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Intellectual Property and Corporate Research: Threats to Scientific Openness

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Science, in its idealized form, is an open source pursuit. Discoveries, while credited to their discoverers, are treated as part of the intellectual Commons. Laws concerning intellectual property, on the other hand, seek to establish private ownership of ideas and technologies. What are the benefits of each approach? And what are the costs? In this talk, I'll look at these questions from the perspective of a practicing scientist, arguing for greater openness yet recognizing that, as Ts'ai Ken T'an said, "water which is too pure has no fish."