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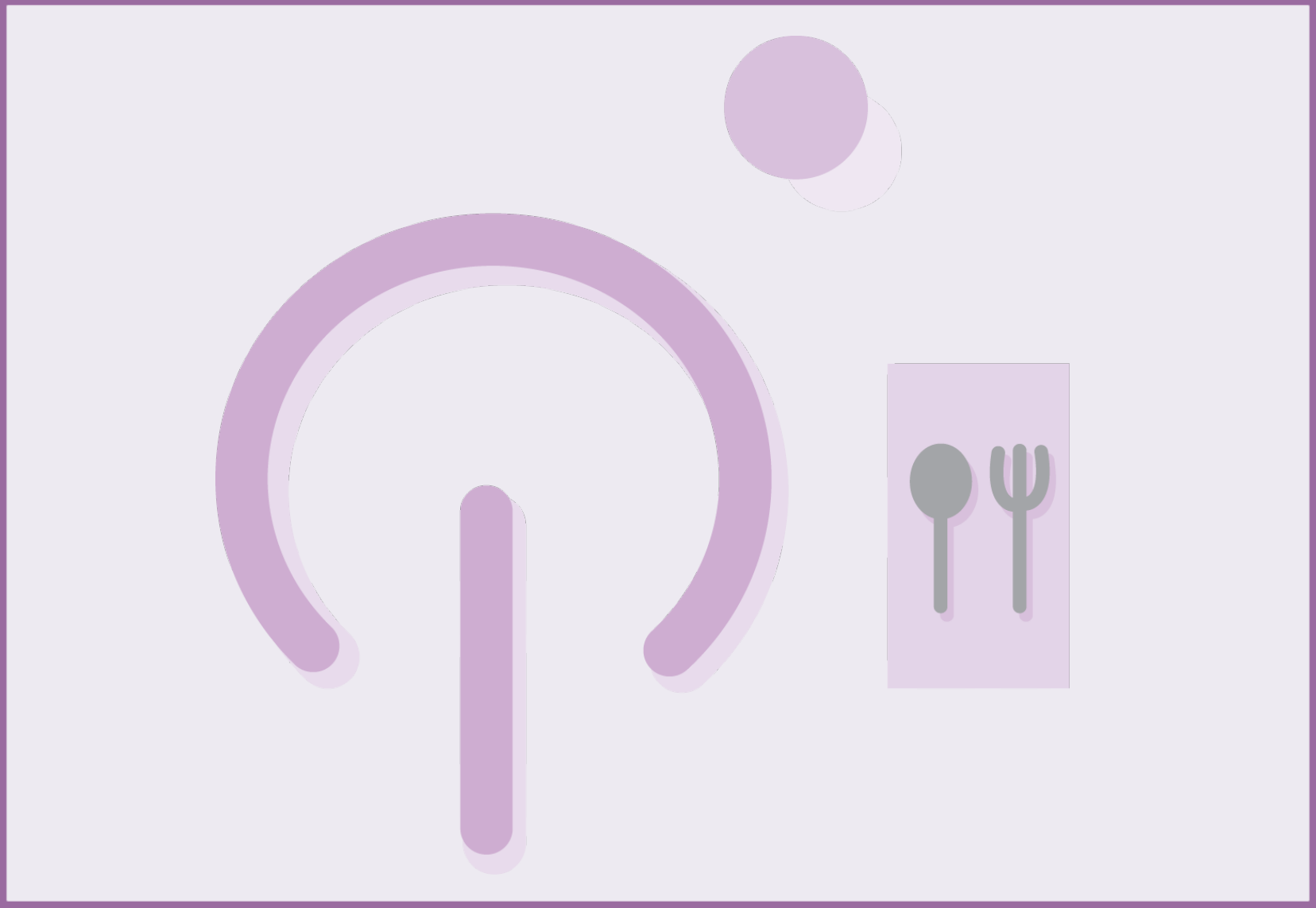

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Introduction

- In 2001, number of women starting in CS at UIUC was ridiculously low: 9%; way lower than fraction of women among faculty, or among students starting in mechanical engineering; retention was also worse than for men.
  - Decided to work on retention and recruitment
- Fixed first retention; started next outreach activities to increase recruitment
- No significant change in recruitment of women, so far
- But outreach activities very appreciated by participating undergraduate volunteers and high school students

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U of I Recruitment Initiatives

- **C**hicTech ("SHEEK-tek") – CS roadshow
- **T**echnical Ambassadors Competition (TAC) – for high school girls
- **G**ames 4 Girls competition (G4G) – for college girls
- **C**hicTech retreat – weekend on campus
- **WCS** – Women in CS club

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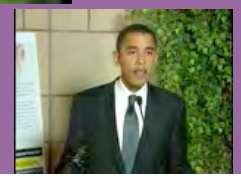

ChicTech Presentation

High School Visit

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Introduce CS

What is Computer Science?

The art of utilizing the
power of computers
to solve problems.

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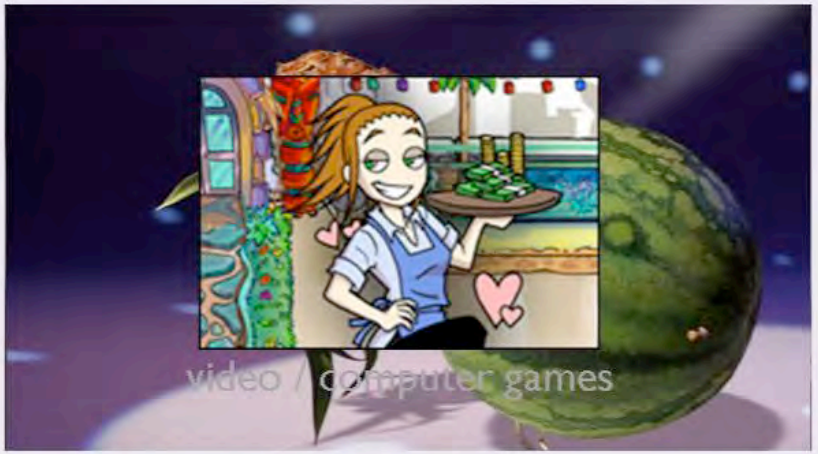
Make it appealing

creative?



computer graphics

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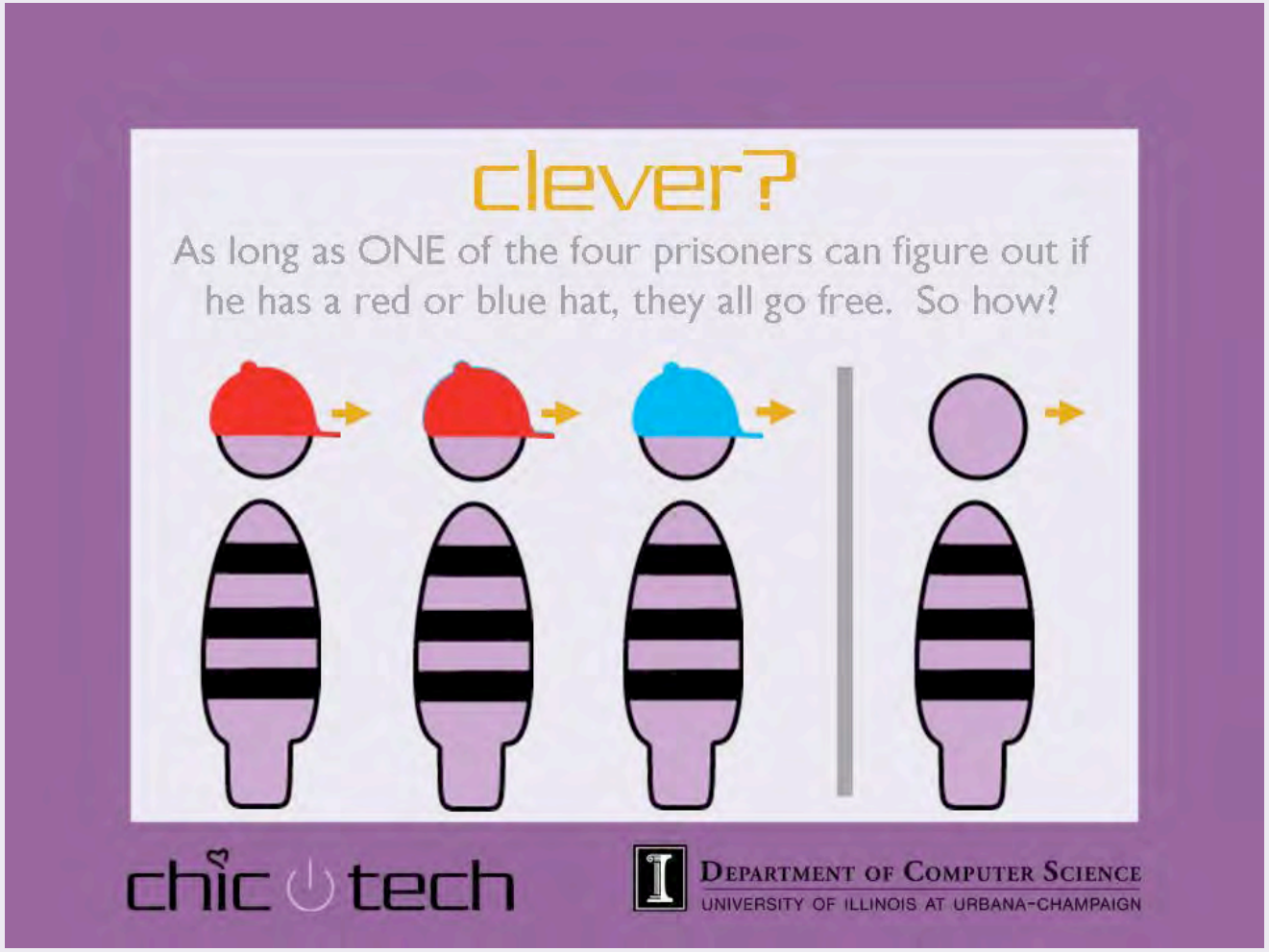
Do a puzzle



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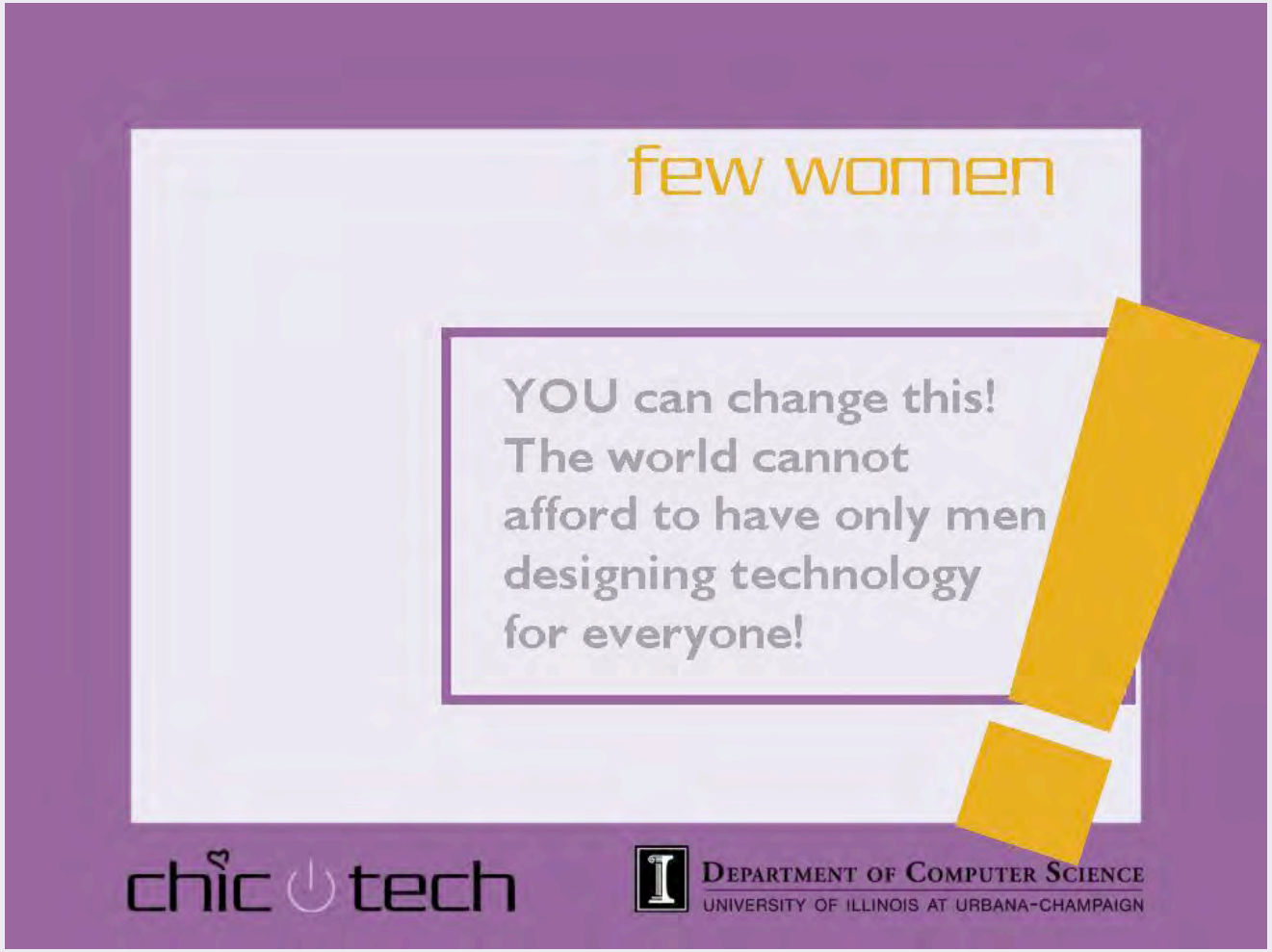
Say why we came



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Emphasize job quality

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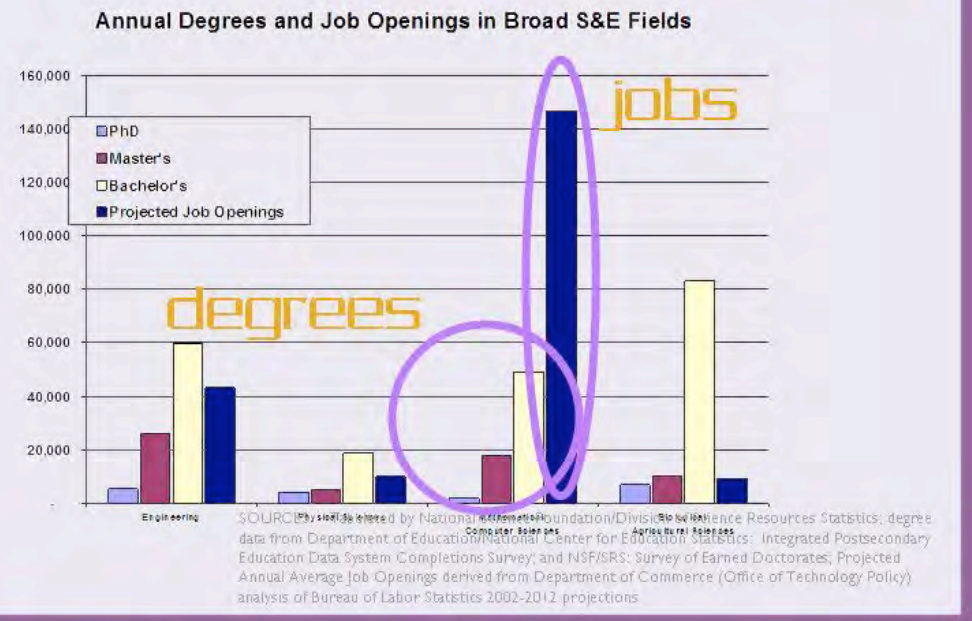
and availability

job availability



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ChicTech Presentation

and variety

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ChicTech

The numbers game: Need to address a lot of young women, because only a fraction will be interested, no matter what.

In 2007, Girls attending presentation by:

WCS/Alums: 315

Partner colleges reached several hundred.

Need an order of magnitude better!

Main challenge: Getting into schools

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Technical Ambassadors Competition

- **G**roups of girls build a technical project for the benefit of a non-profit organization in their community
- **F**inal projects are evaluated by a panel of faculty judges
- **P**rojects are judged according to a variety of criteria, especially usefulness of the product to the client
- $300 cash prize for 1st Place; $150 for 2nd & 3rd Place

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Technical Ambassadors Competition

Examples of 2008 TAC projects:

- Website for Albany Park Community Center

- Intro Video for Excel Youth Center
- Website for FASHIC

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Technical Ambassadors Competition

- With this competition ChicTech offers an opportunity and an incentive for girls to realize the satisfaction of applying technology to address community problems. It shows that solving such problems requires creativity and teamwork
- Afterwards, contestants are invited to a two-day weekend retreat on the UIUC campus

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Games for Girls Competition

- **C**omputer competition for college girls, known as 'Games 4 Girls' (G4G) Objective is to create games that will appeal to high school and younger girls
- **T**eams up to five college women students + faculty advisor to create computer games
- **E**ntries judged by professionals and high school girls at Retreat
- 1k for 1st place; $500 2nd & 3rd Place
- 1k Donation to 1st Place Women's Program
- Mostly built using Gamemaker

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2008 Winners

1st place AU

The game is a narrated spy game where you have to solve the codes (similar to 'Hang Man') in order to catch the criminal who travels from country to country.

2nd place OSU

This is a story about the dreams of a hot-tempered girl named Kaliope

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2008 Winners

- 3rd place: Cornell and Hobart & William Smith

- Games are available for download!

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ChicTech Retreat

- Takes place in April after the Competition deadline
- Involves high school and college women who participate in the TAC and G4G competitions
- In addition to many of the planned activities, the retreat features judging for both competitions
- High school girls interact personally with ChicTech volunteers and participate in engaging activities and workshops
- At presentation and award ceremony, winners win cash prizes and team acrylics, and all participants received an award certificate

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ChicTech Retreat Weekend

April 19 – April 20, 2008

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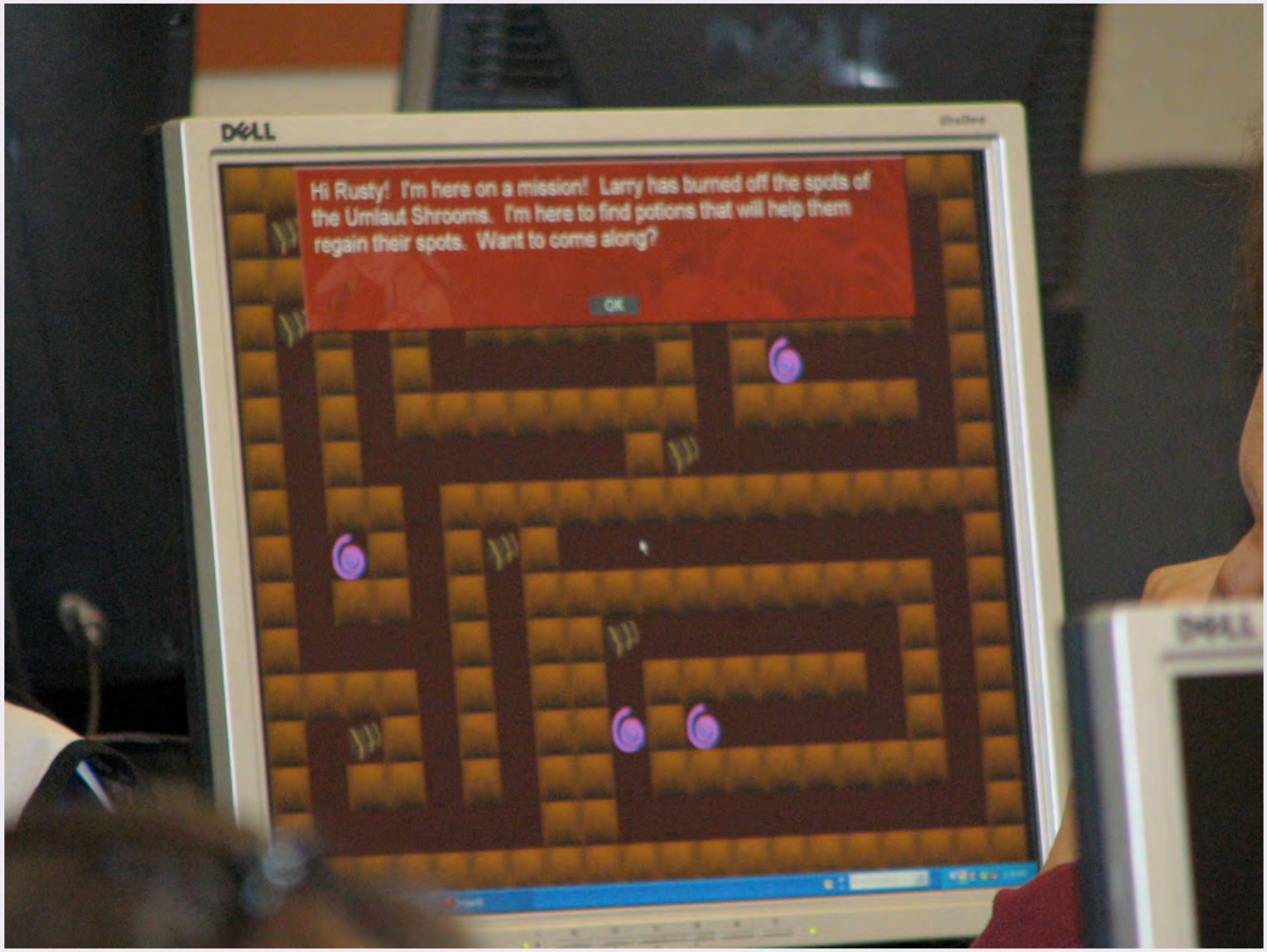

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Other Outreach Initiatives

- **S**ummer GAMES camp: Twenty middle-school girls, one week, game programming
- '**S**queak' workshops: Exposure to introductory programming for middle-school children
- **L**EGO Robotics competition – over 100 girls participate

Women in CS

Department support helps WCS engage in numerous activities

- **C**hicTech, TAC, Retreat
- **F**reshman picnic
- **A**nnual awards banquet
- **M**entoring (jrs/srs mentor freshmen)
- **T**echnical project for Engineering Open House
- **O**utside speakers, social events, etc.

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For more info, see www.cs.uiuc.edu\outreach

The End

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