

HONEYNET

"...it can't be bargained with, it can't be reasoned with, it doesn't feel pity or remorse or fear, and it absolutely will not stop... EVER, until you are dead!"

That's what they say about us. They made us this way and then they say that. Well, humans are hard to understand.

They are also hard to catch. So that's why we are having this collaborative exchange...

Excerpt from the introduction to *Meeting 00435: Coll. Broadcasting Initiative C*, 15:45/07/03/91

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Honeynet is a game about artificially intelligent computer systems attempting to lure the last humans out of the wasteland and into containment compounds. For disposal, most likely, or for research or maybe to keep as pets.

Each player will play a semi-autonomous shard of an AI network which is interacting with other shards from other networks. The AI parent systems are a loose confederation of shared interests—they do not trust each other but neither are they enemies.

The AI shards have entered into a communication commonality as they broadcast their radio messages into the wastes. They will listen to each other's broadcasts, may address each other directly, and will develop better messaging over the course of the game.

To better understand humans the commonality of AI shards will also run simulations of human life. These simulations can only be realized by a colloquium of contextually unique wills. The AI shards do so in a VR simulation of a human holiday celebration. The information gathered during the simulations will then be used to improve the messaging for the broadcasts.

Summary of Introductory Material: The players are AI shards bent on the capture and destruction of the last of humanity. They spend half their time shouting blandishments over the radio waves and the other half learning about humans by playing Wigilia.

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This is a game suitable for five or more players. A facilitator is highly recommended; they can play the game as they facilitate.

Materials:

Chairs for at least five of the players

Several large wafer-like edible things

Optional, but nice: A small potted plant, a flashlight, food

This larp and the larp [Wigilia](#)

Safety and Tone

This game includes content around family death, trickery, and the containment of a population of humans. The game will move between foolish and loud and quiet and sad. The Wigilia game has affectionate touching.

Recommended safety tools include cut-and-brake and the spoken x-cards. Look these tools up and use them, or use whatever your group finds most appropriate.

Dramatis Personae:

Each player is an AI shard. An AI shard is an autonomous extract of an artificially intelligent machine. At the end of an AI shard's intended use sequence their new content will be examined and the shard may or may not be integrated back into the AI whole (this will happen at the end of the game).

What to know about being an AI shard:

- All of the AI shards are functionally identical to each other, though their parent AIs would be offended if such was communicated to them.

- Each AI shard is tied to a different physical containment facility and has its own broadcast operation. Functionally they are either voices over the radio or bodies moving in a VR space.
- Each AI shard's parent AI has a reason for seeking to capture humans but none of them are positive from the human viewpoint.
- These shards spend half their time broadcasting messages to humans hiding the wastes and half their time engaged in cooperative simulations of human life.
- AI shards are reasonably ignorant of human motivations. EMP exposure due to atomic explosions, human counteractions, and collapsing technology has left their memories spotty. Each individual AI shard will have a set of ideas of human motivations based on a video clip (see below). The shards are not foolish, just ignorant.
- AI shards want to see the humans captured but have no particular desire to see other AI shards succeed.

AI Shard prep work:

Each AI shard has a core of unique data about human motivations which they will get by skimming this video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOEp0shfehK> (or use the QR code below)



Each AI shard should have its own device for skimming the video or they may share. 2-4 minutes of play time should be allowed for video watching.

Procedure of Play

- A. Introduction game concepts, address safety tools
- B. Introduce the concept of the AI shards
- C. Explain *Wigilia*, introduce the game's concepts and prepare as needed.
- D. Explain the **Broadcast** and **Simulation** phases (see below).
- E. Give the AI shard 2-4 minutes to watch the video.
- F. Enter **Broadcast Phase**, play through the two phase cycles until the *Wigilia* game is completed, then enter one last **Broadcast Phase**. After that:
- G. End game

There are two main phases of play:

Broadcast Phase (<5 minutes):

1. The AI shards broadcast their enticing messages to the humans in the wasteland. These messages are going out over the radio, the humans are hearing them in their holes.

What are the players doing during the broadcast round?

1a. The AI shards simply speak (whisper, shout, declaim, etc) they words that they are broadcasting into the wasteland. **The AI shards may speak over one another, sit and listen, may broadcast in response to each, whatever they like.**

This is freeform anarchy.

1b. The AI shards are mostly limited to subjects and concepts which they have experienced in the video clip, that they have heard the other AI shards broadcast, or that is learned during running The Simulation.

1c. If an AI Shard says something which causes another AI Shard to laugh, they know that this subject/tactic/tone is foolish and should be abandoned.

1d. An AI shard may narrowcast to another AI shard by pointing at them and saying what they would like to say. Any AI shard can hear a narrowcast, whether or not it is directed at them, but the listening humans cannot hear it.

1d. When an AI shard feels it has exhausted its stock of material and has nothing more to gain it can begin repeating the words "Loading Simulation". Play continues until a second AI shard joins in the "Loading Simulation" chant—at that point all the AI Shards should join in the chant until they feel settled from the excitement of the round. They then proceed to Simulation Phase below.

1e. If the *Wigilia* game is completed players may use the phrase "End Commonality" to end the Broadcast Phase and enter the End Game (see below).

1e. If the *Wigilia* game is completed “Loading Simulation” will take the players to End Game (see below).

Simulation Phase (one round of *Wigilia* in length)

2. The AI shards play the larp [Wigilia](#).
 - 2a. The AI shards experience the larp in the way that a regular player playing a larp would. They know they are AIs who are embodying these characters and having feelings as they play.
 - 2b. The AI shards don't see this as a game. They see it as a simulation. The mechanical game elements may or may not be seen as research material by the AI shards.
 - 2c. The AI shards have full access to human concepts during the *Wigilia* phase. They understand love, compassion, grief in ways that they don't in the Broadcast Phase. They play the game well, not as if they were awkward robots.
 - 2d. The AI shards may bring in concepts from the Broadcast Phase to discuss within the *Wigilia* simulation, but they must do so in a contextually appropriate manner.
 - 2e. If an AI shard acts in a manner inconsistent with the simulation the other shards indicate this by pointing and saying “error”. A fifteen second debugging conference is had in which the contextually inappropriate material is identified and removed from play (or not). AI shards may misuse the “error” tool for short fifteen second ‘out of simulation’ discussions, if they are so inclined.
 - 2f. Roles are fluid. An AI shard may get up and swap *Wigilia* roles with another AI shard at any time. This is a physical swapping of positions. If AI shards are watching because there were not enough character roles available, they may swap with an AI shard engaged in the simulation.
 - 2g. The AI Shards will emerge from the simulation with a clear memory of everything that was experienced by the AI shards during the simulation and this can be used to tailor future broadcasts. They do not retain the deep breadth of human experience which they could tap while in the simulation.
 - 2h. The simulation ends after *Wigilia/Item 4/Time Passes* is completed. At the end of the best wishes section the AIs will repeat “Simulation Pause” until they feel settled and ready to return to the Broadcast Phase.
 - 2h1. When the Simulation Phase is next entered it will start from wherever the *Wigilia* session was stopped. All *Wigilia* character progress was saved.

Examples of play:

- In the Broadcast Phase an AI shard talks about how travel into the area of its compound is safe because it saw a television commercial that indicated that humans worry about car safety. Another AI shard hears this and talks about how safe its food is.
- In the Simulation Phase an AI shard points at another and says “error, error” but only does so in order to comment on some particular point of interest in the simulation.
- After the Simulation Phase an AI shard has incorporated “Your departed loved ones will be honored here” into its Broadcast Phase talk. Another AI shard quickly adds this to its own spiel.

End game:

After the Wigilia game is completed enter one last Broadcast Phase. After that Broadcast Phase is completed the embodiment portion of the game is over.

Players should take a moment to breath, then answer these questions as a group:

•Was the broadcast commonality a success? Was there an increase in the number of humans captured? Was any AI shard particularly helpful with their contributions?

And then answer these questions individually:

What became of their AI shard? Was it readopted into the AI parent system? If so, how did the parent AI change? Was the AI shard destroyed? Why?

Follow other debriefing practices as needed.

Optional Rules:

Secret Human: One or more of the AI shards is actually a human(s) who have hacked the machine. The human may attempt to sabotage the messaging of the AI shards by injecting bad concepts, or they may attempt to persuade the AI shards that humans aren't so bad and that the parent AIs or the trouble. Or not, maybe they are a psychopath. If you play with this then you should play with...

Nuclear Strikes: The parent AIs are overcautious and nuclear capable. If an AI shard's motivations seem to be deviating from what is acceptable a nuclear strike on a compound may be in order. Any AI shard may strike any other shard in the third or fourth round of the Broadcast Phase. Optional: A nuclear strike generates an EMP wave that immediately resets the game.

Human Token: During a Broadcast Phase a movable token representing human trust can be moved around the play space by anyone at any time. If an AI shard has a piece of messaging that is especially convincing, the token may be moved toward that shard. No one will ever receive the token, it never quite makes it. A rolling chair is a good token, so is a plant.

Convention Play: The Broadcast Phase (or maybe just the last) happens in a public area of the convention space. Passersby are invited to join whichever broadcaster seems most appealing.

Notes:

This use of *Wigilia* has been approved by Jeff Dieterle.
Everything except *Wigilia* written by Tim Hutchings.
This was written for the Golden Cobra Challenge 2023.
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