Vibe Coding Kills Open Source

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"I ship code I don't read."

Peter Steinberger, OpenClaw (2026)

"70-80-90% of code at Anthropic is written by Claude."

Dario Amodei, Axios AI+ Summit (2025)

What is “vibe coding”?

- User describes intent, gets working software
- AI agent selects and assembles open source packages
- **User never reads docs, files bugs, or engages with maintainers**

The puzzle

OSS usage ↑

OSS engagement ↓

How can both be true?

Tailwind CSS: A case study

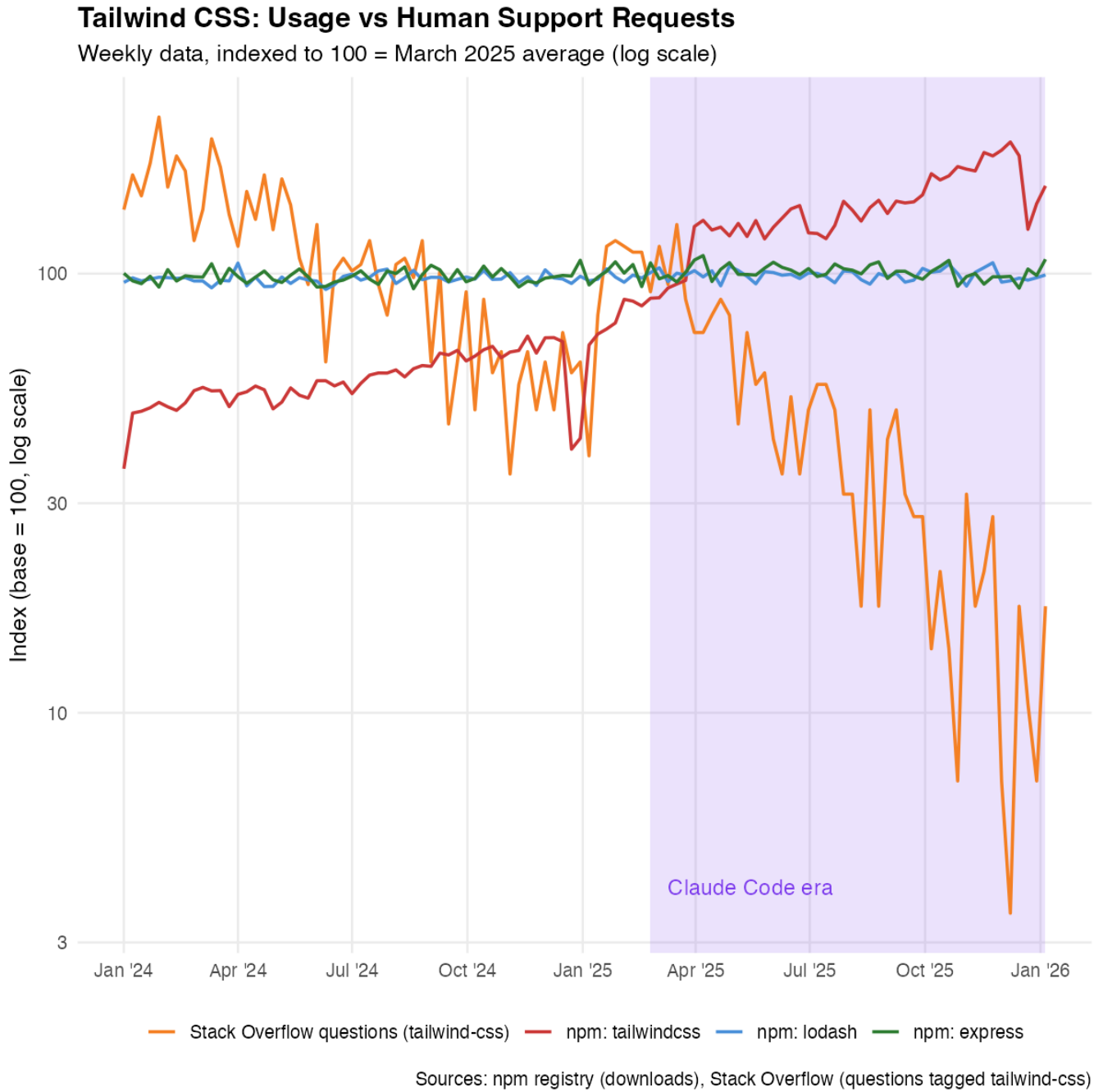

Figure 1: npm downloads vs Stack Overflow questions

> “Traffic to our docs is down 40% despite Tailwind being more popular than ever. Revenue is down close to 80%.”

Adam Wathan, Tailwind CSS creator (2026)

Does this generalize?

We ran an experiment:

- 100 websites $\times$ 6 frontier AI models
- Track which npm packages each model recommends
- Measure downloads (usage) vs stars (human attention)

The pattern holds

When AI recommends a package...	
Downloads	**+1.7 million/week**
Stars	**-10/week**

Usage **up**, engagement **down**

Two channels

Productivity
AI lowers cost of building OSS

Demand diversion
Users don't engage, maintainers lose **visibility**

How OSS maintainers earn returns

- Documentation visits $\rightarrow$ consulting leads
- Bug reports $\rightarrow$ reputation $\rightarrow$ job offers
- Stars/downloads $\rightarrow$ sponsorships

All require direct engagement

A model of the OSS ecosystem

- Developers create packages, decide whether to share
- Users choose packages, choose how to use them
- Vibe coding: higher productivity, lower engagement

$$\pi = \bar{\pi}(1 - v)$$

Revenue falls with vibe coding share v

Which channel wins?

Demand diversion is about 6x as big as productivity gains

Long-run equilibrium

- Entry falls $\rightarrow$ fewer new packages
- Variety shrinks $\rightarrow$ less choice
- Remaining packages may concentrate around superstars

Welfare can fall despite better AI

The magnification trap

The same feedback loop that grew OSS...

more entry $\rightarrow$ better ecosystem $\rightarrow$ lower costs $\rightarrow$ more entry

...now works in reverse

less entry $\rightarrow$ worse ecosystem $\rightarrow$ higher costs $\rightarrow$ less entry

What would save OSS?

84%

of revenue must come from visibility independent sources

A Spotify model for OSS

- AI platforms already track which packages they use
- Revenue sharing based on attributable usage
- Infrastructure for redistribution exists

Collapse or concentration?

Speculative—not in model, no data yet

Think **Linux distributions**: many $\rightarrow$ few (Ubuntu, Debian), but specialized distros persist for specific tasks

What we call "OSS" may be pushed down the abstraction ladder—feels like **operating system**, not tool

But users will still share high-level solutions... maybe in English

“Prompt Requests” not “Pull Requests”

> “Pull requests are dead, long live prompt requests.”
>
> **Peter Steinberger** (Pragmatic Engineer, 2026)

The collaboration layer may shift—from code to intent

Takeaway

Vibe coding is a **fundamental shift** in how software is produced and consumed.

The productivity gains are real. So is the threat to OSS.

koren.mk

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Appendix

Stack Overflow is dying

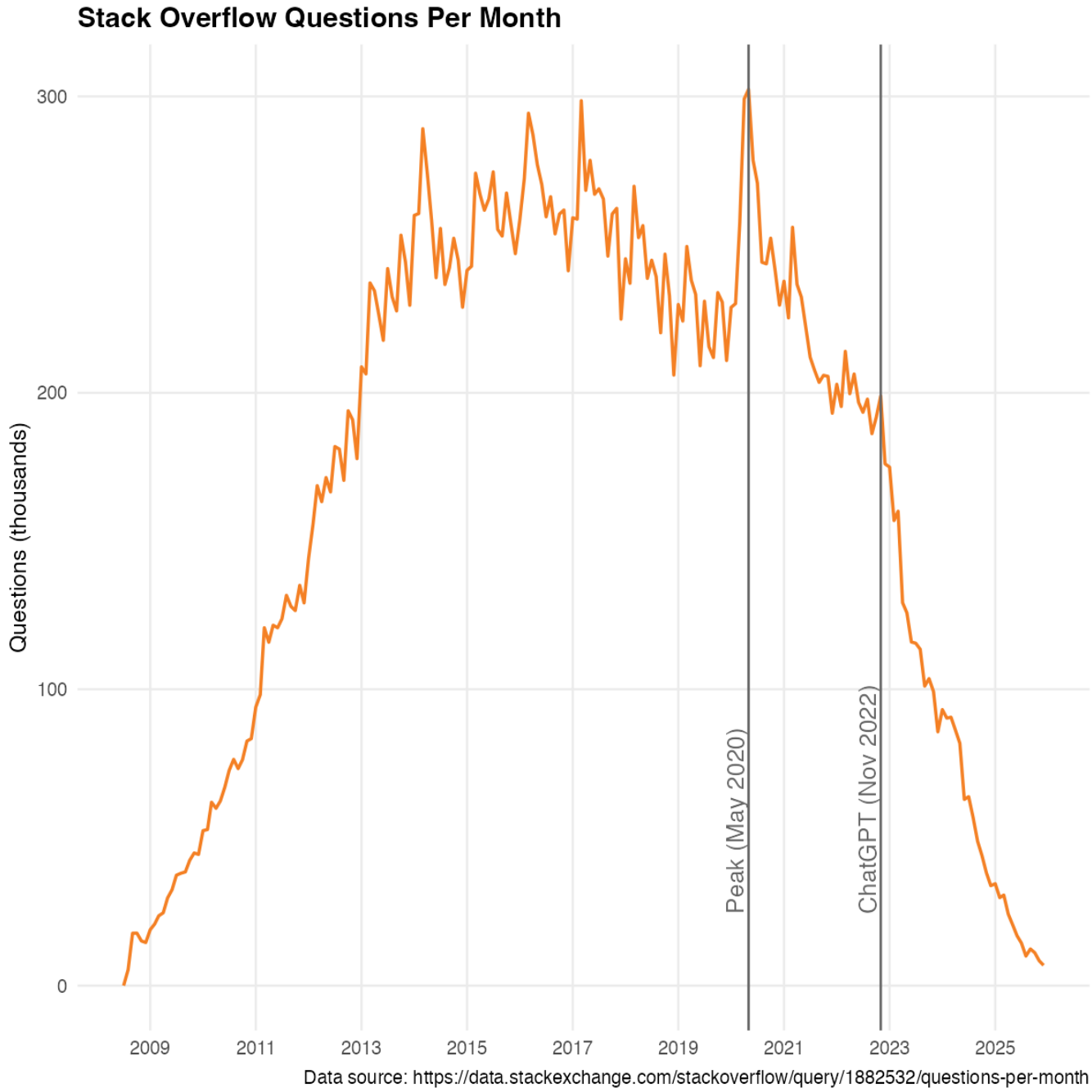

Figure 2: 25% decline after ChatGPT launch (del Río-Chanona et al., 2024)