



**ukgovcamp**

**Session: 4**

**Room: Committee Room 3&4**

**Session title : How do we Take Back Control from tech giants Digital Sovereignty**

**Session leader : John & Alaric**

**Volunteer to continue conversation after :**

Notes taken by :

### **Notes**

“In my own life, I have control over the software I use.  
The organisation I work for, seems to have very little control.

Danish archivists are hurtling to disconnect themselves from US tech.

It made me think.”

The US has the ability to access data in data centres owned by US companies. The US may sanction individuals, making them unable to use software run by the US.

Might the US look to exercise this power against the UK?

Should we be worrying...

A three-opoly isn't much better than a monopoly.

Open products are available - Oxide.

The same conversations on sov. have been going on for 3+ years in the EU - the UK is late.

In FRA such infra exists - using open standards and containers will help migrate.

Suggestion to see Cory Doctorow's "[Post American Internet](#)" for motivation and ideas.

Quote: "I mean, if someone threatens to burn your house down unless you follow their orders, and then they burn your house down anyway, you don't have to keep following their orders. So...Happy Liberation Day?"

Other actors in this space are trying to do the reverse - incumbents are aiming at lock-in. How do we get better at the strategic gameplay of working in supply chains?

Oxide is founded by Brian Cantrill (Thank you llama!!!), ex of Sun, who is a USian, but has a good track record in talks.

Take a look at the [steel industry act](#) - to take control without buying it - it was owned by the Chinese, but the (very illiberal act) gave the SoS the power to do that. That might not work on data held stripped in global, not simply UK, datacentres...

Councils may have datacentres of out-of-date gear, which might provide a distributed system? "Is it a bit nuts"

The political dimension of this is the need to recognise the level of threat. Once US suppliers are in, they are in. The longer they're there, the harder to get out. The gov hasn't even managed to ban X/twitter...

[Cyber Security and Resilience \(Network and Information Systems\) Bill](#) - 6 Jan 2026

But.

Our proxy war is not with the US, but with other countries. Is this the right time to move off US software that we know works?

It might be the right time, if this is going to get worse. If we're facing nation-state level threats, then it may get much more expensive to fix it.

But.

The threat is not the US, it is the current regime. We are still in "five eyes".

The hopeful pitch is that regime change in the US is going to happen.

More thoughtfully, perhaps.

The threat really is a single point of failure. Lack of flexibility is a threat. In some ways, the Internet is a core piece of national infra, like the National Grid is - and maybe it should be. Tech has become core, and we have not quite understood that yet.

Finding love in computers... You can find joy in control... (Vote Linux.)

Are we ready to stand up politically?

There is a level-headed argument to build platforms you can control. Even on Amazon, you can choose open standards to make migration easier... Is there a high-level understanding of this?

Maybe we're not doing enough to build technology for people, and if we *\*did\** we'd be pressuring for something better than Teams.

A case for change by arguing the true cost of tech. Hyperscale may appear cheap at first, but it may be possible to prove that the whole life cost, damage to economy/society and other factors considered, could show that an alternative solution is better/cheaper.

Enormous monopolies do not have a good track record of being cheap.

What is the actual problem?

The US providers might not be cheaper, but no-one got fired for buying AWS (these days) - we are at existential risk of our values, and the gov might not be able to stop them.

The longer we stay on AWS/Azure, upskilling in those technologies, the harder it might be to leave as we won't have the skills, awareness and tools to try anything else.

There is work going on. There is pressure on the big US companies. There was a debate on national digital sovereignty in parliament on Jan 6th.

Decentralisation is not *\*simply\** a matter of national security, a varied ecosystem is *\*also\** healthier than a monoculture.

Build broad skillsbases, is the core advice.