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UK government needs to avoid 'open washing' in AI Act, says Open UK

By Dalvinder Kular 04/07/2024

OpenUK has called on the next UK government to avoid "open washing" when drawing up legislation around AI.

According to a new report from the not-for-profit group, language used in the AI Act could imply the use of open-source technology where the definition is not met.

The report added that any legislation governing the use of AI must also address the the legality of data scraping. The issue around AI's use of data is critical to the UK, but OpenUK said the "political heft" requested by the House of Lords has not been thrown behind this issue and AI in the UK is detrimentally impacted.


In its Open Manifesto, the group called on the government to support open source skills training. OpenUK said that around five per cent of the UK population hold a GitHub account, which is the highest per capita number of any country in the world.

The group warned that the UK risks falling behind as France is now the fastest growing open source country thanks to President Macron's measures to support open source technology. OpenUK advised the UK government to take similar steps to ensure the UK digital economy does not "lose its position of strength."

Amanda Brock, chief executive of OpenUK, said the UK could be the next Silicone Valley if leaders introduced measures to unlock the country's potential.

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