



Self-Service K8s for Devs

Learn to build a Kubernetes environment that empowers your developers to deploy quickly and safely.

Fi

AI / OPEN SOURCE

Open Source in 2025: What Will Matter Most This Year?

Navigating the pressures on the open source software world must become our collective mission in 2025, argues Amanda Brock of OpenUK.

Jan 6th, 2025 10:35am by [Amanda Brock](#)



Image by Wesley Tingey from Unsplash+.

2024 didn't fail to disappoint in delivering another roller coaster of a year for open source software. Open source isn't just code today, it's a philosophy that we have seen put under serious pressure throughout the last couple of years.

Navigating that pressure must become our collective, global, community mission in 2025. That's the only way that we can hope to protect the future of open source. At the State of Open Con, on Feb. 4 and 5, our agenda will focus on the topics we know will rise in importance in 2025 based on the events of 2024.

Here are some of the ideas we'll explore during the event:

The Open Source AI Definition Debate

AI has created a fundamental challenge to

GraphQL Summit
Virtual by Apollo

GraphQL Summit Virtual by Apollo

View AI and API stories from Netflix more

SHARE THIS STORY



TRENDING STORIES

1. Open Source in 2025: Strap In, Disruption Straight Ahead
2. Heroku Moved Twelve-Factor Apps to Open Source. What's Next?

everything we thought we knew about openness. My stance on the new **Open Source AI Definition** is clear. The **Open Source Initiative's** purpose is to protect the open source definition and open source software. At this juncture, a strong and focused OSI is critical to the future of open source. We must see the OSI focus its energy not on a second definition but on the future of open source software in 2025.

As we see the **Free Software Foundation** provide a second definition for openness in AI in 2025, and policymakers grapple more fully with openness at the French-led third **AI Action Summit** (in Paris, Feb. 10 and 11), I expect the fuss around open source and AI will die down a little. We are likely to see the approach shift to a more pragmatic one.

For example, I believe the debate around AI will shift to focus on disaggregating its component parts — weights, models, algorithms, datasets etc. — and to assess the level of openness of these, whether they are fully or partially open and what the impact of each is.

For open source software, our long-established Open Source Definition being observed in licensing in AI will be critical as it ensures the free flow that underlies open source — allowing anyone to use it without restriction other than legal restriction.

3. Rust Will Explode, SBOMs Will Be Duds: Open Source Predictions
4. Open Source in 2025: What Will Matter Most This Year?
5. What Happens to Relicensed Open Source Projects and Their Forks?

TRENDING STORIES

1. **Open Source in 2025: Strap In, Disruption Straight Ahead**
2. **Heroku Moved Twelve-Factor Apps**

to Open Source. What's Next?

3. Rust Will Explode, SBOMs Will Be Duds: Open Source Predictions
4. Open Source in 2025: What Will Matter Most This Year?
5. What Happens to Relicensed Open Source Projects and Their Forks?

By assessing risk from this perspective, the outcomes will be far less tied to the current state of AI. Trying to define a sector could only ever be a transient approach for AI and open source. A clearer understanding of what it means for data to be open (or partially open), both inside and outside of the context of AI, will be high up the policy agenda in 2025 and beyond.

Agentic AI is the current flavor of the month. Few beyond **AutoGPT** are really delivering on this promise to date. We will see this area of AI evolve and stay current throughout 2025. Of course, other areas will also evolve in relatively quick succession. as AI continues to take shape.

Greener Data Centers

The infrastructure necessary not only for AI but for our digital future is critical. Data centers, **GPUs and the infrastructure necessary to service AI**, including power, will be a key focus of 2025. The infrastructure required must be minimized and enable greener processing. Open source lends itself well to this.

Greening digital infrastructure will be a key focus

of the **United Nations Climate Change Conference (UNCCC COP 30)**, slated for November in Brazil. And as the Green Digital Declaration and Digital Action Day evolve from COP29, we are likely to see a bigger focus on open technology which can be a huge enabler of this in 2025.

Challenging Open Source Business Models

Open source isn't a marketing tool. It's for life.

Despite the normalization in recent years of a pattern of commercial organizations switching away from **open source licenses** as they grow (and facing the choice of taking more funding or doing an initial public offering), I expect that this bait-and-switch commercial approach is coming to an end.

Key to this is **the power of the fork** combined with the shift in the open source community to commercial users and their staff. A key user benefit of open source to commercial users is their **staff engagement in projects** and evolving skills through participation. Powerful users are able to fund and manage the shift back to open source through a fork if a key software project changes its license to a more restrictive one

The path to a successful fork is no longer the nuclear option. Thanks to what **James Governor**, founder of the tech analyst firm **RedMonk**, has labeled "The Hammer of **Valkey**," 2024's forks have demonstrated that in open source in 2025, it won't be the "buyer" but the "seller" who must beware.

Geopolitical Tremors: Shaking the Foundations of Open Source

We confronted a harsh reality in 2024, with the **first exclusions of developers** from open source projects as a consequence of geopolitics and sanctions.

This risks the opening of a floodgate that might destroy the essence of the global collaboration on which open source is based. Any restrictions need to be carefully understood and managed to protect the heart of our modern digital world, where both AI and open source span geographical borders and require a global approach to governance.

That governance unnecessarily restricting collaboration would be very destructive to the world-leading innovation open source enables. We must educate our policymakers on the importance of this.

The Public Sector and Paying for Open Source

As all governments look to their digital futures, they are scratching their heads, wondering how to become tech-savvy and build forward-looking infrastructure to serve their citizens' needs. Ultimately, open source will serve this. As a consequence, we will increasingly see public sector engagement in open source at scale through 2025 and beyond.

This offers an opportunity to build funding models that include public sector investment at scale. The opportunity this offers to consciously divert

funding from the public purse into sustainable software through open source must not be missed. And there is ample opportunity for that to include the recognition that not only innovation but also maintenance and skills development must be supported.

The Global Challenge

Looking ahead to 2025, open source's challenges remain complex. We must evolve open source principles to meet AI's rapid transformation while preserving the collaborative spirit that's always been our greatest strength. Key to this is the recognition that the future of open source is not simply in the Global North nor in enterprise.

As our global digital infrastructure spans geographical borders, it requires a global governance regime and an understanding of the benefits and funding needs of globally collaborative innovation. This will allow it not only to survive but to thrive.

State of Open Con is a conference covering open technology, including the future of open and technical open source software and security tracks. The event, held Feb. 4-5 in London, includes plenaries on the future of open source and AI openness.

Alex Williams, founder and publisher of The New Stack, will co-host a track on the future of open source at the event.

TNS



Amanda Brock is CEO of OpenUK, the UK organisation for the business of Open Technology: open source software, open hardware, open data, open innovation, open standards and open access AI - with a purpose of UK Leadership and Global Collaboration...

[Read more from Amanda Brock →](#)

INSIGHTS FROM OUR SPONSORS



Why We Shift Testing Left: A Software Dev Cycle That Doesn't Scale

20 May 2024

Improve Developer Velocity by Decentralizing Testing

23 March 2024

We Need a New Approach to Testing Microservices

16 March 2024



RFP Definition, Steps & Template for Requests for Proposals

6 January 2025

Anti-Patterns vs. Patterns: What Is the Difference?

2 January 2025

Data Center Tiers: What Are They and Why Are They Important?

2 January 2025



Capturing the productivity gains of AI coding assistants without sacrificing control of privacy

17 December 2024

Stacklok has contributed Minder to the OpenSSF out of a deep belief in the power of the open source community

28 October 2024

This Month in Minder: September 2024

26 September 2024

TNS DAILY NEWSLETTER

Receive a free roundup of the most recent TNS articles in your inbox each day.

SUBSCRIBE

The New Stack does not sell your information or share it with unaffiliated third parties. By continuing, you agree to our [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#)

ARCHITECTURE ENGINEERING OPERATIONS CHANNELS

Open Source
 Cloud Native Ecosystem
 Containers
 Edge Computing
 Microservices
 Networking
 Serverless
 Storage

AI
 Large Language Models
 Frontend Development
 Software Development
 API Management
 Python
 JavaScript
 TypeScript
 WebAssembly
 Cloud Services
 Data
 Security

Platform Engineering
 Operations
 CI/CD
 Tech Careers
 Tech Culture
 DevOps
 Kubernetes
 Observability
 Service Mesh

Podcasts
 Ebooks
 Events
 Newsletter
 TNS RSS Feeds

THE NEW STACK

About / Contact
 Sponsors
 Advertise With Us
 Contributions



roadmap.sh

Community created roadmaps, articles, resources and journeys for developers to help you choose your path and grow in your career.

Frontend Developer Roadmap

Backend Developer Roadmap

Devops Roadmap

© The New Stack 2025

[Disclosures](#) [Terms of Use](#) [Advertising Terms & Conditions](#) [Privacy Policy](#) [Cookie Policy](#)

FOLLOW TNS

