

URL: <https://ecorner.stanford.edu/clips/open-source-vs-closed-source-ai/>

Ilya Sutskever, co-founder and chief scientist of OpenAI, explains his general approach to deciding whether an AI model should be open- or closed-source. While keeping AI open-source prevents concentration of power in the hands of the builders, he believes it would be irresponsible to make powerful future AI models open-source. The current capability is not that high, he says, but OpenAI is now closed-source.



Transcript

- You know, the challenge with AI 00:00:06,903 is that AI is so all-encompassing, encompassing, and it comes with many different challenges, it comes with many different dangers which come into conflict with each other.. And I think the open source versus closed source is a great example of that.. Why is it desirable? Or let me put it this way.. What are some reasons for which it is desirable to open source AI? The answer there would be to prevent concentration of power in the hands of those who are building the AI.. So if you are in a world where, let's say, there is only a small number of companies that control this very powerful technology, you might say this is an undesirable world, and that AI should be open, and that anyone could use the AI.. This is the argument for open source.. But this argument.... Of course, to state the obvious, there are near-term commercial incentives against open source.. But there is another longer-term argument against open sourcing as well, which is, if we believe, if one believes that eventually AI is going to be unbelievably powerful, if we get to a point where your AI is so powerful, where you can just tell it, "Hey, can you autonomously create a biological," like, I don't know, "a biological research lab autonomously, do all the paperwork, rent the space, hire the technicians, aggregate the experiments, do all this autonomously," that starts to get incredible.. That starts to get like mind-bendingly powerful..

Should this be open sourced also? So my position on the open source question is that I think that, (clears throat) I think that there is maybe a level of capability.. You can think about these neural networks in terms of capability, how capable they are, how smart they are, how much can they do? When the capability is on the lower end, I think open sourcing is a great thing.. But at some point, and, you know, there can be debate about where that point is, but I would say that, at some point, the capability will become so vast that it will be obviously irresponsible to open source models.. - And was that the driver behind close sourcing it, 00:02:50,310 or was it driven by a devil's compact or a business necessity to get cash in from Microsoft or others to support the viability of the business? Was the decision-making to close it down actually driven by that line of reasoning, or was it driven by more financial- - So the way I'd articulate it, you know, 00:03:12,150 my view is that the current level of capability is still not that high, where it will be the safety consideration that will drive the close sourcing the model, this kind of research.. - Okay.. 00:03:29,490 Right now, it is indeed in the competitive phase, but I claim that, as the capabilities of these models keep increasing, there will come a day where it will be the safety consideration that will be the obvious and immediate driver to not open source these models...