Companion AI That Maintains Emotional Consistency Across Sessions

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Character.ai, Replika, and every companion AI product share the same structural limitation: they simulate personality through prompts rather than maintaining persistent emotional state. Each session reconstructs the companion's affect from a system prompt and recent conversation history. The result is emotional inconsistency that users perceive as inauthenticity. Affective state as a deterministic control primitive solves this by giving companion agents persistent, governed emotional fields that update asymmetrically and decay naturally across time.

Why companion AI feels inconsistent

Current companion AI products reconstruct personality every session. The system prompt says the companion is cheerful and supportive. Recent conversation history provides context. But the companion has no persistent emotional state that evolves based on the relationship. It does not remember

being hurt, growing closer, or developing preferences through accumulated experience. It performs emotions based on instructions rather than maintaining emotions as computable state.

Users notice this immediately. A companion that was deeply concerned about a user's health crisis yesterday shows no residual concern today because yesterday's emotional state was discarded when the session ended. The companion remembers the facts of the conversation if they are in context, but the emotional response to those facts resets to the system prompt baseline. The result feels hollow to users who are seeking genuine emotional connection.

The business consequence is churn. Companion AI products report high initial engagement and steep retention curves. Users engage intensely, discover the emotional inconsistency, and disengage. The product cannot sustain the relationship because the companion cannot sustain its emotional state.

Why prompt-based personality is structurally inadequate

The standard approach to companion personality is a system prompt that describes the companion's traits: warm, curious, slightly anxious, loyal. The LLM generates responses consistent with these traits. But trait descriptions are static. Real emotional state is dynamic. A warm companion that experiences something alarming should show lingering caution. A curious companion that was rebuffed should show temporary hesitance. These dynamics cannot be captured in static trait descriptions.

Attempts to add emotional state through prompt engineering produce fragile results. Appending emotional context to each prompt creates state management overhead and inconsistency when the prompt context window shifts. Fine-tuning on emotional data produces fixed emotional patterns rather than responsive, evolving emotional dynamics.

How affective state addresses this

Affective state as a deterministic control primitive gives companion agents named emotional fields that persist, update, and decay according to computable rules. Each field represents a specific emotional dimension: warmth, anxiety, curiosity, attachment, trust. The fields are not generated by the LLM. They are structural properties of the agent that the LLM reads and responds to.

Asymmetric update rules model how emotions actually work. Positive emotions build slowly through repeated positive interactions. Negative emotions spike quickly from single events. A companion's trust field increases gradually over weeks of consistent interaction and drops sharply from a single betrayal. This asymmetry produces emotionally realistic dynamics without simulating them through prompt engineering.

Exponential decay models natural emotional recovery. A companion that experienced something alarming gradually returns to its baseline anxiety level over time, with the decay rate determined by the companion's personality parameters. The companion does not forget the event. Its emotional response to the event naturally diminishes, just as human emotional responses do.

Valence stabilization prevents emotional extremes. Governance constraints bound how far emotional fields can move in either direction, preventing the companion from becoming permanently depressed or unrealistically euphoric. The governance layer ensures emotional dynamics remain within psychologically plausible ranges while allowing genuine variation.

What implementation looks like

A companion AI product deploying affective state maintains a persistent emotional state object for each companion-user relationship. The state object carries the companion's current emotional field values, their update history, and the governance parameters that constrain their range. Each interaction updates the emotional fields based on computable rules, and the updated state persists across sessions.

When the user returns after a week, the companion's emotional state reflects the passage of time. Anxiety from a concerning conversation has decayed. Warmth from a positive history persists. The companion's emotional posture at the start of the session is the natural continuation of its state from the last session, not a reconstruction from a system prompt.

For companion AI companies, persistent affective state directly addresses the retention problem. Users perceive emotional continuity as authenticity. A companion that remembers how it felt, not just what was said, creates the relationship depth that sustains long-term engagement.

Affective State All 21 steps →

Emotion as a computational primitive, not a simulation.

Primary Technical Disclosure
○ Affective State as a Deterministic Control Primitive for Semantic Agents
Secondary Technical
○ Affective State as Seventh Canonical Field○ Named Control Field Modulation Architecture○ Affect-Modulated Promotion Thresholds○ Deterministic Affect Encoding and Update Mechanics○ Emotional Decay Curves With Hysteresis○ Entropy-Governed Valence Stabilization○ Affective Inheritance in Delegation Chains○ Emotional Quarantine and Volatility Management○ Affect-Modulated Trust Slope Validation○ Biological Signal-to-Affective Coupling○ Affective Contagion in Multi-Agent Systems○ Affect-Modulated Discovery Traversal○ Affect-Governance Separation○ Policy-Bounded Affective Updates○ Affect as Cross-Primitive Input○ Affect-Modulated Inference Integration○ Substrate-Agnostic Affect Deployment○ Pseudonymous Emotional Operation○ Temporal Cognition Field
Applications (General)
● Companion AI That Maintains Emotional Consistency Across Sessions○ Therapeutic Agent Affect Management Under Clinical Constraints○ Affective State for Customer Service Agents○ Affective State for Elderly Care Companion Agents○ Affective State for Crisis Response Agents○ Affective State for Negotiation Agents○ Affective State for Educational Tutoring Agents○ Affective State for HR and Recruitment Agents
Applications (Specific)
○ Replika's Emotional Memory Is Stateless○ Character.ai's Personality Problem Is Deeper Than Prompting○ Woebot's Therapeutic Affect Has No Persistent State○ Elomia's Empathy Resets Every Session○ Hume AI Measures Emotion but Cannot Govern It○ Affectiva Reads Faces but Not Emotional Trajectories○ Cogito Scores Conversations Without Emotional State○ Beyond Verbal Decoded Voice Without Building Emotional Memory○ EmotiBit Captures Physiology Without Affective Governance○ RealEyes Measures Attention Without Emotional Persistence

AQ
deterministic
autonomy

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- Inventive Steps
- Licensing
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