HalpyBOT Dev Update #5

Welcome one, welcome all, to your HalpyBOT Dev blog for the month of `{!REF_ERR}`!

It's been another relatively slow month, but that doesn't mean we haven't been working hard. We've got a new feature to show off, and another one just waiting for the final checks to be rolled off the assembly line and into staging. So anyways, off to the show! Apologies for the lack of shiny new toys or pictures this month. I promise next month will be cooler!

Case Flow

We've talked before about how Case Creation works, from adding cases manually to getting them from the site. This all works great - but what about the other side of things? We don't want dead cases cluttering up the board forever, so how do we deal with it? Enter case cleanup.

HalpyBOT has historically shouted out a message when paperwork is filed. Now, cases are now automatically removed from the board when this happens! The bot attempts to match announced paperwork to an active case and cleans it up accordingly. It's a simple thing, but it's an essential step in the process. If the bot messes up, the case can be removed by an admin from the board, however, this will be the exception, not the rule. We're continually working on testing and tweaking this system, so please bear with our growing pains.

Under the Hood

As always, each month we're trying to validate and ensure that everything is as optimized as we can get it. I can't tell you how many hours we've spent sometimes just staring at our code, trying to find ways to make it better, faster, and stronger. This update is no exception, with a few minor performance and memory improvements under the hood which are really too boring to elaborate on further.

We've also fixed a few bugs and tweaked a few logic processes to be simpler. Notably, we've tweaked how some decorators are formatted and simplified the logging setup for the internal API system. This all makes our code easier to read, maintain, and build on later down the road.

Reversions and Mistakes

We're not perfect, however. This month we discovered that one function we developed (the modification of case notes) wasn't quite working as intended, and in fact, had a completely redundant function in it that went nowhere, did nothing. That function has now been removed, and the behavior corrected. This reduces the memory intensiveness of the bot and reduces processing time for some functions.

So what's the holdup?

I know that this project is taking (generously speaking) a long freakin' time. As I mentioned Last Month, we're a tiny team and this labor of love has to be fit in during our very finite free time. We really need more help on all fronts, from writing code, reviewing it, or helping with testing when the time comes. I really do encourage you to at least think about if you can help us out. The Seals only survive with our members, and only with your help can we make this the best product we can.

Next Steps

As I alluded to earlier, we've already got another set of changes in review right now. It's one that a Seal actually requested, and we're super excited to be making it for you. I won't write about it here, but you can read the notes in the Git Pull Request. After that, we're into testing the bot and ensuring that it's up to the standards we expect, then working on the long-awaited Seal API! Keep your eyes peeled for more details on that coming down the pipe soon.

See you all next month!