



AI Openness: 3 Years on from Llama 2

Open Source Tools for AI

Hannah Foxwell

Co-founder BIMP and creator of AI for the rest of us



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2.12.2 Thought Leadership: Open Source Tools for AI

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Developer tools are the products, platforms and open source projects that reduce effort to design, build, test, deploy and operate software. It's a complex ecosystem with a lot of optionality and diversity.

Shifting Foundations with AI

The foundations of Dev Tools are shifting. Large language models have moved beyond being occasionally helpful. They are now credible, and sometimes formidable, at writing and understanding code. We exist in a technology landscape optimised around our finite human focus as the most scarce resource. Agentic coding changes the dynamics. We need tools that are optimised for AI Agents. We need tools that allow us to instruct, guide and supervise AI Agents.

Dev Tools must evolve with the evolving needs of their users. Many developers no longer write code all day, they manage a fleet of AI Agents. We need Dev Tools that serve the needs of the agent author and the human supervisor.

Some aspects of the Dev Tools business have changed forever. Software development teams are shrinking and a "per seat" pricing model may no longer make sense if your users are agents and don't need "seats". Dev Tools companies where revenue is currently coupled to the number of human users may struggle to grow their business and need to consider other metrics to measure and meter their value. The build vs buy decision has also changed. If a SaaS product is simple enough that it can be "vibe coded" in a couple of prompts then it is unlikely to succeed with a subscription model. That or the price will need to be reduced to a point where it becomes preferential to a DIY solution.

With these dynamics in mind businesses must consider what value they sell. One enduring theme is trust. You choose a partner because you trust them. You trust them with your data, trust them with security, trust them with reliability, trust them to do business ethically. This is still a big deal.

AI Native

When we talk about AI-native development we are optimising for processes where AI agents are the actors and human developers the supervisors. Many practices we have in place today were created for very human problems. Everything from the 2-week sprint to the code review is optimised for a world where developer time is a precious resource.

"AI-native" is a lot bigger than simply writing code with an agent. It touches everything from product strategy, requirements definition, architecture, coding standards, testing and reliability engineering. These are not solved problems but everywhere you look there are glimpses of a future where every part of the software development lifecycle is agentic.

AI Native and Open Source

Open source is where innovation thrives. Where ideas are tested, proved and refined. Where real solutions to real problems can find their users and build a community. Open source is also transparent, and with that comes scrutiny and trust. Open standards and protocols allow us to scale new capabilities (just look at MCP) and provide interoperability between vendors. Instead of lock-in or proprietary interfaces we have a dynamic ecosystem, this accelerates open innovation further.

AI generated Code

There is no doubt that many maintainers have found themselves under pressure from a deluge of AI generated "code-slop" contributions. Some have introduced AI guidance ([Kubernetes](#)) and others will publicly denounce and block future contributions from anyone who submits poor quality AI generated contributions ([Ghostty](#)) to manage the noise.

It's important to remember that true open source is free from restrictions on users and use. If your AI-authored contribution is not accepted by a maintainer that is their decision but you remain free to fork that repo to add your changes. As a maintainer you are allowed to say no. You are the caretaker of that project and you can set out the priorities for it.

Contributors should always take ownership for the quality of their contributions. When contributors delegate responsibility for review to the maintainer that is unfair, unreasonable and selfish.

The Opportunity

Beyond the hype of each new model there is another story unfolding in the day to day working lives of each and every one of us. The impact of these models can be felt keenly by developers but outside of the tech realm the promise of productivity isn't playing out that way. Organisations were promised savings and were delivered a "work-slop" - this does not represent the potential of this technology and is an opportunity few have managed to take advantage of.

Even in the domain of software development we are still learning the right harnesses, loops and skills that make AI native development reliable and secure. UK-based Tessl are leading the way with their focus on trustworthy skills, robust evals and context engineering practices, whilst [nono.sh](#) have closed an enormous security gap with their isolated agent sandbox. We have an abundance of problems to be solved in the Dev Tools space and we are fortunate to have trailblazers right here in the UK.

Asks of the UK Government

We have the [Cyber Runway](#) accelerator for cyber-security but we have no equivalent for developer tools. This is a glaring gap in our startup ecosystem. The seismic shift in software development requires more focussed support. We need to create the right conditions for world leading teams to turn problems into developer solutions at the speed of AI.

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.

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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

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Anastasia Stasenko 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

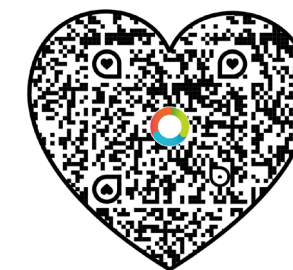
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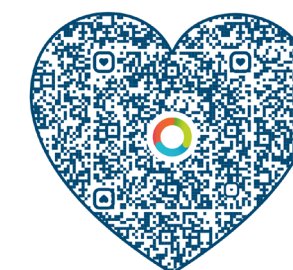
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