

OpenUK delivers data centre sessions at Labour Conference

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OpenUK, the non-profit organisation representing the UK's Open Technology sector, hosted two panel sessions during the recent Labour Party Conference in Liverpool.

The first panel was titled *The Intelligent Environment: Building Sustainable Data Centres with OpenUK* – the only session during the conference that covered data centres' essential role to the UK economy. Only a week after data centre environments had been re-classified as **critical national infrastructure** by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology – and hot on the heels of Amazon committing to spending £8 billion in the UK data centre space over the next five years – the panel provided attendees with an overview of the challenges faced by the UK's data centre sector and the impact of policy decisions on energy consumption, planning decisions and construction, delivery of services and technology innovations like AI and the benefits to be reaped from open technology.

Amanda Brock, CEO at OpenUK, says, "The technology sector is a powerhouse for the economy and at the heart of supporting the UK's future growth, but only if it has the right support and policy in place. DSIT's recent announcement re-categorising data centres as critical national infrastructure points to a healthy desire to support expanding their operations, but this challenge reaches far beyond planning restrictions identified in the Labour Manifesto, if those goals are to be delivered. For our AI and digital

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source software, upgrading networks and open hardware environments to enable state of the art data centres – must be in place if the UK's technology sector is to succeed.

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“The UK’s leadership in the AI sector punches well above its weight due to the quality of the research taking place in the UK and its available talent. But the foundation is shaky and others are snapping at the UK’s heels. To capitalise on these advantages, and to support business growth, the Government must build on the UK’s wealth of talent around open source and AI. The UK’s open source community is currently not making it into the conversation and we are seeing France push ahead in AI openness.”

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