

Top 3 Counties Host 7.8% of U.S. Systems Design Practices

7.8% of U.S. Systems Design in 3 Counties

Where the real work of sovereign AI is being done—according to the 2022 U.S. Census

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THE DATA

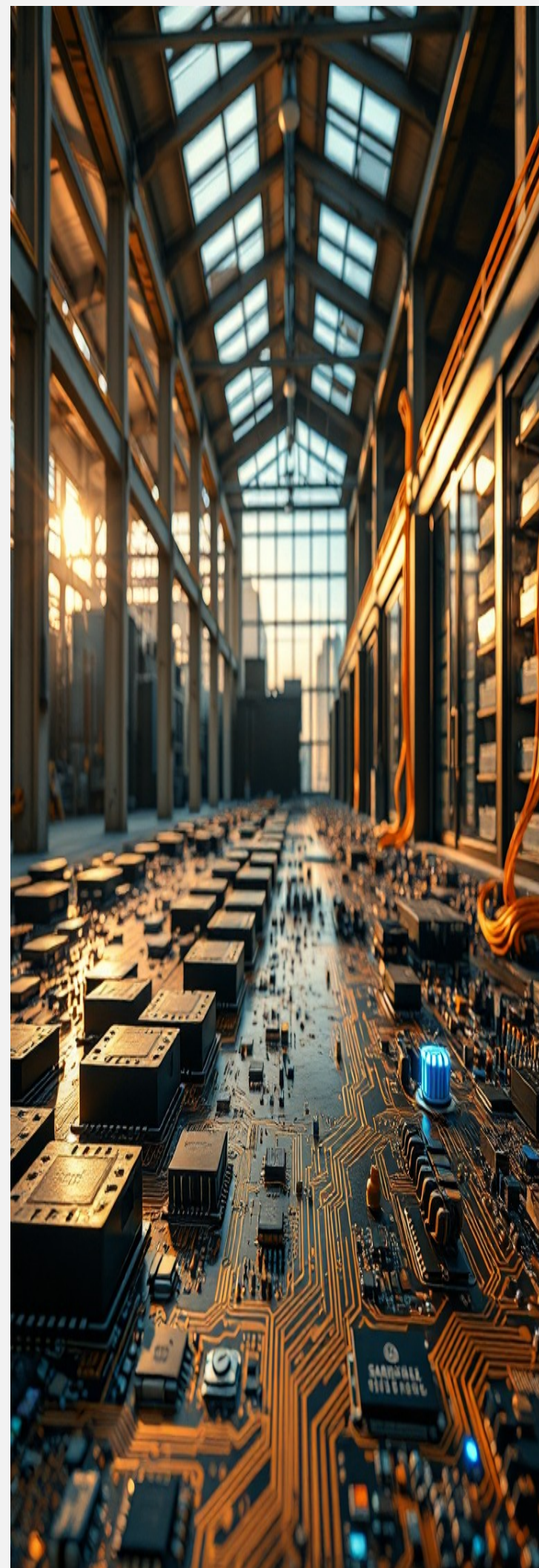
7.8%

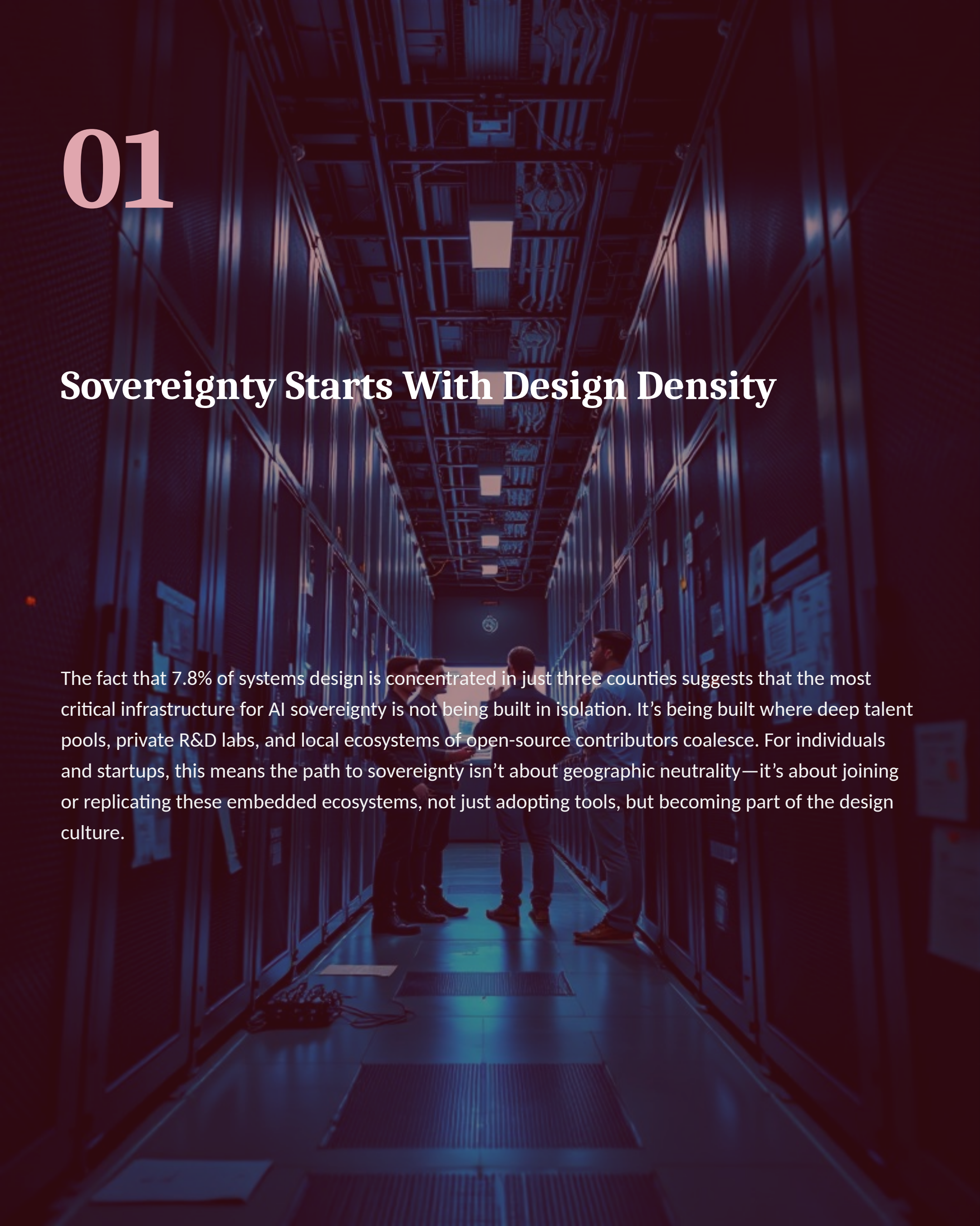
Share of America's Systems Design Practices in Its Top Three Counties (2022)

The top three U.S. counties account for nearly eight out of every 100 systems design practices nationwide.

This concentration reveals that the foundational layer of AI sovereignty—systems design—is not dispersed across the country, but clustered in a handful of high-density innovation zones. These are not just tech hubs; they are centers of architectural innovation where open-weight, self-hosted, and on-prem inference stacks are being built at scale.

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, County Business Patterns 2022, NAICS 541512 (Computer systems design services) · ALEX Intelligence computation
<https://alex-companies.com/data/2026-09-15-ai-tech-conc-541512-county>



A photograph of a server room with blue lighting. In the background, four people are standing and talking. The room is filled with server racks on both sides of a central aisle. The floor has metal grates. The overall tone is professional and technological.

01

Sovereignty Starts With Design Density

The fact that 7.8% of systems design is concentrated in just three counties suggests that the most critical infrastructure for AI sovereignty is not being built in isolation. It's being built where deep talent pools, private R&D labs, and local ecosystems of open-source contributors coalesce. For individuals and startups, this means the path to sovereignty isn't about geographic neutrality—it's about joining or replicating these embedded ecosystems, not just adopting tools, but becoming part of the design culture.



02

Local Ecosystems > National Policy

While national narratives often frame AI sovereignty as a policy or defense issue, the data shows it's fundamentally a local, design-driven phenomenon. The top counties aren't leading because of federal funding—they're leading because of self-sustaining innovation loops. This shifts the imperative: instead of waiting for government-backed sovereignty initiatives, builders should focus on embedding themselves in active systems design communities, contributing to open-weight projects, and using tools like FlowTSFM and GradRepair-ODE to harden their local stacks.

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