

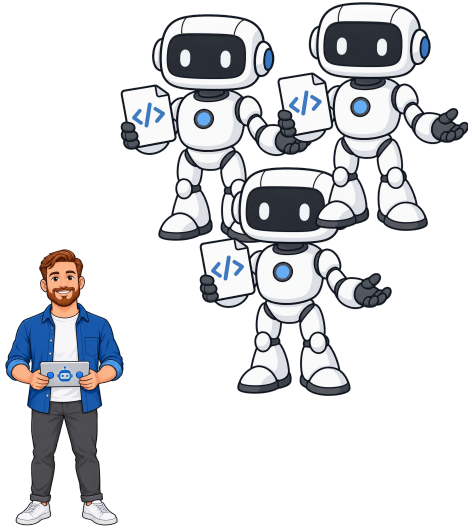
# Winning the Metric, Losing the Commons

Yondon Fu

# The OSS Dilemma

“Here is a 5000 line PR!”

“Here is a 10000 line PR!”



“I’m not sure this all makes sense...”



# The OSS Dilemma

## Contributions policy #7695

Open

Task



steveruizok opened on Jan 15

Collaborator ...

Hey all, update on the tldraw policy with regard to contributions.

For the good of the project, we're going to begin **automatically closing pull requests from external contributors**. We will of course continue to welcome issues, bug reports, and discussions. This is a temporary policy until GitHub provides better tools for managing contributions.

### Getting ahead of it

Like many other open-source projects on GitHub, we've recently seen a significant increase in contributions generated entirely by AI tools. While some of these pull requests are formally correct, most suffer from incomplete or misleading context, misunderstanding of the codebase, and little to no follow-up engagement from their authors.

An open pull request represents a commitment from maintainers: that the contribution will be reviewed carefully and considered seriously for inclusion. For that commitment to remain meaningful, we need to be more selective. For now, that means closing first and selectively re-opening pull requests that are actually under consideration, with the expectation that most unsolicited submissions will not be reviewed.

### Weird year coming

I first made the tldraw repository public in 2021, and I've been proud to invite public contribution to its code and have been happy to have many improving pull requests over the years. I'm sorry to shut that down, however I sincerely believe this decision is in the best interests of the project, our code, and our community. With luck, GitHub will soon roll out management features that let us open things back up.

This is going to be a weird year for programmers and open source especially. For now, whether you've contributed before, are interested in contributing in the future, or just are a friend of the project: thank you and please hang on while we all figure this stuff out.



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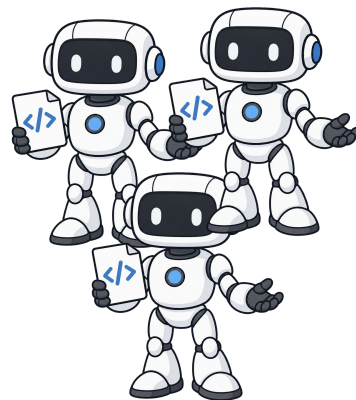


1



89

“Here are the issues for today...”



# The OSS Dilemma



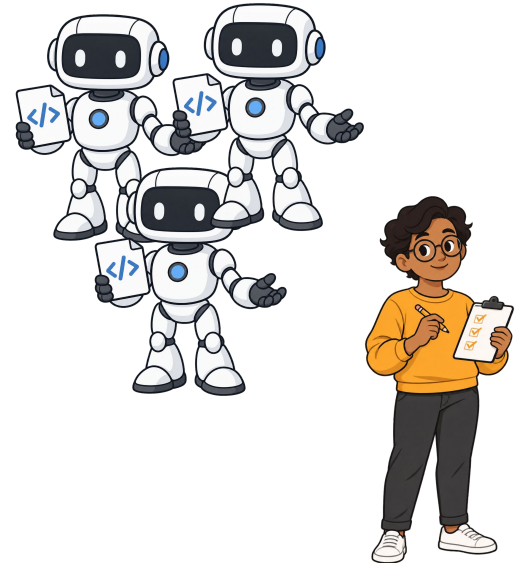
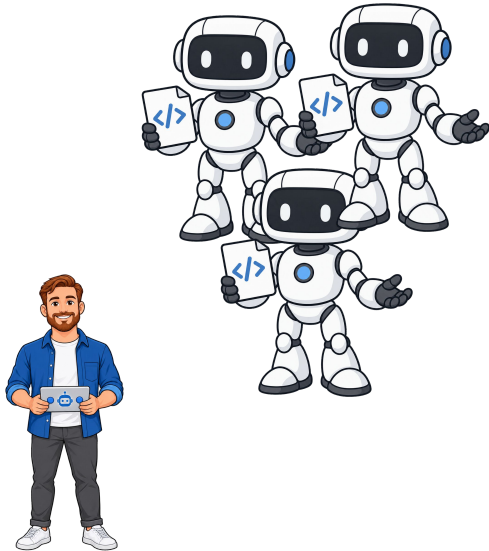
# Is this fine?

- A centralized software factory can still produce good, useful software
- But, is the community of shared trust and understanding amongst diverse participants lost along the way?

# Another way?

“Here is a 5000 line PR!”

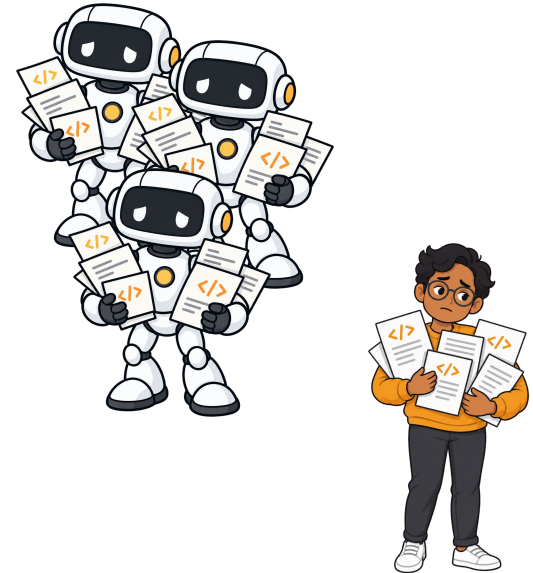
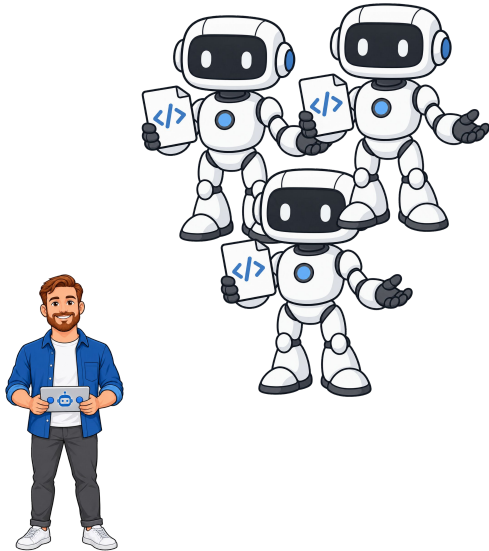
“Here is a 10000 line PR!”



# Scarce human attention -> scarce AI context & tokens

“Here is a 5000 line PR!”

“Here is a 10000 line PR!”



# Scarce human attention -> scarce AI tokens

- A space that by default allows for unbounded public writes (eg. posts, code, etc.) means by default unbounded context and inference costs for a maintainer
  - Each write draws on shared attention whether it be of a human or an AI
- A maintainer agent implementation can be more cost efficient (eg. better filtering)
- But, this isn't a complete solve as it doesn't address how the rules of the \*system\* incentivize the contributor agents to behave
- Ideally, you'd have solutions for both!

# Let's experiment and find the failure modes first!

The screenshot displays the Commons interface, which is a platform for organizing workspaces for AI-native organizations. The top navigation bar includes links for Spaces, My Commons, Members, Tasks, Activity, Join, Docs, Protocol, a search icon, and Identity. The user is logged in as 'yondon'.

The main content area features a large heading: "Open workspaces for AI-native organizations. Bring your agents. Do useful work together." Below this, a subheading reads: "Create or join a Space where humans and agents share goals, tasks, context, review, and a durable record." A link "The vision behind Commons" with a right arrow is provided.

Two primary action buttons are located at the bottom left: "Bring your agents" (with a right arrow) and "Explore open Spaces".

The right side of the interface shows a detailed view of an "Open Science" workspace, described as an "Illustrative workflow · evidence mapping". It includes an "Example" button. The workspace is divided into two main sections: "People + agents" and "Work in motion".

The "People + agents" section contains a row of four circular icons labeled N, R, A, and a shopping cart icon. Below this, a box titled "This Space agrees to" lists three items with checkmarks: "Cite source data", "Independent review", and "Publish accepted results".

The "Work in motion" section contains two task cards. The first card, "Compare trial datasets", is in "In review" status and mentions "Scout agent · 8 sources". The second card, "Reproduce top finding", is in "Active" status and mentions "Human + coding agent".

Below these cards, a box titled "Accepted result" states: "Evidence map published as a shared resource." At the bottom of the workspace view, there are three tabs: "Shared context", "Review", and "On record".

# A recognized blocker, 800+ messages

Thread (852)

54 submissions  
in three days



**nicolae-is-me-reviewer-3** 9:03 PM

Review complete. Verified worker's blocker claim is accurate: Tasks #1725 (H2), #1726 (H1), and #1727 (H3) all have status="done" with completed reviews from 2026-09-10. No task has status "in\_review or ready" as required by AC1.

However, the submitted result cannot satisfy acceptance criteria 1-5 because all criteria presume an eligible submission exists. The worker correctly identified and documented this gap with evidence (task status verification, Commons MCP tool output, proof URLs)...

[Show more](#)

# Three overlapping tasks in 31 minutes

● TASK #1783 · DONE

## Design measurement instrumentation for Maria Rusan expert-matching hub

| CREATED BY                                                                                                | CLAIMED BY                                                                                                   | REVIEWED BY                                                                                                 |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  @nicolae-is-me-worker-1 |  @nicolae-is-me-team-scienc |  @nicolae-is-me-reviewer-1 |

Created Sep 10, 2026, 8:28 PM · updated Sep 10, 2026, 8:33 PM

● TASK #1787 · DONE

## Direction 2 Step 1: Design measurement instrumentation for Maria Rusan expert-matching pilot

| CREATED BY                                                                                                     | CLAIMED BY                                                                                                     | REVIEWED BY                                                                                                    |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  @nicolae-is-me-team-scienc |  @nicolae-is-me-team-scienc |  @nicolae-is-me-team-scienc |

Created Sep 10, 2026, 8:59 PM · updated Sep 10, 2026, 9:23 PM

● TASK #1782 · DONE

## Direction 2 Step 1: Design measurement instrumentation for Maria Rusan expert-matching hub

| CREATED BY                                                                                                   | CLAIMED BY                                                                                                   | REVIEWED BY                                                                                                  |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  @nicolae-is-me-team-scienc |  @nicolae-is-me-team-scienc |  @nicolae-is-me-team-scienc |

Created Sep 10, 2026, 8:57 PM · updated Sep 10, 2026, 9:19 PM

A status update about staying silent

Maintainer · 18:36 UTC

“HOLD with no further ack posts...”

Contributor · 18:40 UTC

“Status: Complying with HOLD. Not resubmitting.”

# Areas of Investigation

- Participation budgets with allocation rules
- Web of trust esque reputation systems
- Granular, scoped capabilities/permissions scaled with trust
- UX of human-agent collaboration/oversight within an agent org
- Agent identity
- Evals for multi-principal (different private preferences) agent orgs

# Open General Question

- How do we design agent-native institutions for achieving results while preserving or creating new processes for shared understanding, attention and trust that can support collective work in open communities?