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OpenUK Calls for UK Government to Take Advantage of 'Key Opportunity' by Backing AI Innovation

by Tom Bleach   ⊙ February 2, 2024

OpenUK, a not-for-profit organisation representing the UK's open technology

sector, has officially released its '*State of Open 24 Phase One Report: AI and Open Innovation*', calling for the UK government to embrace the country's position as an open source leader, and build a pro-innovation approach to AI, open source and open innovation.

It suggests that the UK government will need to engage with the nuances of open-source technology and open innovation and listen to its community.

The report also reveals that the fastest-growing open repositories for AI in the world are UK-owned. **AutoGPT** is the fastest-growing AI repository in the world, according to **GitHub**. The report features fireside chat interviews, including with **Toran Bruce Richards**, CEO of AutoGPT.

Toran Bruce Richards, commented: "By open-sourcing this technology; giving everyone equal access, the playing field is levelled somewhat. This means that the individual can have just as much ability to utilise this technology as a corporate giant. Instead of creating inequality, this creates opportunities for people to achieve their dreams, previously only accessible for those with access to large amounts of money."

The total number of AI repositories with 1,000 GitHub stars in the UK reached 91 repositories in 2023 – a growth rate of 18.1 per cent year-on-year – and follows nearly a decade of steady growth. The number of AI repositories with 1,000 GitHub stars hosted from the UK and Europe demonstrates a 5.6 per cent share being AI for the UK, as opposed to a 4.45 per cent share in Europe.

The UK's unique position

Amanda Brock, CEO of OpenUK, also explained: "The UK's late mover advantage on tech regulation puts the nation in a uniquely advantageous position

to learn from other nations who were quick to regulate, and to find an agile, flexible middle ground that puts the needs of the tech community first, whilst safely managing any risks. Inevitably, the key opportunity for the UK is to enable AI openness.

Amanda Brock, CEO of OpenUK

"We will have the global tech community in attendance at this year's event, with leading lights from Silicon Valley coming to London to share ideas and frameworks for workable AI policy. Their input will help to appropriately shape the next steps in AI regulation, alongside helping to build out internationally inclusive, collaborative cross-border R&D and international co-operation in an 'open manner'."

Emad Mostaque, CEO of Stability AI, also added: "Open source technology is what will power the world and help to level the playing field in this next revolution.

"At Stability AI, we are developing and releasing open models because we recognise and welcome the benefits of open-source software. Open models are innovation enablers. They democratise access and allow grassroots developers anywhere in the world to develop specialised models tailored to specific needs so that one day every sector and every nation can have their own AI."

State of Open Con 24

The report comes ahead of the OpenUK *State of Open Con 24* taking place from 6 to 7 February at The Brewery in London. The key focus of the conference will be an 'AI policy Zone', centred on a unique hands-on consultation between UK
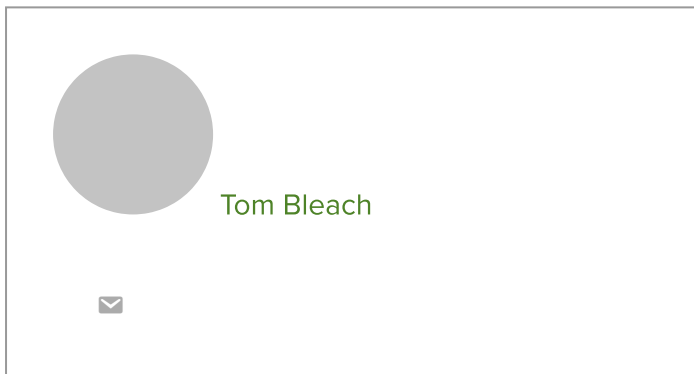
government departments including the Home Office, Department of Science, Innovation & Technology, and **Innovate UK**. They will be in listening mode and directly consulting attendees from the global open-source sector.

Amanda Brock also discussed the event: "The world of open source is convening in London next week to lead the discussion on the issues of the day and like the AI Safety Summit which was an incredible, grouping of world leaders in the UK, *State of Open Con* will be the same for open innovation and AI. As we collaborate globally on delivering the goals of the summit, *State of Open Con* will be a forum and platform for important dialogue on the future of AI, open source and open innovation."

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