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life.

EDITED BY **SALLY McLEAN**

IT'S A WRAP Amanda Brock organised a huge tech event in less than 10 weeks

ADHD doesn't stop me getting down to business

THIS week a Scots business-woman created a tech event which she organised in less than 10 weeks and featured 130 speakers, including directors from the UN and the White House.

And the ability of Amanda Brock to create, manage and raise £500,000 to stage the event is down to her late diagnosis of autism and ADHD.

The 54-year-old CEO of OpenUK said: "I think the focus has helped in being prepared for this event.

"It has been a mammoth amount of work to get done. But the ability to retain vast amounts of information and multi-task is one of the things that gets it over the line."

And she also hopes owning her diagnosis will change people's perception of what ADHD is.

She said: "I got my diagnosis late in life. I think that many people assume having ADHD means you are always distracted and an underachiever but the opposite is also the case.

"When you find the right problem, you are dedicated to solving that, and you can put in hours of time.

"As I looked around this week's conference, so many of the great speakers I know, and my friends, are ADHD. We might be finishing our slides as we walk into presentations but we deliver and we deliver with passion, energy and enthusiasm."

Amanda believes being diagnosed and then understanding what autism and ADHD mean helps her.

She said: "I've spent most of my life thinking, 'That is just me' when now I know it's my brain wired differently.

"Having a label that's caused me to explore what this means has given me a deeper self-awareness and understanding. It's been important for me."

The last nine-and-a-bit weeks have involved 20-hour days but State of Open Con was a roaring success.

Open source – which is computer code that can be seen, modified and distributed by anyone is everywhere – from your mobile phone to powering the video streaming service you watch, the audio streaming service you listen to and the games console you play on.

Governments and public-sector organisations use it to build digital services which help us in our lives.

Her State of Open Con event

Told to stay away from computers at school, Amanda Brock is now a leading light in her field, as she tells **Rick Fulton**

MULTI-TASKER Amanda Brock has met her challenges

brought together businesses, organisations and people to showcase some of the best people working in this world.

It's a huge change for Amanda who grew up in Crieff, Perthshire, where at school she was told to "stay away from computers".

When computing did become part of the curriculum the source code never ran and put her off computers.

Instead she became the first person in her family to go to university to study law and ended up in a firm which did IT Law and they spon-

sored her to do IT Law at Queen Mary University – it was the first internet law course in the UK.

She said: "I worked around internet law during the dot-com boom and then around open source software and digital services.

"As a woman working in law and technology, it could be a difficult environment. Sexism had a whole different meaning then and at points it really took a toll on me, but I am a very determined Scot and kept pushing forward.

"When I look back, I often think it's a miracle that I got as far as I did.

"Five years ago, at 49, I stepped away from law. For the past three-and-a-half years, I have been the CEO of OpenUK,

which is a not-for-profit working with tech companies from the UK.

"We have broken the mould of a country organisation in open source."

While this week has been a success, she is already thinking of the next tech event on sustainability she's organising – this time at Dynamic Earth in Edinburgh on September 15.

She said: "I might try and persuade Nicola Sturgeon, who was the year below me at Glasgow Uni when we studied law, to come and speak.

"We had a similar event at COP26 in Glasgow around open technology and green initiatives, and we are keen to do more in all the regions of the UK over time. So, watch this space!"

■ For more info: openuk.uk/

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