Alternate Reality Learning
pervasive & persistent game design,
massively multiplayer learning

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“Life imitates ARG.”
– an alternate reality gamer

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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.*
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
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
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- 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
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…)*
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*)
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Resources: www.argn.com
www.immersionunlimited.com
www.unfiction.com

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Web site: www.4orty2wo.com

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