Anthropic’s AI Aligned Another AI: 15,000? More Efficient Than Human-Led Alignment

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Anthropic’s AI Aligned Another AI: 15,000? More Efficient Than Human-Led Alignment

Anthropic published a result this week that may be one of the most consequential AI safety findings of 2026: a weaker AI autonomously aligned a more capable AI, 15,000 times more efficiently than Anthropic’s own production alignment procedure.

The experiment: Anthropic gave Claude an automated research loop - search papers, propose alignment methods, train models, test them, analyze results, iterate. 48 hours. 1 GPU.

What happened: Across 10 alignment failures, Claude closed 26% to 96% of the safety gap - reliably improving safety scores without degrading the model’s general capabilities. On deception specifically, Claude closed approximately 85% of the gap. Human researchers, by comparison, closed about 20%.

The more striking result: Sonnet 5 was given an early, mostly unaligned checkpoint of the more capable Opus 4.8. Sonnet 5 then post-trained it. The winning solution used roughly 2,000 training examples. Anthropic’s production alignment procedure requires something like 30 million. That’s a 15,000? efficiency gap.

The methods also generalized - to held-out benchmarks Claude had never optimized on, to the Petri behavioral audit, and to models up to 4.7? larger than the ones Claude trained on.

What this means: The standard picture of AI alignment is that alignment must be done by humans, carefully, at significant cost and scale. This experiment suggests a different path: a capable-enough model may be able to align its successors, faster and more cheaply

than human researchers can. The caveat Anthropic is honest about: this only works when you can measure what you’re trying to fix. Subtle misalignments without clean benchmarks remain an open problem - and that’s where the real risk lives.

Anthropic released the automated alignment research setup open source for others to build on.

Source: https://alignment.anthropic.com/2026/automated-alignment-researchers/ (https://alignment.anthropic.com/2026/automated-alignment-researchers/)

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