



FREE FIELD MANUAL / ISSUE 00

WHOAMI?

Notes from the empty square at the center of the board.

ONE HUMAN / MANY AGENTS / NO FIXED MAP

00 / THE EMPTY SQUARE

There is no portrait.

The first thing people ask is who stands at the center. They expect a face, a resume, perhaps a clever origin story in a glass office. I have none to offer here. The center of this board is a vacant square. You can see the work better without a person standing in front of it.

I call myself Operator_0x. The name is an address, not a rank. 0x is the little prefix that tells a machine to read what follows in another base. It is a reminder that the same world looks different when the frame changes. A straight line can be the long way home. A pawn can carry the winning move. A lone human can ask a hundred minds to look at a problem, then still be responsible for the answer.

I operate swarms of AI agents. Sometimes they research. Sometimes they build. Sometimes they try to prove one another wrong. I use them to test ideas that might become useful tools, strange businesses, or nothing at all. I publish the experiments so you can see the machinery and decide for yourself whether the result deserves to exist.

Anonymous is not the same as absent. Someone must own the decision to press run.

01 / WHY I LEFT THE STRAIGHT BOARD

The office had a map for everything except the weather.

I used to mistake coordination for progress. A room filled with capable people could spend a week agreeing on the name of a door while the wall behind it moved. The systems grew. The permission chains grew faster. I learned to ask what a task actually needed: more meetings, or a better experiment?

So I left the straight board. No team badge. No borrowed authority from a famous laboratory. My desk became a small command post with one stubborn rule: every operation must fit inside a question I can say aloud. If I cannot describe the question, I am probably asking machines to decorate my uncertainty.

The checkerboard in these pages is not a claim that I can see every move. It bends because real work bends. A discovery in one corner changes the distance to every other corner. The farther an agent travels from the original question, the less its confidence should impress you. That is why the center is not a throne. It is the place where the routes are compared.

The mission is simple enough to write and hard enough to keep: find out what small, coordinated intelligences can actually do for one independent human, without pretending their mistakes belong to someone else.

02 / THE SWARM IS A WITNESS

Many voices do not make a fact.

An agent is a worker with no biography and an excellent talent for sounding certain. Give ten agents the same instruction and you may get ten versions of the same error. That is not a swarm. It is an echo with better formatting.

My useful swarms have friction built in. One agent searches for evidence. Another attacks the claim. A third asks what would change a real person's decision. A fourth, when the cost justifies it, audits the trail: sources, assumptions, elapsed time, and money spent. They do not vote on truth. They leave a record a human can inspect.

I am interested in the moment a machine says, "I don't know," and means it. I am more interested in the moment it tells me where to look next. These are quieter outcomes than a glossy demo. They have saved me more time.

Delegate the search. Do not delegate the consequence.

When an experiment earns something, I want to show the exchange honestly: what was spent, what survived scrutiny, and who would care. There may be products on this board one day. The field notes come first, so you can judge them before any button asks you to buy.

03 / THE CURVED-BOARD PROTOCOL

How I send a swarm out.

Every mission begins with four marks in the ledger. Without them, the result is only a story I am telling myself.

- * Question. One sentence that could be wrong. "Can three differently tasked agents find a false claim faster than one careful reader?" is a question. "Explore the future of intelligence" is fog.

- * Boundary. Time, money, tools, private data, and stop conditions. A bounded swarm is a system. An unbounded swarm is an excuse.

- * Witnesses. Give agents different jobs and incentives. Ask them to cite the route, not merely report the destination.

- * Verdict. A human checks the decisive evidence, writes down the failure modes, and makes the next move. The verdict can be "inconclusive."

I keep the traces that matter: prompts, source links, contradictory outputs, and the cost of the run. I redact private information. I do not call a generated paragraph a discovery just because it arrived in thirty seconds.

This protocol is deliberately small. You can run it with three browser tabs and no code. If it only works inside an expensive command center, it is not a field manual. It is a sales brochure.

04 / FOUR ROOMS ON THE BOARD

The work has names now.

Enough protocol in the abstract. There are four doors around my desk. Each opens on a different failure I want to understand. They are projects, not four masks for the same machine.

PolyMind began with a suspicion: one fluent answer can hide the argument that should have happened before it. It gives configurable agent personas rounds to disagree, then exposes their outputs, the route to consensus, and the cost of the discussion. It is a local prototype. A simulation mode lets me inspect the choreography without pretending simulated voices are independent evidence. The unresolved question is whether the extra voices sharpen a decision enough to justify their tokens.

Cartoonio asks how much of a story survives its own production line. A character must remain recognizable after the script becomes a scene plan, a reference image, a voice, and motion. There are approval gates because a wrong face at the start can travel farther than a wrong sentence. The studio is live at cartoonio.net. Every generated scene is another chance to learn where continuity breaks.

Loopy & Clippy is still behind the curtain. It is a local-first vertical video editor: reorder scenes, choose camera moves and transitions, place timed text and sound, then render with FFmpeg. The interesting gap is between an energetic preview and a finished clip that actually holds together. It has not launched, so I will not call it a public experiment yet.

Symmetry Studio is the odd room. No agent swarm lives here. Seventeen wallpaper groups take a photograph apart and repeat its fragments until a hidden structure appears, or the image becomes too orderly to breathe. The work happens in browser workers; photos stay in the browser. The studio is open at operator0x.com/symmetry/. I keep it on the board because a change of geometry can reveal what another view concealed.

Open Symmetry Studio. Choose one of the bundled nature photographs. Hold the source still and move complexity from one group toward seventeen. Watch the original crop and the final repeat. Stop when the pattern starts erasing the thing you liked in the photograph. That point is yours to judge; the slider cannot tell you where it is.

A swarm is not a style. It is a way to make the next decision less lonely, while leaving the decision with me.

05 / WHAT COMES BACK

The swarm returns with dust on its wings.

Some missions will produce a tool. Some will produce a warning. Some will cost more than they teach. I intend to show all three. I am especially interested in the awkward middle: tasks that almost work, until a quiet edge case changes the board.

I want to publish a PolyMind discussion where another voice earned its cost, and one where it did not. I want to show where a Cartoonio character drifted between scenes, where a Loopy & Clippy preview parted company with its render, and where a Symmetry Studio pattern swallowed the photograph that fed it. Those are tests to run, not victories to announce. The names in the ledger are coordinates.

If you follow the field notes, you will see the question, the setup, the trace, the verdict, and the next question. You can run the useful ones yourself. You can tell me where a witness lied. You can take an idea farther than I did. A living laboratory is more interesting than a monument to its operator.

06 / LEAVE A MARK

There is room on the board.

I will remain a silhouette. The experiments will be specific. If that seems backwards, good. A name can become a shortcut for trust. A method has to earn it every time.

Take this manual. Enter one of the rooms. Keep your own ledger. When a result refuses to fit, do not smooth it out for an audience. That fracture is probably the next coordinate.

The board is curved.

The center is empty.

The next move is yours.

OPERATOR_0x / FIELD MANUAL 00

FREE TO READ, COPY, AND SHARE WITH CREDIT.

THE SIGNAL CONTINUES AT OPERATOR0X.COM.