

Operating Open Source at Scale: Community-Driven Stewardship of Critical Engineering Tools

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Speaker Introduction

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A photograph of a modern library interior. The room features tall, light-colored wooden bookshelves filled with books, arranged in a grid pattern. The shelves are illuminated from within, creating a warm, ambient glow. The floor is a dark, polished surface that reflects the light. The overall atmosphere is quiet and scholarly.

**Most firms do not have an open-source adoption problem.
They have a stewardship problem.**

A large iceberg floating in the ocean. The tip of the iceberg is visible above the water surface, while the vast majority of the iceberg's mass is submerged below the surface. The water is a deep blue, and the sky is a lighter blue with some clouds. The overall scene is a metaphor for hidden foundations or substrates.

**Open source is not
a side input to
software delivery.
It is the substrate.**

**The risk is not spread evenly.
A small number of technologies
underpin daily delivery.**



**The challenge
has changed.
Using OSS is
easy. Sustaining
it is hard.**



A worker wearing a yellow hard hat with a clear face shield, a grey long-sleeved shirt, and yellow work gloves is operating a circular saw. The worker is focused on the task, looking down at the blade. The background shows a large industrial building with vertical corrugated metal siding. A yellow and black power tool, likely a screwdriver, is visible on a surface in the foreground. The overall scene is dimly lit, emphasizing the worker and the machinery.

**In finance, OSS risk is
operational risk.**

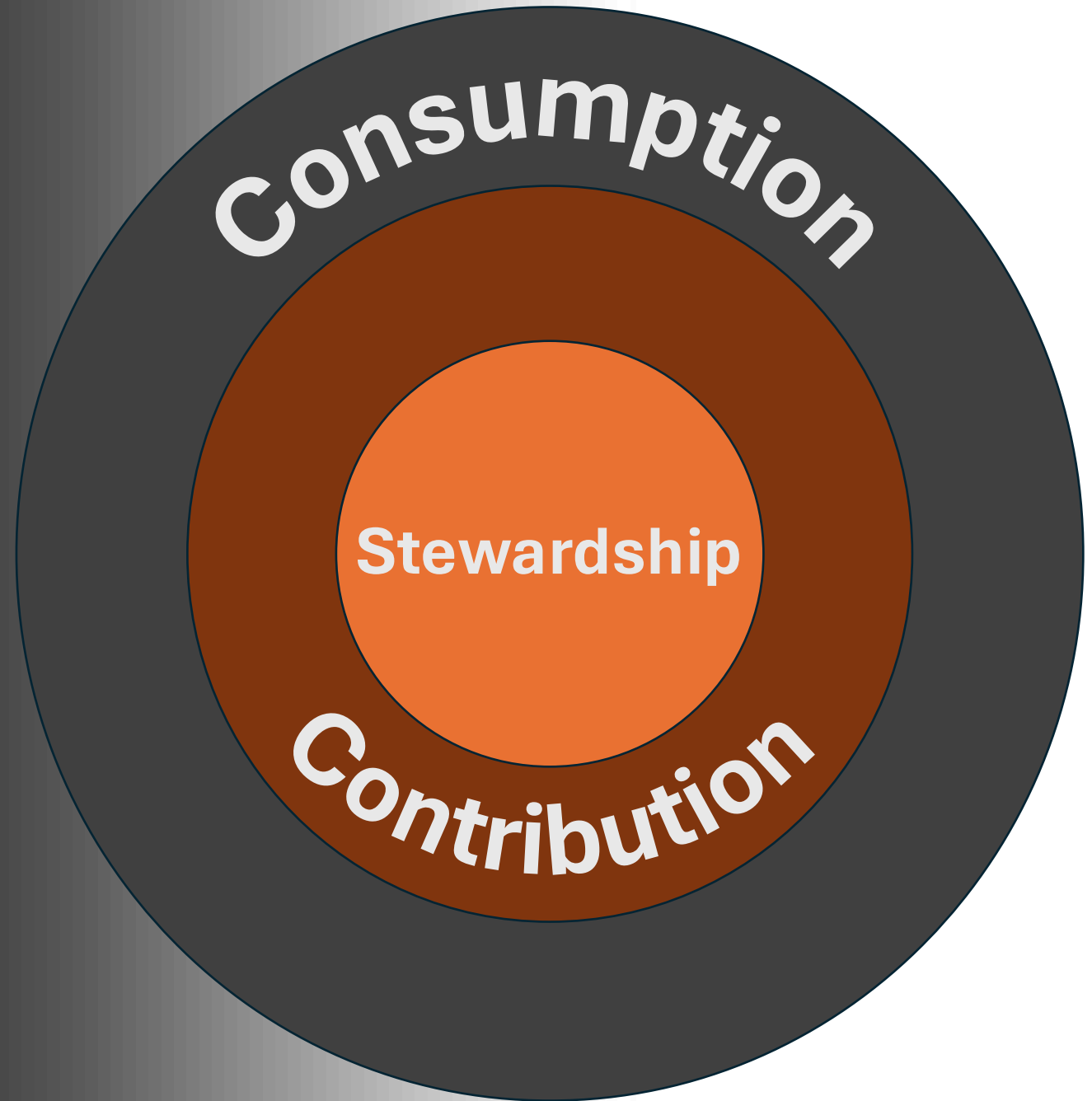
“Who owns this tool?” is often the wrong question.



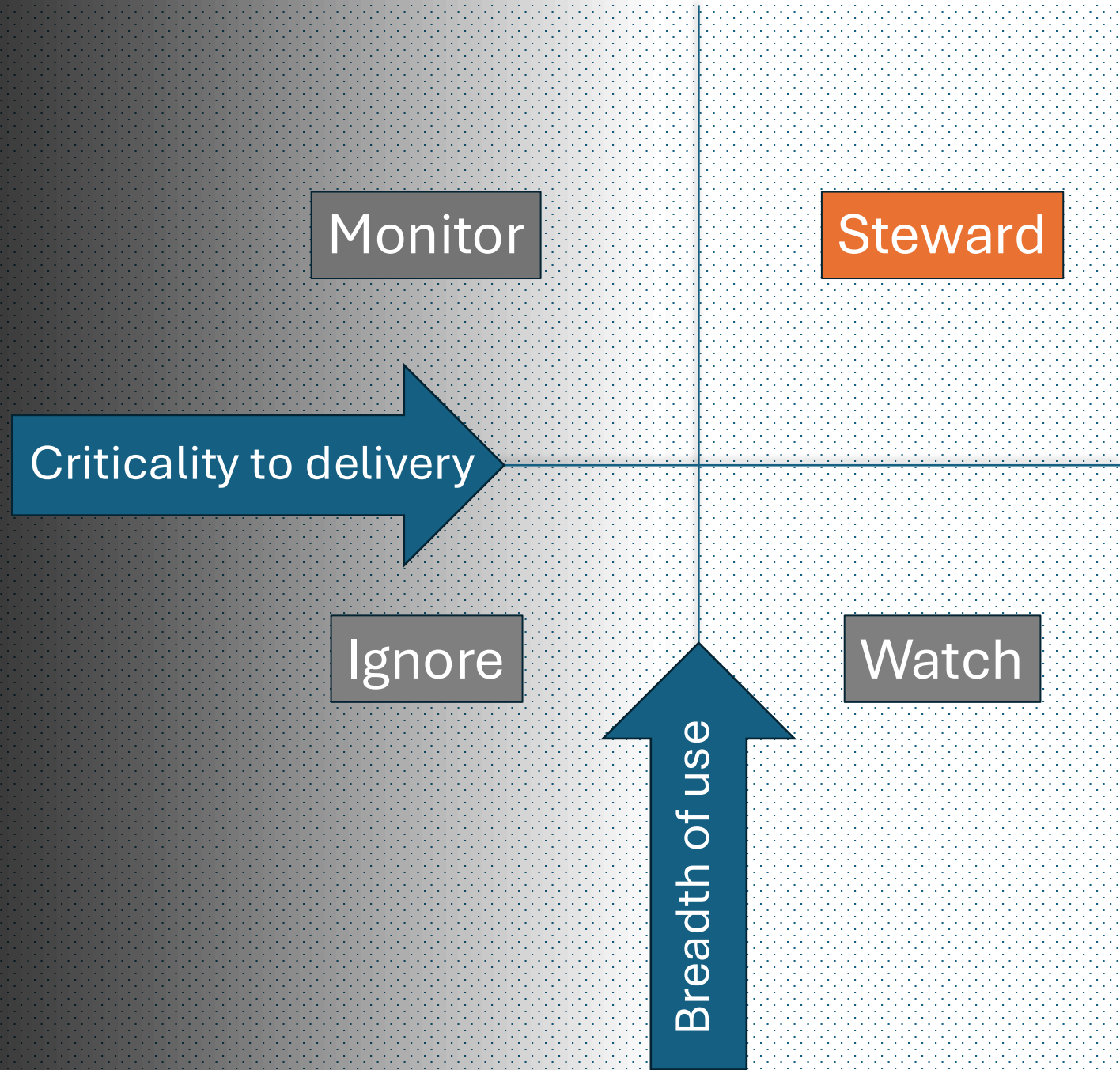


**Scale does not
come from more
owners.
It comes from
better
stewardship.**

**Stewardship =
shared capability
around critical tools
not centralized
control over them**



**Not every
dependency needs
a community.
Critical
technologies do.**





**A community is not a mailing list.
It is a living operating model.**



Teams steward the technology. The OSPO enables the system.

Teams / communities provide

- practical expertise
- operational context
- upgrade ownership
- contribution energy
- day-to-day stewardship

OSPO provides

- policy and guardrails
- education and process
- governance advice
- contribution support
- tooling and enablement

**Participation should be
easy to start
and more structured as
influence increases.**



A woman with long, wavy brown hair, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, is seen from the side. She has a black backpack on her back and is looking down at a smartphone held in her hands. She is standing in a crowded airport terminal with many other people in the background, some with luggage. The floor has yellow lines. The text "Good governance should enable participation, not smother it." is overlaid on the left side of the image in white, bold font. There is a small orange horizontal bar above the text.


**Good
governance
should enable
participation,
not smother it.**

**Security cannot sit
outside
stewardship.
It has to be part of
how communities
operate.**

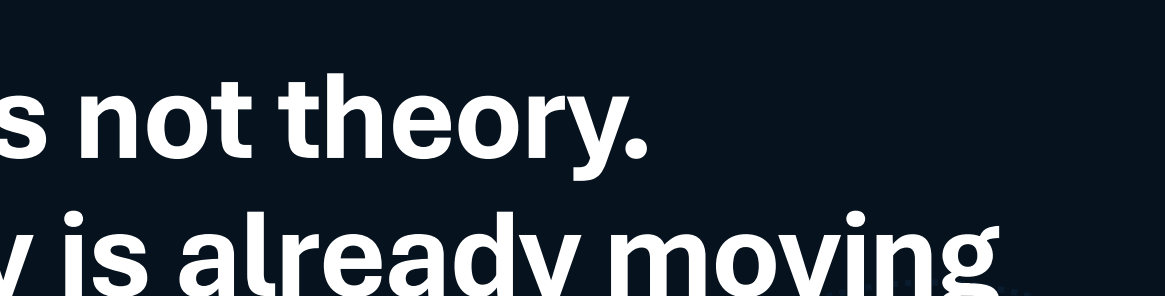


**The same mistakes
appear everywhere.**






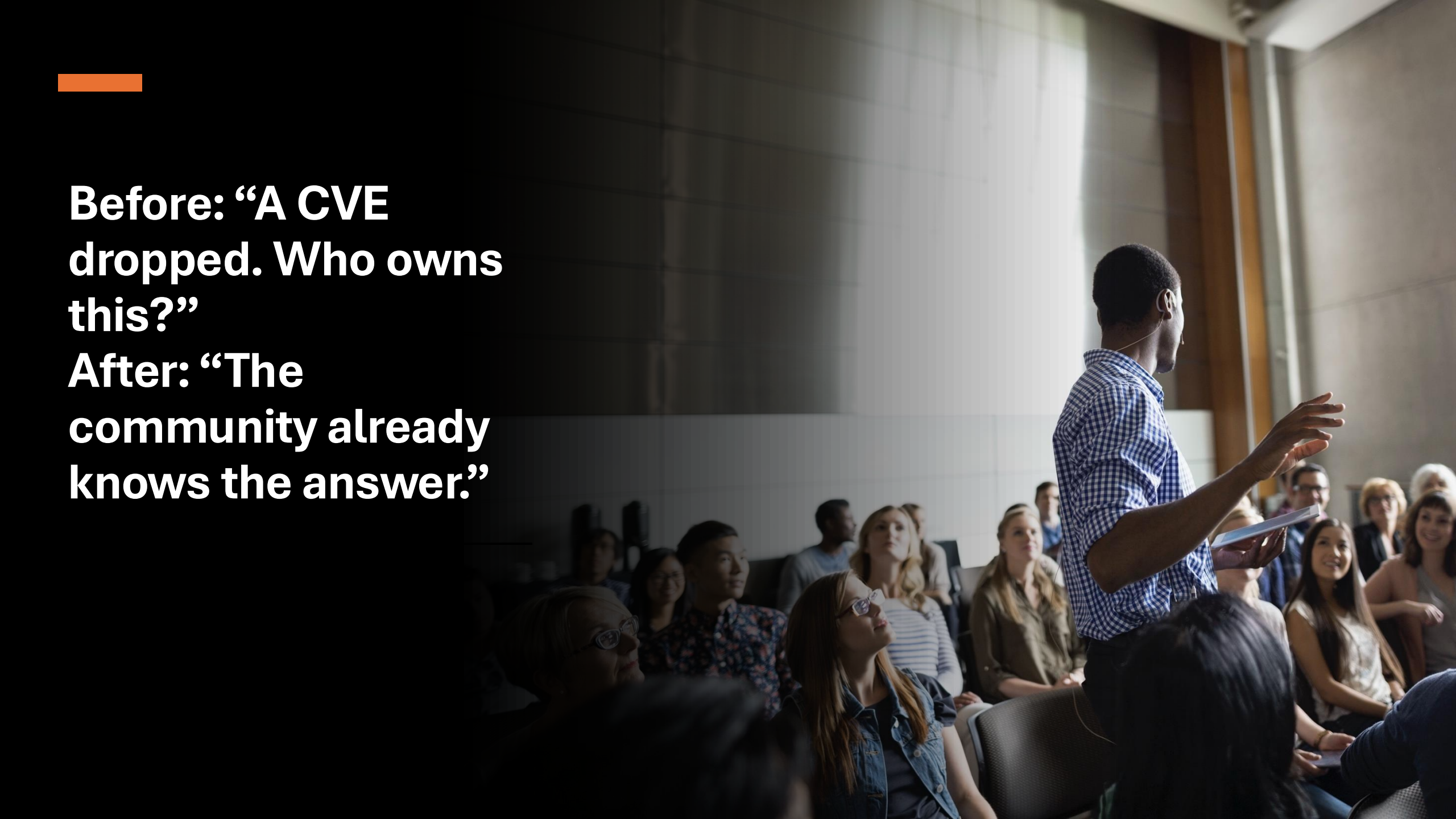
**This is not theory.
The industry is already moving
this way.**



Identify critical project →
form cohort/community →
structured engagement →
stronger ecosystem.

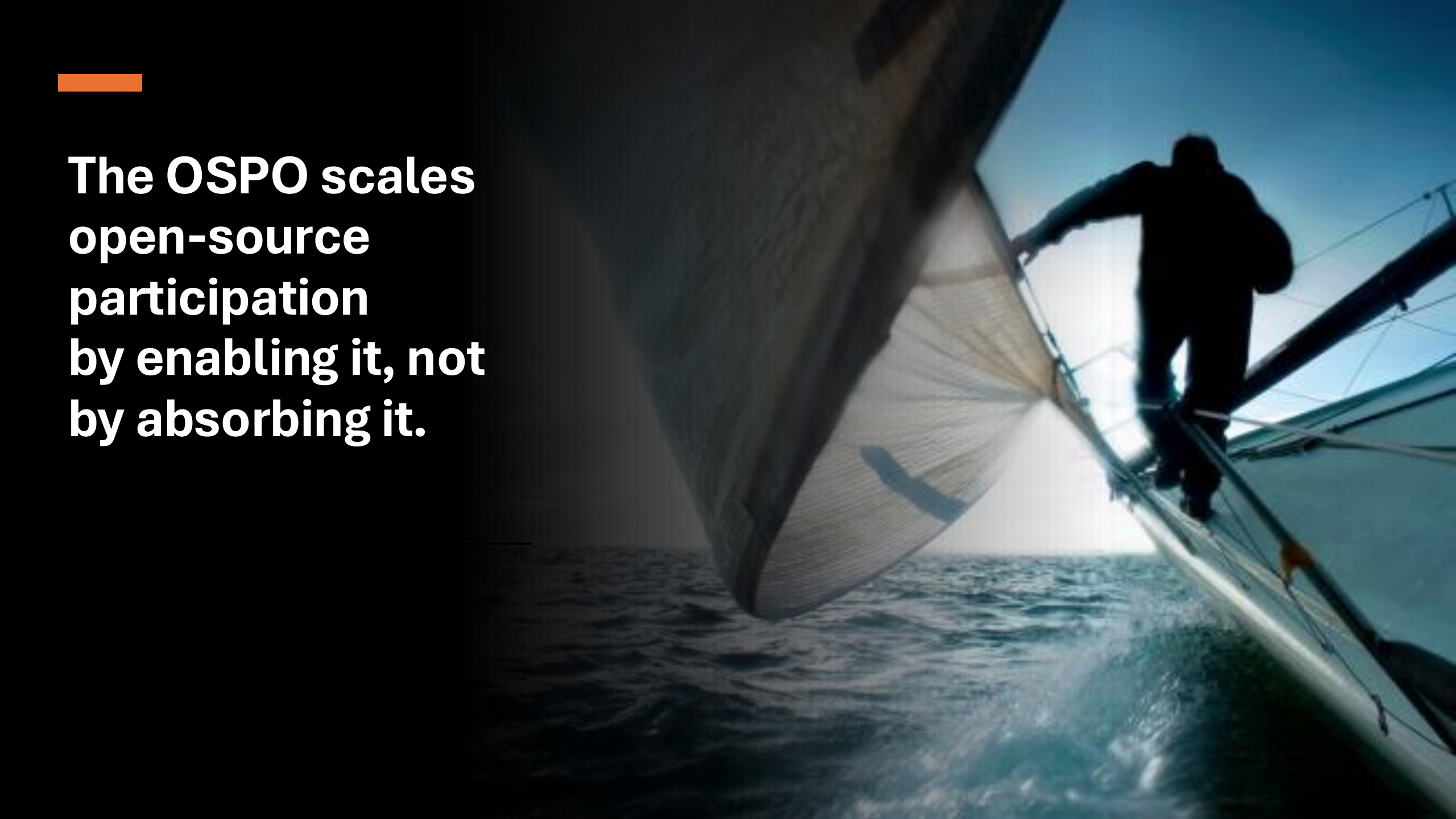


**Risk drops.
Consistency
rises.
Engineering
moves faster.**


A man in a blue checkered shirt is standing and presenting to a diverse audience seated in a modern, well-lit room. He is gesturing with his right hand while holding a tablet in his left. The audience members are looking towards him, and the room features large windows and a clean, architectural design.

**Before: “A CVE
dropped. Who owns
this?”**

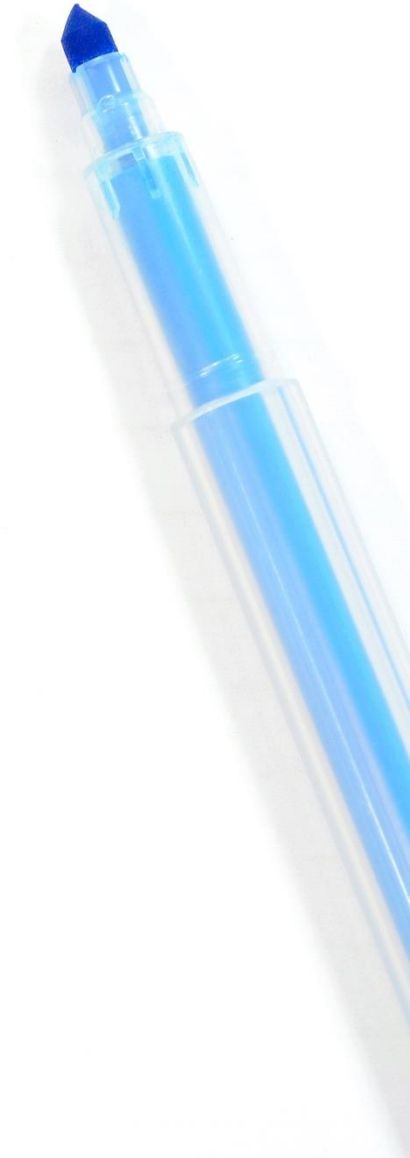
**After: “The
community already
knows the answer.”**

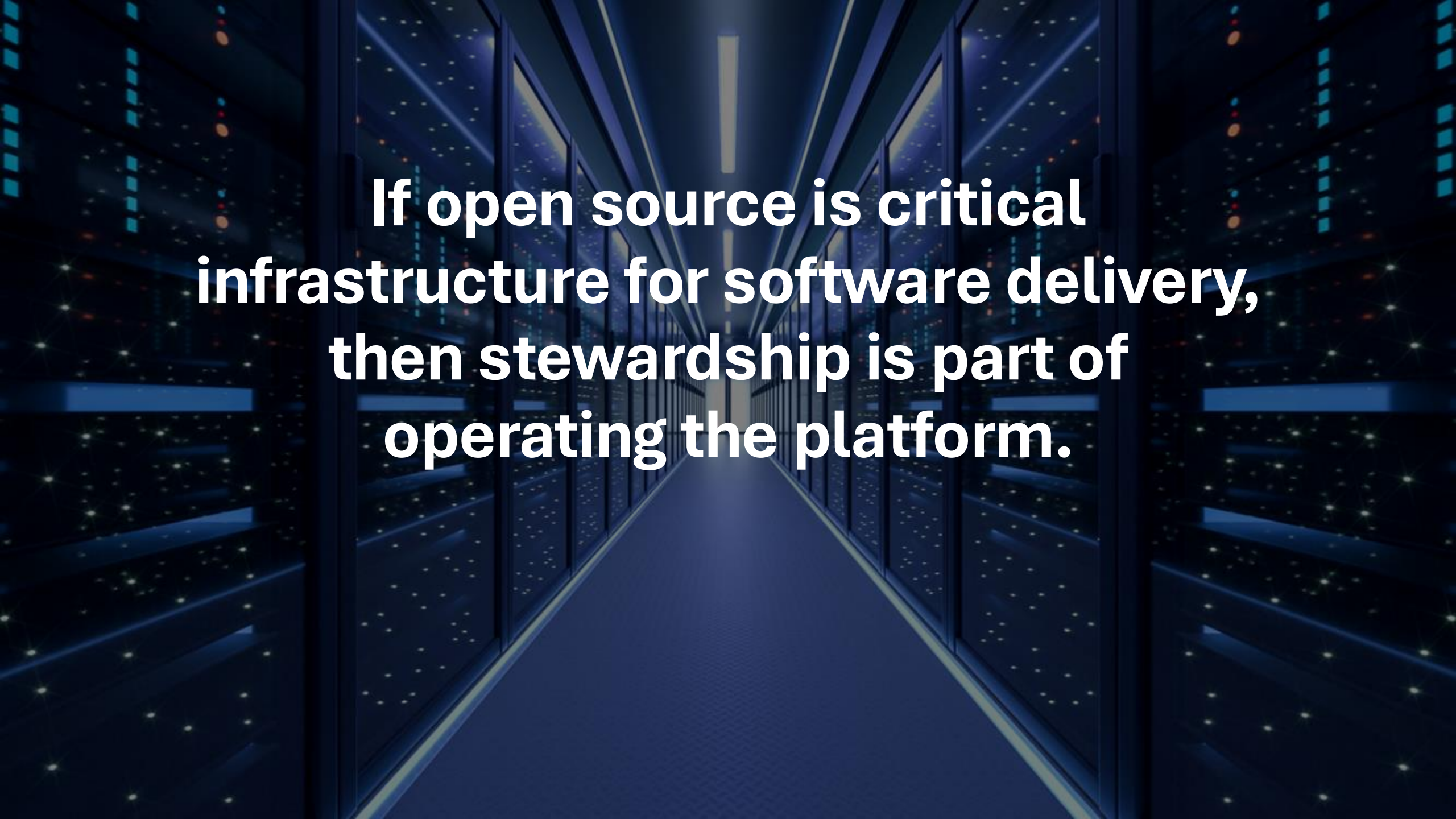
A person is silhouetted against a bright sky while standing on the deck of a sailboat. The person is leaning over the side of the boat, and a large, light-colored sail is visible in the foreground. The water is a deep blue, and the overall scene is captured in a low-angle, dramatic lighting style.

**The OSPO scales
open-source
participation
by enabling it, not
by absorbing it.**



Identify your critical few
Find the hidden communities
Give them structure and support



A perspective view of a server room aisle. The aisle is flanked by rows of server racks on both sides. The racks are illuminated with a cool blue light, and there are numerous small, glowing points of light scattered throughout the scene, creating a sense of depth and a futuristic atmosphere. The floor is a dark, reflective surface that mirrors the lights from the racks and the ceiling. The overall color palette is dominated by deep blues and purples, with some warmer tones from the glowing lights.

**If open source is critical
infrastructure for software delivery,
then stewardship is part of
operating the platform.**

Appendix:

Research & Reports

- FINOS State of Open Source in Financial Services 2025
- Linux Foundation / TODO Group — State of OSPOs 2025
- Sonatype — State of the Software Supply Chain 2026
- Harvard Business School — The Value of Open Source Software (2024)

Regulation & Standards

- EU Digital Operational Resilience Act (DORA)
- OpenChain ISO/IEC 5230
- OpenChain ISO/IEC 18974

Industry Case Studies

- Bloomberg Engineering — Sustaining OpenTelemetry (2026)



Thank you

Neil McGonigle

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