



R is people

How the R Consortium supports the future of R

useR! 2026 sponsor session

Warsaw, Poland

Mike K. Smith, Chair, R Consortium; Senior Director, Pfizer R&D UK Ltd

Opinions and views presented here are those of the presenter acting as chair of the R Consortium (UseR! 2026 sponsor) and not necessarily those of his company.

R's enduring value – a foundational environment



Statistical rigor

R was built for statistical computing and graphics.



Trusted methods

Peer review, and domain expertise support serious work. Large user-base means problems can be trapped quickly.



Reproducibility

R workflows make analytical work reviewable, shareable, and repeatable.



Mature ecosystem

Packages, documentation, examples, communities, and teaching materials compound over time.

This is the bedrock on which we build.

R has always been more than “just” a language.



Build

package authors
R Core contributors
infrastructure teams



Maintain

reviewers
organizers
documenters



Teach

academics
mentors
community leaders



Use

researchers
analysts
industry teams

***PEOPLE* are at the heart of R...**

The moment we're in

AI is changing how people write code, draft analysis, search documentation, and prototype ideas.

- It's faster to prototype.
- Code can be produced with less friction.
- It's a force-multiplier for our day-to-day work.

The key question

Is AI grounded in high-enough quality content? How do we prevent “slop”?

The R answer

Statistical rigor, reproducibility, mature methods, maintainable packages, and human review.

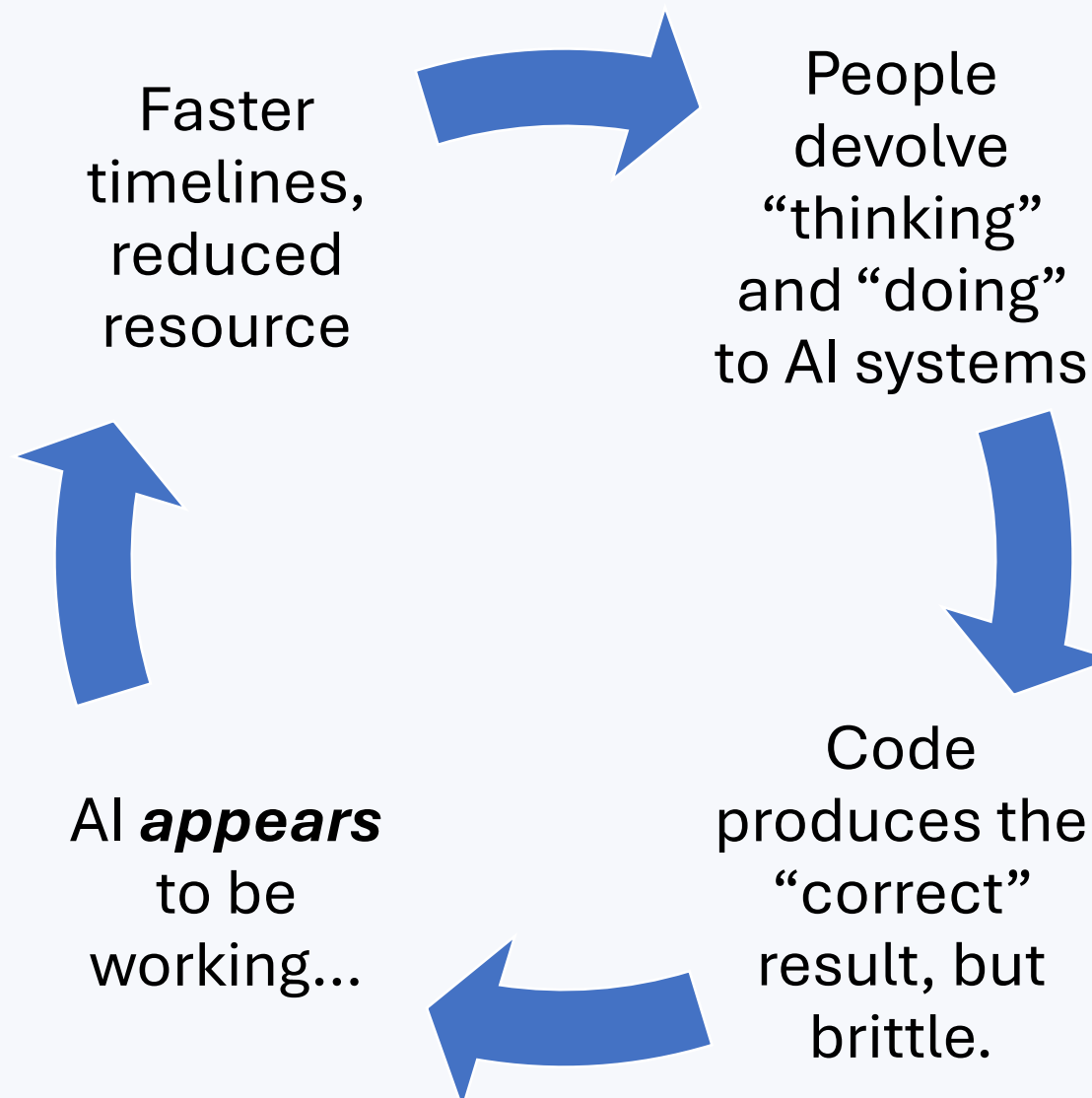
i.e. We already have it! But we need to protect that and continue to support...

The AI doom spiral

If all that matters is speed and cost...

Impacts are insidious...

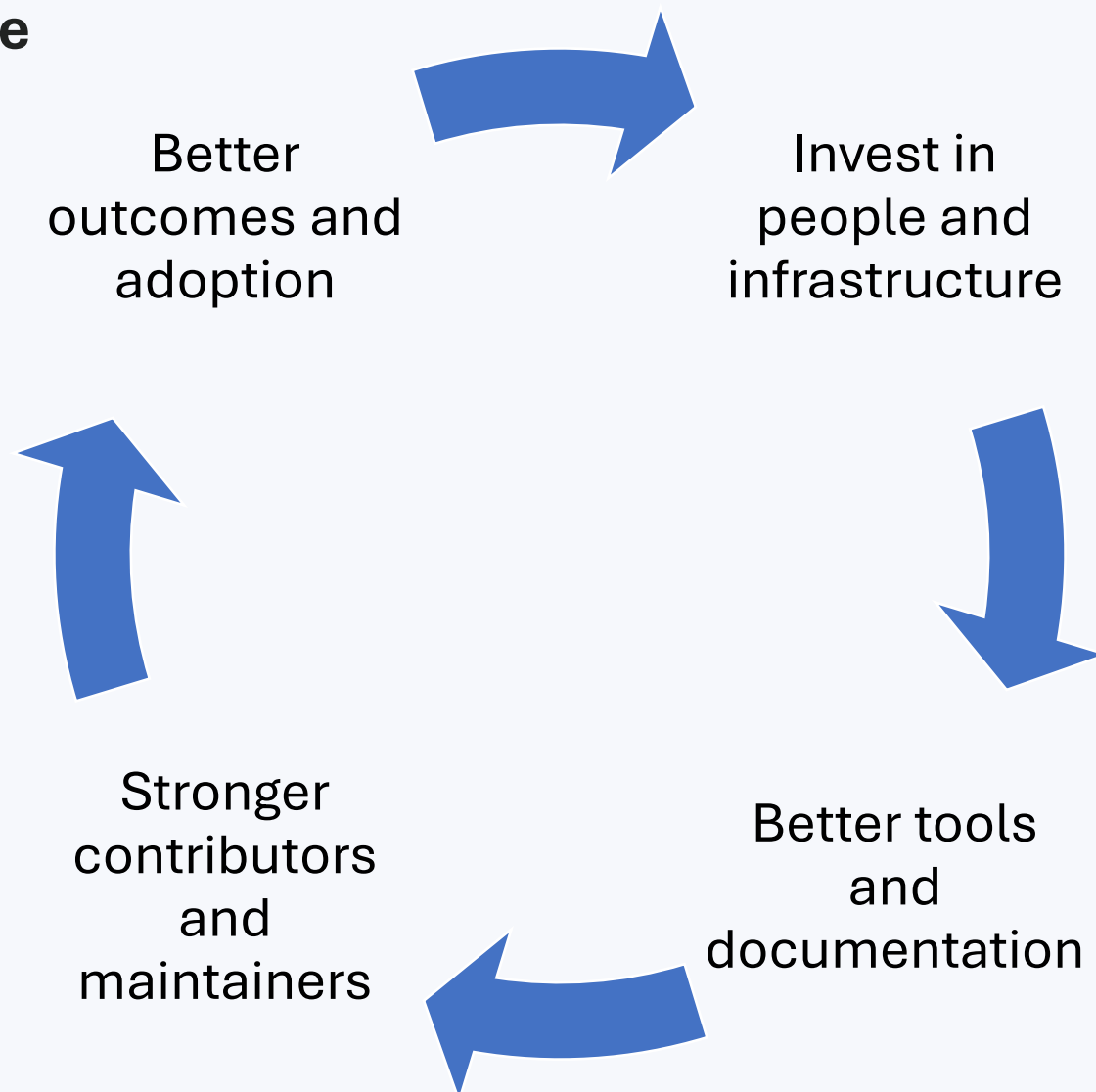
We won't know the full impact until it all goes wrong...



From doom spiral to virtuous cycle

The R Consortium's role is to help the community invest in the inputs that make better outputs possible.

AI can accelerate this cycle but we rely on people to keep foundational aspects strong.



What the R Consortium does



Grants

Funds infrastructure and community projects through the ISC.



Events

Builds opportunities for learning, exchange, visibility, and connection, online and in-person.



Working Groups

Working together to solve challenges that can't easily be done individually.



Ecosystem support

Supports the R Foundation, R Core priorities, and global community infrastructure.

The R Consortium helps longevity of R and its community.

Supporting the R Foundation and R Core

Sovereign Tech Fund work

Support projects that strengthen sustainability, security, infrastructure, and maintainability for R.

Research Software Maintenance Fund

Support maintenance, mentorship, and contributor capacity for research software that the ecosystem relies on.

EUCRA readiness

Improve documentation, attestation, security posture, and maintainability for the regulatory environment ahead.

Put a human face on the work.

- Show who maintains the language and why the work matters.
- Create visible pathways from user to contributor.
- Coordinate support without taking credit away from the people doing the work.

Industry has a role

If your organization depends on R, it has a stake in R's future.

Fund

membership
grants
event support

Contribute

employee time
working groups
review

Share

use cases
requirements
lessons learned

Advocate

internal support
executive awareness
long-term planning

Sustainability does not happen by accident. It takes internal champions who can connect business value to community investment.

What you can do next

Contribute

Fix docs, file issues, review code, submit PRs.

Mentor

Help a new contributor make their first useful contribution.

Join

Participate in a working group or help start one.

Apply

Bring forward infrastructure ideas for grant consideration.

Attend

Use events to connect, learn, and share work.

Advocate

Make the case for organizational membership and employee time.

**The next step does not have to be large. It just has to be real.
If you can do it person to person, so much the better.**



The future of R is built together.

Join us. Contribute with us. Help expand the circle.

r-consortium.org