AI

UK AI legislation must avoid 'open washing', says industry group

AI   17 hours ago

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OpenUK CEO Amanda Brock. Image credit: OpenUK

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Legislation governing the use of AI must ensure the technology remains open without compromising the term's meaning, according to open source advocacy group OpenUK.

The not-for-profit group has warned of the risk of "open washing" – the misleading use of terms such as open source in cases where the definition is not met – in the forthcoming AI Act.

The UK has yet to pass legislation regarding AI safety. The Conservative government had been hoping to encourage innovation before enacting stricter regulations.

New AI laws are expected to be on the horizon post-general election and will require conversations over how open access to advanced generative AI models will be.

OpenUK, along with figures including former Stability AI CEO Emad Mostaque and Facebook parent Meta, are calling for the technology to remain open source.

OpenUK has warned the next government of the practice of open washing and has encouraged it to avoid rewarding improper claims of open AI technology as it seeks to secure public access to algorithms, training data and innovations made through generative AI.

The group's 'Open Manifesto' also called for proper attention to the legality of data scraping and greater support for open source skills training.

"Last year, I talked about the UK's open source business folk and contributors as a submarine powering our digital economy," said OpenUK CEO Amanda Brock.

"That submarine is beginning to surface and the new government heralds an opportunity for the UK's policymakers to leverage the UK's open source and open data skills to enable them to power the future of the UK's tech industries."
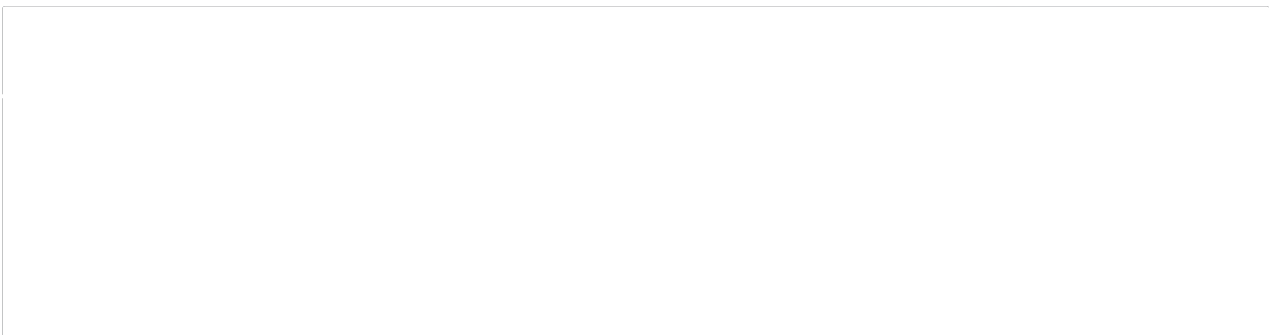
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