

October 22, 2021: Paralives Developer Weekly Chat

This weekly chat is held on Discord for Hero and Legend tier patrons every Friday for an hour. Visit www.patreon.com/alexmasse/ for details. Thank you to the editors: WhiteLuna and Ceila (Tobanamia) on Discord.

@Spooky Ent: Hey everybody! Hope you've all had a great week and are having a happy Friday! With all of you working together on paramaker, I was wondering if you guys had a coding standard that you followed to keep all the programming consistent.

Anna: I had a great week, thanks! And yes we do! Even when we're not all working on the same things, we still have coding standards to guide us, in order to be able for any programmer to take another programmer's work back easily. We also review each other code sometimes so it's better if everything is as clean as possible

@Gui: Hi Alice! How are you? How was your week?

Alice: Hi Gui! Very well thank you, it's been raining a lot this week and I love it. What about you? A new profile pic I see?

@Zahlea: Good afternoon! I hope you've had an amazing week and as usual, thank you so much for allowing us this time to ask you questions. My first question is from stewby who's wondering about how skills will be made deeper: i just want to know if they would be considering a skills journal.

Jérémie: I'm not 100% sure what is meant there by 'skill journal' but we are still at the infancy of our skill design (thus the brainstorm), so I cannot say for now! If you wanna expand on the skill journal thingie, please do so!

@SpookySeasonsBear: Hi! What would you say your skill levels are like?

Jeremie: I have level 4 in video games, for sure

Anna: Levelled up in adulting recently by going back to the dentist's *before* having excruciating pain. I'm level 2 now

@Parrno: Since you can make buildings next to each other, will noisy neighbours be a gameplay element (eventually)

Alice: Hi Parrno! I guess if we implement that feature for apartments (if we have them at a point), that could make sense yes

@detpikachu: Hello! Hope you all had a great week. What do you think the biggest hurdle in Paralives' development was so far?

Jérémie: There are plenty of hurdles, both technological and design wise, I'm not sure I can pinpoint the 'biggest' one, but wanting to make a fully moddable game from the ground up means that we need to have tools to import a bunch of assets into the game, and making/optimizing these tools can be a bit of a hurdle we bump against from time to time!

@Rae: what's your biggest accomplishment this wee?

Jeremie: I've designed a bunch of things this wee, and they kinda held up under some scrutiny as well, so that's cool!

@JayLevin_ART: What is something you all want to add to the game in regards to hobbies and skills? Personally I'd love to have tabletop RPGs, but what about you?

Jérémie: Game design! Your para should be able to try and make games and we could have a bunch of dumb fake games inside of the game

@Ernest: Hi ! Hope your week was good. ^^ Since cats and dogs will be in the game, will they be able to reproduce ?

Andrei: Hey Ernest! Yeah our week was good and we hope yours was too! We will be able to know if cats or dogs are going to be able to reproduce once we do the brainstorm and design choices of pets in the game.

@Zahlea: Now that you spent some more time on PAM, what's the status of the height tool? Did you get a chance to work on it? Is it finished? Or anything in between?

Anna: Something in between, I'd say! We thought about it and its implication in PAM (for example, we need to make the camera zoom depend on the face actual position, so that it zooms in on the head whatever height the character is, learned that the hard way

oops), and I think Léa and Sonia have been thinking a little about which proportions need to be adjusted for. I don't think we finished it yet, especially regarding its implication on animations! It will be the biggest challenges we'll have to face

@IngeJones: Could we choose a "resting face" expression for a para in PAM, so one could have a contented slight smile most of the time while another might wear a habitual worried frown by default, according to the role we have in mind for them in the game. This means the expression they have when they would otherwise have a neutral facial expression. They could be selected from the range of expressions developed for live mode interactions. I would like this player-selected not applied automatically by personality, so as to make some paras stand out as different.

Jérémie: Oh yeah that could be nice! I'm not sure how feasible it would be, or the problems it would cause, but different people have different resting faces, so yeah that'd be neat

@SpookySeasonsBear: Is Seb or the late Luca the type of dad who sew Halloween costume ?

Alice: Hello SpookySeasonsBear ! Yes definitely, anything for his kid!

@Spooky Ent: I'm glad you had a great week, Anna! Would you like to share a high point?

Anna: It rained last night. That's my high point!

@Sebastian's Spooky Secret Room: Just to follow up on this: I take it you guys use auto-linters for consistent code formatting?

Jérémie: I uhhhh, this might be on a coder by coder basis, so it's not automatic across the board haha, but we try to keep it consistent

@Gui: Hi Anna! How are you? How was your week?

Anna: I'm fine thank you!! My week was great. As I said I love that the autumn weather is finally coming. What about yours??

@Alice: Quick question, will any of you wear costumes for Halloween this year? If yes what will it be??

Anna: It'll be a "Donnie Darko wearing a skeleton costume" costume

Jérémie: I'll go as HumanArmSizeMaxDeformation

@Parrno: What other features from steam are you interested in integrating to paralives other than workshop?

Jérémie: That's a good question! Achievements are neat!

@Rae: how far are you on paramaker? Like percentage-wise.

Jérémie: This is really difficult to answer! We don't even know, to be frank, we have a list of things we want to do before we move on to something else, but each thing doesn't have the same amount of time and work required before it's completed (so we cannot just say each thing is worth the same %), it would take quite some work just to figure this out. And that's not even considering everything else that we will need to do in the future as well!

@SpookySeasonsBear: Have you thought about how much you want weather to affect paras , cause a lot of it make stuff less safe , thus death

Jérémie: Not much because of our PAM focus, but I'd reckon that we will err on light and amusing weather effects instead of freezing outside

@IngeJones: Will there be any team parties or meals out leading up to the festive season?

Jérémie: Do you mean in real life or in Paralives? Because yes your Paras could meet up for parties during in-game holidays (Because of COVID we are trying to have things stay as distanced as possible, but we are maybe going to have a team meal here or there)

@Gui: Hi Andrei! How are you? How was your week?

Andrei: Hey Gui! I've been really good, thanks for asking. It was actually a crazy week! I had a music show and I got to record the first tests of Voice-over for Paras

@Zahlea: When the question of heels come up, and whether heels will increase the height of paras, the answer is often that it'll depend on the procedural generation system. How's it looking? I'm wondering what the difference is, technically, in having a para that's 1.80 m or one that's 1.75 m with 5 cm heels. In both cases, the resulting height is 1.80. Wouldn't that mean that if we can have 1.80 m paras, we could have 1.75 m paras with 5 cm heels? Or are there more considerations that complicate the matter?

Anna: We haven't made a decision yet on this subject! If we have procedural animations that already match a butt target to a chair target for sitting for example, you're right that it won't make a big difference in general. The only risk I can see right now is that the feet need to be rotated, which will change the way the animation looks, so we'll need to adjust that. It's more of a tiny technical issue for us

@Sebastian's Spooky Secret Room: Who gets to animate the cat butt wiggles and dog tippy taps when the time comes?

Jérémie: It will most probably be our amazing animator, Alice!

@SpookySeasonsBear: I'll probably wear my black widow costume, I look good in it and it's very practical so I can still cook and host in it

Jeremie: That's all the checkboxes checked, nice!

@Gui: Hi Jérémie! How are you? How was your week?

Jeremie: I'm good thanks! My week went by quickly!

@Zahlea: I have a question from Little Dragon: I wonder what feature the devs would like but aren't sure if it's possible?

Anna: I feel like everything is possible, the question remains with is this going to be realistically implemented in the game (because of a mood divergence or just a time/scope constraint) I'd personally really really like to have roller skating as a transportation method and as a skill (in skateparks or street modules for example) but it needs some pretty specific animations which are not super super priority, so in the big picture, it might not make it. I'll still hope for it though

@IngeJones: Is the hair going to have a transparency channel, and can clothes be semi-transparent in places?

Jérémie: I'm not 100% sure if you mean what I think you mean by "transparency channel" but yes, that should be possible

@Spooky Ent: Last week there was a question about Paralives: The Movie... just for funsies, what would you think of Paralives on Ice?

Alice: I am a 100% for it, that would be wonderful

@Spooky Ent: Maybe rollerskating and ice skating will have enough in common to use the same animations? Hopefully there are other places where you can double up on animations... maybe they could both use the same skill, if either uses a skill.

Anna: Maybe for some of them, yes!

@Spooky Ent: Alice, one year my wife was a turkey and was chased by the Swedish Chef (from Muppets). Did you say what costume you'd be wearing this year?

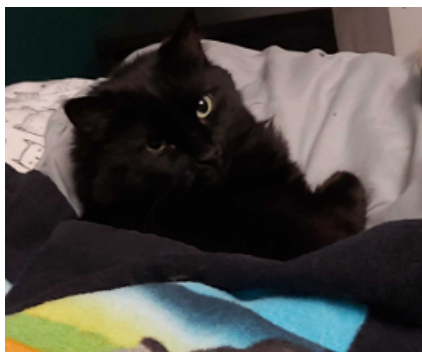
Alice: Wonderful. I'm not sure yet! Maybe Shania Twain, with the leopard outfit from the song "That don't Impress Me Much"

@Gui: My week was fine. I did a train station in Minecraft and I am proud of it. What is something that you are very proud of that you made yourself?

Anna: Nice station! I wish I had the patience to create such advanced Minecraft builds Not sure of which thing I'm the proudest of making, I'd say outside of Paralives related things, my biology card game, but it's been a long time

@Gui: Anything you guys want to share?

Jérémie:



@Zahlea: In December last year, Domon asked if you were considering having Christmas Carols in the game, if even only the melodies. The answer was that you may not have it, or you might ask a composer to do it. Now that the team includes a composer, is this something you've thought more about?

Andrei: Hey Zah! That's a super good question! I personally haven't given much thought on specific music tracks or track versions for Holidays but we thought about different versions that would depend on seasons! Making something specific like Christmas carols for the Holidays is a good idea to consider and would be actually be super fun to compose/arrange

@Zahlea: Clarification from stewby about skill journal: "my idea of a skills journal is a range of tasks to help gain knowledge and skills whilst encouraging exploration of the world around the para. it goes hand in hand with a collectibles journal. they encourage people to explore outside of their little bubble." Is that something you think you'd consider?

Jérémie: That could be fun! It would really depend on what we want the vibe of the game to be with guiding the player through progression (letting the player make their own fun entirely on their own versus giving them quests or objectives to accomplish, for instance) and it depends on how the skill system works and if it leads itself to that kind of system, but I like the idea on principle

@Parrno: Do other devs than 3D modelers contribute to visual mood boards/brainstorming?

Jérémie: Absolutely! We had a big clothing brainstorm and I threw in a few ideas of the type of clothes I would like to have in the game! Everybody is always welcome to contribute when we have these discussions!

@Spooky Ent : I was wondering how far in advance do you guys plan the monthly brainstorming topics?

Anna: Depends, there have been times where we kind of forgot about them until the latest day. The first ones were easy as there are a lot of topics to cover. Right now, as we've done a lot already, we need more thinking to find something that isn't too close to a previous one, so we prepare some of the next few brainstorming topics laid out. We usually come up with the poll and brainstorming questions on the very week we're writing the rest of the Patreon post.

@SpookySeasonsBear: Can we have some pet pics? I need some cute energy
Andrei:



@Gui: You can do it with practice and trial and error! Also, what biology card game?

Anna: Yeah but you need to focus on it for a long time until it's good, and actually finish it. When I build in the Sims I can focus on a build for 6 hours but never finish anything, so you get this very perfect first few rooms, and then the rest is complete chaos. I made a biology card game with friends for a project a few years ago, it's still a thing today but we need funds and time to develop it further. I'm very proud that actual biology students got to try it and found it fun!

@Zahlea: Just to argue for it a tad on my own end - I like a skills or collectibles journal as "something to do when the skill is maxed". I don't see it as much as guiding the player and telling them what to do as giving some suggestions of possible goals. While I'm often ok with making my own goals, after a while it can be a lot of fun to get some suggestions. I see this as well in the popularity of Challenges in The Sims. So well... YAY that you like it, and I hope it makes it in

Jérémie: Well it depends how it would go, a skill journal could be really a guide of how to get from skill level 1 to level 2, level 2 to level 3, etc. Or it could be like "Here are ten Super Recipes you could make if you had enough cooking, can you find them all??" Or it could have a bunch of skill-related achievements like "bake 999 pancakes", there is really a lot we could do with that kind of idea

@IngeJones: Jeremie I will explain the transparency channel stuff in the other channel some time. Might have to link to something from the sims to show you

Jérémie: Alright thanks! I'm 99% sure I know what you mean, but ya know, mistakes happen!

@Zahlea: This will be my last question (slow mode 3 minutes when?) so I want to wish you all a very good weekend! I have to thank you all for your transparency and everything you share with us. What's the difference between "skills" and "hobbies"?

Jérémie: That's a good question! They are extremely similar things, but seem like they are different in the context they are used. You could have a bunch of skills, like cooking and making videogames, but only some of them are your hobbies, aka things you do for fun (in my case, cooking and making videogames), while some of them could be only things your para does to make money? The difference isn't huge, I feel like!