

Company shutdowns as a source of AI training data: a register of 149 closures and what their records sell for

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Abstract

When a software company closes, its code, tickets, documents and chat outlive it, and since 2026 AI data vendors and wind-down services have offered to buy them. This paper describes a public register of technology companies that are closing, sold or have gone dark, compiled each morning from public signals, and sets it beside the public record of what such companies' records sell for. As read on 18 October 2026 the register holds 149 companies: 69 listed as acquired, 64 as closing or closed, 11 in insolvency and 5 whose sites went dark. 132 are in the United States and 17 in the United Kingdom. Only 15 entries rest on a stated public record (a notice, a filing, a news report or an announcement); 134 rest on a startup directory's status confirmed by the company's site no longer working, and of those only 57 sites were last seen working in 2025 or 2026. Of the 11 insolvencies, 6 are UK administrations, 4 creditors' voluntary liquidations and 1 a US bankruptcy filing. None of the 149 appears as a seller in the compiled records of deals, prices or market events. Those records show sales by closing companies mostly in the tens of thousands of dollars: one wind-down service reported about \$1 million across nearly 100 deals in its first year. The middle half of published offers for one company's records runs from \$174,000 to \$693,000. We describe the sources, the publication rule and the limits of both records.

Keywords: company closures; insolvency; startup shutdowns; AI training data; data licensing; corporate records; wind-down; data markets

1. Introduction

A company that stops trading leaves behind more than accounts and equipment. A software company's source code, its issue tracker, its support tickets and years of email and chat record how a team built and ran a product. Developers of AI systems have begun to pay for such records, because they show real work in progress: how a ticket became a commit, how a decision was argued and made. In 2026 that demand reached the end of a company's life. Wind-down services that dissolve startups began brokering the sale of their code and workspace data [12, 16, 17], AI data vendors opened tracks for companies that have shut down [23, 24], and in the bankruptcy of a US airline a technology company won an auction for a de-identified copy of the corporate archive [28].

Closure also sets a clock. Once a company stops paying for its software subscriptions, the vendors delete the data: Microsoft deletes customer data no more than 180 days after a subscription expires or is terminated [31], and Google Workspace states that on cancellation data "will be deleted and can't be restored" [32]. A record that is to be sold has to be found, secured and licensed within that window, and the people with authority to sell it (directors, administrators, liquidators, trustees) are often not looking for a buyer.

Two questions follow, and the public record answers each only in part. How many companies are at that point at any one time, and how are they found? And what do their records fetch? This paper addresses both from material compiled by the author's organisation. It describes a register of closing technology companies built from public signals, reports its composition as of 18 October 2026, and sets beside it every record in four open datasets that concerns a sale, offer or programme for the records of closing, closed or acquired companies. The legal rules that govern such sales, in bankruptcy and outside it, are set out elsewhere [33]; this paper describes them only where they bear on the data, and nothing in it is legal advice.

2. Data and method

2.1 How closures are detected

The register is written by an automated reader that runs each morning over a set of public sources, each read in one of three ways: what it published since the last run, the whole list with each item kept once, or one slice of a long list per morning [1, 36]. Table 1 lists the sources that produce closures. Each source contributes "signals": a public item, with its own reference, date, address and words, saying that something happened to a company.

Table 1. Sources that produce closure signals

Source	What it finds	Kinds of event	Region	How it is read
The Gazette [3]	UK software, data and IT companies entering administration or liquidation	Insolvency	UK	What is new each morning
Companies House, companies in administration or liquidation [8]	UK software, publishing, data, media and research companies the register lists as insolvent and that filed accounts in the last two years	Insolvency	UK	Monthly snapshot; published only after review
Companies House, strike-off proposals [8]	UK companies in those industries that the register proposes to strike off, with two or more years of accounts	Closing	UK	Monthly snapshot; published only after review
SEC filings, Form 8-K [6]	US public technology, media and research companies reporting bankruptcy or receivership (item 1.03)	Insolvency	US	What is new each morning
California WARN notices [7]	Closures and layoffs of 50 or more people at information and professional-services employers	Closing	US	Whole list
Hacker News [4]	Founders' own announcements that a company is closing or has been acquired	Closing, acquired	US, UK	What is new each morning
Y Combinator directory [5]	Companies of ten or more people now listed as inactive or acquired	Closing, acquired	US, UK	Whole list, daily copy
Site watch	Companies still listed as active whose site stopped answering, became a parking page or redirects elsewhere	Site gone, acquired	US, UK	120 home pages per morning
News headlines [10]	Press reports of shutdowns and acquisitions	Closing, acquired	US, UK	Read into a review file
Review	Companies added by hand from a candidate, a reply or a referral, with the source read	Any	US, UK	As found

Source: the compiler's source register, the configuration of the daily reader as of 18 October 2026 [36], summarised publicly on the register page [1]. Two further sources are planned but not wired: US bankruptcy dockets, which need an account and a way to tell software companies from other debtors, and Delaware assignments for the benefit of creditors, for which no free machine-readable docket was found [36].

Two sources enrich every entry rather than finding it. The Wayback Machine supplies, for each site, the first capture that loaded, the last capture that loaded and the number of months with a working capture [9]. Companies House supplies, for UK companies, the incorporation date, the size of the last accounts filed and the industry codes, and from the company's register pages its insolvency case and filing history [8].

2.2 Classification

Each signal carries one of four kinds of event that end a company as it was: insolvency, closing or closed, acquired, and site gone. An entry's "trigger" is the strongest kind among its signals, in that order. For UK insolvencies the procedure is recorded as the notice or the register words it: administration, creditors' voluntary liquidation, members' voluntary liquidation (solvent) or compulsory liquidation [36]. The date shown for an entry is the newest date among its signals of the same kind as its trigger. A directory listing a company as inactive or acquired carries no date, and such an entry is then shown without one; the site's last working capture is reported separately and is not treated as the date of the event [36].

2.3 What reaches the public register

An entry is published only if all three of the following hold [36]; the register page states the rule in summary [1]. Its trigger is one of the four closure kinds; layoffs alone, and companies found only because they guard their data, are excluded. The compiler's review has not set it aside as still operating, too small, large enough to sell direct, holding nothing to sell, with records likely gone, or a solvent wind-down. And either a public record or the company itself states the event (one of eight sources: the Gazette, Hacker News, SEC filings, WARN notices, the two Companies House sources, news headlines and review), or the company's site no longer works (it no longer answers, or it has become a parking or domain-sale page). Entries found only through a Companies House status wait for review before publication, because a status alone may reflect a group tidying up a subsidiary. The register names no person, gives no contact details and does not say whether the compiler has been in touch with a company [1]. This paper follows the same rule and names no company in the register.

2.4 The market record

The record of what closing companies' records sell for comes from four open datasets compiled by the author's organisation under CC BY 4.0, each row with its source address, date and the source's own words [11]: AI training data prices (1,022 rows, reviewed 17 October 2026), data licensing deals (111 rows, 17 October), a log of market events in company-data sales (110 rows, 17 October) and buyers with a public way in (37 rows, 16 October). From these we took every row that concerns a sale, offer, price, programme or terms for the records of a company that is closing, closed, insolvent or acquired, and every row for company records stated per company. To test whether any register entry has a public record of its data being sold, we searched all four datasets, and the dataset of lawsuits and rulings, for the name and the domain of each of the 149 entries.

2.5 Version

The register was read from its published snapshot, written on 16 and 17 October 2026 (67 entries first published on 16 October and 82 on 17 October) and shown at /closures [1, 2]. All counts below are computed from that snapshot with a short script; the shares are of the 149 entries unless stated.

3. Findings

3.1 Composition

Table 2 gives the register by trigger and country. Acquisitions (69) and closures (64) make up 89% of it. Insolvencies (11) and sites gone dark with no other signal (5) are the remainder. The United States accounts for 132 entries and the United Kingdom for 17; the two countries differ in kind, with 10 of the 11 insolvencies in the UK and 127 of the 133 acquisitions and closures in the US.

Table 2. The register by trigger, country and basis of publication, 18 October 2026

Trigger	US	UK	All	Stated by a public record or the company	Directory status confirmed by site gone
Acquired	68	1	69	0	69
Closing or closed	59	5	64	4	60
Insolvency	1	10	11	11	0
Site gone	4	1	5	0	5
All	132	17	149	15	134

Source: computed from the register [1]. "Site gone" in the last column means the site no longer answers or is a parking or sale page; for the five entries with that trigger it is the only signal.

3.2 Insolvencies and their procedures

The 11 insolvencies are the entries with the clearest legal status and dates. Ten are UK companies: six in administration and four in creditors' voluntary liquidation. Their signals come from Gazette notices (appointments of administrators and liquidators, meetings of creditors) and from the Companies House register, where an insolvency case and its filings (statements of affairs, administrators' proposals) can be read. The eleventh is a US public company that reported bankruptcy or receivership under item 1.03 of Form 8-K on 16 October 2026. Their industries, as the registers word them, are mostly software development and information technology services, with one in electronic components and one in telecommunications and broadcasting. No members' voluntary liquidation is in the register; the reader's first call on a solvent liquidation is that it usually follows a sale of the business, whose records may have gone with it [36].

3.3 How the register sees most closures

Most entries do not come from a legal record. Of the 149, 129 carry a signal from the startup directory, which lists 69 of them as acquired and 60 as inactive [5]. The directory's status is not dated, and none of these entries is published on the directory alone: each is in the register because its site no longer works (115 no longer answer and 14 are parking or sale pages) [1]. The result is that only 20 of the 149 entries carry a date for the event, 18 of them in 2026 and 2 in 2025. Fifteen are dated within the 90 days before 17 October 2026 [2].

The directory entries also show the population the register mostly covers. All 135 entries with a directory team size list ten or more people, because the reader keeps only those; the median is 11, and 37 list 20 or more, 20 list 50 or more and 7 list 100 or more. Their directory batches run from 2005 to 2024. The archive readings give the length of each company's life online: across the 137 entries with both a first and a last working capture, the median span is 6.4 years, and across the 139 with a reading, the median number of months with a working capture is 45.

The archive also shows that many directory entries are not recent events. Table 3 gives the year in which each directory entry's site was last captured working.

Table 3. Directory entries by the year their site was last captured working

Last working capture	Entries
2026	31
2025	26
2024	22
2020 to 2023	34
2010 to 2019	14
No reading	2
All directory entries	129

Source: computed from the register's archive readings [1, 9]. The last working capture approximates the end of the site, not the date of the closure or sale.

Only 57 of the 129 directory entries (44%) were last seen working in 2025 or 2026. For the 48 last seen in 2023 or earlier, the subscription deletion periods in Section 1 suggest that records held in hosted software may have been deleted, unless someone kept an export. The register cannot see whether records survive; it can only show how long ago the company's public face disappeared.

3.4 Who buys from closing companies

Of the 37 organisations in the buyer table, eight say they take companies that are closing or have closed (Table 4). Four state it as a rule (Turing, Oak and the wind-down services SimpleClosure and Sunset), and four in the words of their eligibility: micro1 runs a separate track for companies that have shut down, Appen answers companies that are winding down first, Centific offers them a faster process under an asset-purchase agreement, and The General Data Company takes industrial companies that are no longer trading [11].

Table 4. Programmes that take closing or closed companies

Organisation	Kind	Stated rule for closing companies	Published figure
micro1	Buys for its own account	Separate track: 50 or more employees at peak, substantial Teams or Slack history, English, listed countries	Referral field of \$75,000 on the track's posting; tiers of \$100,000 and above for operating companies
Turing	Buys for its own account	Operating, winding-down and closed companies; codebases of 50,000 or more lines, human-written, with tests	Up to \$1 million for an operating record; repositories typically \$10,000 to \$100,000 or more
Ooak	Buys for its own account	20 or more employees, operating, winding down or closed; a liquidator or administrator can sign	Up to \$1 million; deals to date \$20,000 to several hundred thousand dollars
Appen	Buys for its own account	Any size; companies winding down answered first	None
Centific	Buys for its own account	Companies winding down get a faster process and may license their whole history	None
The General Data Company	Buys for its own account	Industrial companies, including those no longer trading	None
SimpleClosure AssetHub	Wind-down service	Startups shutting down, now operating companies too	Tens to hundreds of thousands of dollars for unique assets
Sunset	Wind-down service	Startups winding down	None on its page

Source: the buyer table [11] and, for micro1's track, its posting of 8 October 2026 [24]. Figures are the organisations' own published bounds; none is a reported payment.

Other programmes appear in the market log but not in the buyer table: a January 2026 post by Labelbox offering to work with "fully defunct startup codebases" in a one-time transaction with no public attribution [23]; a listing board for dead companies' archives that charges buyers \$1,500 a month and takes no cut of sales [26]; and a report that SpaceX had held internal discussions about buying customer and operational information from troubled or defunct startups, attributed to people familiar with the matter, with no deal or price reported [25].

The stated thresholds sit high against the register. micro1's track asks for 50 or more employees at peak, which 20 of the 135 directory entries with a team size meet on their listed size; Ooak's rule of 20 or more is met by 37. The directory's figure is the listed team size, not the peak, so these counts are indicative.

3.5 What the public record shows of sales

No company in the register appears as a seller in any of the five datasets searched. The name and domain search returned five matches, all on common words in unrelated rows. The public record of sales by closing companies therefore concerns other companies, and it is short. Table 5 lists it.

Table 5. Public records of sales, offers and volumes for the records of closing, closed or acquired companies

Date	Party	What	Amount as stated	Basis	Source
Apr 2026	SimpleClosure (wind-down service)	Code and workspace data of shut-down startups, test marketplace's first year	About \$1 million recovered across nearly 100 deals; typically \$10,000 to \$100,000 per company	Reported (founder's own totals)	[13, 16]
Apr 2026	Sunset (wind-down service)	Defunct companies' workplace data bought	A price range similar to SimpleClosure's	Reported	[13, 14]
Apr 2026	cielo24 (closed transcription company)	13 years of Slack, Jira, email and Drive files, sold during its wind-down to an organisation in language technology	"Hundreds of thousands of dollars"; "mid-six figures" in the service's account	Seller to press; service's account	[13, 19]
14 Aug 2026	Warmly (acquired by HubSpot)	Offers for its codebase and employee communication records	As much as \$300,000; its chief executive turned down all four offers, and the acquirer said the deal "was for talent, and no data was included"	Reported	[22]
14 Aug 2026	Spirit Airlines (bankruptcy estate)	De-identified corporate records	\$10,000,000 winning bid, opening bid \$5,000,000; court approval pending	Court filing	[28, 29]
3 Sep 2026	SimpleClosure AssetHub	All AssetHub companies	On track to return more than \$10 million by the end of 2026 (a forecast)	Vendor	[18]
14 Sep 2026	Turing (data vendor)	Five to ten failed-startup codebases	An average in the tens of thousands of dollars each	Buyer's own statement, relayed by press	[15]
13 Oct 2026	A closed crypto startup, through SimpleClosure	Code base; workspace data in Google, Notion, Figma and Slack	Roughly \$25,000 net for the code; a pending amount, likely around \$15,000, for the workspace data	Seller to press	[12]
13 Oct 2026	SimpleClosure AssetHub	AssetHub deals to date, and the share of SimpleClosure's deals that include code or data	Over 150 deals; 47% of SimpleClosure's deals now include code or data sales	Reported (chief executive)	[12]

Source: the prices, deals and market-log datasets [11] and the sources cited. "Reported" means named press relaying a party's statement.

Four features stand out. First, almost all of the record comes through two wind-down services, and its volume is stated by them: nearly 100 deals in a first year, then over 150, with nearly half of SimpleClosure's deals now including a sale of code or data [12, 13]. Second, the amounts are small in absolute terms. SimpleClosure's two totals imply an average of about \$10,000 per deal over its first year, at the bottom of its own stated range [16]; one founder's code base fetched roughly \$25,000 net of the service's cut [12]. Third, the largest closed-company sales concern companies with long histories: a 13-year archive sold for hundreds of thousands of dollars [13, 19], and the one court-supervised sale concerns an airline whose asset schedule, as an objecting union described it, included about 100 million emails [29]. Fourth, an acquisition does not usually release the records for sale: in the one acquired company on the record, its chief executive declined offers of up to \$300,000 and the acquirer said no data was part of the deal [22].

3.6 What prices suggest

Against that record stand the published offers. Among the 93 prices for company records stated per company on the side of offers to holders, the middle half runs from \$174,000 to \$693,000; the lowest is \$9,381 and the highest \$12.5 million, the latter an unsigned competing proposal for the airline's archive after its auction [2, 11]. Those offers come from programmes aimed mostly at operating companies, and several are expressly illustrative.

The figures specific to closing companies are lower. An estimator published by one buyer gives \$33,000 to \$47,000 for a closed company of 11 to 50 employees with four years of records in six tools [27]. A vendor that compiles reported figures puts deals for shutting-down startups at "somewhere between 10,000 and 100,000 dollars per deal", rising "into the hundreds of thousands for a complete company archive" [35]. Sunset's chief executive told the press that it values a dying client's assets by head count, years in operation, volume of data and how the team used its tools [12].

For scale, SimpleClosure reported that non-AI companies that shut down through it in the first half of 2026 had a median of \$13,000 in the bank when they stopped, and AI companies a median of \$30,000 [20]. A sale of records in the range the wind-down services report is therefore of the same order as the median cash those companies held at closure. And the stock of closures is large: 25,467 US commercial bankruptcy filings were made in the first nine months of 2026 [34], against which a register of 149 technology companies, and the roughly 150 deals one wind-down service reports, are a small sample.

The airline's sale sits apart from the rest. Its price moved from a \$5 million opening bid to a \$10 million winning bid at auction, with offers that differed in who would de-identify the records, and approval was still pending after the hearing was adjourned to 6 November 2026 [28, 29, 30]. It shows what a large, long-lived archive can fetch under a competitive court process, not what a closing startup should expect.

4. Limitations

Coverage of the register. The register covers technology companies in two countries, found through the sources in Table 1. It does not read US bankruptcy dockets or Delaware assignments for the benefit of creditors, so private US companies that fail through either route enter only if they announce it, appear in the news or the startup directory, or file a WARN notice. UK coverage depends on industry codes and recent accounts.

Selection by the directory. Most entries come from one startup directory and are limited to companies of ten or more people. The register therefore over-represents venture-backed startups and under-represents other small businesses. The directory's status changes without a date, and its team sizes are listed sizes, not peaks.

What a trigger means. An acquisition is not a closure of the business, and its records usually go with it. A site gone dark is not proof of closure, and a site that still answers does not prove a company is trading. Fewer than one entry in seven carries a dated event.

The market record. It is a public-record compilation with strong disclosure bias. Wind-down services and buyers publish volumes and ranges that suit them; sellers rarely publish prices; several figures are self-reported, forecast or rounded, and two rows can describe the same deals. The counts of deals are the services' own. Small numbers mean that no distribution of realised prices can be computed.

Matching. The search for register entries in the market datasets used names and domains. A sale under another name, or one not published, would not be found, so the absence of a match shows only that no public record was compiled.

Persons. The register names no person, and this paper follows that rule. It cannot therefore say who holds authority to sell each company's records, which is often the deciding fact.

Position of the compiler. The author's organisation compiles the register and acts as an agent for organisations, including closing companies and their officeholders, that sell data to AI developers. It uses the register to identify companies it may approach. That interest could bear on what is collected and how it is presented; the sources and rules are stated so that both can be checked.

5. Conclusion

A public register built from insolvency notices, filings, founders' announcements, a startup directory and the state of company websites finds 149 technology companies that are closing, sold or gone, most of them US startups found through a directory status and a dead website rather than a legal record. Few of the entries are dated, many of the companies disappeared years ago, and none appears in the public record of data sales.

That record is thin and comes mostly from two wind-down services. It shows closing companies' records selling for tens of thousands of dollars in most cases, hundreds of thousands for long archives, and millions only in one court-supervised auction of a large company's archive, which still awaits approval. Published offers for operating companies' records sit well above the realised figures for closing ones. Three additions would improve both records: dated closure events from court dockets, so that the register measures timing as well as status; outcome fields stating whether a closing company's records were sold, retained or deleted; and realised prices published by the services that broker these sales, with the company's size and the age of its records beside each one.

6. Data availability

The register is published at <https://aidata.broker/closures>, with a page per company and the figures used here at <https://aidata.broker/figures/closures-total> and <https://aidata.broker/figures/closures-90-days> [1, 2]. The market datasets are available under CC BY 4.0 at <https://aidata.broker/datasets/prices.json>, [deals.json](https://aidata.broker/datasets/deals.json), [market-log.json](https://aidata.broker/datasets/market-log.json), [buyers.json](https://aidata.broker/datasets/buyers.json) and [cases.json](https://aidata.broker/datasets/cases.json), and a snapshot of 18 October 2026 is deposited at <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.23452930> [11]. The register itself is not in that snapshot. The counting script is available from the author on request.

7. Conflict of interest

The author is chief executive of AIData.Broker, which compiles the register and the datasets analysed here and acts as an agent for organisations that sell or license data to AI developers. Some organisations in Tables 4 and 5 are potential counterparties of the author's organisation, and the wind-down services offer related services.

8. Funding

The register and this analysis were produced by AIData.Broker. No other funding was received.

9. Use of AI tools

Generative AI tools were used to assist with the scripted analysis, with checking the sources and with drafting this manuscript. The author reviewed the text, the tables and every cited source and takes responsibility for the content.

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Statements

Use of AI. This paper was prepared with generative AI tools, which compiled and analysed the open datasets and drafted the text. The author takes responsibility for its content.

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