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Open source supports 27% of UK tech economy



Ubuntu was developed by UK open source firm Canonical. Image credit: rafapress via Shutterstock

Open source made up just over a quarter (27%) of the UK tech economy last year, according to a new report.

Research from OpenUK, a not-for-profit representing the British open source market, found that the sector contributed an estimated £13.59bn to the UK economy in 2022. The tech sector as a whole contributed £50.71bn to the UK economy, according to government figures.

Open source refers to tech projects that rely on open collaboration and transparency from communities of developers.

The UK has produced a number of notable firms in the sector, including Canonical, which developed the Linux-based operating system Ubuntu.

“The level of value being contributed to the UK economy from open source software businesses clarifies the open source sector’s often overlooked importance to the UK economy,” said Amanda Brock, CEO of OpenUK.

“We need a better understanding of open source across government to enable appropriate regulation and investment support around this sector, which propels much of the UK’s digital economy.”

Brock pointed out that many of these companies are overlooked because despite being headquartered in the UK, the nature of their business means they are largely international.

“As we look to AI being front and centre, we see open source underlying its democratisation. I expect that the combination of our leadership in both open source and AI combined will finally open the UK’s eyes to the potential of open source software in the UK,” she added.



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There are some companies out there that haven't really got a grip on their use of open source, let alone included it as part of their wider strategy.

"There are real opportunities in this space for those that embrace it, and the enormous wealth of talent in the UK makes it a great place to do that."



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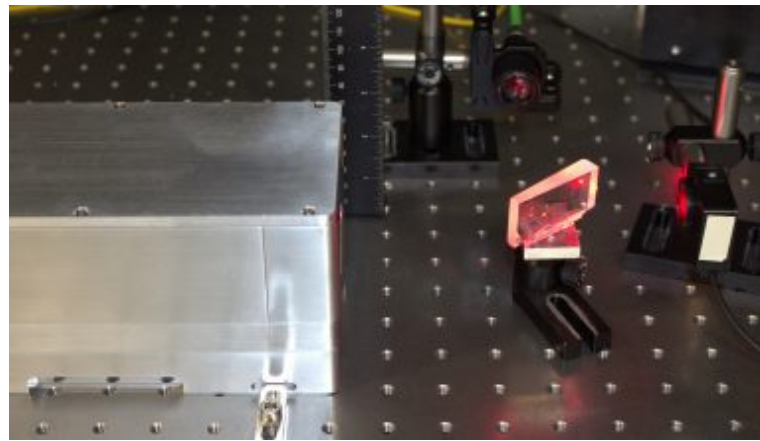
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