

September 23rd, 2022: Paralives Developer Weekly Chat

This weekly chat is held on Discord for Hero and Legend tier patrons. Every week, you can ask a few questions to any developer from Friday 1PM to Monday 1PM ET and they will get back to you with their answers the next Friday.

Visit www.patreon.com/alexmasse/ for details.

🌟 Community's choice question

This question got 4 votes from the Super Patrons on Discord!

Possible Assassin (Ny)

Are you guys able to give us an update on where you are when it comes to phase 1 of livemode?

Alex:

We are making solid progress on the basic features related to animations and interactions but still have work to do on that front. For instance, characters can already do various interactions but they can't interact with each other yet or hold items in their hand. Once this and other related tasks are completed, we will move on to other live mode features like aging, skills and so on.

Sebastian's Pool Dive:

This was inspired by a question from last week's chat: have you thought about how chance encounters work in the world? Like if your Para sees a friend while visiting a bar. I think it would be nice if they greet or at least acknowledge people they know, maybe do a bit of small talk if they're close and have a dialog notification greeting your Para. It's more realistic than them ignoring each other unless you go over and greet them

Anna:

You're right, it feels a little bit more realistic! Characters AI is not planned to be completely designed and implemented until further down the line so I can't answer with very much precision, but I'd say it would be nice if they went to their acquaintances to chat first. However, maybe it might depend on the Para's personality? If they're more introverted they might not go there by themselves, or if they're super social they might prefer to go chat with new people to make new friends. That's just an idea there!

🐼 General questions

Possible Assassin (Ny):

*» Would you guys say you're still on track to go into early access by the time your planned window comes around?

Anna:

For now, I think so, yes, but it's a bit easy to say cause we're still working on the first basic things of live mode. It's still a quite wide window for now!

Khlias:

I think modding helps tremendously a game to have a good lifespan in general, how far the game will be able to be modded? And are you willing to gives « modding tools » to make modding more comfortable (blender support for creating new outfits, hairstyles, animations for example...), maybe even some open source code to be able to create more complex mods.

There's example of games where developers gave direct modding support like Stardew Valley, and I think it's nice to let modders gives the ability to use their creativity to draw their passion for a game. I'm sure some modders would be willing to do this for Paralives.

Edit : Just saw the roadmap that probably answer this question, but feel free to answer if there is a clarification to be made!

Alex:

We are creating advanced modding tools to let modders integrate new 3D models, textures and animations to add new furniture, items, clothes and more to the game. Our modding tools also allow people to edit any deep game parameters like the duration of days, the color of the sky, the cost of any objects in build mode and almost anything you can think of. It should be pretty easy to use because these tools are directly in the game so you can tweak parameters and test the changes in real time. Us, developers, are already using these tools to integrate our own content and we are improving them as we go.

Script/code mod support is not planned for now but we feel that modders will be able to do a lot of exciting and detailed things with the modding tools that we have developed.

Khlias:

A more technical question. What do you use for your animations in the game? Are you using procedural animations, or inverse kinematic chaining in-game using slot ray/bones to handle animations of paras with different height/weight? Or... both?

The popular simulation game uses the latter so hands rarely clips through the body of characters with different weight, it also helps with blending animations together with creating IK work chaining from the root bone used by their armatures system.

Since Paralives will have paras of different height (which is an exciting feature), I am curious about the system you are currently using, maybe you still need to create variations of animations/postures to handle the height difference during animations interactions.

Anna:

Yep, we'll use both!

A while ago I made a Twitter thread about my work which included the first stepping stones to our procedural system, [you can read it here](https://twitter.com/alexmasse/status/1424256) if you're interested. There's some examples of what we did to adapt the sitting animation to any Para and any chair. (It's a bit old but the main reasoning stayed the same since then!)

We are going to use a procedural system (with IK stuff, but also other procedural constraints) on top of the animations playing, so the hands and legs (and any other parts of the body that require it) will adapt to what they're interacting with and depending on their height.

Slot bones are used as targets for procedural constraints like IK to adapt to the Para's body, but there are also targets on the items that the character interacts with!

We definitely still need to create variations of animations to handle the height difference because every animation is made by hand at first and we don't want to "denature" the movement too much. The hardest challenge in this whole system is to have a nice balance

between keeping the animations as close as possible to the original and adapting it so it doesn't clip through other parts of the game or produce weird outcomes.

Alex1246 (SOS name D. T.):

In regards to workouts, are there any plans to include workouts like leg squats, chest workouts, bicep workouts, shoulder workouts, leg curls, back workouts, refer to link below:

<https://ironbullstrength.com/blogs/learn/bodybuilding-workouts-for-beginners>

Also in the Sims 3, when a sim workouts sufficiently, they will get a pumped physique moodlet and the physique will look pumped from working out, are there any plans to implement pumped physiques from working out in Paralives?

Anna:

We already have a few workout moves done, you can see some of them in this post:

<https://www.patreon.com/posts/maggies-training-71424256>

We're still brainstorming about the details of a fitness or bodybuilding skill so I can't answer very precisely on the type of workout we're going to include or not, sorry! Thank you for your ideas though!

Khlias:

Which kind of voice paras will get and how will you/or you do create them?

Andreï:

Great question Khlias! Up until now, we've done some tests to try different voice over approaches for Paras and so far we really liked how combining onomatopoeia expressions with very few gibberish words sounds like. Right now we can't 100% confirm that's gonna be our definitive approach but hypothetically if we went for that, producing it on a macro level for many different Paras with different types of voices would probably mean that we'll get some voice-actors to record them. Hope that answers the question!

Zahlea:

In the roadmap, under Modding Tools -> Done, there is a task called "Menu to browse assets inside a mod", would this one allow us to disable certain parts of a mod, say if one mod is a collection of bathroom furniture items that we have to get the whole set or none of the items, then through this menu we could disable what items in the mod we don't want, like if we just don't like the bathroom carpet that comes with the mod?

Anna:

No, that's not really what we meant by that. We did a specific section in our mod system that allows us to browse the assets to add or edit them, which required us to kind of "redo" the windows-type hierarchy of folders and items into the game, in order to facilitate the whole process of modding. There's also a little parameter window in there where you can see the details of an item (or texture or mesh or whatever asset you selected) and tweak its parameters. I think you were thinking about a more user-friendly window where people could just check on or off the content of a downloaded mod? In that case, it's not what we intended to do with this task, it's really more of a tool for modders. I hope it's clear enough!

👉 Devs questions

Gui

Time for the call roll! Hi Alex! How are you? How was your week?

Alex:

Hey Gui! I'm doing okay, thank you for asking! I'm looking forward to next week's tasks at work because they seem pretty exciting.

Hi Léa! How are you? How was your week?

Léa:

Hello! My week has been weird, I was still very sick and had to prepare everything because I'm moving on saturday to a new apartment!

Hi Anna! How are you? How was your week?

Anna:

Hi Gui! I'm alright, thank you! My week's been good, nothing much to declare. Hope you had a great one!

Hi Alice! How are you? how was your week?

Alice:

Hello Gui, I'm doing good. I hope you are too! I saw friends this weekend, got myself a few books, and started to properly decorate my apartment for Spooky Season! 🎃👻

Hi Jérémie! How are you? How was your week?

Jérémie:

I'm pretty tired and busy. Thanks!

Hi Sonia! How are you? How was your week?

Sonia:

Hello! I'm good thanks for asking! I had a very busy week, finally back in Canada after I went to France to see my family. Now mom and bro are coming to visit Montreal so it's about to get busier!

Hi Étienne! How are you? How was your week?

Étienne:

Alright! Still some remnants of the flu in my body but it's fiiiiiiiiine.

Hi Andreï! How are you? How was your week?

Andreï:

My week was actually pretty chill! Got to see some old friends the weekend, got a haircut, not much besides

Hi Chloé! How are you? How was your week?

Chloé:

Hi Gui! My week was okay, I celebrated my birthday this weekend and was looking forward to eating curry at a restaurant I liked, and I showed up and there was no curry at all! And they gave me a cake because it was my birthday, and it was a cake I couldn't eat because of dietary restrictions, ahah :.) My friends enjoyed it in my stead, though!

🌱 Live mode

Zahlea:

Another animation question for you Alice (or it's a bit of a planning question for anyone 🤔):

In the roadmap, under Live Mode -> Done, there is a task called "Research and study the animations needed for the live mode". Does this imply that you have a (for now) "finished" list of animations that you'll need with just a few additions where something's been missed; or is it more of a living document where this task means the list is filled up with just a bunch of animations to start with and then others are added as you go along? I guess what I'm saying is - what was the definition of done for that task 🤔

Alice:

Hi Zah! Consider it a list of the essential animations that we need or want to have for early access. It's already quite a lot of animations but we have many other ideas that will be added little by little, once the main ones are finished. Depending on the technicalities of the features, some of these may change over time. Some might end up being simplified and require less animations, while others might require more work to get the desired result. :)

Zahlea:

From Little Dragon this week!

Could it be possible to have staff put abs only areas in commercial buildings? Or areas only certain people can go into, for example if it were possible to have a house and commercial venue on the same plot of land, there might be areas only accessible by the staff and the occupant of the house.

Anna:

Oh, I like the idea! It would definitely make the player curious and make them try to get into those careers or play with those Paras to see what's hidden there hehe. The staff only thing might come after release though because there shouldn't be active jobs at first.

ShadowRose:

Would it be too complicated if there were shops that changed and grew over time in the town? What I mean by that is a small shop upgrading to a bigger building, or a rival shop with different prices. Inspired by my shopping trip today.

Anna:

That's actually an idea we've had before! It would definitely be cool to see your environment change and to keep some interest in visiting the shop event after hours of playing. It's not confirmed but it's an idea we definitely want to explore!

Entirago:

Maggie's summer made me think, how cool would it be to take a picnic blanket out into the park and lie down with a good book for the afternoon?

Anna:

Very cool indeed! This plan is completely validated by Maggie!

Entirago:

Do you think an artsy para might be able to go out to a public place and people-watch, and maybe get inspiration from the experience? By artsy I mean writers too, of course.

Anna:

Oh I love the idea, that would make a cute interaction and a way to get some brain juice flowing! Personally I love doing that from time to time, sitting in a park during summer or in a coffee place in winter.

ShadowRose:

How in depth do you intend to make hobbies like gardening and fishing (if there's even fishing, I forget)?

I'm mainly referring to how you can research plants in the Sims and it tells you about what you could graft it with and what season it grows in, but fishing is a lot more basic and doesn't have any information about where or what time of day you caught anything, so I'm wondering if you intend to make it an option to "learn more" or if it will simply be the basic hobbies and

information about it, which is also valid because more detail requires more research outside of the game and more to put into the game, I'm just curious

Anna:

That's something we have yet to decide on! I feel like if gardening and fishing are some of the skills we implement for the game, it should definitely include different types of interactions, including researching or talking about it. I can't answer with full precision yet though. All skills will require some basic research about it anyway, that's part of game design!

🎨 Paramaker

Alex1246 (SOS name D. T.):

Just wanting to ask in regards to paramaker, will creators have the option to use 4 or 6 or 8 or 10 pack abs and also will abs customization be included, examples will be provided.

Sonia:

Abs customisation isn't planned, sadly you'd have to settle for the usual 6 pack!

🎮 Art

James:

Hi devs! A Big question for Léa!

Is there any game art you want to add into paralives that isn't planned, but might be added post-release?

Léa:

I'm in love with everything spooky and Halloween related. If I could I would design everything you could possibly need to create a spooky Victorian mansion. Also I've been petitioning for a while to create crows that would caw and fly away when your Paras get too close, clearly not a priority but the VIBE would be worth it in my opinion! I love tiny clutter items and the possibilities for spooky trinkets are clearly endless. I can't confirm anything, but I would really like to be able to add this type of content to the game!