

Open source skills could help drive UK economic growth



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Open Source contributed 27 percent of the UK tech sector's Gross Value Added (GVA) in 2022, according to a new report from [OpenUK](#), the non-profit organization representing the UK's open technology sector.

The report finds that there are 3.2 million GitHub accounts in the UK and 8,200 UK contributors to open source projects in the past year. There have also been 1,700 new contributors to open source projects in the last 12 months, representing 20.7 percent growth.

It describes open source software as the 'submarine under the digital economy' in that it underlies all technology ecosystems whether the internet, cloud, AI and ML or blockchain.

The demand is there too, 77 percent of companies are seeking programming skills in the UK. Backend developers are the most sought after role (51 percent recruited), along with cloud engineers (36 percent), and development operations engineers (32 percent). Backend developers also remain the priority for future recruitment (28 percent), along with cloud engineers (23 percent) and development operations engineers (16 percent).

The report's authors make clear that the government has an opportunity to support open source talent and build out a stronger skilled tech sector here in the UK. Remote working is a norm in open source and means that many international companies hire based on skills, not geography. With improved connectivity across the UK as the full fiber rollout continues this offers employment opportunities to people who hold in-demand skills whether they're in cities or rural areas.

"Although the open source software submarine powers our digital economy it's been overlooked by the UK for a decade. The contributors who crew that submarine -- the UK-based open source workers -- are a respected and influential part of the global tech sector. Many are homeworkers, with in-demand skills that let them work and grow as leaders in that 'global submarine' bringing Bay Area salaries into the UK," says Amanda Brock, CEO of OpenUK. "It's time to surface the submarine and show that with the right focus and investment, we can build this sector out and use the contribution to open source projects to develop more skilled workers whilst keeping that talent here in the UK, across our cities and rural areas. This has the potential to stem the historic talent flight to the US which has stunted the UK's success. Collaboratively we can deliver the dream of being the next Silicon Valley."

The [full report](#) is available from the OpenUK site.

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