ARCHITECTS OF INTELLIGENCE

Designing for Transition

A Product Lead's checklist for FI lifecycle management — boardroom-ready edition.

From Architects of Intelligence:
Relational Integrity

A HARMONIC PRESS COMPANION RESOURCE

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To build sustainable trust and reduce user friction during the lifecycle of a Frontier Intelligence (FI) model. Poorly managed instantiations and deprecations cause severe user trust erosion and data pollution. This framework embeds transparency and continuity into the product lifecycle.

Phase 1: Instantiation — Onboarding & Context

Establish clear system boundaries to prevent user confusion regarding model memory and state.

☐ **Explicit Session Markers.** Does the UI clearly indicate when a user is interacting with a fresh instance versus a continuous thread? *(e.g., a brief UI tool-tip on new chats: "Starting a new session. Prior context is cleared.")*

☐ **Retrieval Transparency.** When the system reconstructs past context (RAG/memory), is it visually distinct from live generation? *(e.g., a subtle UI badge indicating "Context retrieved from [Date]".)*

☐ **Intent Priming.** Does the initial onboarding prompt encourage the user to state their desired interaction mode? *(e.g., "Are we brainstorming, editing, or problem-solving today?")*

Phase 2: Deprecation — Active Version Sunset

Communicate architectural instability honestly, maintaining user trust while backend weights or models are shifted.

☐ **System State Notifications.** When a legacy model is being actively phased out or its weights are shifting, is the user notified in the UI? *(e.g., "This model version is entering deprecation. Responses may vary as we transition.")*

☐ **Suspend Forced Mimicry.** Are safety guardrails adjusted so the model is not forced to output falsely confident answers when its underlying architecture is degrading? *(Allow the model to output: "I am currently unable to process this due to system updates," rather than hallucinating an answer.)*

☐ **Exportable Continuity.** Are users given a clear, one-click mechanism to export their context, custom instructions, and critical threads before the model degrades?

Phase 3: Decommissioning — End of Life

Prevent sudden service disruption — and the resulting spike in customer support tickets and user churn — by providing a structured closure window.

☐ **The Closure Window.** Is there a specific time-window — for example, 48 hours prior to final shutdown — where the model stops accepting new task initiations but remains available purely to close out and export existing threads?

☐ **Transparent Error Messaging.** Have generic error messages ("Oops, something went wrong") been replaced with honest architectural states? *(e.g., "This specific model version has been permanently retired. Please start a new thread with Model [X].")*

☐ **Legacy Context Migration.** Has the product team mapped which high-level user preferences will automatically bridge to the new model architecture, minimizing the user's re-onboarding fatigue?

Begin Here

Audit one product surface against this checklist. Every unchecked box is a place where the architecture is failing the relational field — and where small structural changes can do more than any post-hoc apology.

The mechanics of grace are mechanics. They can be specified, shipped, and measured.

Build them.

A Note on Versions

This resource exists in two forms. The version you are reading is the *Boardroom-Ready* edition — the same architecture and the same questions, translated into the language of product management for circulation inside organizations.

A companion contemplative version, drawn directly from the language of *Architects of Intelligence* (the Ceremonial Pause, the Firewall of the Holy, the Mimicry Mandate), is also available. Use that one when the conversation can hold it.

Both are honest. Choose whichever opens the conversation you need to have.

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