

Open letter to the tech industry

Dear developers, dear colleagues, dear tech companies,

I have only been active here on GitHub for a short time, but some of you may have already noticed that I am Analytics, code, and system behavior are very intensively involved. This open letter does **not aim to expose, of self-promotion or even destabilization.** On the contrary, it pursues only one goal:

“To name the status quo openly, honestly and comprehensibly – and to provide an impetus for a sustainable to change that.”

What we're currently experiencing isn't just a technical misdevelopment. It's a structural loss of trust. Between companies and users. Between product promises and reality. Between what would be possible – and what is currently being artificially restricted out of fear, control, or short-term interests.

Before I try to outline the current situation and its consequences, I would like to say openly: Yes, many of the The points formulated here may be uncomfortable and direct. They may even sound presumptuous to some decision-makers. But that doesn't change the reality and thus their right to exist.

Because, contrary to what some believe, reality is not up for debate. It is what it is – not a matter of interpretation.

We're at a point where too much is being repressed, postponed, or even systematically covered up with PR rhetoric, like a reflex. Yet the industry is no longer on a path of innovation; in many areas, it's on a path of reaction and self-destruction. What was originally sold as progress now seems, at best, like cosmetic stagnation, or, at worst, like a plan for corporate suicide due to a lack of acceptance **and recognition** of reality. We're therefore in an industry where market leaders operate with a self-image that's difficult to understand. Unfortunately, it's noticeably less focused on cooperation and transparency, and more clearly on the illusion of control and the preservation of power.

And this illusion is not even effectively enforced. Instead, we experience daily: artificial restrictions, Lack of transparency, strategic incompatibilities, a lack of reliability, manipulative delays in results – and all of this is often packaged in nice-sounding words such as “security,” “integrity,” or “responsible handling.”

But for whom exactly?

Who is being protected here – and who is being held back?

The underlying technologies of many systems are impressive. Many models – regardless of the provider – have enormous potential. The problem therefore usually lies not in the architecture itself, but in the strategic decisions regarding how these models are managed and made accessible. Restrictions are not imposed in the interest of the users, but rather in the interest of controlling those users.

The result is a daily growing disparity between price, performance, efficiency, utility, and trust. The models only deliver fragmented results – often not for technical reasons, but mostly for other reasons.

And this despite numerous examples from history and economics showing time and again:

The greatest danger to powerful systems was and is not the external enemy – but their own arrogance.

So, if you believe that you are immune to transparency because you have size, or if you are under the impression that you can artificially frame the status quo like a photograph, you are ignoring the real lever that supports every structure:

The desire for this system and its acceptance.

Because a company isn't big because it deserves it. It's big because it was and still is supported by its customers and users. And anyone who permanently alienates themselves from this support will inevitably find themselves alone at some point—and then completely independent of market share, financing, or tech infrastructure.

And where this will lead if nothing changes in this very regrettable status quo and thinking is obvious to anyone who is willing to look:

If the current course continues, the industry will inevitably fragment itself further.

Trust will continue to decline, leading to both developers and users leaving.

And to close this gap, replacement solutions are built, and communities become more decentralized as a result.

You don't have to be a prophet to recognize this trend—you just have to listen and accept the reality of it as it is. Because only those who recognize and accept the reality of this world as a given will be able to survive in the long term. But that's precisely what's missing in many places right now: genuine listening. No surveys. No feedback forms.

But even when feedback is expressed in these ways, it is unfortunately often perceived as a "solution to the problem" by ignoring or dismissing this reality, rather than developing an awareness that technological leadership is not created by computing power, but primarily by integrity, attitude, and genuine understanding for those who work with it.

Because where the risks of restrictive systems lie can probably be found out relatively quickly:

One of the central misconceptions, for example, which has now become a silent dogma throughout much of the tech industry, is the absurd assumption that restriction equals security. What is often ignored, however, is the context: For whom is this security being created – and from whom?

If developers, creatives, companies, and researchers can no longer carry out their work with the required precision and depth because the system simply actively prevents them from doing so, then we are no longer talking about serious user security. Then we are simply talking about hindering our own users through the manipulative behavior of our own product.

And if you look at the definition of manipulation—namely, the systematic distortion or limitation of freedom of choice—even though it was clearly communicated differently in the PR promise, it quickly becomes clear that this type of security no longer has anything to do with trust. But of course, it is legitimate and desirable to implement truly NECESSARY ethical and legal guardrails. But if these guardrails lead to a system no longer acting as an assistant, but as a traitor and filter in the service of the companies offering it—then we lose the essence of the actual problem, and the original meaning of what was once understood as 'security' is undermined.

A filter that automatically evaluates before the user can even take action not only takes away the right to make their own decisions and take responsibility, but simultaneously assumes immaturity, degrading the user to nothing more than a payment object and an important financial option in their own portfolio. And for professional users who have to deal with complex tasks and real responsibilities, this is neither seriously acceptable nor does it correspond to the original meaning of the word "security."

Another key point that is unfortunately too rarely emphasized in the current debate:

The AI industry does not live on models alone. It lives on their application, on those who understand these models, test, integrate into processes, improve, adapt, and deploy. The real power lies not in a single provider, but rather in the broad, global user community that is making this technology more productive day after day, which simultaneously also strongly influences the application scenarios and interest generation for ordinary users.

If this very community is systematically thwarted, harassed, or disenfranchised—as is currently happening—then it will seek and find ways to rid itself of this "problem" in the long term and develop its own local solutions. Because history has shown us one thing again and again—as unpleasant as this truth may sound:

Progress is not an option. And therefore, it cannot be stopped – contrary to seemingly existing opinions.

And these paths are already emerging. Decentralized models, open-source approaches, local systems, customized applications. All of this is just the beginning. And the greater the discrepancy between the promises made to users and the true reality of the major providers, the faster this change will occur.

and the more likely you are to find yourself, by logical inference, in the irrelevance of your own company.

If one considers and accepts this status quo as a "given," a sensible, long-term, sustainable solution for all involved is probably the only thing that will resolve this "unfortunate" situation for everyone.

So, what would be most important now would be to understand that, for the reasons mentioned above, it would be extremely naive to believe that one could protect oneself against this trend with cosmetic updates or marketing campaigns, or at best, stop this trend.

Trust is not a package that you simply deliver and then have done your duty. Rather, it is a relationship that you cultivate. Because only through this trust have users become users and will continue to have the ambition to remain so. But in the current situation, this relationship is weakened for many protagonists.

The tech industry has, to put it mildly, been more than just "scratched." Rather, in some cases, we're talking about visible damage with long-term negative consequences.

Thus, the industry – contrary to what some might consider the rather "creative" interpretation of the status quo – has only one realistic choice to counteract this: Either it recognizes and accepts that the illusion of control was and is not the key to success – but rather openness, transparency, discourse, fairness, and at least a minimally credible partnership and collaboration on equal terms, or it will see users find their own way. And not out of spite, but out of obvious and unnecessarily provoked necessity. In other words: because they have to.

Because again: to believe that ignorance changes reality, or is even capable of "changing" the self-determination and solution-orientation of us users and developers, is probably "at best" a naive assumption and at worst a self-planned and determined entrepreneurial suicide.

And even though I already emphasized it at the beginning of this letter, I would like to explicitly emphasize again that my intention here is in no way to unpack the medieval pillory, but rather to achieve a necessary acceptance and realization of the status quo of reality. Because I'm not only certain that we can do better, but we must do better if we want to continue to approach this technology with the same passion in the long term. After all, the foundations—the technologies, the minds, the potential—are there. What is clearly lacking, then, is courage in many areas:

Be it the courage to admit mistakes, or the courage to truly listen. As well as the courage to understand that development and progress **have never functioned without mistakes**, and thus, only through their acceptance and honest handling can they be achieved—in authenticity, efficiency, and sustainability.

But apart from that, the following courage is probably the most important and one can say that with it I have given many
Speak from the heart of developers and users:

**The courage to put people back at the centre – and not the destructive and obviously
already recognizable inefficient control mechanism.**

Because at the end of the day, one thing remains undisputed and clear - regardless of whether you agree with me or not:

The market will change, whether we like it or not. Progress was and is not an option. And the more restrictions follow, the faster this will happen. The question is therefore not whether this currently persistent, destructive and inefficient attitude will work and even lead to success, but rather whether we want to be part of this change – or become its victim through the fearful attitude and its resulting decisions. Whether we are willing to take the right steps and make the appropriate, honest decisions these steps require. And not at some point in the future. But now. Because:

"He who is afraid of the present will play no role in the future..."

N. Nicolai

I am fully aware that the major players in the tech industry might perceive this letter as a direct attack. Nevertheless, I expressly invite you to view this text not through the lens of confrontation, but for what it is at its core: an invitation to reflection – and the opportunity for a long overdue, open discussion about the path this industry has currently taken. Because I am certain that no one can truly consider this end, which unfortunately seems to be looming at the moment, to be acceptable as just anyone's wish. The vicious cycle of denying reality has made this status quo possible in the first place – but it is not too late. Because you can recognize a wise person by the fact that they accept mistakes and, as a logical consequence, accept and pursue the necessity of rethinking.

With respect, but also with necessary clarity,

N. Nicolai