



Sustainable Digital Sovereignty

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Digital sovereignty is
no longer optional.

TECH

International Criminal Court to ditch Microsoft Office for European open source alternative

The court will move its internal work environment to Open Desk, a German-developed open source software

Maximilian Henning  Euractiv



TECH • INTERNET

The Battle for Control Over Ukraine's Internet

9 MINUTE READ



The over-centralisation of digital services
mean whoever controls the infrastructure
can switch it off.

And the threat just got real.

Users need **control...**

Which can only come with **choice.**

They should be able to choose:
 Their preferred interface,
 Their preferred vendor,
 Where their data is stored...

And more importantly: be able to change.

Digital commons and open standards are
the only available answer.

The alternatives exist

[matrix]

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 element

 rocket.chat

 mastodon

 Thunderbird



 openDesk


Nextcloud

 Collabora
Online

 LibreOffice®

 ONLYOFFICE

Etc...

The policy is here



In particular in Europe, who has been releasing instruments and budgets.



Digital Commons EDIC

DEC 2025

Digital Commons EDIC

Member States jointly building and maintaining digital commons

JUN 2026

Tech Sovereignty Package

Chips Act 2.0, Cloud and AI Development Act, EU Open Source Strategy

JUN 2026

Open Source Strategy

€2 billion over seven years, procurement guidance, Open Internet Stack

NEW INSTRUMENT

Maintenance Instrument

Sustained funding for the maintenance and security of critical open source components

TARGET 2030

30 million users

Of open collaboration tools and secure messaging, with Member States and EDICs

But we lack the funding model to make it sustainable long term.

For individuals,
Digital Sovereignty is a matter of
freedom:

No one should be able to take
your digital life hostage.

For organisations,
Digital Sovereignty is a matter of
risk management.

⇒ they need to ensure that alternatives are secure,
maintained and usable enough in the long run.

⇒ they need them to be **sustainable.**

Matrix is a perfect microcosm to find solutions **[matrix]**

- As an open standard it has:
 - The independent body ⇒ maintains neutrality
 - The vibrant ecosystem ⇒ healthy competition which forces vendors to raise the bar on quality
- It addresses relevant and easy to comprehend use cases:
 - Alternatives to Microsoft Teams, Zoom, WhatsApp...
- Already deployed at scale to solve them
- So far, relatively self-contained

Two topics

What needs to be funded

Governance

Fund the neutrality of the common

Software

Fund the whole cost, not just features

How we can fund it

Buyers

Use your purchasing power

Business models

What options exist

Independence has a cost



Neutrality isn't free

For Matrix, that means funding
The Matrix.org Foundation

Protect & expand the protocol

Evolving the standard neutrally, in the open, for everyone

Give everyone a voice

No single vendor controls the standard

Grow adoption

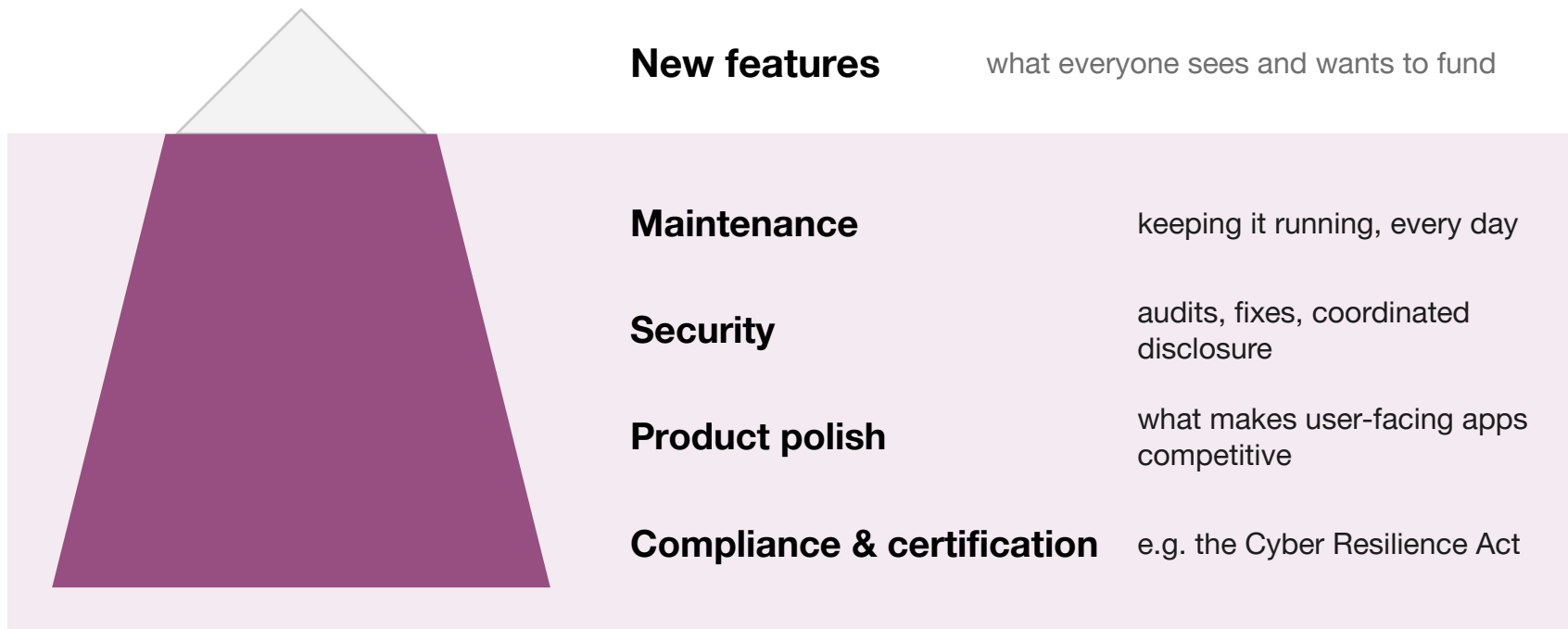
Events, outreach and nurturing the ecosystem itself

Trust & safety

Keeping the open network healthy

Open source is an iceberg of costs

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Buyers hold the power

Procurement can make sure the people writing the code, organisations or individuals, actually get paid.

Buyers can require that the provider:

01

Funds upstream

Provides proper recurring upstream support, through funding or long term maintainers

02

Is connected

Proves a real relationship with the software manufacturer or community

03

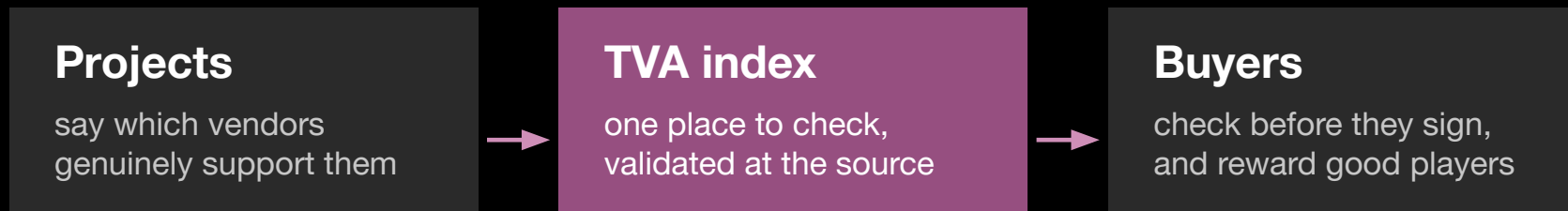
Can fix issues

Delivers real level 3 support quality, verified, not just promised

Potential solution: Trusted Vendor Authority



A proof of concept index of vendors, partners and resellers who genuinely support open source projects, as determined by the projects themselves.



AN INDEX OF GOOD PLAYERS IN OPEN SOURCE

Trusted Vendor Authority

SEARCH FOR AN OFFERING OR AN ORGANISATION

matrix-rust-sdk	OPEN SOURCE PROJECT
Your all-in-one toolkit for creating Matrix clients with Rust, from simple bots to full-featured apps.	
Synapse (Matrix Foundation)	OPEN SOURCE PROJECT
The original Apache-licensed Synapse implementation from The Matrix.org Foundation, written by Element. N...	
matrix-js-sdk	OPEN SOURCE PROJECT
The original JavaScript SDK for adding Matrix to Web and Node applications	
Matrix Authentication Service	OPEN SOURCE PROJECT
A Matrix-aware OpenID Connect Identity Provider	



<https://docs.getgrist.com/qXyWFrZetxxB/Trusted-Vendor-Authority/p/8>

Business models

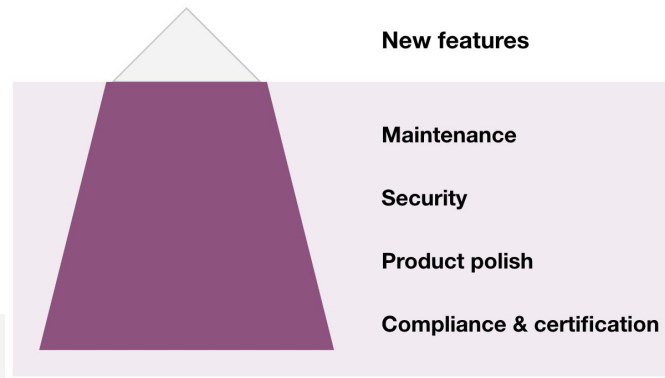
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The threat: Free-riding

Others use and sell the software without contributing back upstream

The need

Recurring and committed funding to support the bottom of the iceberg



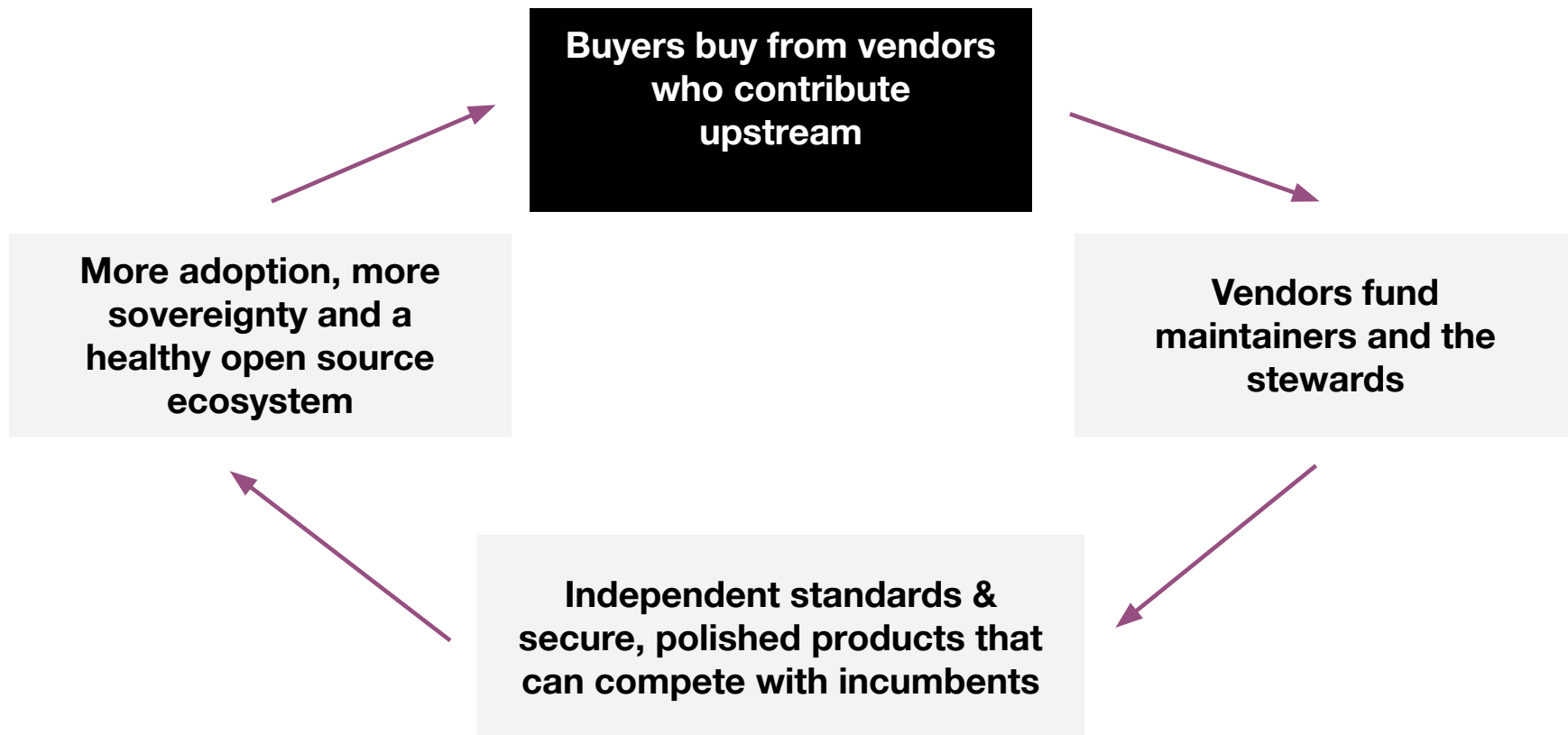
The options

1. Copyleft licensing → doesn't solve the free-riding user problem
2. Vendor locks enterprise value behind a paywall → open core
3. Users pay recurring fees to get support for the open source software **and “the right to use”** (which is more a sustainability fee).
 - The whole bottom of the iceberg needs to be funded
4. Users buy from vendors who support the upstream

⇒ **The more open source is funded, the less open core is needed.**

Building the virtuous circle

[**matrix**]



In short

[**matrix**]

If you buy

Put upstream funding, community relationship and level 3 support in your requirements.
Have line for governance and open source subscription in your procurement frameworks.

If you sell

Fund the maintainers and the governance of what you sell.

If you build

Make the full cost visible, not just the next feature.



[matrix]

Sovereignty is only real if it is sustainable.

Thank you

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