

## PHONE-CONTROLLED GAMING ON A JUMBOTRON

 TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Megaphone has devised a novel way to make mega-screen advertisements draw crowds. Anyone within view of a large video display managed by [Megaphone](#) can join in a simple video game by calling in with their cell phones, with their phones serving as makeshift game controllers. As a video on Megaphone's website demonstrates, those linked into the game can fire weapons at space-alien attackers while seeing their own avatar along with those of other players. The graphics look like vintage '70s video games, which has a certain retro appeal. And keeping the games simple makes it easy for anyone to join in. Megaphone's founders note that their current games offer only a hint at what's possible. They see applications for their interactive displays in clubs, concerts, movie theatres, sports stadiums and world-famous urban locations such Times Square in New York or the Shibuya crossing in Tokyo. Among the possible features: crowds playing at two separate locations could compete with one another. Besides gaming, the displays could also serve as makeshift voting booths or a way for concert goers to select a performer's next song. The essential appeal is audience participation on a massive scale. Participants get a sense they're contributing to a larger effort, in the same way stadium goers continue to enjoy creating the wave during sporting events. With multitudes of users participating, everyone also retains some needed anonymity. If you play poorly, no one will know. 😊 And Megaphone is yet another example of harnessing cell phones to enhance a marketing effort. Last September we [profiled](#) a feature at VFestival that let festival goers download applications such as blinking screens intended to help people find each other. Similarly, a UK ad firm we [wrote about](#) in August lets cell-phone carrying pedestrians download product information, songs and ring tones from the company's storefront video displays. No doubt there's a long list of major advertisers the world over who are eager to see more. Spotted by: Ozgur Alaz

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