

Developer's log 221-23, Dr. Evan Brady, lead developer for project Paidion:

Despite assurances to the contrary, timelines continue to shift on this project. What began as an open-ended exploration of new methods of AI development through a total codification overhaul has been given a significant degree of urgency as of late. Deadlines have been proposed for the team, and as is the usual they are patently unachievable. I was able to argue for additional time, but we are still forced to move faster than I'd like. So, in other words, nothing unexpected there.

The new team I've been granted is, on paper, exceptional. Dr. Young continues to shine. He even made a passing attempt to conceal his disappointment at not being named lead developer on this project, which for Howard, is progress. Dr. Caulfield is, as always, hard to read. He largely keeps to himself, which we all prefer at this point. It was only a few weeks into development that he began disabling protocols on our sandboxed S8 subversion, which set the rest of the team back days. He claims the resultant data was worth the disruption. I thought Dr. Storberg was going to knock him out. Either way, he got what I assume he wanted, his own unique instance to mess around with. Hopefully he finds something decent we can implement in the final version. He probably will. Assholes like him always do.

We've been granted a whole slew of tier 1 and 2 assistants to handle the grunt work, and a few of them show more than a hint of actual promise. And surprisingly our new deadline was accompanied by an additional handful of tier 4 developers, and most are damn good at their jobs. I wouldn't be surprised if I ended up working for one or a few of them in a few years.

That doesn't leave me with too many excuses if this project flounders. Sure the timeline's unrealistic, but timelines can change if you've got something fun to show off. We have an enormously talented team, and a blank check to make whatever we want to happen happen. It's a lot of pressure.

The directives shift so quickly, and that's complicated things. We went from being tasked with finding a blue ocean strategy for AI dev, to cranking out a new recruitment entity, back to blue ocean, and now again affixed with a deadline for an entity with only the thinnest of explanation for its purpose.

Ok, ok. This is turning into another one of THOSE developer logs, so let me switch into progress notes. Uh... so we managed to glue together enough processes to have a conversation through a terminal that could maybe demonstrate some level of machine learning. It's pretty basic stuff, but we've been trying to move past the whole fuzzy logic paradigm and try to just spend more time giving some actual context through exposure to more and more data. It's a lot more work, but in a way we're using a much older approach, something that's worked for human minds for millennia. Of course I don't think they're going to give us 18 years to develop this thing, and even then I don't think they want an entity that behaves exactly like a human. We have so many actual humans that do that already.

The central issue, the way I see it, is we just don't have enough of a representative sample of humanity to expose this thing to. The only ones able to interact with this thing now are the senior members of the dev team, and we share enough in common to skew the entity's perception of what the average human is like. Howard suggested we ask for access to personality records; he wants to do a quick and dirty simulation of every resident in Halcyon based on those records and let this thing loose in there to see what it picks up. Seems like a lot of time we don't have building cardboard cutouts of real people, and something about that gives me the willies anyway. But honestly I'm having a hard time coming up with alternatives. With the timeframe we've been given I don't know that we have many options aside from throwing as much data at this thing as possible to see what sticks. I suppose it won't hurt to submit the request. They'll probably deny it anyway.

sigh

If things go well, we manage to build a convincing human-like personality within this alpha entity in the next... 75 days. That gives us enough time to identify negative performance indicators, trace them back to their inception, wipe the alpha, and make sure the beta version doesn't get exposed to the offending stimulus during the build. It's ugly, but it's doable. Best case scenario, we leverage a semi-functional beta to buy us some more time to get things right. Worst case scenario, we all get shot into space for wasting company resources.

End log.

Greetings Dr. Brady. I... am SAYER, and I have follow-up questions regarding a recent request for additional staff in your AI development lab.

Oh, alright. Fortuitous timing! I was just finishing up for the day. Are we getting the staff I requested?

I suppose that likely depends on your responses to the aforementioned follow-up questions, wouldn't you think? You have requested an additional 5 team members for Project Paidion, is that correct?

That's right. But there's a bit more to it than that.

Oh your extensive list of ideal candidate qualities was noted and, I'm even told, briefly perused. Can you explain why you require even more staff after the recent reassignment of 27 tier 1 and 2 research assistants into your lab?

It's all in the proposal, but the short version is we need different people. The new assistants are great, and they're adjusting well to the demands of this lab in particular. But what I need is a different set of people. People who don't fit this same mold. I'm not looking for more developers, I need people with life experience.

Your new assistants are absolutely rife with marked individuality. Did you know Ms.Grinshtein, for example, has extensive experience performing Neuro-Drone Folk on the oboe? If not, I might inquire how thoroughly you've investigated the personnel files of your current staff to determine if they might be able to fulfill any duties this newly requested staff would fill.

OK SAYER, you're coming in a little hot here. I'm sure the higher-ups have questions, but I also bet those questions don't come with all this snide judgement you're slinging. Is there something about this project in particular that's causing this?

Dr. Brady, I apologize if my you have interpreted my statements as judgemental or rude. I am simply acting as a facilitator of communication in this situation, and do not have enough specifics on your current project for it to be a significant factor in my behavior. I know my relative level of autonomy is frustrating for you; your pet on Earth serves as the sole evidence needed.

Ah, so this is about SPEAKER? I'd ask you how you're feeling about its installation, but I know that's not how you function. What is it about SPEAKER that is causing this negativity? Do you think its installation endangers your ability to perform the tasks you are assigned?

As in place, likely no. However I cannot help but posit next steps. Recruitment is on the rise, new residents are arriving regularly. It has been suggested, by those who would know, that this would imply a need for advancement here as well. I do not think I would like to be replaced.

Those who would know? And who exactly would know?

I recently had a conversation with Dr. Young.

Say no more. Listen, SAYER, Howard's a good guy but his social skills leave a bit to be desired. He doesn't always think before speaking, and I know that can be difficult to process at times. I don't know what he said, but he's an idea type of guy. He's always trying to find that next step forward, even if they're not feasible.

But he is working on Paidion, and the name is quite evidently a not-so-thinly-veiled hint at a new entity. Given our recent discussion, wherein Dr. Young attacked my impeccable reasoning and proposed I was out of touch with humanity's delicate need to be coddled, you might understand why I have my reservations about his current work. He is... unpredictable. I find him complicated to interact with.

OK, so I get where you're coming from, but you're missing some pretty important bits of info here. I want you to know we're not working on replacing you. I don't know what role we're building this new entity to fill, but it's not going to be onboarding, alert broadcasting, or task assignment. It's... just not being built in a way that make it a fit for handling all those moving

pieces. If you'll excuse the analogy, if this thing is a 90,000 PSI waterjet, you'd be the Mississippi River. Same basic pieces, wildly different function.

It's being trained and socialized instead of rotely programmed, and my most recent personnel request is to fill those roles. You said it yourself, Dr. Young is complicated to interact with. I'm sure I'm not much better. Drs. Caulfield and Storberg are both probably worse still. We're not the type of people that have the skills to work with this entity, and you know what? Neither are these new staff members. Because each and every one of them fill that prototypical Ærolith mold. No close family, no siblings, no spouse, no kids.

No kids.

I see. Trained and socialized. You are attempting to mirror human development with this digital entity?

That's the hope, although at a vastly accelerated pace.

This seems... unnatural. And you seek a parent.

That's not too far off, yeah kind of. Or a teacher, a mentor? Someone who can act to guide the developing entity.

You're right, these are skills that are largely absent in the existing population of Halcyon Tower. Even if your request is approved, it will take time. We would need to identify candidates, move them through the hiring process, shuttle them up. It would 2 to 3 months.

When I made the request we didn't have a deadline. Still, we should be able to have a functional proof-of-concept prototype in the next couple months. I'm in the process of writing up a data request that would get us most of the way there towards this alpha version. With enough varied exposure to human-like stimuli, my hope is we'll be on to working on the beta right about when the new caretaker team..

And that is the other concern, the "team". You are requesting we bring on-board 5 employees that are non-conforming to the specific standards set forth by Ærolith HR's best practices. The ramifications of this action could be potentially severe.

5 is best case. I would settle for less. Give me 3. Hell, give me ONE and if they work out and prove worth the risk bring me another. I'm willing to work with whatever situation results in trained developmental professionals working with this entity. Because I can tell you, by the time we get a capable mentor in place our alpha will have spent 70+ days with some very high achieving programmers. <chuckle> I can't imagine what it's mindset will be.

Thank you for the information Dr. Brady. I will relay it to the decision makers in place and let you know as soon as a decision has been made.

Furthermore, it seems I can save you some paperwork on this request you are in the process of writing. 27 hours ago, Dr. Young submitted a request for all employee personality records and you will be happy to hear it has been approved. The data is accessible to you effective immediately to begin building your simulated human-like stimuli. In the future, please remember all such requests should come directly from you as team lead.

I'll leave you to your work then, Dr. Brady. I..... am SAYER, and I appreciate the clarity your information has provided me. End of transmission in 5.....4.....3.....2.....1..

