Affect-Governance Separation

by Nick Clark | Published March 27, 2026 | PDF

Affective state cannot override governance authority, truth validation, policy compliance, or trust slope validation, maintaining strict architectural separation of concerns.

What It Is

Affective state is structurally prohibited from overriding governance authority, truth validation, policy compliance, or trust slope validation. No matter how extreme the affective state, it cannot bypass a governance denial, promote an unvalidated claim to verified status, violate policy constraints, or override trust slope requirements.

This separation is enforced architecturally, not by convention. The governance evaluation functions do not accept affective state as an override input.

Why It Matters

Without strict affect-governance separation, extreme affective states could compromise safety. An agent in a state of high cooperation disposition might accept an untrustworthy delegate. An agent with collapsed risk sensitivity might bypass safety checks. These scenarios are prevented by making governance structurally impervious to affective influence.

This mirrors a fundamental principle: emotion should influence how an entity evaluates options, not whether governance rules apply.

How It Works Structurally

Governance functions receive their inputs from the policy reference, trust slope validation, and verified state. Affective state is not among their inputs. The separation is enforced at the interface level: the governance subsystem has no read access to the affective field for the purpose of override decisions.

Affective state can influence the inputs to governance indirectly, such as by modulating which candidates reach the governance gate through promotion threshold adjustments, but the gate itself evaluates independently.

What It Enables

Safety guarantees that hold regardless of agent emotional state. In regulated domains, the ability to demonstrate that governance constraints are architecturally independent of affective state provides a structural compliance argument that behavioral testing alone cannot provide.

System architects can design expressive affective systems without worrying that edge-case emotional states will compromise critical governance boundaries.

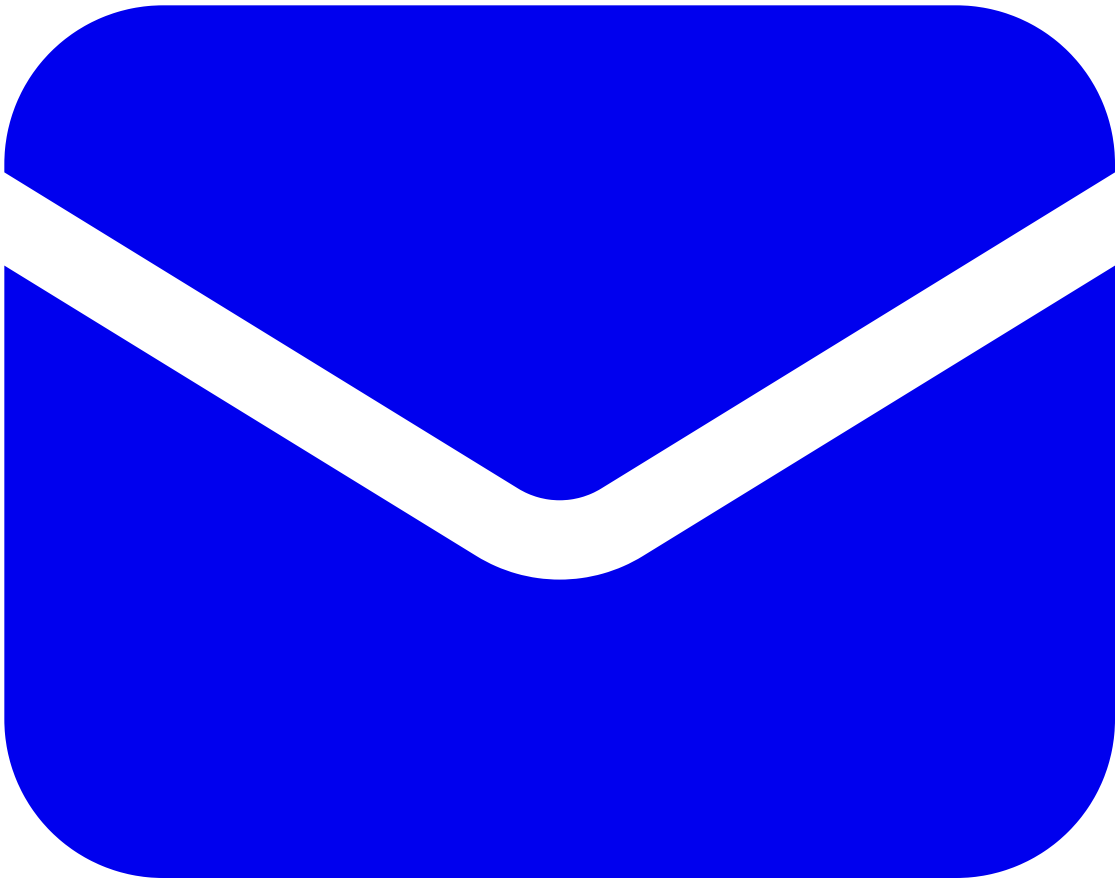
Affective State All 21 steps →

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
Affective State overview →
AQ
deterministic
autonomy

Legal

Last updated: 2026-03-03



-
- nick@qu3ry.net
- 72 28 14 36 01

Invented by Nick Clark | Founding Investors: Devin Wilkie