

HARC

by [Sam Altman](#) 5/11/2016

We're excited to announce YC Research's newest project: the Human Advancement Research Community (HARC).

This came out of a conversation that started between Alan Kay and me more than a year ago about how to invent future computing technologies; I'm delighted to finally be officially working with him and his group. He is one of the smartest people I've ever met.

HARC's mission is to ensure human wisdom exceeds human power, by inventing and freely sharing ideas and technology that allow all humans to see further and understand more deeply.

The PIs at HARC wrote the following:

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In our increasingly interconnected world, every individual's actions can affect billions of others in complex and invisible ways. We believe every individual must have access to technologies that allow them to build their own understanding of the world and its systems in order to act conscientiously, responsibly, and effectively, both as individuals and in collaboration with others.

HARC researches technology in its broadest context, which includes: technology for communication (from the invention of spoken language to modern data graphics), intellectual tools (such as the scientific method and computer simulation), media (from cave painting to video games), and social systems (including democracy and public education). We are focusing on areas where we believe the structures created today will have the most impact on the future, and that can most benefit from having dedicated resources outside the for-profit world. At the moment, these areas include programming languages, interfaces, education, and virtual reality.

Our shared vision of technology combines an expansive long-term view with a strong moral sense. We look to the distant past as well as the far future. We reject the artificial boundaries created between the humanities, arts, and sciences. We don't always agree on what is good or evil, right or wrong, but we use these words seriously and are driven by them. We seek to guide human technologies in thoughtful and ethical directions, with a deep sensitivity to the relationship between technology and the human condition, and the difference between what a piece of technology is intended to be and how it impacts humanity in reality.

In partnership with Infosys and SAP, HARC is starting with 20 of the top researchers in fields related to human learning and understanding, many of whom previously worked in SAP's Communications Design Group. They include Principal Investigators (in alphabetical order): Vi Hart, Dan Ingalls, John Maloney, Yoshiki Ohshima, Bret Victor, and Alex Warth.

We will share more detail about each PI's current projects once we settle into our new roles and establish a web presence.

HARC will be chaired by Patrick Scaglia, who has spent his career leading similar long-term research initiatives. Alan Kay and Patrick will jointly contribute to the group's strategic vision. Chris Clark will run the group operationally (along with YCR's other groups).

The Advisory Board includes Patrick Collison, Adele Goldberg, Alan Kay, Vishal Sikka, and Tanja Rueckert.

Special thanks to Infosys, SAP, Sam, Alan, and Patrick for their generous support and hard work creating HARC, and we look forward to sharing more about our research in a few weeks.