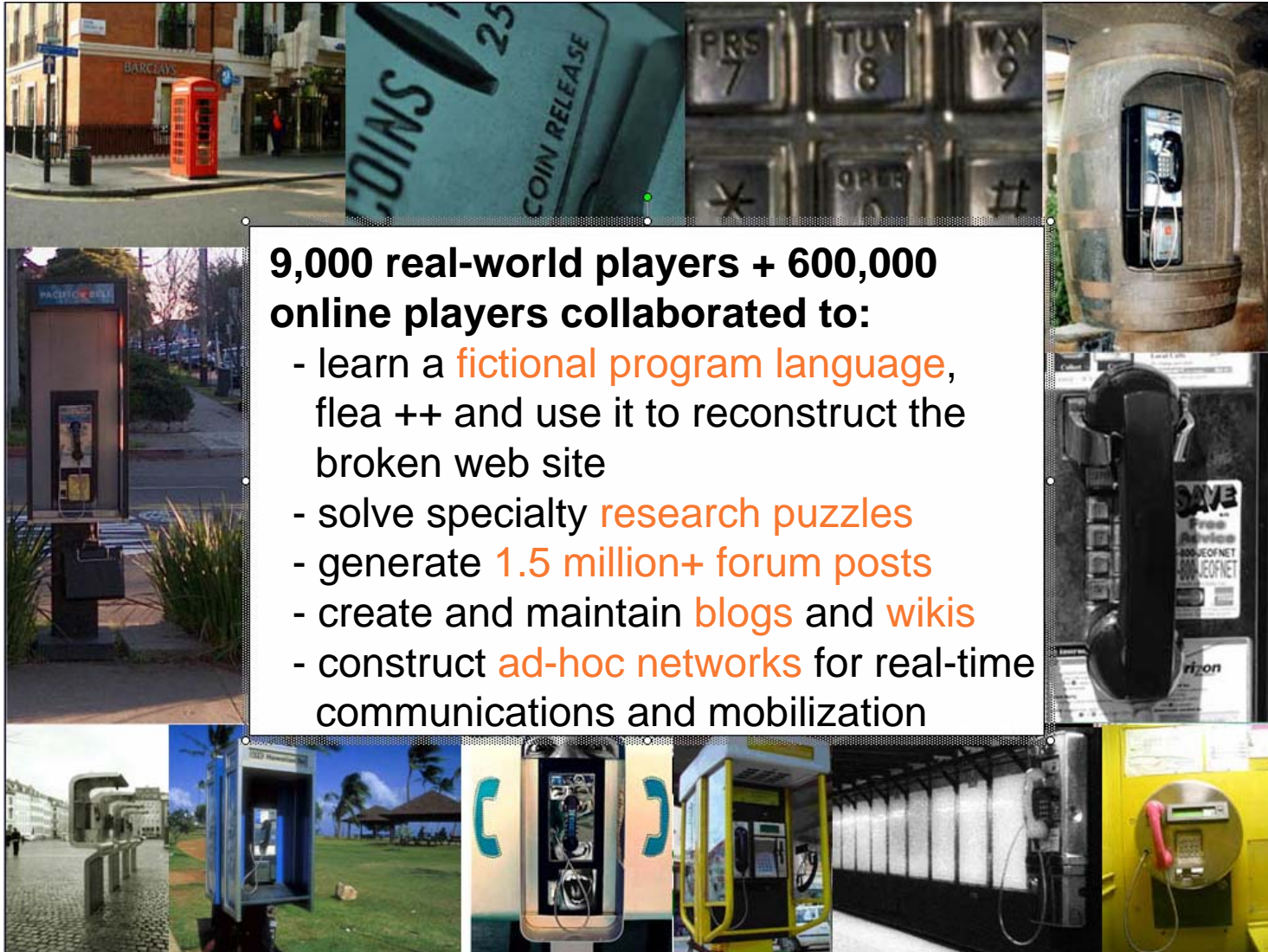
What was I Love Bees?

9,000 real-world players + 600,000 online players collaborated to:
- investigate the mystery: "Who hacked www.ilovebees.com, and why?"
- use GPS data and technology to locate and answer 40,000 payphone calls in 50 states & 8 countries
- compile, reconstruct and interpret a distributed 6 hour radio drama divided into 15-second fragments

Jane McGonigal
www.avantgame.com

What was **I Love Bees**?

9,000 real-world players + 600,000 online players collaborated to:
- learn a fictional program language, flea ++ and use it to reconstruct the broken web site
- solve specialty research puzzles
- generate 1.5 million+ forum posts
- create and maintain blogs and wikis
- construct ad-hoc networks for real-time communications and mobilization

Jane McGonigal
www.avantgame.com

Alternate Reality Learning

- interpret and analyze texts and data

- persuasive argument

- verbal expression (written and oral)

- logistical planning

- facility with new digital technologies

- construct, extend and operate successfully in social networks

- collective intelligence: large-group, differentiated collaboration

THE EDUCATION ARCADE

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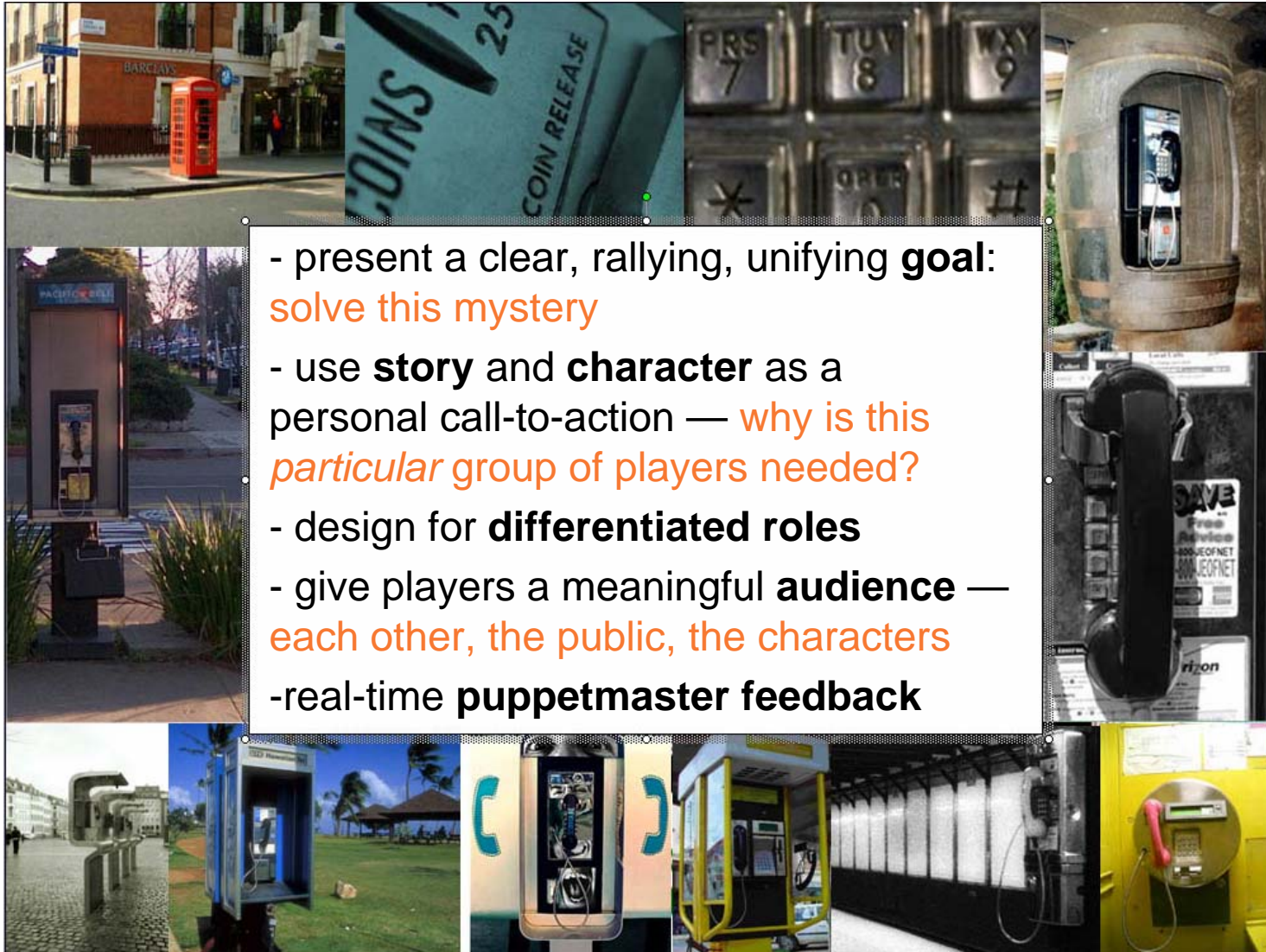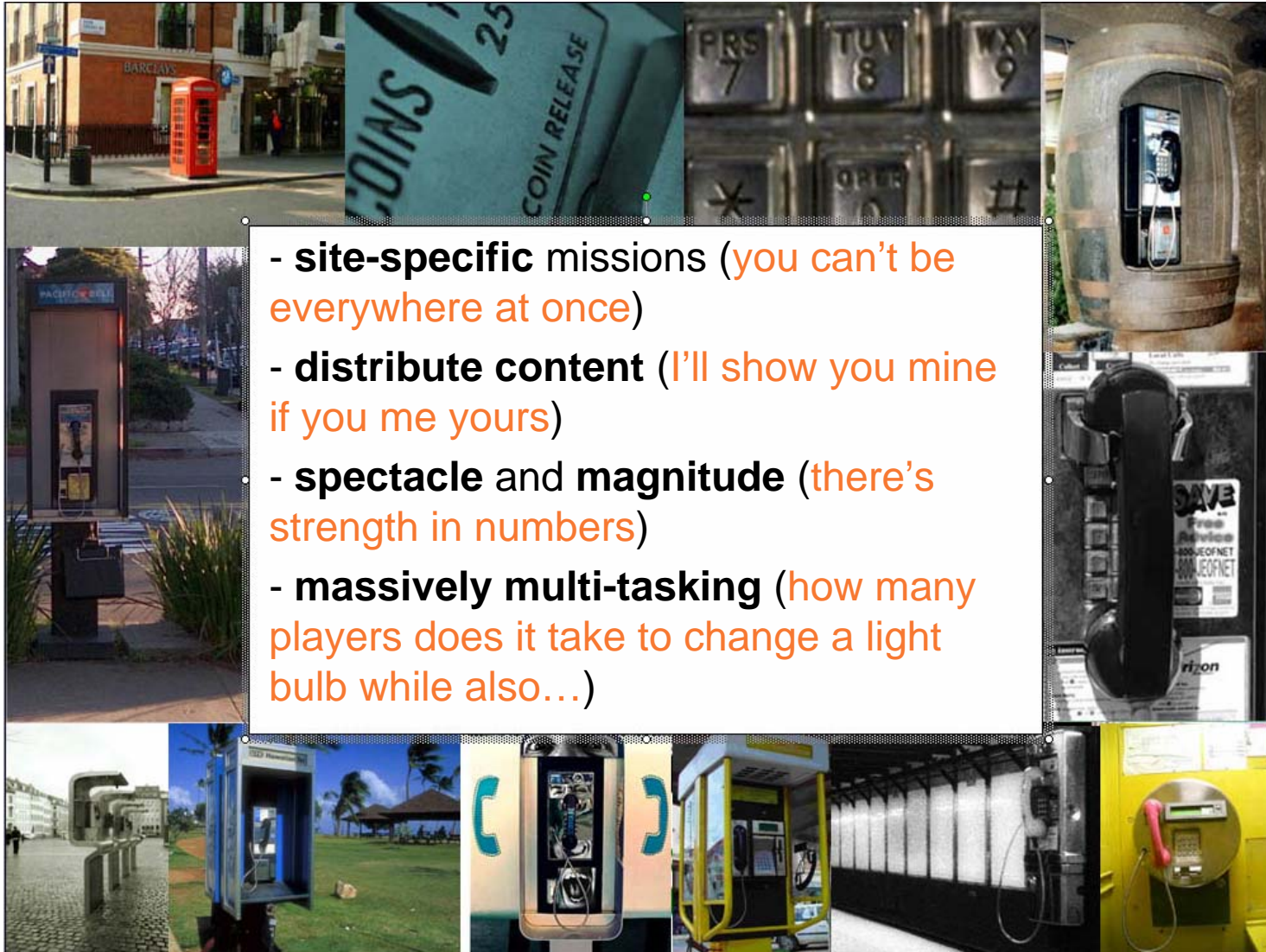www.avantgame.com

Design for Initial Engagement

- present a clear, rallying, unifying **goal**: solve this mystery

- use **story** and **character** as a personal call-to-action — why is this *particular* group of players needed?

- design for **differentiated roles**

- give players a meaningful **audience** — each other, the public, the characters

-real-time **puppetmaster feedback**

Design for Massive Collaboration

- **site-specific** missions (you can't be everywhere at once)

- **distribute content** (I'll show you mine if you me yours)

- **spectacle** and **magnitude** (there's strength in numbers)

- **massively multi-tasking** (how many players does it take to change a light bulb while also…)

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Design for **Persistence**

- **real play**, not role play (personality persists)

- **everyday technologies** (ubiquitous computing persists)

- **symbols** and **places** that will be **re-encountered** (local and media environments persist)

- digital **traces** of the **collective infrastructure** (network persists)

THE EDUCATION ARCADE

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Alternate Reality Learning

Resources: www.argn.com

www.immersionunlimited.com

www.unfiction.com

42 Entertainment

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