



89% Of UK Organisations Run Open Source, According To OpenUK Survey

- *53% of non-tech organisations contribute to open source software projects*
- *77% of UK public sector looks to open source for skills development*
- *Just over half (54%) have written policies and processes for open source contributions*

8 July 2021 – OpenUK today announced its second phase State of Open Report for 2021, which delves into the adoption of open source in UK organisations. According to the report’s research, the vast majority of respondents (89%) run open source software internally in their business, while approximately two thirds (65%) contribute to open source software projects. This demonstrates the commitment that the UK has to contributing to open source, either through leading projects that are used internationally or by helping international projects to improve.

The main reasons for adopting open source were cited as saving on costs (75%), more collaboration (72%), skill development (64%), the quality of code (61%) and security (52%).

Amanda Brock, CEO at OpenUK which carried out the research through a survey of almost 300 companies, stated: “The UK is one of the world’s leading countries when it comes to contributing and Europe’s number one. We see here that UK business use is also high and Open source makes a big contribution to the UK economy. It allows companies in the UK to compete and collaborate globally. As the UK continues to develop its digital economic strategy after Brexit, open source and open technology will play a key role in the future success of a Digital Global Britain.”

The report is based on survey responses from 273 organisations based in the UK:

- Open source participation is high
 - More than half of the businesses in the sample - 52% - participate in open source community projects, while 40% participate in open source projects with non-profit organisations and foundations
 - A third of respondents (33%) state that their organisation collaborates with academic institutions in open source projects
- Open source adoption is almost ubiquitous
 - The vast majority of respondents (89%) run open source software internally in their business, while approximately two thirds of respondents (65%) in total contribute to open source software. The technology, media and

communications sectors had the biggest degree of participation with 78% contributing. For the non-tech sectors, this averages at 53%.

- 49% of those in the survey develop open source software. Of these, small companies are much more involved in open source software production, with 61% reporting that they open source their own software while 57% develop and contribute to open source software
- Open source companies see business growth
 - 64% of businesses in the Survey state that they experienced business growth in 2020 compared to 2019 and 48% report an increase in the use of open source software during the same time period.
- Open source skills are in demand
 - The most desirable skill-set was around backend infrastructure development - 38% of businesses hired in this area during the last 12 months, while 23% planning to hire in the coming 6-12 months.
 - Other software roles including development leads, full stack developers, front end developers and development operations engineers were hired by 29% of businesses in our sample during the last 12 months
 - Demand for more senior roles such as development operations architects was relatively lower (14%) during the year of the pandemic.
- The UK public sector looks at open source for skill development and collaboration opportunities
 - Skill development was the primary reason for looking at open source at 77% of respondents in the education sector, followed by collaboration (73%) and being able to experiment to improve the quality of code and fix bugs (64%). As more public sector initiatives support open sourcing code by default, such as the recent NHS strategy paper, more opportunities to take part in and lead open source projects for public sector benefit will arise.
 - For organisations in the public, care, health and pharma sectors, collaboration is the top benefit (75%), followed by cost saving and skills development (both at 61%).
- Awareness of new best practices for managing contributions to open source is limited
 - Only 18% of UK businesses are aware of the OpenChain [standard](#) for compliance with open source licenses, while only 3% have OpenChain governance of Open Source implemented.
 - 58% of respondents have codified their open source policies and 54% have written procedures for open source management and contributions

“In the UK, open source software represents a significant opportunity to carry through on the ideas that have been discussed throughout the past decade. The value of open



technology to the UK economy will only increase as more companies and governments take advantage of open source. In the world after Brexit, the UK has an opportunity to rethink its approach to engaging with the world. We can learn lessons from the world of open technology, where leading in innovative projects and collaborating with others globally is more efficient and more effective,” stated Lord Maude of Horsham in the Foreword to the report.

“The principles of open source and community-driven environments allow us to collectively gather around a problem statement, solve an industry challenge, and then bring together the right participants, both from engineering and industry perspectives, and then contribute back to the community,” said Leanne Kemp, CEO & Founder, Everledger and OpenUK Ambassador.

“Open source is embedded very deeply but very stealthily in the fabric of UK business. If the average C-suiter knew their reliance upon open source, then I think its importance, investment in it, and particularly a company's commitment to participating in projects would be much more prevalent in the UK,” commented Nigel Abbott, Regional Director, NEMEA, GitHub and OpenUK Ambassador.

The full report, including case studies on the use of open source at organisations including Starling Bank, The Department of Finance (DoF) in the Devolved Northern Ireland Government, The University of Edinburgh, The Alan Turing Institute and Anthony Nolan, is available at the OpenUK website here.

About OpenUK

OpenUK is a not for profit industry organisation for the business of Open Technology, being open source software, open source hardware and open data across the UK. OpenUK gives its participants greater influence than they could ever achieve alone by creating a cohesive voice for the business community.

OpenUK is committed to promoting UK leadership in open technology and supporting collaboration between businesses, public sector organisations, government and communities, focusing on the UK to collaborate globally. OpenUK works on 3 pillars: Community, Legal and Policy and Learning.

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