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Affective Inheritance in Delegation Chains

by [Nick Clark](#) | Published March 27, 2026 | [PDF](#)

Selective transmission of parent affective state to child agents through policy-governed inheritance masks with depth limits and return channels.

What It Is

When a parent agent delegates to a child agent, it can selectively transmit elements of its affective state through policy-governed inheritance masks. The mask specifies which dimensions are transmitted, at what attenuation, and with what depth limits. Child agents receive inherited affect as initial condition modifiers, not as overrides of their own accumulated state.

Return channels allow child agents to report affective outcomes back to the parent, completing the feedback loop. The parent's own affective state may be updated based on the child's reported experience.

Why It Matters

Without affective inheritance, delegated tasks operate in an affective vacuum. A parent agent that has developed justified caution delegates to a child that begins with default openness, potentially repeating mistakes the parent already learned from. Inheritance transmits relevant experiential context.

Depth limits prevent affective states from propagating indefinitely through delegation chains, which would cause distant descendants to carry emotional context irrelevant to their operational scope.

How It Works Structurally

The inheritance mask is defined in the delegation policy and specifies, for each affective dimension, whether it is transmitted, the attenuation factor applied during transmission, and the maximum delegation depth at which transmission occurs. The child receives the attenuated values as additive modifiers to its own baseline.

Return channels operate asynchronously. When the child completes its task or reaches a milestone, its affective state summary is available to the parent's update function, which may incorporate it according to the parent's own policy.

What It Enables

Delegation chains that preserve experiential context across agent boundaries. A fleet of delivery agents where the coordinator has learned to be cautious about a specific route can transmit that caution to agents assigned to that route, improving collective safety without requiring each agent to independently discover the risk.

Hierarchical organizations where leadership affect appropriately influences but does not overwhelm subordinate agent decision-making.

[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

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



[Invented by Nick Clark](#) | Founding Investors: Devin Wilkie