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Site navigation

- [Home](#)
- [Sectors](#)
- [Technology](#)
- [Business](#)
- [Security](#)
- [Culture](#)
- [Events](#)



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-
-

[Home](#) > [Technology](#) > [Data](#)

OpenUK and the UN Announce Open Source Data Centre Challenge

Elizabeth Greenberg

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Furthering commitments made at COP26, with Data Centre Blueprint The Challenge will see open source software developers contribute to building a carbon neutral data centre model

[OpenUK](#), the not-for-profit organisation representing the UK's Open Technology sector, announced an open source Challenge in partnership with the United Nations' Office of Information and Communications Technology (UN-OICT) around its Data Centre Blueprint known as "Patchwork Kilt."

Participants in the challenge will contribute open source solutions that help create a carbon-negative [data](#) centre model.

Date centres were shown to have a larger carbon footprint than aviation, [according to data from 2022](#), and is [responsible for around 3-4% of the world's carbon emissions](#). Mitigating the environmental impact of data centres is vital in responsibly propelling emerging technologies.

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- Andrew Phillips, CTO, Skyscanner
- Alexia Cambon, Senior Director: Future Work Research, Microsoft
- Jason Maude, CTA, Starling Bank
- Jane Austin, Chief Product Officer, Juniver

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The challenge brings together a broader community for contributions to Patchwork Kilt.

Participants will have the opportunity to make contributions through an array of different fields developing carbon neutral solutions for data centres. These areas include:

- Heat redirection: Develop an open source software solution to monitor and redirect heat produced in data centres.
- Building repurposing: Participants will create an open source tool to better re-evaluate urban spaces, finding brownfield sites that can be re-used for data centres.
- Heat reuse: A statistical analysis of open datasets to identify areas to repurpose waste – heat.
- Circular supply chain: Build an open source software solution that manages the lifecycle of critical data centre components.
- Blueprint evolution: Analyse the data from Patchwork Kilt for insights into how to supercharge global sustainability efforts.
- Community empowerment: Providing communities with actionable insights from data centres that can be used to build more sustainable cities.

The winning Challenge contributor will be invited to celebrate their success with the presentation of a trophy at OpenUK’s Awards Ceremony and dinner at the House of Lords in November.

This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience attending the black tie event, a highlight of the global Open Technology calendar and receiving recognition from the sector.

Christ Lloyd-Jones, OpenUK’s chief Blueprint officer who is leading on the Project, said: “Achieving a sustainable future that benefits everyone is dependent on collaborative action – and this is why we started the Blueprint Challenge.

“Our collaboration creates a Challenge as a way to open up this initiative to wider contributions and a broader community, allowing new technologies to be included. It’s a critical initiative that can have a tangible impact on the future of data centres.”

Salem Avan, director – policy, strategy and governance division at the UN, said: “Advances in computing power and Artificial Intelligence are generating major technological advances that have the potential to support progress in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG). In this context, Open source is key as it is a universal connector, uniting diverse voices through a common language.

“I’m therefore excited to announce the October Open Source Challenge for Data Centre blueprint as a collaborative effort between OpenUK and the UN-OICT. The significance of open source in data centres cannot be overstated; it fuels innovation, transparency, and cost-efficiency. By harnessing open source technology to efficiently run data centres, we not only reduce our environmental footprint but also contribute to global sustainable development efforts.”

Recommended reading

- [AI’s Growth Makes Data Centre Sustainability More Important Than Ever](#)
- [Disastrous Data Centre Vulnerabilities Exposed](#)
- [OpenUK: Open Source Added £13.5bn to UK Economy in 2022](#)

Amanda Brock, chief executive officer at Open UK, said: “Our UN collaboration has been a great support over the last two years. Yet as with any COP initiative, we must deliver on our promises, working towards long-term impacts through Open Technology and its community.

“To maximise its longevity, our Blueprint will keep updating in line with technological progress. We are in discussions with prospective partners to usher in its next phase, so all contributions have the potential to have a real, continuous impact on building a carbon-negative data centre model.”

Contributions can be made to the challenges via the UN Unity Platform from 1 October with further information found on the OpenUK website.

Tags: [Carbon Emissions](#), [computing](#), [data](#), [data centre](#), [Open Source](#), [OpenUK](#)

Elizabeth Greenberg

Staff Writer



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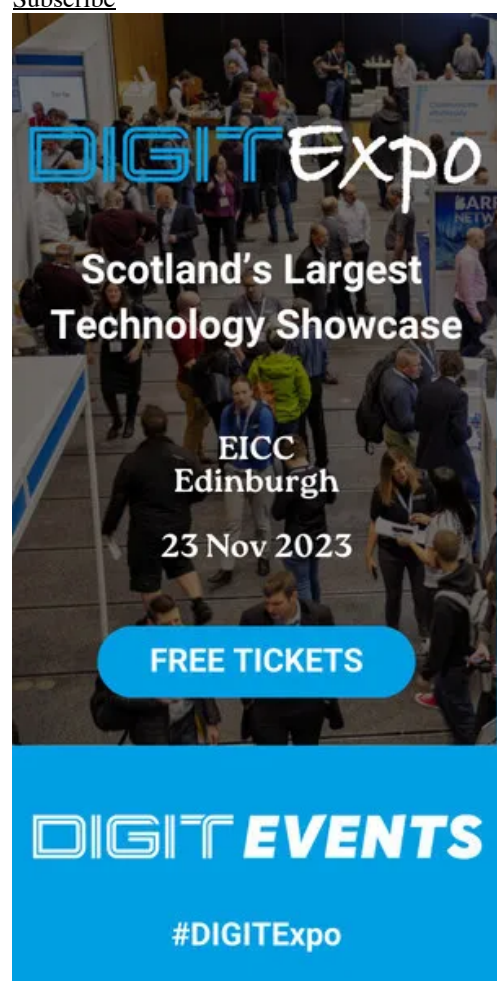
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