



AI Openness: 3 Years on from Llama 2

Fireside Chat: Model Context Protocol (MCP) and Protecting its openness

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Index

1. Introduction	4
1.1 Executive Summary	4
1.2 Introduction - Three Years on from the Opening of Llama 2 Professor Amanda Brock, CEO, OpenUK and OpenHQ	6
1.3 Take the OpenUK & OpenHQ Survey, in association with	8
2. Three Year Evolution of the AI Revolution	9
2.1 Launch of Llama2 as Open Innovation	9
2.2 The Great Debate defining Open Source AI	11
2.3 The Deep Seek Moment and the rise of China’s AI	13
2.3.1 China’s Strategic Approach and Policies	13
2.3.2 China’s Technology	13
2.4 The US Response	13
2.4.1 US Executive Order Approach and Policies	13
2.4.2 The Technology	16
2.5 The European Union	17
2.5.1 The EU AI Act	17
2.5.2 EU Sovereignty and Open Source Strategy, 2026	17
2.5.3 The Technology	17
2.5.4 The EU Open Source Policy, Sachiko Muto, Chairwoman, Open Forum Europe	18
2.6 India	19
2.6.1 The Technology - Sarvam Small Language Model	19
2.6.2 Approach to Policy	19
2.7 Middle Nations	19
2.8 Canada	19
2.9 The UK	20
2.9.1 Policy not Regulation	20
2.9.2 The Technology	21
2.9.3 Case Study: Open weights, owned compute and the case for sovereign AI, James Drayson, CEO and Co-founder, Locai Labs	22
2.9.4 Fireside Chat: Open foundation models enabling a map of the planet, Professor Anil Madhavapeddy, Professor of Planetary Computing, University of Cambridge	25
2.9.5 UK Instigated Global AI Summits	27
2.10 International Policy Making and Governance	28
2.10.1 AI Action Summit, Paris 2025	28
2.10.2 Open Source in the India AI Impact Summit	28
2.10.3 Geneva in 2027	28
2.10.4 International Organisations	28
2.11 Shifting focus to Agentic AI	29
2.11.1 The Agentic Harness	29
2.11.2 Thought Leadership: Security, Identity and Harnessing Agentic, Sal Kimmich, CEO, Gadfly AI	30
2.11.3 Case Study: The OpenClaw Foundation, Vincent Koc, Chief Architect, OpenClaw Foundation	31
2.12 AI and Open Source Software	35
2.12.1 Impact of AI on Open Source Software	35

Index

2.12.2 Thought Leadership: Open Source tools for AI, Hannah Foxwell, Co-founder BIMP and creator of AI for the rest of us	36
2.13 AI and Open Standards	38
2.13.1 Global Open Standards	38
2.13.2 Fireside Chat: Model Context Protocol (MCP) and Protecting its openness, David Soria Parra, Member of Technical Staff, Anthropic	39
2.13.3 New Foundations	41
2.14 The AI Stack and AI Sovereignty	43
2.14.1 Sovereignty and Geopolitical Shift	43
2.14.2 Thought Leadership: The Commons we have not (yet) created, Anastasia Stasenko, Founder and CEO, Pleias	45
2.14.3 Case Study: Open weights, owned compute and the case for sovereign AI, Tom Wilkinson, Chief Data Officer, Scottish Government	47
2.14.4 Thought Leadership: Security and Vendor response, Karan Saini, Research Manager, OpenUK	50
2.15 Value generation and ROI	52
3. What the Data Shows	52
3.1.1 AI Repositories Globally by Country	52
3.1.2 AI Repositories Evolution over the last 3 years	53
3.1.4 Top AI Repositories in the UK	54
3.1.5 Fastest growing AI Repositories Globally	55
3.1.6 Comparison of Contributions Received by AI repositories	55
3.1.7 Top Topics in AI Repositories	55
3.2 Model Repositories	56
3.2.1 Top 10 Most Downloaded Models	56
3.2.2 Top 10 Most Liked” Models	56
3.3 Agentic Repositories	57
3.3.1 Agentic Repositories by Country	57
3.3.2 Top 10 Agentic Repositories Globally	58
3.3.3 Top 10 Agentic Repositories UK	58
3.4 Conclusion - What we see from the Data	59
3.5 The Entrepreneur’s AI Journey, Matt Barker, Founder and CEO, Bolt MCP	60
3.6 Case Study: Agentmemory, Rohit Ghumare, Creator & Maintainer, Agentmemory	61
4. What the Literature Says	62
4.1 Literature Review: Open Source AI, Global Ecosystem Shifts and the UK Policy Response in 2026	62
4.2 Literature Themes from 2023-2025	66
5. Conclusion	67
6. Formalities	69
6.1 Authors of this Report	69
6.2 Creators of this Report	69
6.3 Contributors	70
6.4 Methodology	71
6.5 Acknowledgements	72
6.6 References	72
6.7 Sponsors	74

2.13.2 Fireside Chat: Model Context Protocol (MCP) and Protecting its openness

David Soria Parra
Member of Technical Staff, Anthropic



Please briefly tell us about yourself, your role, and how you came to be in it?

I am currently a Member of Technical Staff at Anthropic and the Co-Creator and current Lead Maintainer of the Model Context Protocol. I joined Anthropic 2 years ago, after working 10 years at Facebook / Meta on developer tooling, source control and static analysis.

How did you get involved in open source and what impact has it had on your career?

Since the beginning of my career I have worked on Open Source. I started working part-time as an engineer at a small agency (Mayflower GmbH) that worked a lot with PHP in Munich. One or two people were deeply involved in PHP's development and that's how I got involved. I started working on small patches, documentation, libraries, these types of things. It's really thanks to my mentors there that I got involved in Open Source. The work on PHP later allowed me to get a part-time job during university at Sun Microsystems working on optimizing PHP for Sparc processors. This was the first job I got hired for because of my background in Open Source. At the same time I was the PHP 5.4 and PHP 5.5 release manager and on the side I got deeply involved with Git and Mercurial, leading me eventually to work on Mercurial where I wrote some key parts. One of the people involved in the Mercurial community was building a Source Control team at Facebook, and that's how I ended up there. It was the start of my career. Getting into a FAANG company only happened because of Open Source. You can easily say that my career is built and enabled mostly because of my Open Source contributions. It paved the path I am on.

Who worked with you on MCP and what problem were you trying to solve?

I worked on MCP together with Justin Spahr-Summers. While the idea was mine, Justin really was the one who believed in it being important and helped to drive a lot of the initial implementation. We wanted to enable people to bring their workflows to AI. In a way we wanted to build the limbs to the AI brain. At the time the models got increasingly more capable and it was clear to us that the missing piece is allowing people to build for themselves and connect their systems and flows to these systems. We also knew that people are using a wide variety of clients, be it IDEs, Desktop applications like Claude Desktop or websites. So we needed to solve the classic NxM problem, N clients need M integrations. A protocol reduces this to N+M+1.

How did your open source backgrounds shape your approach in building MCP?

It was clear to me that building a protocol only works when you succeed in building an ecosystem. My experience told me that the most sustainable way to build a successful ecosystem is through open source. My background here of course helped me significantly to understand (1) why developers want an open source solution (2) why ecosystems benefit from open source and (3) how to successfully build an Open Source project.

Why was open sourcing it the right call rather than keeping it as an internal advantage?

I believe MCP only works because it is open source. You need to allow people to build client integrations, you need to allow people to build servers. This only works if you have an open specification of the protocol connecting client and server. It's only logical that of course you will want to provide an open source implementation of the SDKs for the protocol then as well. Protocols are definitions for how systems communicate with each other. They only work if they are open and can be freely implemented. The alternative is to do a proprietary API. You can do that, but we believe that an open source protocol like MCP uplifts everyone in the ecosystem, and allows people to use AI more as a whole.

For a non-technical reader, what does MCP do and why does it matter?

MCP (Model Context Protocol) is a universal adapter that connects AI assistants to the tools and data you actually use, email, files, Slack, databases. Think of it like USB: instead of building a custom integration for every AI-and-tool pairing, a tool builds one MCP connection and any AI assistant can use it. It turns AI from something that just talks about work into something that can do work, read your real files, search your real messages, update your real spreadsheets. MCP enables one conversation to handle your entire digital life, whether you're planning a big purchase, building a business, or writing a novel.

Why did Anthropic donate MCP to a foundation?

We knew from the early days of MCP that making a true standard requires ensuring that such standard stays vendor neutral and without any trademark or license risks. Early in the process we decided that we need to either create a foundation or donate it to a foundation. With the Linux Foundation we did eventually find a great home. We donated MCP to the Linux Foundation precisely so the developer community can trust it will stay open and vendor-neutral. And we contributed to a \$12.5M fund at the Linux Foundation to strengthen the security of the open source ecosystem more broadly.

MCP has been adopted even by rivals like OpenAI and Google - what made that cross-industry cooperation possible?

MCP solved a problem that every AI company shares, so adopting it is simply rational. Before it, connecting an AI system to an external tool meant building a custom integration for each pairing. MCP replaced that with a single open standard, so a tool builder writes one connector that works everywhere. In addition, we build MCP as a truly open source project. This included open governance that is merit based and transparent decision making. This allowed others to engage and build trust that an open standard can work, before fully committing.

What does MCP tell us about where open standards fit in the AI era?

Open standards keep AI companies competing on model quality and safety, not on who controls the tools. Open source software is essential for building a secure and innovative ecosystem for agentic AI. Myself and Anthropic are excited to continue contributing to MCP and other agentic AI projects through the AAILF. We recently launched a dedicated program for open source developers building on MCP, because the community building on this standard is as important as the standard itself.

As agents move from coding into general knowledge work, what's next for open infrastructure?

Anthropic supports open source software when it makes sense – like the development of MCP, and we will continue to innovate that. We believe proprietary models are the safest for widespread enterprise development. As models become more advanced, what you can build with them grows, but so does the complexity of building well. At Anthropic, we're invested heavily to ensure Claude is a true virtual collaborator, while keeping humans in the loop on the work that matters most.

6. Formalities

6.1 Authors of this Report

Professor Amanda Brock, CEO, OpenUK

OpenUK CEO, Amanda's built one of open source's most recognised and impactful organisations. Executive Producer of State of Open Con (2023- 2025), Amanda's a globally sought-after keynote speaker. A lawyer with 25 years' experience, 5 as GC of Canonical, she's been instrumental in shaping open source's legal frameworks, as she was internet law during the early 2000's. Regularly contributing to tech press, she edited 'Open Source: Law, Policy and Practice', (2022).

Recognition: Computer Weekly 50 Most Influential Women in UK Tech (2023, 2024); Computing IT Leaders 100 (2023, 2024); Lifetime Achievement Award WIPL (2022); Women Who Will Changemaker (2023); INvolve Heroes (2022, 2023); Novi Awards (2024) and Ambassador, Open Charge Alliance. Advisory Appointments: UK Cabinet Office Open Standards Board; UKRI Digital Research Infrastructure; UKRI Exascale; KDE; commercial boards – Mimoto, Scarf, FerretDB and Space Aye; and is Fellow Open Forum Academy; Distinguished Fellow Rust Foundation; and European Representative, OIN.

Dr. Jennifer Barth, Head of Research, Symmetry Research at FSP and Chief Research Officer, OpenUK

Jenn holds a DPhil from the University of Oxford and is Head of Research at Symmetry Research at FSP, where she brings a rare blend of ethnographic depth, commercial acuity, and ethical clarity to the AI conversation. Jenn's work sits at the intersection of technology, organisational culture, and socioeconomic change. She is known for translating complex technological shifts into human-centred insights that resonate deeply with executive audiences. Her measured, critically informed perspective — grounded in qualitative research and lived experience — enables leaders to move from abstract concern to practical, principled action. Alongside her role at FSP, Jenn serves as Chief Research Officer at OpenUK.

Karan Saini, Research Manager, OpenHQ

Karan Saini is a New Delhi-based security researcher, public interest technologist, and open source contributor. He was most recently a Senior Information Controls Fellow with the Open Technology Fund, hosted by the Internet Governance Project at Georgia Tech, where he researched the scale of DNS-based web censorship in India. He regularly writes for leading publications and has contributed to award-winning media projects.

6.2 Creators of this Report

OpenUK

[OpenUK](#) is the unique open tech industry organisation for the business of open technology in the UK. It spans the opens – software, hardware, data, standards and AI and is the convening point for the UK's business, academic and contributing communities across open tech. Our work supports the UK's journey to become "The State of Open". Our organisation is run with the support of our volunteer community and their leadership in the tradition of open source manner delivering on three pillars: community, legal and policy and learning. OpenUK's Community is recognised through our world-leading recognition program including the Open UK Awards (the Oscars of Open Source) now in their 7th year, New Year's Honours Lists and Ambassador Scheme.

OpenUK undertakes research and reporting both on its own account through its "State of Open Reports" and on a commissioned basis for third parties. Case studies, Thought Leadership, Surveys and desk-based research are included in our reporting which pushes the envelope and leads the way. Our Research and Reporting Show and Tell events coalesce the global open source research communities digitally to regularly update and share research practices and topics. .

The State of Open Con has become one of the world's leading open source conferences since its inception by OpenUK in 2023. In 2027 we expect to host 1000 people across 8 tracks and plenary sessions, with at least 50 partners in our delegate experience space and over 200 speakers in London. For 2026 we are on the road, with smaller events across the UK, meeting our audience. Contact <mailto:admin@openuk.uk>

Symmetry Research

Symmetry Research, an FSP company, looks beyond the surface and behind the curtain of the fundamental innovations and trends shaping our society, markets, culture, and values. We are academics and researchers looking at the intersections of emerging technology and socioeconomic impact, producing independent research for thought leadership and business solutions. We take a research-led approach to helping organisations transform through and with technology. Symmetry Research's mission is to share and grow knowledge about the interaction of technology and everyday lives. We want to understand the past, present, and future of human interaction with emerging technologies and socioeconomic changes—from behaviour to context, nature to nurture, origin to experiences—we do independent research for high-stakes business decisions.

6.3 Contributors

Anastasia Stassenko

Anastasia Stassenko is the co-founder and CEO of Pleias, a Franco-German startup developing full open source small reasoning models trained exclusively on permissively licensed data. A senior associate lecturer in data analysis and digital strategy at Sorbonne-Nouvelle University, she coordinated the creation of Common Corpus, the largest fully open dataset for training LLMs, with over two trillion tokens.

Professor Anil Madhavapeddy

Anil Madhavapeddy is the Professor of Planetary Computing at the Department of Computer Science and Technology in the University of Cambridge.

David Soria Parra

David Soria Parra is a Member of Technical Staff at Anthropic based in London. He co-created the Model Context Protocol (MCP). He leads its technical direction, governance, and ecosystem development. Before joining Anthropic in 2024, David spent nearly a decade at Meta leading engineering organizations, and served as an Entrepreneur in Residence at Sutter Hill Ventures. He is a long-time open source contributor with a track record spanning PHP, Git, and Mercurial.

Hannah Foxwell

With over a decade of experience in engineering leadership, Hannah Foxwell has always advocated for the human aspects of technology transformation and evolution. Hannah is relentlessly curious about the tools, technologies, processes, and practices that make life better for the people involved in software development. This curiosity has naturally evolved alongside technological changes—from Agile to DevOps, DevSecOps, Cloud Native, and Platform Engineering. In 2026 Hannah co-founded BIMP, bringing together her knowledge of cybersecurity, platform engineering, and AI to deliver software supply chain security at the speed of AI. As the creator of "AI for the rest of us" Hannah leads a community of over 2,000 enthusiasts in the UK, providing free monthly events and an annual conference aimed at demystifying the technology and improving AI fluency.

James Drayson

James Drayson is the CEO and co-founder of Locai Labs, a UK company based in London that develops on-prem sovereign AI so enterprises can own their intelligence. James holds a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of California, Los Angeles, and a Master of Science in Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Management from Imperial College London. He is Forbes featured and a UKRI Young Innovator Award winner.

Matthew Barker

Matt Barker is co-founder and CEO of BoltMCP, focused on helping enterprises securely connect AI to their data and control how it's used. Previously, he was CEO and co-founder of Jetstack, where he helped build one of the most widely adopted projects in the cloud native ecosystem, cert-manager. Under his leadership, Jetstack bootstrapped to a team of 50, and was acquired by Venafi in 2020.

Rohit Ghumare

Creator & Maintainer, Agentmemory, CreateMVP, and AI Engineering from Scratch AI-native course. Open source Leader and Cloud-native engineer. He writes and talks about AI agents, harnesses, AI Inference, and the infrastructure underneath, and is currently building iii.dev. Contributor to major open source global projects.

Sachiko Muto

Sachiko Muto is the Chair of OpenForum Europe, a senior researcher at RISE Research Institutes of Sweden, and a Board member of the Drupal Association. She originally joined OFE in 2007 and served for several years as Director with responsibility for government relations and then as CEO. Sachiko has degrees in Political Science from the University of Toronto and the London School of Economics; she received her doctorate in standardisation policy from TU Delft.

Sal Kimmich

Sal's work is centered on advancing secure computing practices and pioneering privacy-enhancing technologies to safeguard sensitive data. At the Confidential Computing Consortium (CCC) within the Linux Foundation, they play a pivotal role in the development and implementation of Open Source projects that establish Trusted Execution Environments (TEEs). These environments are designed to provide secure areas within hardware that protect data in use, addressing critical security challenges across various industries.

Vincent Koc

Vincent Koc is Chief Architect at the OpenClaw Foundation, where he leads engineering for one of the fastest-growing open source projects in AI. An engineer and technologist with nearly two decades of experience across the Asia Pacific and the US, he has contributed to major open source projects across the data and AI ecosystem and teaches applied AI at universities including MIT. He joined OpenClaw as a community maintainer focused on security and observability before moving to the Foundation full-time.

Quoted Individuals

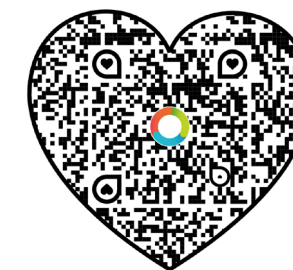
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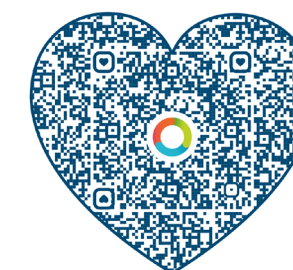
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