



OPEN SOURCE AI: IT'S TIME TO HIT THE GAS

Last month, we brought the community together at the [Open Source AI Summit](#) in San Francisco's Presidio. Speakers included former White House AI Czar David Sacks and representatives from NVIDIA, Hugging Face, Google, Block, the Allen Institute for AI, Prime Intellect, and more.

What emerged from two days of talks and panels will not surprise you: people want their intelligence to expand agency, create opportunities for innovation, and fuel economic growth. Attendees agreed that we must shift public sentiment around AI, secure legal protections for open-source and open-weight models, and meet the moment with greater urgency. There is much to do.

Here are our top 5 actionable takeaways. We encourage you to get involved:

1 Tell better, bolder stories.

There's a narrative taking root that AI will lead to the end of the world. Meanwhile, a handful of large, closed-source companies dominate the public conversation about AI development. Our summit highlighted an opposite future, one where open-source AI and open-weight models are making remarkable progress, giving people more freedom and privacy. The [Human Rights Foundation](#) (HRF) [showed](#) how activists and dissidents use these alternative solutions to fight authoritarianism. Scientists described how local, open models can unlock new discoveries, citing black-box frontier models as a barrier to research with private data. Sadly, these stories are largely absent from mainstream discussions, and few know what open source and open-weight are, or that they exist. To us, AI can be the greatest public good since roads. If you have a story about open-source AI changing lives, you need to share it, and do so in a way that people outside of our niche ecosystem can understand and relate to. The community can then play a much bigger role in amplifying it.

2 Promote policy advocacy that protects open-source AI.

At the summit, David Sacks [noted](#) that more than 1,500 AI bills have been introduced in state legislatures, yet open-model advocates struggle to coordinate their efforts and compete with the lobbying power of groups backed by frontier AI companies. Travis Oliphant, creator of NumPy, [shared](#) a similar sentiment as he reflected on what made NumPy one of the most widely used open-source projects in the world: "you do need leadership. And that doesn't have to be in a single center source, but there does have to be message, and there has to be mission." Greg Lukianoff, president and CEO of the [Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression](#) (FIRE), [warned](#) that relying on "code is speech" alone is a failing legal strategy. Groups like FIRE and the [Bitcoin Policy Institute](#) (BPI) are already leading this fight, and getting more technical experts involved, both in these organizations and in Congress, will make that work stronger. More than 200 organizations signed [NVIDIA's open-weights letter](#), and dozens of them joined the Open Secure AI Alliance at launch. We need more. If you have resources, consider funding these efforts. Or let your local representative know why open source and model weights must be protected.

3 *Scale up open security work.*

AI security and safety were among the most urgent issues discussed at the summit. One panel [examined](#) how AI is making software vulnerabilities easier to find and exploit at scale. As one security analyst put it, this kind of research used to require access to specialized cyber models, but “now anyone can do it.” Panelists shared that when attackers struck, defenders turned to open-weight models because frontier models refused to help, or, as David Sacks described, the guardrails end up “guardrailing the good guys.” Defenders need open tools, but many open-source projects simply can’t afford the tokens. [Spiral](#) and Block’s [Project Loupe](#) is tackling this by providing free AI-powered vulnerability scanning to open-source bitcoin projects. If you maintain an open-source project, start scanning your code with AI before attackers do. Organizations can also consider contributing resources to initiatives that protect open-source software.

4 *Raise the bar from open weights to open source.*

Open-weight models are a huge step forward, but as Noah Smith of the [Allen Institute for AI \(Ai2\)](#) [put it](#), “If we only have the final weights, then the most important decisions have already been made for us.” What data was used? What got filtered out? Which evaluations shaped the model? “If those things are invisible,” Smith said, “then the community has access but not much control.” Ai2 sets a higher standard by publishing the data, code, intermediate checkpoints, and evaluations behind its [Olmo](#) models, allowing anyone with the compute to rebuild them from scratch. That level of transparency creates true accountability and should be the gold standard for a technology shaping our personal lives and economy. Beyond transparency, open source drives efficiency. NVIDIA’s Bryan Catanzaro [noted](#) that labs waste enormous amounts of scarce compute repeating experiments without sharing results. That’s why NVIDIA is building [Nemotron](#) as a shared foundation with open datasets and techniques. For all of these reasons and more, Ramez Naam [challenged](#) the community to “go from open weight to open source.” Naam’s challenge is ours too: demand and invest in a higher standard of openness.

5 *Grow the community.*

The inaugural Open Source AI Summit brought together builders and advocates from leading organizations worldwide. Travis Oliphant said it best when he shared lessons from decades of building open-source communities: “It starts with events... specific events where people can come together and feel like it’s their home, it’s their tribe.” We want to continue its momentum and make next year’s summit ten times bigger. If you want to sponsor or help build it, we’d love to hear from you.

To hear more from the speakers and conversations that inspired these ideas, watch the talks from the Open Source AI Summit on our [YouTube channel](#) or [podcast](#).

Open source must be protected. If you want to help move these efforts forward, reach out to us on [X](#) or by email at hello@presidiobitcoin.org. Let’s hit the gas together to make sure this happens.



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