Fintech Review is a magazine focussing on the intersection of finance and technology in the modern age. We provide you with details and reviews of the latest fintech news, while analysing market trends and ventures so you don't have to. You will also find interviews with key industry leaders and opinion pieces from those experienced in the game. We hope you enjoy this publication as much as we enjoyed writing it, and may it enhance your knowledge about this relatively new market.

fintech REVIEW

ISSUE 01

fintech review

finance / technology / blockchain / investment

FEB 18

fintech REVIEW

ISSUE ONE
FEBRUARY 2018

SUBSCRIBE
Never miss an issue. Subscribe at
www.finreview.com

Get In Touch
For general inquiries, write to
hello@finreview.com

SUBMISSIONS
If you'd like to contribute, email us at
distribution@finreview.com

Advertitise With Us
To inquire about advertising or sponsorship
advertising@finreview.com

Fintech Review
LV 9/50 Queen St
MELBOURNE VIC 3000 AU

finance / technology / blockchain / investment

fintech REVIEW

ISSUE ONE
FEBRUARY 2018

GENERAL DISCLOSURE/DISCLAIMER

IN THIS ISSUE

ISSUE ONE
FEBRUARY 2018

ANALYSIS

INTERVIEWS

FEATURES

OPINION PIECES

ICOCOUNTDOWN

LATE JAN TO FEB 2018

Jan

DADI
A new era of cloud computing services, powered by blockchain technology.
Presale starts from **22 Jan**
More info: **dadi.cloud**

Ink Protocol
Decentralized reputation and payments for peer-to-peer marketplaces.
Presale starts from **22 Jan**
More info: **paywithink.com**

Blitz Predict
A decentralized sportsbook and prediction market aggregator.
ICO starts from **22 Jan**
More info: **blitzpredict.io**

Benebit
Revolutionizing cashback and Loyalty programs using blockchain Technology.
Presale starts from **22 Jan**
More info: **benebit.io**

NaPoleonX
1st Algorithmic Crypto-asset Manager.
ICO starts from **22 Jan - 28 Feb**
More info: **napoleonx.ai**

Betrium
A decentralized, global sports betting platform.
Presale starts from **22 Jan - 14 Feb**
More info: **betrium.co**

Mark.space
Ecosystem allowing users from all over the world to communicate with each other.
ICO starts from **23 Jan**
More info: **mark.space**

Play2live
First decentralized streaming platform for gamers and eSports fans.
Presale starts from **25 Jan**
More info: **play2live.io**

STK token
The STK token will provide instant crypto payments at point of sale at any merchant, whether it's for your morning coffee or your weekly grocery run.
Public sale cancelled, replaced with airdrop for members as of **29 Dec**
More info: **stktoken.com**

IQeon
A decentralized gaming PvP platform.
ICO starts from **30 Jan**
More info: **iqeon.io**

Eticket 4
Secondary ticket marketplace based on blockchain.
Presale starts from **30 Jan - 21 Feb**
More info: **et4.io**

Wysker
A visual mobile shopping experience with a new token for e-commerce.
ICO starts from **31 Jan**
More info: **wystoken.org**

LiveTree
The world's first community-powered, film TV and content network.
ICO starts from **31 Jan**
More info: **secure.livetree.com**

Bluzelle
Decentralized, On-Demand, Scalable database service.
ICO start from **Jan 31**
More info: **bluzelle.com**

Adhive
The first AI-controlled influencer marketing platform.
Presale starts from **31 Jan**
More info: **adhive.tv**

Experty.io
Allowing experts to monetize their skills through a skype-like voice and video application.
ICO starts from **31 Jan**
More info: **experty.io**

Sapien
Highly customizable, democratized social news platform capable of rewarding millions of content creators and curators without any centralized intermediaries
Presale starts from **31 Jan**
More info: **sapien.network**

Feb

GoNetwork
Highly scalable, low cost, low latency p2p network for Ethereum on mobile platforms.
Private presale and ICO **TBA in Feb**
Website: **gonetwork.co**

Dragon Coin
A Decentralized Currency for casinos and players.
ICO **TBA in Feb**
More info: **drgtoken.io**

Mira
An easy way to buy, store and send cryptocurrency.
ICO sale starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **miralab.io**

WePower
Platform to buy, trade or invest in tokenized green energy.
ICO starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **wepower.network**

KickCity
Decentralized event management and marketing protocol on blockchain
ICO starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **ico.kickcity.io**

Movement
Perfect App for active lifestyle, transfers your moves into tokens.
ICO starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **movementapp.io**

Medicalchain
Decentralized platform that enables secure, fast and transparent exchange & usage of medical data.
ICO starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **medicalchain.com**

Daneel
A reliable and indispensable assistant to assist you in the cryptocurrency jungle.
ICO starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **daneel.io**

Setcoin
The Inserviss Platform is a Global Mobile Marketplace that connects service providers and customers.
ICO starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **ico.setcoins.io**

Winding Tree
Decentralized open-source travel distribution platform.
ICO starts from **1 Feb**
More info: **windingtree.com**

Credits
Decentralized financial system for the direct interaction between participants on P2P principles
ICO starts from **1 - 28 Feb**
More info: **credits.com**

CoinPlace
Multi-currency P2P market. Can buy and exchange any cryptocurrencies or tokens into fiat money.
ICO starts from **1 Feb - Mar**
More info: **coinplace.info**

Giftcoin
The world's first cryptocurrency for charitable giving and good causes.
ICO starts from **2 Feb**
More info: **giftcoin.org**

Shift Cash
The first global tokenized platform for car title loans.
ICO starts from **5 Feb**
More info: **shift.cash**

Metronome
New cryptocurrency that is engineered for institutional-level endurance.
Token auction starts from **5 Feb**
More info: **metronome.io**

Sharpe Capital
Earn Ether for your predictions on blockchain assets.
ICO ends **7 Feb**
More info: **sharpe.capital**

GPCC
Copyright protection on blockchain for digital art.
ICO starts from **7 Feb**
More info: **gpcc.io**

The Abyss
An advanced and improved DAICO model, allowing contributors to control the withdrawal of the funds.
ICO starts from **7 Feb - 1 Mar**
More info: **theabyss.com**

SocialMediaMarket
Decentralized ecosystem to discover and analyze advertising campaigns with social media influencers.
ICO starts from **9 Feb**
More info: **socialmedia.market**

Healthureum
Dynamic and multi-functional ecosystem of healthcare services.
Main token sale start from **10 Feb**
More info: **healthureum.io**

Neurogress
Ecosystem for neurocontrol of electronics and machinery software.
Presale starts from **10 Feb - 25 Mar**
More info: **neurogress.io**

Scrinium
Decentralized investment platform that helps to pick the most appropriate trading strategy based on performance analysis of traders worldwide, to automatically create an individual investment portfolio.
ICO starts from **11 Feb**
More info: **scrinium.ai**

ConnectJob
1st Decentralized App to offer you to pay services with crypto.
Presale starts from **12 Feb**
More info: **ico.connectjob.io**

Narrative
A social media network that rewards users and moderators that positively impact its quality.
ICO starts from **13 Feb**
More info: **narrative.network**

SimplyVital Health
Health Nexus is a blockchain ecosystem,the fuel for value based care.
Presale starts from **14 - 28 Feb**
More info: **simplyvitalhealth.com**

Luckbox
To create a fully licensed betting platform dedicated to serving the global esports community.
ICO starts from **15 Feb**
More info: **luckbox.com**

Thrive
The first meritocratic and community-based Premium advertising marketplace.
Presale starts from **15 Feb**
More info: **ico.thrivelabs.io**

ODEM
The only platform offering in-person, in-classroom educational experiences.
ICO starts from **17 Feb - 19 Mar**
More info: **odem.io**

Coinvest
Decentralized stock exchange that allows users to invest in an array of cryptocurrencies in a simple manner.
ICO starts from **18 Feb**
More info: **coinve.st**

Requitix
A superior payment processing solution that minimizes fraudulent actions and reviews.
Presale starts from **20 - 28 Feb**
More info: **requitix.io**

TE-FOOD
Food Quality and Supply Ecosystem for Emerging Markets.
ICO starts from **22 Feb - 22 Mar**
More info: **ico.tefoodint.com**

NaviAddress
A decentralised global unified address platform for real and virtual worlds.
ICO start from **28 Feb**
More info: **naviaddress.io**

Bitnation
A decentralized market for legal services.
ICO starts from **28 Feb - 28 Mar**
More info: **tse.bitnation.co**

Mar

CRYPTO**NEWS**

LATE JAN TO FEB 2018

Wall Street runs to Cryptocurrency (Cointelegraph)

The recent low volatility in the stock market has led institutional investors to begin researching investments into cryptocurrencies. Traditional assets are reasonably predictable, unlike the crypto market. Institutional investors use their financial literacy, analysis and open information to value assets - this is not possible for the vast majority of cryptos since they do not confer access to, or ownership of cash flows. This volatility is most evident in erratic behaviour of Bitcoin.

Brazil to write laws on the blockchain (Coindesk)

The Brazilian Government is looking to start processing petitions and writing laws on the blockchain. Brazil would be the second government to adopt blockchain into its government duties. This would allow every citizen to vote secretly without any third party tampering. The application would be a Dapp built on the Ethereum blockchain, allowing the government to ensure security.

Public debate on Bitcoin to be held at 2018 G20 Summit (Reuters)

Governments are starting to take cryptocurrency seriously, with France's finance minister calling for a public debate on Bitcoin at this year's G20 Summit in Buenos Aires. Despite boasting a more than US $500 billion market cap - cryptocurrencies are still a small market (Consider the stock market, which is worth US $69 trillion). However, their growth has been astounding, and, as cryptos continue to soar, governments are looking to better regulate and understand the use cases for cryptocurrencies. Some governments have started to research how to use Blockchain for government tasks. Furthermore, large, private institutions have began to adopt Blockchain - such as the ASX.

RSK Mines Its Genesis Block – Bitcoin Now Has an Ethereum- Like Smart Contracts Platform (Bitcoin.com)

RSK Labs launched its mainnet in a beta with a limited distribution. Mining their genesis block at 1:41 am CST on January 4, 2018 after nearly 3 years of preparation. The launch of this test mainnet brings smart contracts and side chains to Bitcoin. When speaking about the launch of the main net, Diego Gutierrez said "We're very excited to share the RSK main net network with the global community." This comes after the source code for the mainnet was released in early December 2017 for peer review.

South Korea on the verge of regulation while Philippines considers It (Coin Telegraph)

Many suspect that South Korea will soon take further actions to ban, or regulate the use of cryptocurrencies. As the adoption of crypto accelerates in South Korea, the government has made a point of reiterating its scepticism regarding the unregulated nature of cryptos. The government has taken a paternalistic stance and believes it necessary to protect their citizens from the risk inherent to these markets. Further regulation could drastically shock the market. In the long term, however, regulation could be central in improving the adoption of crypto usage.

The Philippine's SEC is also currently exploring the best ways to regulate trading cryptocurrencies. Recent policies by Belarus and other relevant nations on cryptocurrency are being taken into consideration. The responsibility for enforcing exchange regulations will fall to the Philippine's central bank. Ultimately, for cryptocurrencies to be used like fiat currencies are used today, they need to be recognised by legislators.

Government-level Blockchain succeeds in Russia (Coin Telegraph)

Russia has completed their first government-level blockchain project. Russia's Federal Antimonopoly Service (FAS) has partnered with the state-run ban, Sberbank, to develop a Blockchain for document transfers and storage. This is a major step for Blockchain technology as it illustrates Blockchain's potential as a trustworthy alternative to centralized databases. The Russian government has also demonstrated interest in Blockchain in signing an agreement with the Ethereum foundation to develop Blockchain education programs in the country. Despite Russia's eagerness to implement Blockchain technology, they continue to enforce a strict cryptocurrency policy for citizens.

Bitcoin not used as much for laundering (Cointelegraph)

A recent report from FDD and Elliott found that less than 1% of all Bitcoin transactions are for money laundering. The report also showed that Europe had five times more illegal transactions than the United States. As government force projects and exchanges to implement stricter anti-money laundering (AML) measures, the number of illegal transactions will continue to decrease.

Bitcoin Atom (Venturebeat)

Then newest Bitcoin fork is here. Bitcoin Atom was planned to help solve a substantial problem in the cryptocurrency world. Bitcoin Atom will implement atomic swaps to allow users to exchange tokens without the need for exchanges. The project is also planning to implement the Lighting Swaps which will allow extremely fast and cheap transactions. Bitcoin Atom will also solve on of Bitcoin's flaws by using a hybrid consensus model that uses both Proof of Work and Proof of Stake.

The ATO is coming after you! (Gizmodo)

The Australian Tax Office has confirmed that they are consulting with tax experts, lawyers and banking and nance experts, which will hopefully help inform the ATO's strategy for supporting the cryptocurrency community in understanding their tax obligations. The ATO is working hard to understand the the domestic and international taxation issues related to cryptocurrency. They believe that this is di cult because the creation, trade and use of cryptocurrencies is a rapidly evolving area. The ATO has stated that there won't be income tax or GST implications "if you are not in business or carrying on an enterprise and you simply pay for goods or services in Bitcoin [or other cryptocurrency]." The Australian government has been welcoming to cryptocurrencies and has changed how they deal with them, making some projects answer to Austrac (which means they have the same reporting and regulatory obligations as the major banks). The government has already removed double taxations and have made amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorism Financing Act. Australia remains a country where cryptocurrencies may thrive.

Zimbabwe potentially to use Blockchain on a national level (CoinTelegraph)

Zimbabwe has faced hyperinflation since the late 90's, a problem that has been exacerbated recently by the increases in price taking place in 2009. With the recent political upheaval, speculations arose that Zimbabwe would be one of the first countries to adopt Bitcoin as an offcial currency. Even though Zimbabwe's legislation is not friendly towards cryptocurrencies at the moment, they haven't completely ruled out the national adoption of online currencies and the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe has been commissioned to study them. Interest in cryptos has not only grown at a rapid rate but now adoption by different parties is bringing it closer to mainstream acceptance. In the short term, the gaining interest and investment should help Bitcoin, Ethereum and other top cryptocurrencies gain value due to the increased in influx of cash.

Coinbase to support altcoins (ABC)

Coinbase has announced that in 2018 they will be adding altcoins. This is not surprising considering the current boom in ICOs and secondary market altcoin trading. Coinbase currently lists three of the most popular currencies; Bitcoin, Ethereum, and Litecoin. Coinbase is currently the most downloaded app on both the App Store and the Google Play Store. With the introduction of altcoins on Coinbase, the altcoin boom will likely continue to soar.

CRYPTO**NEWS**

LATE JAN TO FEB 2018

Venezuela's plan to combat inflation by using cryptocurrency (Reuters)

Venzuela's President Nicolas Maduro announced that Venezuela will launch its own cryptocurrency called the "petro", which will be backed by oil. This cryptocurrency will hopefully help fight the hyperinflation that has swamped Venezuela. Inflation rates of over 45% per month over the last year have resulted in citizens being unable to make necessary daily purchases. With the government facing strict financial blockades led by the US, and upcoming payments of $200 million in interest on government debt, issuing a cryptocurrency may be the change that Venzuela needs. This is aligned with the core strengths and principles of Blockchain currency - faster, more secure transactions. The petro may be Venezuela's solution to an increasingly devaluated Bolivar.

Facebook investigating the power of blockchain (Facebook)

Mark Zuckerberg is studying the power of cryptocurrencies, and their ability to empower individuals. This is a new directive for cryptocurrencies as most businesses have only looked at Blockchain and its applications to cut costs. If Facebook would integrate cryptocurrencies into their site, it would mean costs would be cut while allowing users to make money.

Crypto Market still in the red (Cointelegraph)

After the Christmas Eve cryptocurrency crash, the crypto market went on a bull run until news was leaked that both South Korea and China were considering banning cryptocurrencies in their respective countries. Since that announcement the market has struggled to rally. On the 23rd of January, the biggest loss was around 25 percent over a 24 hour period. The cryptocurrency market shrunk approximately $390 billion after reaching a high of $800 billion in early January. This is the second time Bitcoin is approaching the $10,000 price range since reaching a high of $19,000 in late December.

South Korea isn't banning Cryptocurrencies, at least for now (Cointelegraph)

The South Korean government has announced that they will be taxing cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency exchanges will be paying a corporate tax of 22 percent, in addition to the 2.2 percent local income tax. The tax percentages are in line with South Korean tax rates for corporations making more than 20 billion won yearly. The South Korean government has been recently cracking down on cryptocurrency trading. The government has already banned people trading with anonymous virtual accounts. They have also have frozen the opening of new virtual accounts and banned underage and foreign users from trading on South Korean exchanges. With approximately 20% of all Bitcoin trading volume, tighter regulations are better than a total ban.

Bitcoin to be used for payment of University fees in South Africa (Business Tech)

A South African Business school will start accepting Bitcoin as payment for tuition. This is the second major university to accept Bitcoin as payment. By allowing students to pay tuition in Bitcoin the university believes it will help attract students who are pioneers. This is also a big leap forward for cryptocurrency as it helps people understand that there is more applications than just trading. Bitcoin may be able to further break away from its image as an asset and move towards becoming a proper store of value and accepted currency.

Dutch researchers are using body heat to mine cryptocurrencies (Bitcoin.com)

Manuel Beltrán is leading an experiment that aims to use human warmth to power crypto mining operations. He wants to use human-powered energy to mine digital assets. The cheap energy, which is used by miners in China, is unclean and adds additional CO2 into the atmosphere. Manuel's seeks to disprove the contention that the current level technological growth cannot be supported by our resources. Manuel believes that the human body will be the best resource to use for cryptocurrency mining power due to its abundance. Researchers have stated that a human body at rest is capable of generating over 100 watts of excess heat.

Australian banks to integrate Blockchain services (Business Insider)

The Commonwealth Bank of Australia has announced that they are planning to issue a bond over the Blockchain system, as soon as next year. This is one the first major initiatives taken by a bank to integrate Blockchain technology into a product. This would be the second time a bond has been issued on the Blockchain, the first by a major bank. The integration of Blockchain into banking is the beginning of faster, safer, and more secure transactions. This indicates that Blockchain technology has a multitude of applications other than cryptocurrencies.

The performance of Bitcoin futures to date (Coindesk)

Bitcoin futures were launched in early December. After the announcement that futures would be deployed, Bitcoin was able to break US $10,000 and make a steady run to US $20,000. After launching on both the Chicago Board Options Exchange and Chicago Mercantile Exchange, Bitcoin has fallen from its high of US $20,000. It has been sitting around the US $13,000-15,000 range.

Bitcoin going to Zero? (Cointelegraph)

Various analysts and investment officers believe that Bitcoin may be ignorantly overvalued. The latest is Peter Boockvar, Chief Investment Officer at Bleakley Advisory Group, believes that Bitcoin may see a possible 70 to 90 percent price drop. "Over the next year I wouldn't be surprised if it's [BTC] down to $1,000 to $3,000." When asked if a Bitcoin crash would affect the stock market causing a crash, he said "not something that really is that relevant in a 19 trillion dollar economy." An increasingly amount of analysts believe that Bitcoin may be seriously overvalued and a crash is coming soon. The appeal of easy money has led to many people in South Korea, Japan and the US to invest in cryptocurrencies on credit card debit. On the other hand people like Yale economist Robert Shiller believe that Bitcoin may be around for another 100 years. Nonetheless, Bitcoin has been facing a rough correction over the previous couple of days.

Telegram to hold a large scale ICO (Techcrunch)

Telegram announced that they will be holding an ICO. Telegram's ICO may be the biggest ICO in history as they seek to raise approximately US $1.2 billion. This will easily surpass the US $257 million that was raised by Filecoin in September. They aim to build the next Ethereum to integrate with Telegram's app and other social media applications.

New cryptocurrency trading policies by China are on the horizon (CNBC)

China is looking to tighten cryptocurrency trading policies in the near future. After a surprise ban on ICO's in September which led the cryptocurrency market into a downward spiral, the market has been able to slowly recover and reach new heights. If China does tighten cryptocurrency markets in the short term we can expect that the market will drop from people fearing that it is the end. In the long term we will see Chinese money reenter the market from other countries that still allow cryptocurrency trading.

IRS wins Coinbase case (Forbes)

The Internal Revenue Service won a monumental case against CoinBase, who have to turn over data on users who have bought, sold, sent or received more than $20,000 through their accounts in a single year between 2013 and 2015. The primary issue with the IRS request is that they also want to know the addresses that users sent Bitcoin to and ones the received from. This knowledge starts to break cracks in the total anonymous system that most cryptocurrencies are built on top of.

ICO Token Appreciation: The Economic Reason Why ICOS Works

ICO TOKEN APPRECIATION

THE ECONOMIC REASON WHY ICOS WORK

Written by: Oren Bahari

Imagine Tesla wants to invent the Tesla Roadsters and they will only produce 10 in the world. The car will be used as a 'vehicle' to facilitate joy rides across the world. Tesla sells the prospect of a Roadster in the future at $100 M, discounted by 50% from $200M. The money from the sale will be used to finance the production of the cars, and the signing of the deal signals to the market that the investor trusts the process.

Seemingly, both Tesla and the investor are mad. Tesla, a centralised company, could raise the capital through a loan and make a $100M dollar profit minus interest later. The investor could join an existing market and securitise his investment; not losing any demand based return for his risk appetite. Conditional on rational expectations of the legitimacy of the new company and investors full understanding of the benefits of the project, under all the rules of regular finance this deal should not happen. The variance of the returns possibility for a no-promise, crowdfunded project makes it traditionally unfeasible.

P1 \ P2	HOLD	DUMP
HOLD	2,2	0,4
DUMP	4,0	1,1

Foundationally, the formation of the ICO ensures the creation of the ICO, as the scarcity constructed through the hard cap and property rights guaranteed by Blockchain Tech cumulate to form a dwindling, dynamic, intermediate supply cap. An imaginary supply, between the soft and hard caps – a 'liquid' supply cap. Your original pre-formation (pre-ICO) investments, and even hopeful post-formation investment to a lesser extent, do not achieve economic profits due to volatile demand shifts, but rather the artificial, gradual retraction of the 'liquid' supply cap from a naturally enhancing attitude of investment attractiveness. If a portion of the total supply is hidden for hoarded investment, the remaining that are used, depreciate in utility through their action. For instance, if the Tesla Roadster materialises, the investor 'promises' to hoard his car in his garage and some the remaining nine cars facilitate joy rides, the wear and tear of cars through their usage creates an internal demand for the alleviation of supply pressure. The value of the garage locked, healthy car increases rapidly as a response. Remember, if the rights to the car changed or Tesla produces anymore, your increased, relative value is worthless, so the technology and culture underlying ICOs is pivotal.

Thus, the ICO establishes a new economy with the 'equity' holders with the rights to the movements of the supply instead of rights to the production of supply. Note, the heterogeneous investor base creates a zero-sum game that exhibit game theory characteristics, as investors do not act harmoniously, in corporation with the market nor to their mutual advantage. Overall, this grants organisations an alternative: through the power of technology you may now increase your business risk to reduce your financial risk to some extent. Coupled with the nature of globalisation, if the appropriateness of your venture model allows you to diversify your business risk across the span of a market network, the trade between risks can be advantageous, allowing for the decrease in your cost of capital. In essence, Blockchain and the ICO may allow you to advantageously swap your risk and create value.

LESSONS FROM THE ECONOMICS

ENTREPRENEUR

1.
Remember that harmonious Lock-Ins contracts and collective, healthy movements from those designated as investors is paramount to reducing the variability (and from that value) of your tokenised asset.

2.
The appropriateness of your idea to slowly, diversify business risk over a large, fluid network is pivotal. Often this implies decentralisation and large scalability as key factors.

3.
Properly conveying your Long-Term Dream is crucial. Since the dynamism of your market, or even potential dynamism, is the driving force of economic profits, proof of widespread, continual potential usage is a defining factor. Envisage through roadmap and augment potential usage figures and market size. Any direction to a larger guarantee of future usage is the key to getting the support from major, distinguished investors.

INVESTORS

1.
Understand the movement and actions of the biggest players. If you predict or know the nature of the agreements and decision making of key investors or the collective small investors, you will have a reactive stance to any investment game.

2.
Search for the allure of an investment for when it reaches ordinary exchanges. Those comfortable on their exchanges will choose to invest in project only once their listed. If the product makes sense and seems attractive from several lines of understanding, the short-term gains achievable are significant. Given the advance of the market, compound growth is important. As investors jump on board later exchanges, they may overvalue projects or overbid due to the lack of volume.

3.
Advantageous situations can be negotiated by shortening your lock-in contract by more than the public. This is only for short-term gains once again.

GOVERNMENT *&* AUTHORITIES

1.
The ability to differentiate the nature of the tokens should be based on their change in value. If it depreciates with usage it should not be classified as a security, but if it is pegged or appreciates, like an investment tool, it should be considered under full security regulation. Any promises of an increase in value should indicate securities as well.

2.
Make a contract, law or body that allows for the enforcement of Hard Caps of ICOs. Require an investor licence be mandatory for investment in an ICO, before tokens list on exchanges.

SINGULARITYNET
THE EMERGING FUTURE OF AI

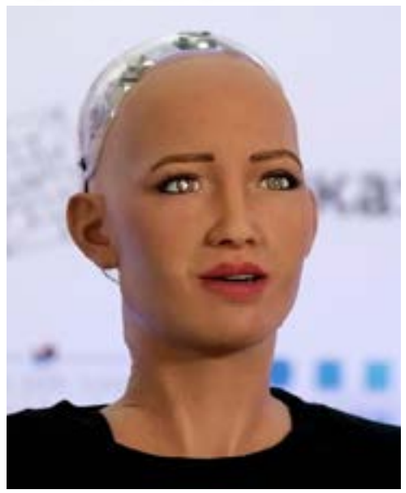
Written by: Michael Kitchener
Website: www.singularitynet.io

The decentralized marketplace for AI.

There is an exciting movement in Blockchain in that applications are expanding from supply chain management, credit lending services, data trading and the like towards more cutting-edge technology; artificial intelligence. (Jones, 2017) Singularity is a Blockchain project that is at the forefront of this movement.

SingularityNET aim to create the foundation of, and provide for a global AI market place. The hypothesized decentralised AI marketplace proposed by the SingularityNET team would allow for AI to be traded and combined in order to combat the many issues that currently prohibit the expansion of AI into the mainstream. In short, Singularity provides the innovative foundations that are requisite for a promising future with AI through creating a protocol for networking AI tools to come together as a coordinated form of Artificial General Intelligence.

Sophia Hanson
SingularityNet Official Spokesbot



To understand the strength behind the singularity platform we must first look at many problems that are ubiquitous within the current state of AI technology. The lack of channels for data transmission between AI means that AI cannot coordinate the processing of data together. As such, such processes must be done manually contributing greatly to costs – in terms of both finances and effort. (Aspland, 2018)

Additionally, there is no current process for discovering needed AI services or evaluating the quality prior to use which is extremely discouraging and thus a significant barrier in the path to widespread usage of AI.

Finally, the great expense of AI is extremely prohibitive with respect to the industry's' growth. (Dipshan, 2017) This rules out the vast majority of organisations and individuals.It is these problems that SingularityNET aims to solve through the decentralisation of the AI marketplace via Blockchain technology. With respect to the lack of data communication SingularityNET plan to wrap AI algorithms and thus implement a protocol to facilitate the coordination of data processing between various AI.

With respect to issues of AI discovery, SingularityNET's market place intends to fill this void, and in doing so also resolve cost issues through the linking of AI services – offering cheap 'automation-in-a-box.'

The AGI token offered by SingularityNET is the instrument powering this decentralised economy. It acts as payment within the net and allows for quantifiable values to be assigned to AI on the market place. The economics behind this token are those of a utility token – it will be used to fund any transaction agents may wish to make within the SingularityNET AI marketplace. The token also provides incentive for network members to allow for the best AI services to be brought to the precipice of the market and aid discovery.

SingularityNET

MOLECULAR FUTURE ARTICLE

Written by: Kevin He
Website: www.molecular.cc

Recent murmurings within the field of digital asset management point to the release of a free, investor-grade digital asset management software. Molecular Future is a blockchain investment software launching as a response to requests by many in the realm of digital asset management. As recent global innovation has made it imperative to provide an integrated, complete digital asset investment software for investors, Molecular Future will consist of several features designed for both institutional and retail investors.

Molecular Future brings institutional professional analysis software which delivers vital functions such as real-time updates of digital currency trends, data integration, information gathering, professional analysis, transaction simulation and token price movements. The technology will allow investors to easily manage their digital assets, with personalised investment advice available to users based upon their risk tolerance, and expendable capital.

Molecular Future brands itself as a 'blockchain based digital assets investment service platform' which can be used by both retail and institutional investors. Included is the option to arbitrage, crowd finance and hedge digital currencies. The software underpinning all of this offers real time monitoring of market trends, integrating big data to simulate large scale transactions. Many of these features have been demanded by those investing in an industry where significant market fluctuations and corrections have occurred all too frequently.

It is understood that this software is being released with the backing of several of the top Fintech companies in the Asia-Pacific. Initial funds have been raised from prominent Hong Kong businessmen, including John Ho, and have found local support through the VC-arm of the Australian digital asset management company Collinstar Capital. Instead of an ICO (Initial Currency Offering), Molecular Future conducted an additional round of funding through a CTD (Cryptographic Token Distribution), which shall allow retail and institutional investors to invest.

Molecular Future's software utilities the latest de-centralised blockchain technology, designed to be as transparent as possible. The use of an independent, decentralised algorithm will allow the users of the software to track their asset contracts throughout the entire transaction process.

The team behind Molecular have amassed a strong ecosystem of connected professionals, consisting of financial practitioners, investors, VC firms, start-ups, advisors and influencers. Through their knowledge and dedication, Molecular has the potential to become a premier digital investment platform in the blockchain industry.

Through the availability of free investment grade software, Molecular Future seems to be a pathway into the digital asset industry. With essential backing from prominent figures in the industry around the Asia-Pacific, this innovative software could be set to take off.

CRUSH CRYPTO INTERVIEW

Interviewed by: Acqeel Ziyad
Website: www.crushcrypto.com

Crush Crypto

Crush Crypto is an independent research group focused on blockchain technology and digital currencies with the goal of providing high quality fundamental analysis in cryptocurrency investing. From it's inception in 2017, it has become one of the most prominent and recognised voices in educating society of new cryptocurrency projects and market sentiment. Crush Crypto is equipped with a growing library of resources to aid both novice and expert investors to make better decisions, as well as their own analysis and insight into the most promising cryptocurrencies, tokens and initial coin offerings. Their market updates help busy professionals stay at the top of their game, through a volatile and ever changing market. Recently, they have partnered with ICONOMI to become one of their first Digital Asset Array Managers. The Crush Crypto Core DAA aims to provide diversification benefits and be the core holdings of cryptocurrency investor. We sat down with Victoria and the Crush Crypto team to chat about their success and how they plan to grow in the future.

Victor Lai, Co-Founder of Crush Crypto

Victor has extensive background in finance and previously worked in investment banking at Investec and at various hedge funds in Asia and North America. He is specialized in fundamental analysis and investing, with experience in asset allocation, investment strategy, and portfolio management. He also has experience in advising clients on a broad range of transactions including IPOs and secondary equity offerings, M&A, divestitures, and restructurings. Victor holds an MBA degree from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business with concentrations in Finance and Economics. Victor graduated from the University of British Columbia with a BCom degree and is a CFA Charterholder.

Victoria Wong, Co-Founder of Crush Crypto

Victoria has extensive professional experience in corporate finance, financial analysis and modeling, and investment research. She was previously Vice President at Morgan Stanley where she spent more than 6 years as an equity analyst looking at companies in Asia and the US with coverage across the transportation, industrials, infrastructure and logistics sectors. She was a member of the Asia Pacific Transportation equity research team consistently ranked Top 3 in Asia by Institutional Investor Magazine in 2010 to 2016 and was most recently ranked #1 in the Industrials and Transportation categories. Victoria has been a CFA charterholder since 2012. She also has programming experience in C++, JavaScript and PHP, and experience in web design and development.

Crush Crypto Interview

Victoria Wong
Crush Crypto Co-founder

Fintech Review (FR): Tell us about founding Crush Crypto. Did you have to leave your previous job? What inclined you to launch this venture?

Victoria Wong (VW): Crush Crypto is an independent research group focused on blockchain technology and digital currencies such as Bitcoin and Ethereum.

It was co-founded by Victor Lai, who had recently graduated from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business with an MBA degree, and by Victoria Wong, who had left her previous job as an equity analyst at Morgan Stanley.

At the time, we were personally investing in ICOs and wanted to read up on objective, fundamental research and analysis on these projects. When we couldn't find this type of information available, we decided to create Crush Crypto ourselves to help other investors.

FR: When did you first hear about cryptocurrency? What wre your thoughts about it initially and have your views changed over time?

VW: We first heard of cryptocurrency a few years ago but at the time we didn't think much of it. We had our hesitations as early bitcoin adopters were political and ideological and many outsiders saw it as more of a revolution against governments and centralized power, rather than an emerging technology with actual utility.

We started to take it more seriously when Ethereum came around and we saw the potential for what blockchain technology could do. The cryptocurrency space is still very new and highly speculative but it is gaining more traction and legitimacy as more enterprises are getting involved (e.g. Enterprise Ethereum Alliance, bitcoin futures, etc.).

There are still technological barriers and unresolved regulatory issues that need to be dealt with, but we are gaining more confidence that cryptocurrency is here to stay.

FR: What do you consider the single most important criteria when judging any ICO project, before looking at anything else?

VW: Whether it is a scam or not. There are many important things that we look at when assessing the viability and investment potential of an ICO project: business idea, market need, the qualifications of the team and its advisors, investor support, competitive landscape, token economics, market sentiment, historical milestones, development roadmap, and the list goes on.

All of these could be rated very high for a project and it may still be a scam and, therefore, a bad investment. Given that the ICO space is largely unregulated, there are bound to be a number of scams or money grabs out there.

As investors, the onus is on us to do proper due diligence. The cryptocurrency community as a whole has been getting better and better at raising red flags and calling out potential scams.

FR: What have been your favorite ICO projects to review thus far?

VW: 0x Project – we reviewed them before their ICO back in early August. It was one of our favorite projects to review as we personally learned a lot about the technical aspects of decentralized exchanges and protocols while doing research on them.

Their ICO was also among the best managed token sales we have seen and overall, we were impressed to see a project of this caliber in such a new and unregulated space. The ZRX token is now up over 30x from its ICO price, so it is one of our better calls so far.

FR: What major challenges do you see for this new market going forward? How would you like to see these challenges best tackled?

VW: Scalability is one of the major challenges that will need to be resolved in order for widespread adoption to be possible. With the explosion of popularity in cryptocurrency, the number of transactions made on the blockchain has grown exponentially over the past year. As a result, there are congestion issues with the more popular blockchains such as Bitcoin and Ethereum. Ethereum has already shown that it can handle upwards of 1 million transactions per day, but this is not going to be nearly enough when the flood of decentralized applications (dApps) begin to launch this year.

There are different blockchain protocols that are trying to solve the scalability issue. The ones that can solve this issue while maintaining decentralization and security will be able to gain substantial network value.

With the amount of developers working to solve this problem, we are optimistic that blockchains can scale exponentially and eventually be able to support dApps as well as daily payment transactions. But until this technical barrier is overcome, it would be difficult to achieve mainstream adoption of cryptocurrency.

FR: Where do you stand on the issue of regulation in the cryptocurrency space? Do you believe it's inevitable or impossible to truly achieve?

VW: We have a mixed stance on this. There are regulatory measures that are intended to prevent money laundering and terrorism financing, or aimed at protecting investors from scams. We support these measures as they help promote adoption and long term sustainability of cryptocurrency.

However, there are also regulations that are more focused on governments getting control and power, or may inhibit innovation and privacy. We believe the space will likely achieve partial regulatory oversight but it will be impossible to truly achieve given the inevitable rise of decentralized exchanges, privacy coins and other ways to circumvent regulatory oversight.

> There are many ways to stand out, but to be in the game in the long run, aim to be a reliable, credible and objective source of information.

FR: In your opinion, which key players and fintech leaders have been most influential in 2017? Who will you be keeping an eye on in 2018?

VW: We believe Vitalik Buterin, creator of Ethereum, is the person to look out for in the blockchain industry in the next few years. His focus on helping to make the world a better place with blockchain technology is second to none.

FR: Does Crush Crypto have any big plans, announcements or changes for 2018? Or do you plan on carrying on business the way you have everything set up currently?

VW: Fundamental research and analysis is our forte, so we will continue to be focused on this. Our goal is to create more high quality content and cover more existing coins and tokens in addition to reviewing ICO projects. We recently expanded our team so we are confident we will be able to increase our production and speed up our time to market. In early October 2017, we partnered with ICONOMI to become one of their first Digital Asset Array (DAA) managers. Our Crush Crypto Core DAA (CCC) has been growing rapidly and in early January 2018, we successfully tokenized our DAA. As CCC progressively gets listed on the exchanges, it will become more widely available to investors.

FR: For anyone trying to start an educational resource about blockchain technology or fintech, what advice would you give them to market themselves well and make an impact on the digital community of investors?

VW: There are many ways to stand out but to be in the game in the long run and to become a source that people will come back to time and time again, being consistent and having a good reputation is very important.

We believe this means being a reliable, credible and objective source of information on blockchain technology or fintech. This is actually our own personal mission for Crush Crypto. We hope to see more quality educational resources out there for the benefit of the digital community as a whole.

INS ECOSYSTEM
EVERYDAY GROCERIES ON THE BLOCKCHAIN

Written by: Michael Kitchener
Website: www.ins.world

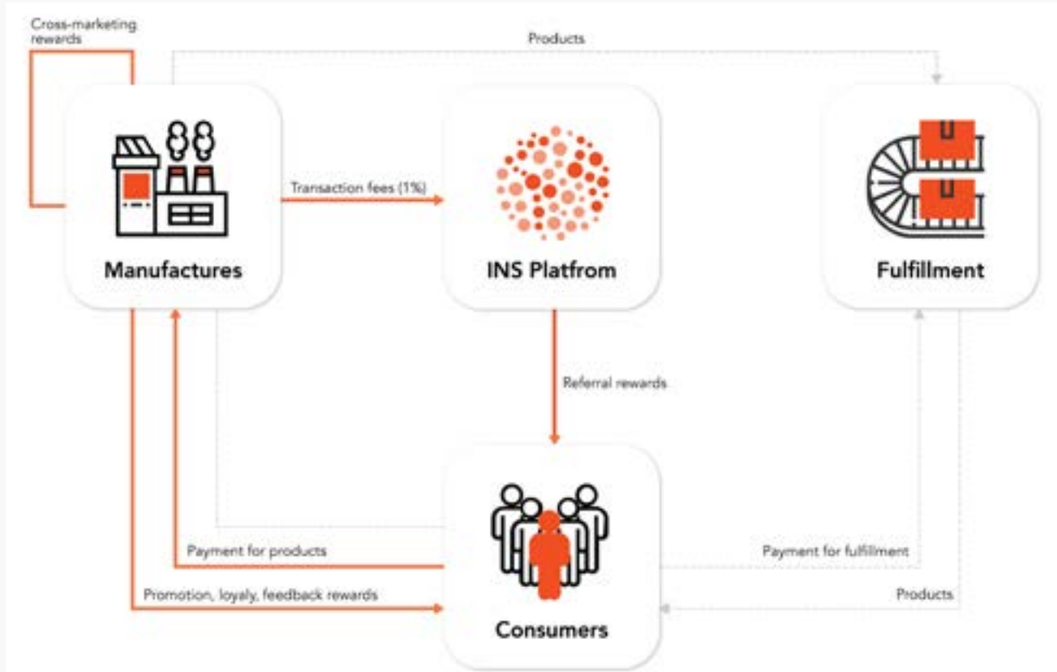
	INS ECOSYSTEM	OFFLINE RETAIL STORE	AMAZON FRESH	INSTACART	OTHER ONLINE GROCERY DELIVERY
Price	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓	✓
Quality	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓
Convenience	✓✓✓	✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓✓	✓✓
Promotions from manufacturers	✓✓✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Assortment	✓✓✓	✓	✓✓	✓✓	✓

...makes the journey of produce from manufacturers to consumers cheaper, quicker and less prone to human error.

Amongst discussion of AI, advanced trading platforms, energy trading and various other forms of market disruption the applications of Blockchain may seem disconnected from the more immediate needs faced by people. Ultimately, Blockchain has not entered the day-to-day lives of the average person, but INS, a project which held an ICO in early December 2017, may bring the use of Blockchain to the precipice of household activity. INS is a platform that allows consumers to purchase various groceries from manufacturers – expediting the convenience and minimizing the costs of grocery shopping.

Like all (successful) Blockchain projects INS have identified a problem with the status quo and provided a candidate solution. The problem with grocery retailers, according to the INS team, is that they hold too great of a portion of the market share and subsequently have too much control over manufacturers and consumers – allowing them more control over pricing to the detriment of consumers. The status quo also incentivises manufacturers to improve their efficiency in delivering goods to retailers as opposed to increasing the quality of their produce. In the spirit of the Blockchain ethos, INS aim to provide a decentralised marketplace for transactions directly between producers and consumers.

Within this marketplace manufacturers will list and sell produce, and, at their discretion, be able to create loyalty programs using smart contracts for recurring customers. Customers will provide feedback and enjoy lower costs. The use of Blockchain will also serve to make the supply chain more efficient.



As with all Blockchain projects (and any other business) one thing that must be assessed is the need for the service within the current market. It seems that there is indeed a need for such a service, INS cite research that states grocery retailers mark-up manufacturer prices by 30-50% causing far greater costs for consumers – unless we operate under assumptions of supreme irrationality the incentives for consumers to switch to the INS platform are clearly there. INS also state that during their time in the grocery industry they have received "hundreds" of requests from producers to sell produce directly. Of course, depending on the behaviour of consumers manufactures could jack up prices to maximise their revenue and negate the entire benefit of the platform, but given the oligarchical structure of grocery retail in most countries (think big supermarket chains), and the contrastingly large amounts of producers it seems fair to think that the far greater degree of competition will keep prices sufficiently low to justify the platform.

The economics of the INS token, which was distributed in an ICO to fund the project, are multifaceted. The token functions as a classic utility token to manufactures who must hold a minimum balance to use the platform, but it will also be used in the rewards system. Importantly, it will be available as a method of payment for orders by consumers, and, unlike fiat currencies, bitcoin, or ethereum which will also be available as payment methods, will have no card fees or transaction fees associated with it – providing clear economic incentive for token usage.

The last question that must be asked is, despite the strength of the idea behind INS, whether or not a Blockchain is required? Fortunately for INS, the whitepaper provides a strong justification for the use of Blockchain. Firstly, a Blockchain with smart contract functionality allows for sales mechanisms that require no central brokerage agent. Additionally, through Blockchain the various steps used to settle transactions in traditional e-commerce can all be avoided, and finally, the well documented supply chain applications of Blockchain will make the journey of produce from manufacturer to consumer cheaper, quicker and less prone to human error.

Ultimately, INS is a fascinating project – not in that it seeks to revolutionise the world or provide some sci-fi type AI, but in the fact that it could bring Blockchain technology one step closer to mass usage.

INS

Raiblocks: What Is It?

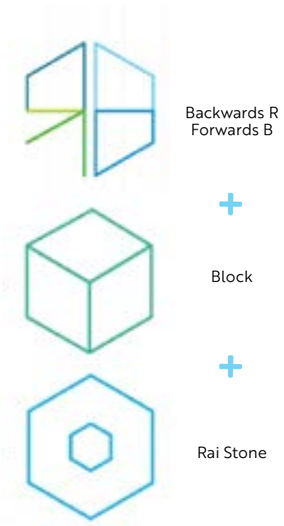
RAIBLOCKS
WHAT IS IT?

Written by: Levi Szallasi
Website: www.raiblocks.net

In today's crypto-industry, even with its technological leaps and bounds forward, there are several underlying problems. Cryptocurrency mining has received a bad reputation, with calculations revealing projections of its substantial contribution to energy consumption, and in turn, climate change. With an incentive to use incredible amounts of energy to send transactions, results an inefficient, unsustainable system that is difficult to fix.

Transaction fees and delayed transaction times, thanks to common methods of mining, are almost universal, often exceeding the transaction times and fees charged by banks – the very institutions which prompted the creation of the first cryptocurrency.

These are significant problems, with more issues such as scalability either already existent, or on the horizon. Scalability refers to the ability for a Blockchain to cope with an increasing number of users, and therefore an increased number of transactions to confirm. With less than 0.05% (using optimistic estimations) of the world's population as users of the largest cryptocurrency, Bitcoin, there is a huge amount of room to grow. With the number of users and therefore transactions growing sharply, the ability for cryptocurrencies to be able to scale is a priority.



RaiBlocks (XRB) offers a solution to these issues, aiming to be a digital currency which offers a low latency, high throughput medium of exchange, with no fees. Also differing from other cryptocurrencies, XRB doesn't require any high-end performance equipment to reach consensus. Rather, every transaction creates its own block, and each block is stored in its respective generator's own Blockchain, which only they can modify. These individual Blockchains collectively form a data structure called a "block lattice".

Contrary to a conventional Blockchain, where a transaction only need to be sent, and is then passively received after a miner has confirmed it, RaiBlocks uses a 2-step system to transfer funds. A sender creates a "send" transaction, and the receiver must also create a "receive" transaction. With individual Blockchains running independently of each other, and due to possible differences in time between a "send", and a "receive" transaction being initiated, the structure of the Blockchain is asynchronous, allowing RaiBlocks to have instant transactions.

Security from attacks on the system by spamming transactions is handled by a Proof of Work security mechanism, not to be likened to the consensus mechanism. This works by forcing each client to solve a simple, low-demand cryptographic function for each transaction sent, making it economically unfeasible for attackers to spam the network.

RaiBlocks is scalable, instant, and feeless by design – it's designed to do one thing, and do it well.

Currently, RaiBlocks is listed on seven exchanges, with most of the volume being traded on KuCoin, and dedicated RaiBlocks exchange, BitGrail. The vast majority of XRB is being exchanged for Bitcoin (BTC), but on BitGrail it can be exchanged for other major cryptocurrencies, such as Ethereum (ETH), Bitcoin Cash (BCC), and Litecoin (LTC). RaiBlocks has also expressed interest in listing on 2 major exchanges, Bittrex and Poloinex, with over USD$1 billion in volume being traded on the two combined. Being such a unique cryptocurrency, as of January 2018, it is the 21st largest cryptocurrency on the world's leading price tracking website, coinmarketcap.com, as indicated by market capitalisation. Both its value and market capitalisation have a firm hold in the market, helping RailBlocks to enhance its positioning among different digital currencies.

RaiBlocks

BLOCKCHAIN REVOLUTION

Written by: Acqeel Ziyad

Blockchain will disrupt and enhance processes and systems.

Cryptocurrency is taking the business world by storm, paving the way for digital currencies as the payment method of the future. Decentralized from banks, cryptocurrencies use encryption to regulate funds and verify transfers. The allure of cryptocurrency lies in their anonymity and security, allowing users to store money safely without providing any personal details (McGoogan & Field, 2017). Although, the lack of governmental authorisation means that banks are highly unlikely to join the "Cryptocurrency Renaissance" (Etsebeth, 2017) by endorsing it as an official currency.

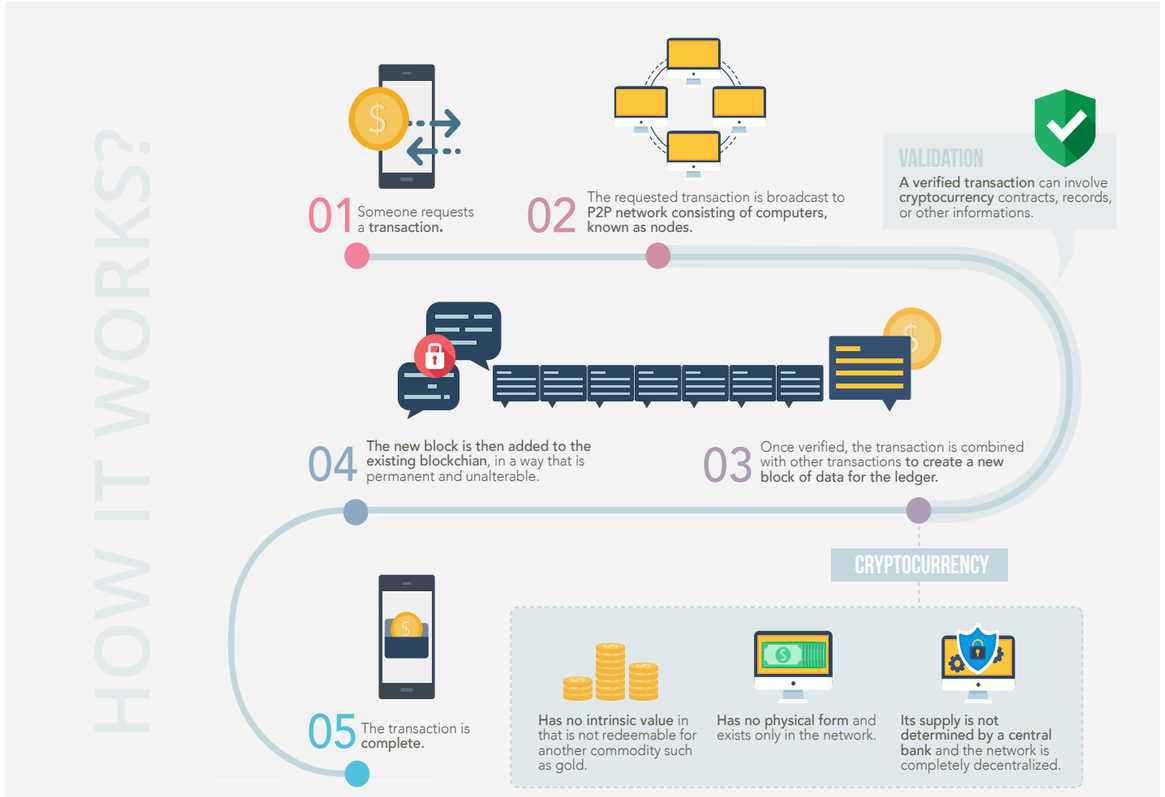
Aside from Bitcoin which launched in 2009, multiple cryptocurrencies have emerged, including Ethereum, Ripple and Litecoin (Scott-Briggs, 2016). Bitcoin is the most developed and commonly use digital currency, valued at over $234 billion as of January 2018. Introduced by Satoshi Nakamoto, Bitcoin promises lower transaction fees than traditional banks, and uses peer to peer technology to facilitate instant transactions (Investopedia, 2015).

Other popular cryptocurrencies use decentralised computer encryption to support peer to peer payments, and are all alternatives to the flagship system. Essentially, all currencies offer similar benefits, but may include original features unique to their brand. For example, Litecoin offers faster payments, and Ripple allows consumers to use other forms of money aside from cryptocurrency. Another system, Ethereum, includes terms of a transaction into a "smart contract", better protecting users from fraud. Currently, the CoinMarketCap publically lists over 850 different cryptocurrencies, and this myriad of options allows potential investors to tailor their choices based on their individual requirements (Greene, 2017).

Investors are drawn to cryptocurrencies for their high returns and endless possibilities. However, high expected return correlates with high risk, and thus, digital currencies are notorious for being volatile, risky ventures. Of course, being a new system, many consumers struggle to understand how cryptocurrencies work (Helmore, 2017), yet they are willing to take the risk in raising funds for new ventures. The process of introducing a cryptocurrency into the market occurs via an initial coin offering (ICO), where the required initial investment amounts may differ.

The market for ICOs is indeed booming, with new ventures creating hundreds of new assets (i.e. coins or tokens) that, in turn, can be used to power yet-to-be-developed peer-to-peer block chain networks. Speculators are attracted to the potential of building on decentralised blockchains, and this is what drives the funding of ICOs.

However, independent of governmental control and held amongst the people for the people, there would be little opportunity to regulate any transaction without compromising the integrity and technology of the software that supports cryptocurrencies. The only option



– to introduce capital controls – would be difficult, costly and time consuming to enforce (Financial Times, 2017). As a result, regulating cryptocurrencies would be virtually impossible.

Blockchain, the underlying technology of Bitcoin, is now a very attractive prospect to financial institutions and asset managers. This technology, by having the potential to disrupt and enhance processes and systems, is now drawing significant focus as well as investments from many financial institutions, including asset managers. Given the technology's potential to both disrupt and enhance processes and systems, many firms are dedicating the resources necessary for understanding blockchain and integrating it into their business.

Benefits of blockchain

Functionally, blockchain technology is a shared record or distributed ledger that is highly flexible with a plethora of potential use cases within the asset management lifecycle. In the real world, it can be used to streamline portfolio management, speed the clearing of funds and settle trades quicker. This, in turn, will ease the compliance burdens associated with know your customer services and anti-money laundering checks. By eliminating redundant functions, using blockchain in a business can reduce operational expenses and increase opportunities to enhance the client experience. While hedge fund managers may not use blockchain technology to replace current systems, they will find it can be leveraged to reconcile information across existing platforms or enable new infrastructure for new markets and products. (Ernst & Young, 2017).

Challenges of blockchain

As asset managers are still in the early stages of exploring blockchain and its applications in business, many are not yet familiar with how blockchain functions technically or how to reap its benefits. A few key challenges include:

1. Infufficient business problems to solve solely by blockchain technology. There have to be business cases to drive tech growth.

2. Scalability is a hurdle not yet passed for widespread adoption. To date, blockchain has seen limited deployment in situations requiring large volumes of data; the linear nature of technology limits its ability to handle such a high volume.

3. Product complexity can be difficult to integrate into the blockchain. After complex products are rolled out, parameters can be difficult to change later using a distributed ledger.

4. Regulatory and legal hurdles, as well as data privacy and high costs of replacing legal infrastructure.

COMFIRMATION
DISTRIBUTED COMPUTING
FINTECH
CLOUD
MINER **BITCOIN**
DECENTRALIZED
LINK
SECUE
TRANSPARENCY
OWNER
ENCRYPTED
USER
TIMESTAMP
BLOCKCHAIN
DATABASE
PROTOCOL
NODE
NETWORK
REVOLUTION
STRATEGIC
CRYPTOCURRENCY
BLOCKS
INNOVATION
AUTONOMOUS
DIGITAL
LEDGER
ICO
ENCRYPTED
TRANSACTION
STARTUP

Investors are drawn to cryptocurrencies for their high returns and endless possibilities.

Furthermore, the universal acceptance of blockchain technology by governments could potentially strike fears of undermining a country's sovereignty in economic policy. This comes since monetary and fiscal policy is so reliant on the widespread acceptance of a domestic currency where the government has a monopoly over its production and distribution (ResearchGate, 2001). In a cashless society, the relative prices of good would remain constant according to the law of one price (Investopedia, 2015) – that is, when arbitrage opportunities due to price differentials across countries eventuates in the equalisation of pricing. In such a scenario, if the people were to prefer cryptocurrencies over their domestic currency, governments would be more vulnerable to the adverse shocks of capital inflow and outflows without a single common currency adjusting accordingly as an automatic stabiliser pursuant to the country's economy.

Another issue concerning cryptocurrency is that since it is decentralised and anonymous, money cannot be tracked. Being unfettered by government control, this leaves cryptocurrencies susceptible to being used for illicit activity on the dark web as there is less of a paper trail that could assist in solving cases (DailyFX, 2017). As such, in a cashless society, illicit activities may become more economically rewarding to pursue given the lower risk of being caught.

To sum up, the technology surrounding blockchain is powerful when understood, and it does have numerous advantages. It increases the efficiency of transactions, reduces the holding cost of money (in the form of cash) and keeps relative prices constant across the globe, thereby accelerating globalisation. However, it poses a threat to the government as the single unitary authority on money within its own borders. In the face of widespread adoption of blockchain, many economies will face the threat of a loss of confidence in their respective domestic currencies, and thus, lose their autonomy in fiscal and monetary stabilisers. As such, the transition could momentarily destabilise economies. However, in the long run, it should improve economic efficiency from the lower holding and transfer costs of money whilst facilitating more global transactions.

Enterpriseinnovation, 2017
https://www.enterpriseinnovation.net/article/will-sovereign-cryptocurrencies-bring-about-cashless-society-529965085

ResearchGate, 2001
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/4752639_Monetary_Policy_in_a_Cashless_Society

Investopedia, 2015
http://www.investopedia.com/terms/l/law-one-price.asp

DailyFX, 2017
https://www.dailyfx.com/forex/fundamental/article/special_report/2017/07/28/Cryptocurrency-News-Money-Laundering-Bitcoin-Forks-and-SEC-Oversight.html

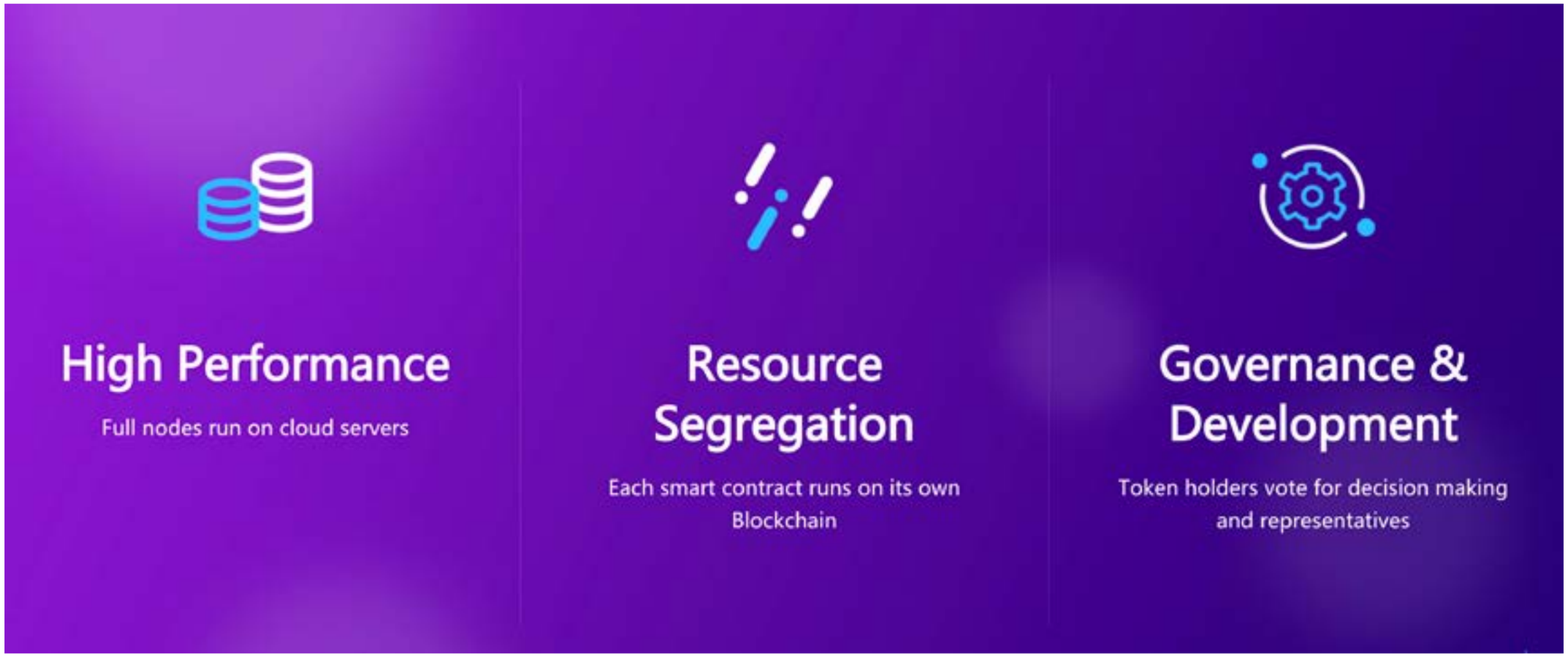
Financial Times, 2017
https://www.ft.com/content/519b-02cc-24e6-11e7-8691-d5f7e0cd0a16?mhq5j=e4

Crytptocoins, 2017
https://www.cryptocoinsnews.com/sweden-to-host-conference-on-blockchain-tech-and-cryptocurrencies-in-september/

ÆLF REVIEW

Written by: Stefan Sathianathen
Website: www.aelf.io

Increasing speed of transactions without the loss of security.



ÆLF could solve blockchain scalability issues while increasing transaction speed without jeopardising security. Current leading cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, face scalability issues that they will have to overcome if they wish to continue to grow in use. Recently, network congestions have led to high fees making Bitcoin transactions very costly. As more users enter the network, the high fees associated with this congestion will become the norm making crypto-transactions very inefficient. By utilising side chains, ÆLF will help keep transaction costs low, while allowing transactions to occur swiftly. ÆLF's technology will help crypto technology scale into the future.

ÆLF is envisioned to be seen as a highly efficient and customizable OS which will hopefully become the "Linux system" in the blockchain community. Just like the Linux Kernel, which resolves the most fundamental, critical and time-consuming parts, allowing other developers to make customized systems based on application scenario and customer needs. The ÆLF kernel includes all the fundamental functions blockchain system, namely the minimum viable block requirements. ÆLF will interact with Bitcoin, Ethereum, and other blockchain systems; cross-chain interaction with mainstream chains will be realized via messaging. It will also form an endogenous multi-level cross-chain structure based on cross-chain interaction, in order to share the digital assets, users and information.

In traditional software architecture, distributed structure is the popular solution to debottleneck capability limitation. The blockchain system should also support distributed parallel processing; allowing multiple transactions with non-competing data to improve transaction efficiency. To improve speeds, when one chain becomes too complex, it can be split into parallel chains to offload the traffic. The initial design of an effective blockchain should focus on solving specific business scenarios, rather than combining all smart contracts on one single chain. In order to deliver optimal performance based on business requirement, the chain has to provide effective and customized data structure, smart contract logic, and consensus protocol specifically for the targeted objective (Eeles, 2006).

ÆLF is intended to ultimately become the new internet infrastructure to support the next generation of digital businesses. Use of ÆLF in the financial service industry will significantly reduce intermediaries and ensure secure transactions. It is highly likely that multiple chains will exist on ÆLF developed specifically for financial services, such as cross-border payment, trade finance, and supply chain financing. The insurance industry will find ÆLF highly attractive, as various DAPPs are built for items such as identity verification. Governments will find ÆLF promising as it will allow them to securely and conveniently to run certain administrative tasks on ÆLF. ÆLF's light node and cloud service, which reduces the requirement for devices connected to it, will help allow internet of things applications be connected.

The ÆLF team is filled with people with extensive experience in building complex systems.They have years of experience working with both the private and public sector. As ÆLF looks into the future and partnering with or helping governments build DAPPS, these connections will help push ÆLF to the forerunners of the cryptocurrency ecosystem.

ÆLF is a project that will help deliver the lacking technology the crypto ecosystem is missing to push it to the next level. With this technology and a team as skilled as ÆLF, building and delivering a project of this caliber should be no big problem. ÆLF's approach to building their ecosystem is similar to those of extremely successful projects such as Linux.

ÆLF INTERVIEW

Interviewed by: Acqeel Ziyad
Website: www.aelf.io

Ælf is best described as a highly efficient and customisable OS that aims to be the 'Linux system' in the blockchain community. Ælf will interact with Bitcoin, Ethereum, and other Blockchain systems, featuring cross-chain interaction with mainstream chains. We sat down with their CEO to talk about Ælf's rise to fame and discuss the technical aspect behind their offering.

Fintech Review (FR): What made you come up with the idea of ÆLF? Describe what lead to the venture become a reality.

Haobo Ma (HM): I've been working with Bitcoin and blockchain since 2012. In Shanghai, I was involved with blockchain private cloud service BaaS from 2014 till 2017. I always felt that blockchain's influence was limited to the financial sector and niche industries' such as Blockchain and cryptocurrencies., but I was determined to change this. There are few commercial applications and models in this new field, mostly aiming to tackle the problem that the current blockchain system can not meet the needs of commercial applications both in terms of scalability and performance. To design a decentralized cloud computing blockchain system to promote the commercial application is the original intention and goal of the ÆLF project. The technical basis of ÆLF is to combine blockchain technologies like parallel processing and microservices, with sidechains and smart contracts.

FR: Why does having a blockchain that mimics an OS an advantage, such as in the case of ÆLF?

HM: The operating system is the fundamental platform which exists for the development of commercial IT products and their running life span. At the same time, the power of Internet allows for one to achieve interactions of applications between different operating systems. Blockchain is the new evolution of Internet, considered to be the 'Internet 2.0', as it compiles file storage, network communication and other functionalities. As mentioned in the ÆLF whitepaper, we intend to use the Operating System as its core to provide highly efficient and trustable applications. On the other hand, Linux foundation and the family of Linux operating systems have given valuable reference and experience to the ÆLF project.

FR: How does ÆLF make use of side chains to help scalability? ÆLF is how to use side chains to help expandability.

HM: The delay and blockage have long plagued both Bitcoin and Ethereum networks and have contributed to their high transaction costs. A recent example is the temporary shutdown of a Ethereum-based transaction by the CryptoKitties project. Though block expansion or lightning network itself can not solve the root causes of this problem, the ÆLF project uses a main chain + multi-level side chain business strategy as can be seen in the application of a divide and conquer algorithm which we like to call a "one chain to one" scenario. The side chain model makes the chain more streamlined into a single function, where the presence of a single business bottleneck will not affect the entire network business. Our business model also includes incentives for mining to also promote the self-improvement of ÆLF and its side chains.

FR: Do you see the use of side chains having any downsides?

HM: It's too early to comment on the advantages and disadvantages of the actual operation of the side chains, but based on the strategy of dividing the chain index mechanism and integrating business on the cloud, this indeed improves the efficiency of ÆLF. By focussing on enterprise and business applications, we ensure that our product deployment is correct and feasible. With

The technical basis of ÆLF is to combine parallel processing and micro services with blockchain technologies such as, side chains and smart contracts.

regard to the shortcomings of side chains, the challenge we currently foresee is on how to best coordinate the flow of value between side chains when the multi-side chains go liv. We view this as a potential challenge for ÆLF operations as well.

FR: Will the ÆLF network be able to handle a sudden use increase without the reliance of adding a new node, similar to the recent crypto kitties surge on the Ethereum network?

HM: No, this will not hinder the entire ÆLF network, but rather only affect the side chain of the ÆLF network. As the entire node must be running on the cluster, combined with cloud computing elastic technology, the network processing capacity of ÆLF can be rapidly increased in the case of rising network usage. The traditional large-scale Internet site is to do so, but in the ÆLF network, all nodes use the same strategy at the same time elastic expansion. We have a mechanism that requires that all nodes must have the flexibility.

FR: What applications of ÆLF do you see governments developing and applying in the near future?

HM: Like other blockchain systems, building trust has always been the primary goal of the ÆLF project. We have improved the efficiency of both deposit and credit business with sophisticated Internet technologies such as cloud computing, as well as with the help of multi-level side chain indexing mechanisms. The goal of governments is usually to improve data sharing to be more efficient by balancing governance of social resources, which is in line with ÆLF's design. The future ÆLF can be best described as cross-system departments, cross-regional credible data sharing, and to improve internal government information flow efficiency, while supporting the decentralization of ideas to achieve non-core government business resources with self-governance. For example, if a system eliminates the need for layers of approvals to achieve reliable document and data authentication and traceability, and relies on a consensus based on specific governance objectives instead, then this system is what governments should endeavour to achieve.

FR: What non-government applications do you see people developing in the near future?

HM: Non-government applications will give more freedom to the people, and said I believe that in the future, more commercial organisations will be more amicable toward tailoring their product-user community based on blockchain. Taking the gaming industry as an example, through our deep collaboration with Giant Network and projects with decentraland, Fair Game and other projects, we found that forming relations with the user community can be beneficial to our business. We hope to devote more resources to researching the core technology at the heart of our offering in order to facilitate this. Furthermore, for non-government applications, the value of blockchain lies in the decentralized user community, reducing the marginal cost of governance and enhancing the user's experience. ÆLF wishes to cooperate extensively with innovators and entrepreneurs in the content distribution, financial lending, and open source community. We plan to soon establish an innovative alliance with strategic consulting firms to advance the entire ÆLF ecosystem, as well as work with the industry's top traditional internet companies.

...the most important and urgent direction for our progress and change is driven by the needs of the industry itself.

What is your view on the cryptocurrency ecosystem where it stands today, and how would you like to see it evolve in the future?

HM: At the moment, there are two major changes that have taken place in the cryptocurrency ecosystem: the digital currency represented by bitcoin to pay for its core value is the first step in converting cryptocurrency into assets by itself and, of course, the fundamental step. Thereafter, the encrypted currency with business hosting as its main representative, represented by Ethereum, initially realized the dynamic distribution of digital assets and even expanded the currency through a unified standard of ERC20. The future of cryptocurrency will give more consideration to performance improvements, deployment maintenance enhancements, and increased freedom of value flow. Speaking on behalf of ÆLF, the most important and most urgent direction for our progress and change is driven by the needs of the actual industry. Commercial applications of software landing on our system is our persistent pursuit, but also marks the beginning of ÆLF.

What other interesting ICOs or current projects do you find most appealing, and why? What other ICO projects are you looking forward to? Why choose them?

HM: Decent and Decentraland. These types of application projects I am more optimistic for, because both the project's conception and their overall solution ideas are able to effectively solve the critical problems that this industry faces.

What plans does ÆLF have for 2018? ÆLF What are the plans for 2018?

HM: According to our development roadmap, 2018 will be the most crucial and fast-growing year for ÆLF, as we will be completing the internal parallel processing of mining nodes, cross-node communication and launching the main chain. In addition, we will work with an external consulting team to set up business alliances and other ventures to explore new business model. We hope to lead more businesses in different fields to grasp the fleeting opportunities for transformation and jointly embrace the revolution in support of block chain technology.

TOKEN ECONOMICS AND BEENEST

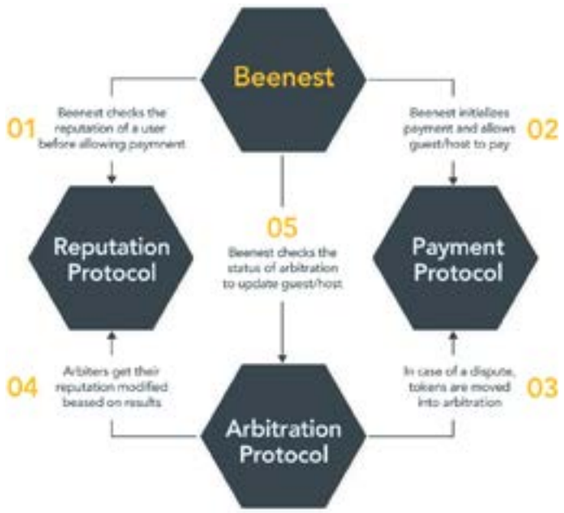
Written by: Michael Kitchener
Website: www.beetoken.com

The Future of Home Sharing.

Bee Protocols (P-A-R)

Bee Protocols provide developers the foundation to build decentralized applications (dApps). Our Protocols are open source solutions for managing secure **Payments**, resolving disputes through **Arbitration**, and building a **Reputation** system that combines secure identity with peer ratings.

- Faster deployment cycles and time to market
- Decreased costs with 3rd party bundled integrations
- Reduced network bootstrapping via transparent user ratings



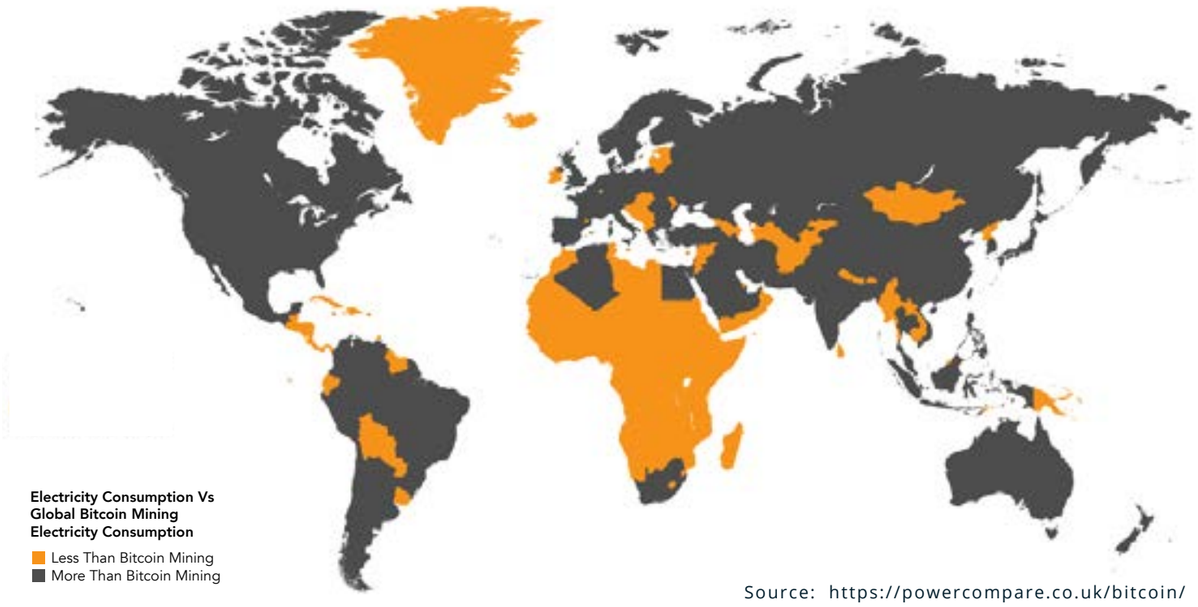
The economics behind utility tokens, and how they appreciate/depreciate, and incentivise the use of any product or service offered by a company hosting a token generation event are, at times, murky. Strong economic logic and careful consideration of relevant incentives are requisite in the design of a successful token that will facilitate the provision of the relevant product or service offered rather than hinder it. It is all too often that start-up companies seeking funding will put minimal effort into tokenizing their service, and do so merely to facilitate a token sale, rather than to actually enhance their product. This is not just a problem for token behaviour associated with such endeavours, but for the industry as a whole as wanton tokenization stands in the way of further legitimisation and distracts from the true value provided by Blockchain technology.

One project that excels in this regard is Bee, with their Bee Token. Firstly, it is important to understand what, in a broad sense, this project is doing. Beenest, the dApp for the project, is house-sharing platform, a crypto competitor to Airbnb. Citing both the prevalence of share-economy services and use of digital currencies amongst young people – the team believes that Beenest is coming at a 'growth inflection point.' The system is constructed through the linking of a few key protocols: with any given transaction, the reputation protocol will first be used to check the reputation of a user and determine whether or not to allow payment, the payment protocol will then be employed to send a receive tokens until the service is fulfilled, and finally the arbitration protocol will allow for disputes to be resolved through trustless voting.

Though the design is elegant, based off of this explanation it seems there is nothing that sets Beenet apart from competitors. However, the clever use of tokenization here has created an environment that, through incentives, will greatly improve the utility and strength of the platform as well as providing a vast range of benefits to hosts and guests. As expounded in the whitepaper, the token is sued to 'incentivise good behaviour and punish malicious behaviour' and to reduce costs and inefficiencies. For hosts, the use of a token will lead to increased revenue due to the lack of commission associated with this network, this should also service to lowers costs for guests in that savings may be passed on to guests given the competitive nature of home-sharing. For guests, early adoption of this platform is incentivised in that as the platform grows and the token grows – early adopters will be able to book more expensive properties with the same number of tokens. Guests also benefit from the arbitration protocol (the arbitration protocol's function is dependent on the usage of tokens) which allows for funds to be returned far more quickly when bookings are cancelled. Additionally, guests and hosts alike will be incentivised to behave appropriately due to the rating system which, unlike the systems used by Uber or Airbnb, are stored on the Blockchain and thus immutable and not subject to manipulation. Lastly, arbiters are incentivised through the reward of tokens – allowing the system to function fluidly.

The multitude of advantages and a more in-depth explanation of their function is available on the Bee Token Whitepaper, but it is already clear just how much tokenization can serve to enhance the provision of a service rather than merely facilitate funding.

bee



Source: https://powercompare.co.uk/bitcoin/

CHIA NETWORK
SUSTAINABILITY MEETS BLOCKCHAIN

Written by: Stefan Sathianathen
Website: chia.network

Bitcoin may have reached its peak network capability without needing a big change. As more transactions occur on the Bitcoin network, users are starting to shell out more money for transaction fees. As transaction fees continue to increase, the advantage of using Bitcoin for its original purpose as a peer-to-peer electronic cash is quickly diminishing. In addition, Bitcoin is not the best product when thinking in terms of being eco friendly. Bitcoin mining currently is estimated to use 30.14TWh a year, which exceeds the use of 19 European countries. The majority of mining occurs in China, due to cheap electricity. This cheap electricity comes at a cost; to create this cheap electricity China burns coal, which in turn adds an excess of CO_2 into the atmosphere. On the other hand, Visa operates two US data centres which supposedly runs on 2% of the power needed to run Bitcoin. Yet Visa, can conduct around 200m transactions a day, while the Bitcoin network struggles to handle fewer than 350,000. Since the proof of work (PoW) system requires a great deal of work on the miners side to verify transactions and add them to the blockchain, it becomes an inefficient way to verify transactions when compared to more efficient systems such as proof of stake (PoS) or proof of space(PoSpace). The major downside of PoS systems is that it helps the richer get richer while the poor remain poor. Accordingly, PoSpace may be one of the few project that contribute a part of the solution to the three issues that all cryptocurrencies try to solve at a fundamental level security, speed, and scalability. Chia network is a project that is developing PoSpace that may be the new underlying technology of every major cryptocurrency in the distant future.

Chia Network: Sustainability Meets Blockchain

"A purely peer-to-peer version of electronic cash would allow online payments to be sent directly from one party to another without going through a financial institution."

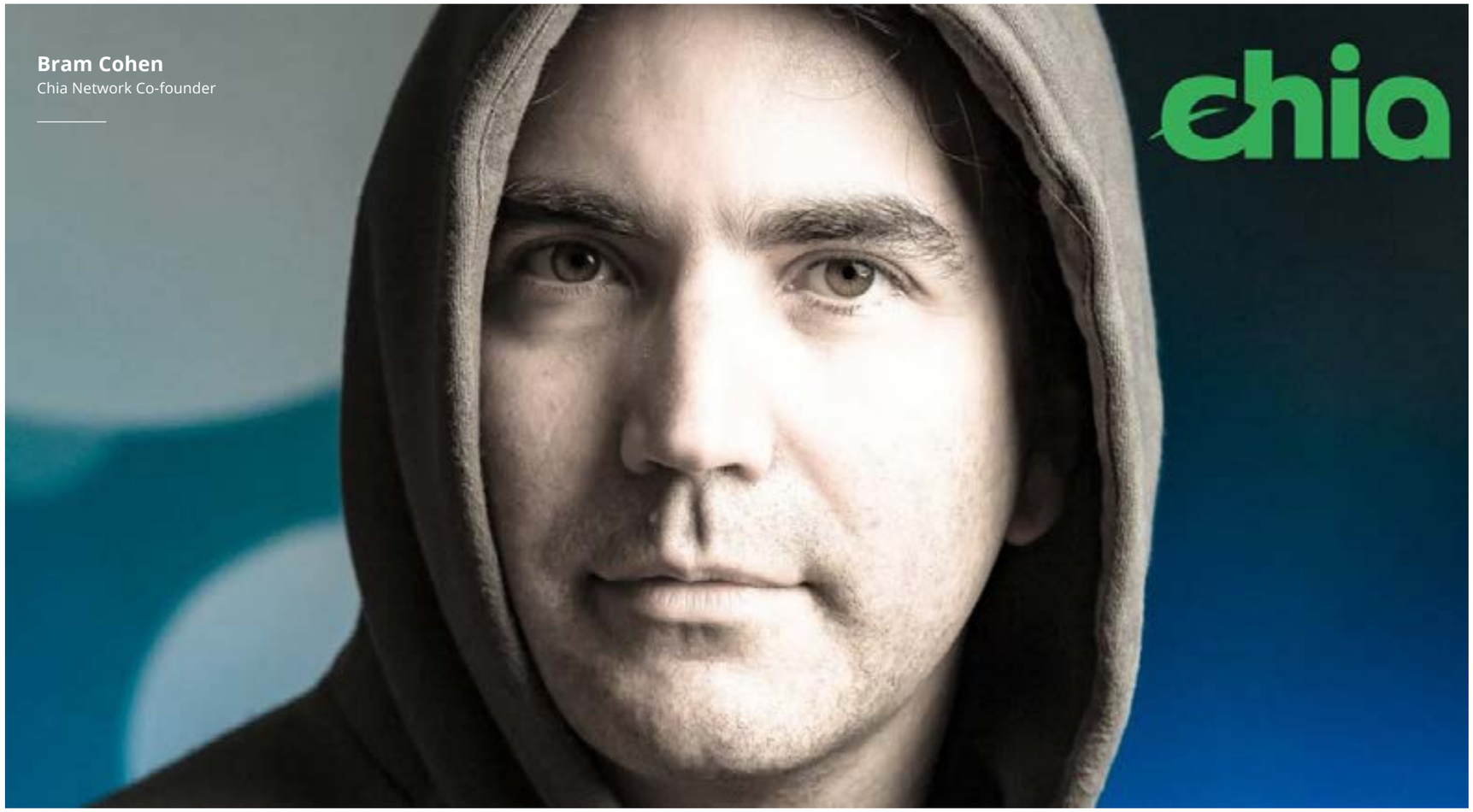
- From the Bitcoin Whitepaper

Chia network has spawned from the need of a better way for transactions to be validated before being added to the blockchain. As described before, PoS mining helps the richer get richer while the poor remain. Even though coins/tokens are selected at random to verify transactions, to verify a block a significant amount of tokens will be needed. Instead of implementing the age old PoW or the new PoS mining solutions, Chia network will create and implement PoSpace, a new verification system that will allow anybody to mine adding blocks to their blockchain. By moving to a system that anybody can mine with no costs and no asics miners, the PoSpace will be able to cut the electricity cost to mine cryptocurrencies.

Chia, instead of using proof of work, like Bitcoin and Ethereum, solves security concerns in proof of space by supplementing its blockchain verification with proofs of time. A proof of space demonstrates that an amount of space is allocated to a task by answering queries at low latency and amortized cost. A proof of time, or more accurately "Verifiable Delay Algorithm", is a special type of proof of work which take a specified number of iterations. Iterations can be accelerated, but calculation can't be parallelized across iterations. Output should be quickly verifiable allowing any two parties who do the calculation to get the same result, ensuring that the output hasn't been modified in any way. This allows the output of the proof of time for one block to be used as the challenge for the proof of space in the next block. Simply put, each block starts with a proof of space and is finalized with a proof of time. The product of the quality of the two of them must meet the current work difficulty threshold. This ensures that a block is a block, with no blocks worth more than others, disincentivizing farmers to farm orphan blocks in the hope of catching up. By implementing both proof of space and proof of time Chia will be able to achieve the same level of security while using less electricity. Full nodes in the Chia network will all keep the full history and a set of pending transactions. They then propagate the three weightiest histories they know of to all of their peers. When a new block is is minted it propagates rapidly to all full nodes while farmers start working on top of it. When a new block is found the farmer publishes it to the network. In exchange for finding a block a farmer will be rewarded with farmer rewards and transaction fees for all transactions they include. Once the three best proofs of space are propagated across the network rapidly, the proof of time servers start working on top of them. After the proof of time server finishes the proof of time for a proof of space it publishes the whole thing as a fully validated block and publishes it to the network to be built on top of again. The are always time/space trade offs because space can be repeatedly reformatted with new proofs, the goal is to make that be the best tradeoff possible.

Chia Network: Sustainability Meets Blockchain

The goal is to prevent wasting massive amounts of energy securing the network, and prevent ASIC-powered centralisation.

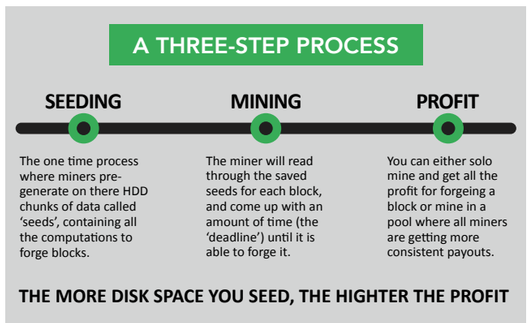


Unlike Bitcoin, Ethereum and other major cryptocurrencies the Chia network uses vacant disk space on hard drive to farm seeds (PoSpace). The goal is to prevent wasting massive amounts of energy securing the network and prevent ASIC-powered centralisation. A hard disk will have empty space filled with randomly generated proofs. Farming (Chia's form of mining) works by taking a snapshot (seeding) of the storage available on your hard drive(s). Based on the storage as a percentage, based on the storage available on the network, you will be given lottery type payouts for the amount you are willing to farm. There is no incentive to buy hard drives to farm Chia, as Chia works because of the amount of idle space sitting around at the moment not costing owners anything. Considering the insignificant energy, bandwidth and that the space is idle anyway, it's not a big deal if your reward is small and infrequent.

Chia network plans to release the initial launch of the network by the end of 2018, but is not set in stone and is dependent on development. No code has been written yet ,but a bunch of mathematical primitives have been worked out and are working their way towards publication.

A great application that will be able to be built into the Chia network is file storage. As farming occurs on unused hard drive file storage would be ideal. For a farmer to mine the minimum requirement of free space will be around 100GB or 1TB allowing users of the network store their data with knowledge that it would be safely stored in the blockchain. Also by distributing their data users will be able to have faster access and data will be more secure than storing in a centralized server.

Chia network is still building a team, but is led by BitTorrent inventor Bram Cohen. Bram invented torrenting in the early 2000s and briefly worked on Steam for Valve. He has already teamed up with early Bitcoin exchange Tradehill's COO Ryan Singer. Together they have already raised a seed round so that they can ramp up hiring. The figure they raised is still unknown but early sales of Chia are set to happen sometime in Q2 2018. Chia, has been staying out of media attention after being announced in early November of last year. They are focusing on the research and developing the underlying technology with the goal of launching the network by the end of 2018.



Chia has an immense amount of potential as businesses and governments are looking how to implement cryptocurrencies into their daily actions and processes. Interest in Bitcoin has surged since last year, causing heavy network congestion and miners working harder. If recent rumors about the Chinese government deciding to ban cryptocurrency mining are true Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies that depend on PoW will be doomed. Additionally, if Bitcoin wants to scale it will continue to use more energy which will upset governments resulting in strict mining regulations or worse prohibition. PoS mining will take off because it will cut energy use for most cryptocurrencies, but will be opposed from the general public as it will centralize the cryptocurrency while making the wealthy, wealthier. Chia will be able to cut out the majority of inadequacies of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies while allowing Chia to strive. All things considered, there may be a bright future ahead for Chia Network. Whether or not this currency can become any sort of threat to Bitcoin remains a big question, but the fact is that Chia is definitely a greener option.

COBINHOOD

0% trading fee exchange

Shaping future economies through cryptocurrency.

Cobinhood Launches Zero Fee Trading Platform

COBINHOOD LAUNCHES ZERO FEE TRADING PLATFORM

Written by: Cathy Lin
Website: www.cobinhood.com

Cobinhood will become the portal for all traders of any size transaction.

NFL Star Richard Sherman Signs On As Company Spokesperson & Sets Out To Educate U.S. Consumers On Cryptocurrency Trading

Launch Follows Successful ICO where 240 Million COBs (CONBINHOOD's Coin) Were Distributed to 17,000 Contributors (totaling 45K ETH – Equivalent to 15MM USD)

COBINHOOD Also Offers Underwriting Services For High-Quality ICO Which Includes Smart Contract Code Review, Legal Compliance, and Marketing Consulting

Launched in 2017, COBINHOOD is a next-generation cryptocurrency service platform. COBINHOOD is home to the world's first zero-fee, high-frequency cryptocurrency trading platform.

The company was founded by Popo Chen, the original founder of '17 Media', with the intention of shaping future economies by creating a financial center for the blockchain era. COBINHOOD believes the evolution of blockchain technology and a decentralized financial landscape will transform global capital markets and business organizations with long lasting impact.

COBINHOOD announced the launch of the world's first zero trading fee, high-frequency cryptocurrency trading platform today, allowing anyone to monitor and trade Bitcoin, Ethereum, COB and CMT tokens, and sixteen more upon launching, more tokens will be tradable on the exchange soon. The company also features an ICO underwriting service and recently conducted successful one of its own where over 45K ETH were raised.

"This emerging market deserves a zero trading fee platform," stated Popo Chen, COBINHOOD CEO. "I've seen first-hand how astronomical fee costs can be, it makes day trade almost impossible. Also, with the space needing continued adoption and education, COBINHOOD will become the portal for all traders of any size transaction. I'm very proud of the team's work both pre and post ICO to bring the platform to life."

The team also revealed that SB winner and four-time Pro Bowler Richard Sherman, a CB for the Seattle Seahawks is now the companies U.S. ambassador and will focus on educating the general population on the future of cryptocurrency. "A lot of traders are being ripped off in the Crypto market, especially on fees," stated Richard Sherman.

Popo Chen and the team at COBINHOOD are giving anyone with a slight interest or those fully immersed in the space a chance to trade for free and make orders in real-time."

COBINHOOD's proprietary order matching engine can process millions of orders with sub-millisecond latency. The system is designed to be fully distributed, highly available, and auto scalable. COBINHOOD stores the majority of the crypto assets deposit in an offline multisig vault, which requires 5 out of 8 geo-distributed hardware security modules to open. On the platform, users can exchange fiat currency directly to any coin available.

During its ICO earlier this year, COBINHOOD distributed 244,773,856 COB to 17,433 contributors totaling 45,254.9 ETH.

The company also launched its underwriting service and signed its first client, CyberMiles. The blockchain technology emerged from 5xlab, 5miles' (a service allowing customers to buy and sell stuff locally) development laboratory.

"Since our launch, we've seen great volume and our users recommending new tokens to be tradable on the COBINHOOD platform," stated Popo Chen, COBINHOOD CEO. "While kicking off with Bitcoin, COB and Ethereum brought us market adoption and credibility, we want to continue to grow the community and add tokens that people really want to trade and engage with. As COBINHOOD continues to grow, adds a mobile trading option and a wallet, we're all expecting this to become the industry leader and clear user favorite as the crypto industry evolves."

COBINHOOD

TRENDS IN THE ICO MARKET

Written by: Oren Bahari

ICO in 2018 will overpower all fundraising enacted in the past.

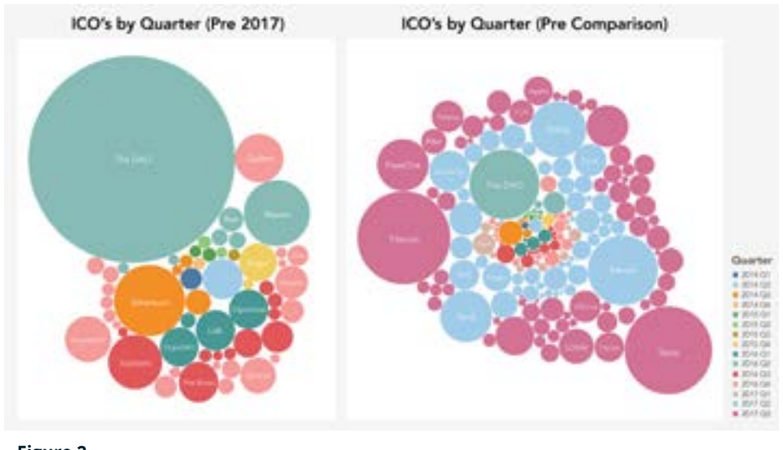


Figure 2

Figure 1: The progress of ICOs so far

ICO's have truly erupted in 2017. Their trajectory is better than casual linear and even exponential trends seen in other emerging industries. Comparatively, another megatrend, Machine Learning and AI Automation of Industry, has only just broken free of its linear bound. The dynamism of ICO has been fuelled by the mainstreaming of Bitcoin and legitimisation of cryptocurrency at the forefront. As seen in the graph, the prospective trend of ICO count, the amount of businesses choosing a decentralised funding model, is continuously upgrading with changing sentiments. It seems as if the Bitcoin explosion gave significant asset potential to believers in the crypto-sphere, and they are searching, harnessing and exploring the next great potential spur. Notably, without both Bitcoin and Ethereums' formation, none of this explosion in investment would be possible.

Even more interesting is the explosion in the cumulative size of projects. There was only a gradual development pre-2017 in the venture ecosystem. Note, The DAO, is an investment conglomerate that raised its funds through an ICO and has now had its tokes labelled a Security by the SEC. Investors in The DAO obviously anticipated the explosion and designed an decentralized organisation. The concentration of colours within the core displays the truly rapid expansion. It also details an almost unrealistically rapid pace, further enhanced by the monumental movement of cryptocurrency in 2017 Q4. Even the magnitude of investment towards purely decentralized networks (the circle size), is often enormous. Undeniably, some these projects have been overfunded. No company truly needs over 50 million in seed funding, so the concept that these companies are raising upwards of 250 million now is outrageous. Gigantic ventures like Filecoin and Tezos will begin in 2018 if regulation does not limit their fundraising bounds. Familiar companies like Telegram are hoping to hit 1 Billion in their future ICOs, a figure so seemingly absurd it brings disgust as much as it does awe. If demand is there, significant money will continue to follow.

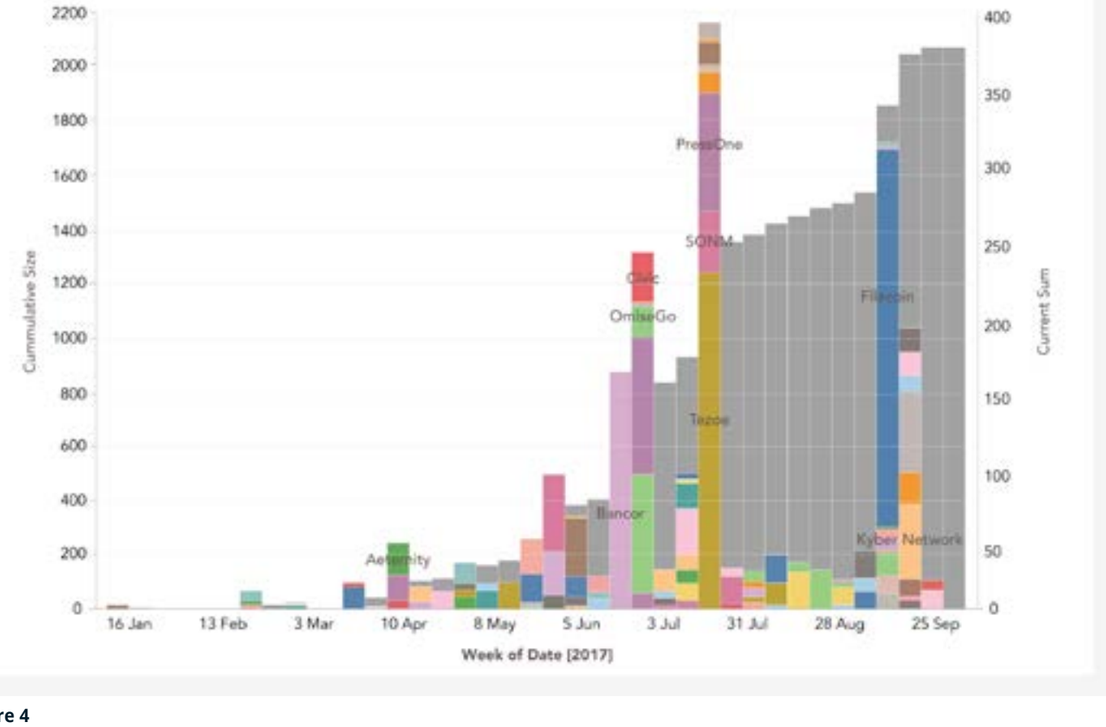
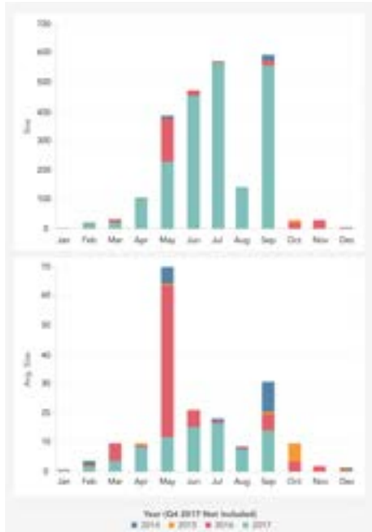


Figure 4

Figure 3: Magnitude VS Avg. Magnitude



Further importance must be place on the changing climate of ICOs. In 2015-2016, it was evident that ICOs were only for the brave few who could any magnitude of money. Now, a more general model and rubric about what composes has been hashed out. ICOs of the appropriate order of several hundred thousand are now unseen, and majority of ICOs of 2017 fall between the $5 and $20 million-dollar ranges. ICOs often also choose to fall within the middle of the year rather than the end. The dynamic movement of cryptocurrency over the Christmas and New Year's period boldens the idea that volatility is expected. Another trend that can be inferred is the greater segmentation of the ICO funding available. Instead of only a handful of ICOs in 2017 like previous years, the spread of funding is flatter and more even with only several outliers. ICO in 2018 will then overpower all fundraising enacted in the past, with a large push in middle of the year.

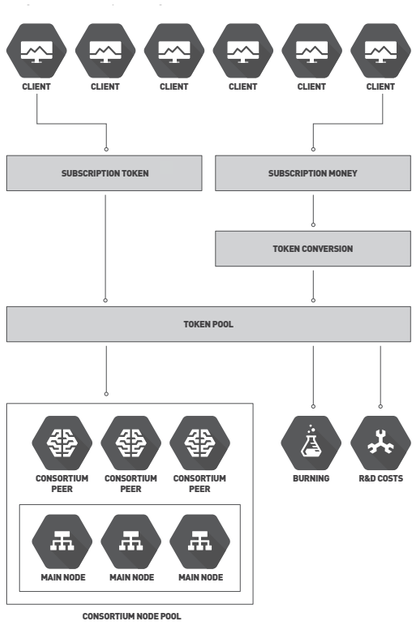
A graph of the contributions to the cumulative size of ICO is display above. Some significant ICOs have had their names written down. It is apparent that there are two significant periods, where all projects raised significant amounts of money. The question is what caused the periodic clumping. The best explanation comes from the high correlation in the magnitude in weekly funding to ICOs and the percentage change (average growth per period) of Bitcoin. The variation in change of Bitcoins price explains the variation of Current Weekly Sum by 52%. Bitcoins personal Market Capitalization over the period examine was overpowering, and consequently could be viewed as defacto displayer of attitude to cryptocurrency investment. This reinforces the assistance Bitcoin has given to many projects, organizations and jobs. The cumulative gains are still driving forward and there are no signs if slowing down.

Ledgerium Review

LEDGERIUM REVIEW

Written by: Kyle Crutchley
Website: www.ledgerium.net

Secure, Lower Costs, Regulatory Compliant.



Accounting costs have spiralled, as the rise in transactions has created an industry where only large companies have the financial means to access this information. Because of the nature of the industry, auditing frauds and appeasement of companies to the detriment of investors have become common place.

In order to open up the market and attempt to create more secure, transparent accounting practices through the use of blockchain technology and triple-entry accounting, Ledgerium has been developed.

The aim of Ledgerium is not to just develop a more transparent and secure accounting industry, but to make it affordable for small businesses to access services like auditing, previously only available to those with significant funds to pay for pricey audits, such as large companies.

The key to revolutionising the accounting industry lies in the blockchain technology at the heart of Ledgerium. Blockchain provides the means to cheaply record transactional information while still being as effective and secure as traditional accounting. Ledgerium's blockchain is also incredibly transparent, as being through the blockchain, all transactions on Ledgerium can be verified. This, along with its security makes it a promising tech.

An important part of Ledgerium is its decentralised nature. This attribute ensures that any transactions on Ledgerium can not be tampered with, creating an accounting system where fraud is virtually impossible and all financial transactions and documents on the blockchain are 100% accurate, allowing businesses and investors to be sure that all financial data is correct.

The Ledgerium blockchain can be used in any industry that utilises accounting services, as well as those firms that require auditing services. These industries can vary from any private enterprise, to governmental institutions, all of whom will benefit from the increased security features of Ledgerium and the minimisation of fraud from using blockchain technology.

Ledgerium works through the triple entry accounting system. How this works is that rather than the traditional system of keeping and adjusting records of the same transactions in two private and independent databases susceptible to fraud, both parties are also recorded in a shared book. These books can be updated in real-time, as all transactions go through the blockchain and the shared book, meaning that all payment processes, invoices, and contracts can be processed and updated onto the Ledgerium software instantly. This differs and is much more convenient and efficient than the traditional accounting system, which relies on outdated reconciliation processes that take days, as opposed to seconds with Ledgerium.

Ledgerium's development has commenced, and is presently scheduled for a full release in the first quarter of 2019. With a prestigious team made up of academics in the field of accounting, professionals with significant experience in blockchain technology, and accounting firms, the adoption of Ledgerium will revolutionise the industry.

Ledgerium

LEDGERIUM INTERVIEW

Interview by: Acqeel Ziyad
Website: www.ledgerium.net

For us, it's to make the world a smarter, more efficient and better place.

Fintech Review (FR): What is Ledgerium?

Adam Wang (AW): Ledgerium is a company that brings blockchain to the accounting and audit industry. We aim to create decentralised ledger through triple entry accounting system and initiate a revolution for traditional accounting and audit procedures. We believe that the trust mechanism of blockchain could lower the costs of financial services and help build a fairer business world. It will increase the integrity of the ledger and reduce the level of materiality. Imagine this, every transaction in a business is been audited on a 24/7 basis. Consider how this will make the user feel about the integrity of the financial reports.

FR: How can Ledgerium be used in the real world?

AW: Ledgerium can be used to establish an accounting data blockchain, which is decentralised. A distributed ledger across many nodes in the Ledgerium blockchain platform will record crypto currency transactions. The Debtors and Creditors ecosystem will feature smart contracts to facilitate listing of traditional account payable and receivables. Blockchain technology will add real time auditing functionality, and ultimately through the artificial intelligence, we will achieve audit automation. By utilising blockchain technology, we can control recording of inventory, supply chain, ownership of tangible assets, ownership of intangible assets, internal procedure control etc. Ultimately, Ledgerium will be a complete solution of accounting and audit blockchain software in the future.

FR: When is Ledgerium launching its product? Tell us about the roadmap.

AWg: By Q2 2018, Ledgerium will launch the main chain, with wallet software for Mac and Windows . We will conduct a marketing campaign in Asia-pacific rim countries including US, Canada, Australia and China. By Q3 2018, the Ledgerium IOS app will be launched, with an additional marketing campaign being conducted in countries including the United States, Japan, South Korea, and Singapore. The Research and Development team will be releasing a demo version of Ledgerium to beta tesers. By Q4 2018, the Ledgerium Android app will be launched, with a marketing campaign be held in European countries. The Research and UI design team will initiate the first product function, while developing the second product function.

FR: How can the community be involved in the ICO?

AW: Slack, Telegram, Twitter, Facebook and Weibo.

FR: Where is the Ledgerium team based?

AW Our central management team and development team is based in Australia. We will have advisors from all around the globe to help us create Ledgerium.

FR: What experience does your team bring to this project to ensure its success?

AW: People are the most important element to make this venture a success. The Ledgerium consists of university accounting academic professors, blockchain technology experts and accounting firm professionals. Our current team members all have years of experience in research, marketing, sales, operation, accounting, legal, Software Design, and others.

FR: What is the ultimate goal of Ledgerium?

AW: We aim to protect public interest by creating and revolutionising the financial reporting world. Imagine a financial report that is from a reliable source, and integrates an anti-fraud, real time AI system.

FR: What challenges do you foresee in developing blockchain technology, and how does Ledgerium plan to overcome them?

AW: Currently the Audit/Accounting system cannot use blockchain technology to design a standardized audit process. To overcome this issue, we can do it by educating Accounting practices or companies using the technology, in order to produce a reliable result which can be reported. We will work with relevant Government agencies and Audit boards to help improve on the procedures and the implementation of our product. Importantly, we will continue to develop and improve the system and market it to the public.

FR: What advice would you give to an entrepreneur trying to launch an ICO successfully?

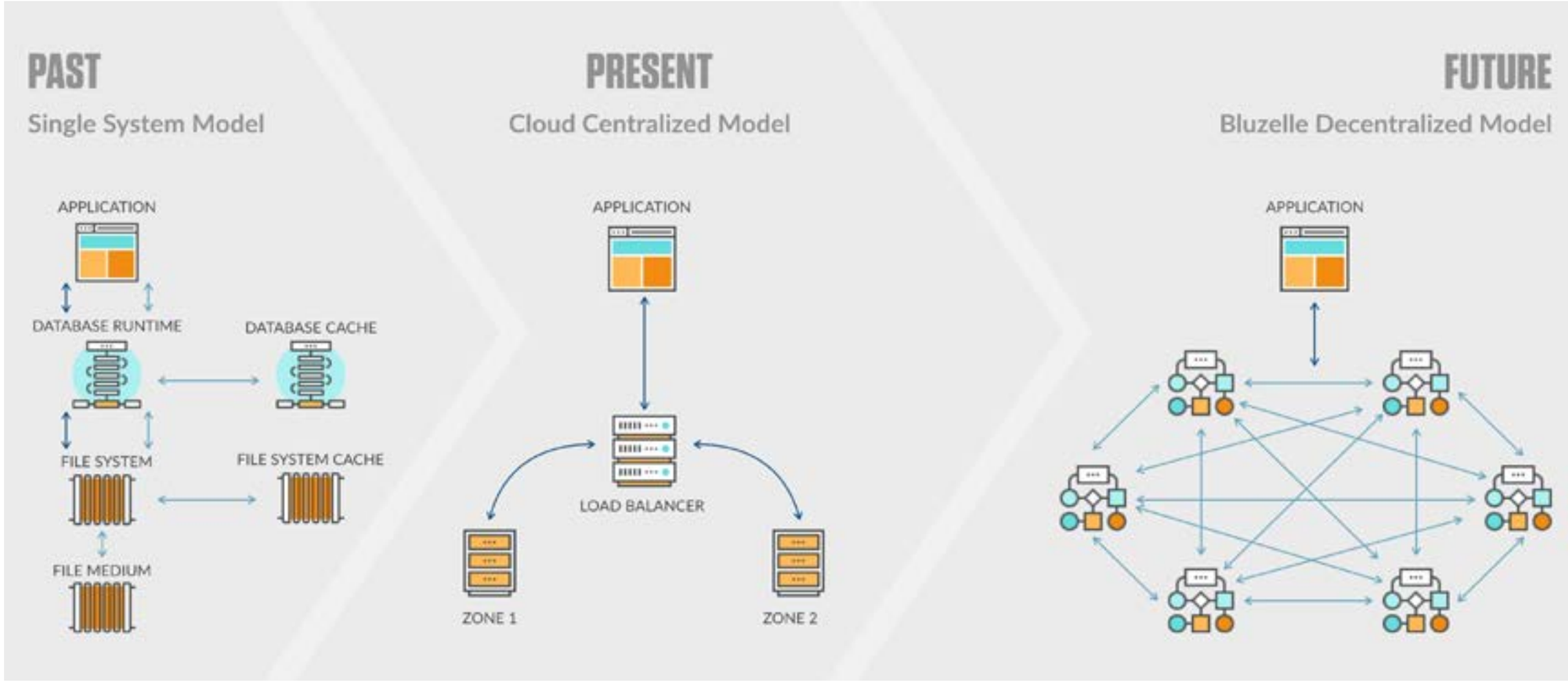
AW: Beside we all know that to have a successful ICO, we must have a very experienced advisory team, including software, marketing and product team. We value having Jayden and Dallas who are undoubtedly very experienced in the field. They provided us with priceless advice and a clear roadmap for our future. We endeavour to work on a very strictly timeline to develop the highest quality product. When launching any ICO, one must ask why they would like to do so. For us, it's to make the world a smarter, more efficient and better place.

Bluzelle Review

BLUZELLE REVIEW

Written by: Acqeel Ziyad
Website: www.bluzelle.com

A decentralized database service for the world's dApps.



Paul Bains
Bluzelle CEO & Co-founder

Bluzelle, is a data storage platform using the decentralisation aspect of block chain technology to achieve high reliability, enterprise-grade scalability, and high performance speeds. They've just scored $1.5 million in Series A funding, and are known to be a competitor of Storj, another decentralized blockchain storage provider.

Bluzelle state their goal is to help the "new internet", meaning decentralized internet, run efficiently. In a recent interview, their CEO and co-founder Pavel Bains said that Bluzelle aims to do, for the new internet, what Oracle did for the current internet infrastructure. Bluzelle plans it's ICO for 2018, during which period it will issue its own tokens for public sale.

Bluzelle is creating a middleware storage solution for the blockchain. Just like the internet being a communication protocol, Blockchain is also a protocol which requires middleware applications to fully utilise it. That's where Bluzelle comes in. Bluzelle's goal is to create a decentralized database network which involves producers (the people who mine for bitcoin by making their computers part of the transaction validation process) renting out their hardware resources to the network. Thereafter, consumers (e.g. software developers) can use the Bluzelle network to streamline their applications.

The ecosystem revolves around the use of Bluzelle tokens. Consumers will pay with tokens to access database services, while producers will earn tokens in exchange for sharing their resources. Ultimately, Bluzelle wants to create a solution to manage data in a secure, efficient, and low-cost way. It plans to provide a crucial part of the infrastructure needed to power the decentralized internet. To do that, Bluzelle is creating a data storage solution that stores small bits of data which is encrypted on computers around the world.

The utility of Bluzelle tokens is a strong point of the project. The Bluzelle network is actually based on two tokens, BLZ and BNT. BLZ is an external token that connects the internal Bluzelle Native Token (BNT) with ETH. BNT is an internal token underpinning the Bluzelle ecosystem, which producers earn when consumers pay for their services. The BLZ token exists on exchanges for customers to get access to Bluzelle services. Enterprises have an incentive to purchase the token not only to access the scaling capabilities that the network provides, but also for the reduced costs associated with decentralizing data storage. There is strong incentive on the consumer end to accumulate the token for scaling and speed, as well as on the producer end to compete for rewards- all signs of an ecosystem with high potential for growth.

In the realm of decentralized databases, Bluzelle faces some competition from companies like Wolk, Ties and Fluence. Wolk seems to be Bluzelle's main contender, by being a decentralized database running on Ethereum, but Bluzelle distinguishes itself by operating on its own protocol. This allows for integration into any blockchain and by serving non-blockchain products as well. CEO Pavel Bains asserts that an MVP will be released by the end of December to show the public what data storage on Bluzelle looks like.

bluzelle

MAGGIE INTERVIEW

Interviewed by: Acqeel Ziyad
Website: www.maggie.vip

MAGGIE 麦奇

Maggie tries to build a free SNS service based on Blockchain. Maggie will start from making dating free again.

Yuxuan Xu
Maggie CEO & Co-founder

Fintech Review (FR): What problems does Maggie solve?

Yuxuan Xu (YX): We believe that centralized SNS cannot sustain for long. As we all know, SNS giants even like Facebook and Twitter now have become part of a "big brother" like system, let alone other centralized SNS apps that initiatively monitor, censor, and even sell users' data & information. There is actually no privacy on a centralized web in this big-government era.

Essentially, Maggie tries to build a free SNS based on Blockchain. Tactically, Maggie will start from "make dating free again". Maggie positions itself as an SNS platform featuring strict certification, high privacy, weak tie and strong personality, and will facilitate efficient transfer of values among users through whole-network analysis & matching and smart contract functionality. Furthermore, the unique tamper-resistance of blockchain automatically establishes a credit system at Maggie's platform.

FR: Why does blockchain technology allow Maggie to solve this unique problem, while traditional technologies cannot?

YX: We believe the utility of Tokens, Smart Contracts and Ecosystems are the most valuable blockchain advantages that Maggie will take to differentiate from traditional centralized technologies.

By using token, users could preserve their essential privacy, anonymously provide or accept value from others. The buyer doesn't need to know who the seller is but only care about what value he/she could provide. Think about the transaction fee in BTC - we only care about the transaction that is packaged into block, don't need to consider which particular node we pay. By using smart contracts, we have the possibility of building a truly decentralized application. Users don't rely on the centralized commercial organization any longer to deal with O2O transactions. All the regulations are discussed with the communities and published on the blockchain via smart contract. Maggie will collaborate with other blockchain communities. More and more decentralized blockchain services will be adopted. By participating in the ecosystem, we build the ecosystem together. We will focus on open discussion and collaboration to guide us forward.

FR: Is the Maggie platform vulnerable to an attack similar to what Ashley Madison, why?

YX: No, this is not the case with Maggie. In a centralized web, attackers can just hack a central server and get all important data. However, in Maggies' decentralized world, there is no central server for hackers to attack. Maggie would ask users to verify their essential privacy by their selves then get the certification which is the only information that others could inquiry on the blockchain, kind of ZCash's idea. The KYC process is not centralized, neither the privacy.

FR: Why would users want to use the Maggie platform, instead of using platforms like Ashley Madison?

YX: Maggie offers a full set of protection mechanism for user's core privacy. The whole process is similar to a masked ball. Maggie will meticulously verify the identity of participants to ensure only those qualified can enter the room. Inside the room, everyone wears a mask, irreversibly isolated from their original identity, such that even Maggie cannot know your real identity. Maggie will also adopt a multi-level effective KYC and user address (similar to that of Bitcoin) as the sole ID. Also, Maggie adopts an encryption method that combines public key & private key system with symmetric key, so as to provide users with the most secure and most efficient point-to-point communication.

To sum up, Maggie is a d-app that initiatively tries NOT to know users' core data & information. Users will never have to worry about their privacy.

Yuan Ma
Maggie CTO & Co-founder

Yixin Deng
Maggie VP & Co-founder

FR: Do you believe the cryptocurrency market is currently overvalued?

YX: Well, individuals do have their own opinions and we totally respect them. But our belief is that we are just at the beginning of the blockchain era. As more and more d-apps emerge and thrive, the whole industry will really soar at a historically rapid speed that no one has never seen. The problem for us may not be "is it overvalued" but "who is our Mr. Right". Price is vital for sure but when we calculate the price we should not lose the whole picture. If one token/coin is not our Mr. Right it is always overvalued for us but if one is our Mr. Right then it is never too later to invest in a long-term perspective. If you want to invest solely for low price, do not invest. If you do not want to invest solely for high cost, do invest.

FR: Do you see many coins/tokens that hold more value than an investment?

YX: I have seen many coins that offer 100000% or even more return and I have also seen many coins that are totally scams and make people bankrupt. Again, the imagination or as we say, potential, in the blockchain industry is absolutely enormous and beyond anyone's previous experience. That's why we can perceive coins/tokens offering unbelievable return. I believe in the future we could see more coins/tokens offering an unbelievable return. However, there is no easy way to find such targets. Our thought process is as follows:

First, one must learn to understand. Only when you try to lean, can you understand. Never try to invest anything you do not understand after your arduous learning. Only when you try to lean, can you understand. Second, one should invest early to enjoy potential high return. But only when you understand, are you able to invest early. Third, and mostly important, hold for long. But only when you understand and invest early, dare you hold for long. I saw many people bought BTC for $100, sold all for $110 and never bought again. I also met people bought BTC for $10 and did not sell until $10000.

FR: Why do you think Maggie is worthy for investors to take a look into for a long term project?

YX: We are really a team of blockchain believers and devoting ourselves to a free SNS. Furthermore, we have also been funded by top blockchain invest institutions: INB, Blockchain Ventures, Link VC and Chainfunder. Currently it is great timing in the industry to launch such a venture like Maggie. Our app is now under test and will be released soon. We encourage interested investors to read and understand the potential of Maggie and share our belief for rapid growth in the future.

GO NETWORK AND THE FUTURE OF BLOCKCHAIN PAYMENT

Written by: Michael Kitchener
Website: www.gonetwork.co

GoNetwork is creating a highly scalable, low cost mobile first network infrastructure for Ethereum.

Disruption to traditional markets, methods and structure of business is a cornerstone of the Blockchain philosophy. The e-commerce market is the latest to find itself in the sights of Blockchain disruption, albeit in a more nuanced manner. GoNetwork aims to provide a low-cost and highly-scalable network for Ethereum that is optimised for web and mobile platforms.

GoNetwork's intention is to provide a solution to some of the shortcomings currently faced by the Ethereum network – such as the limited number of transactions per second. GoNetworks answer to these shortcomings is to evoke state channels - which allows people who have transacted once within a Blockchain to make an unlimited amount of transactions with each other until the final balances are confirmed and then processed on the Blockchain. Importantly, this makes the need for miners to verify every transaction obsolete, expediting the process greatly. The grand plan here is to create a network of state channels between all participants in the network.

This may sound familiar if you are acquainted with Raiden – a project striving for a similar solution. But GoNetwork differentiates itself in that – unlike all other network scaling projects – their focus is not confined to desktop. GoNetwork, unlike, Radien or any other similar projects will not only work for mobile but is being developed specifically at mobile platforms. As GoNetwork's CTO Amit Shah has explained: mobile requires its own specific scaling solutions.

But how exactly will this disrupt the e-commerce market?

In addition to providing for easier, cheaper transactions through the aforementioned network of state-channels, the GoExchange is a planned decentralised marketplace for in-app purchases – which are ubiquitous within mobile games and other applications. On this exchange any virtual item will be tradeable with GoTokens – furthermore, the exchange and network will be protected from fraud due to security advantages of the Blockchain.

Essentially, GoNetwork's primary end is to tap into the mobile economy and e-commerce market, and their means in achieving this is to make ethereum transactions efficient and cheaper.

The team have recently been in the spotlight for winning ETHwaterloo – the largest global Ethereum hackathon – boasting 400+ participants. The team were able to produce a mobile-first Bluetooth tap and pay system utilising the Ethereum Blockchain in 32 hours and their entry was rated top by an all-star team of judges including Vitalik Buterin, Jeff Coleman, Brian Bondy, Joseph Lubin and Dmitry Buterin.

Also of note, to the judges, was GoNetwork's Pocket Platform – an application that allows young parents to teach their children financial literacy. Using the Ethereum Blockchain, parents are able to create digital debit cards and claimable rewards for financially savvy behaviour – such as decreased consumption and increased savings on a monthly basis.

Ultimately, the exposition at the Hackathon has only illustrated a small sample of the potential of GoNetwork team. With this in mind it is easy to see not only a bright future for the GoNetwork, but, subsequently – for crypto transactions in a much broader sense.

GO NETWORK

UNITED BITCOIN
FAD OR FUTURE?

A brief review of the project that claims to be the next 'Bitcoin'.

Written by: Samuel Jordan
Website: www.ub.com

UnitedBitcoin (UB) is a new implementation of Bitcoin which builds on Bitcoin's core network, by having the same total volume, block-speed, halving time and PoW mechanisms as Bitcoin. This particular fork aims to solve several fundamental issues notorious to Bitcoins underlying architecture, such as high transaction costs, slow transaction speeds and price volatility. In order to do this, UB:

1. Uses a Segwit 8MB block size. This changes block sizes from 1MB to 8MB. The current Bitcoin network has become heavily clogged as more transactions occur. This change accommodates for faster transaction speeds and larger sizes.

2. Incorporates smart contract functionality. This helps parties exchange goods, services and anything of value while being transparent and without the use of a middleman (such as a financial institution). This essentially helps determine the ownership of assets.

3. Supports the Lightning Network which allows millions to billions of transactions to occur within seconds, with very small fees. The fees have been predicted to be so miniscule that micro-transactions now become feasible. This system will also allow atomic swaps to occur, meaning that users will be able to swap currencies directly, rather than going through an exchange.

4. Features a pegged currency function to combat rampant price volatility, whereby the team at UB will either liquidate inactive balances, or purchase UB from exchanges to keep prices fixed to certain currencies.

United Bitcorn: Fad or Future?

This feels like the next progression in the evolution that is Bitcoin. Even with many other reputable and truly innovative coins on the market, basic investors appear to only purchase coins that bear the name 'Bitcoin'. So, rather than forcing millions to understand the advantages implemented in other currencies such as Ethereum, IOTA, Ripple and others, why not simply make a better, more innovative and practical version of Bitcoin and focus on that?

This sounds like a simple solution; however, the problem resides in the division of groups in the industry. There are rising numbers of Bitcoin traditionalists, skeptics and progressives. There is also a heated debate raging as to whether Bitcoin is a currency, commodity or something else entirely.

Those arguing in favour of it being a commodity cite that its pricing behaviour, the EFTs/Futures/other investment vehicles that it's been placed in and its nickname 'digital gold', all point to it being a commodity. While those in the traditionalist currency camp follow the logic that an asset must adequately satisfy the following pre-conditions to be called a currency. Namely:

1. **It must be a medium of exchange**
   Something that can be used to facilitate the sale, purchase or trade of goods and services between parties.

2. **It must hold as a unit of account**
   Something that can be used to value goods and services, and to record debts.

3. **It must function as a store of value**
   Something that can be saved, retrieved and exchanged at a later point in time.

While looking at Bitcoin as a medium of exchange, it's clear that more merchants are accepting Bitcoin than ever before, however its transaction fees, price volatility and lack of smart contract functionality limit and even diminish its acceptance. A recent example of this was when the online gaming giant, Steam stopped accepting Bitcoin payments, citing high fees and volatility issues.

Bitcoin doesn't make for a good unit of account either. Again, price volatility dictates this. This condition can only be satisfied when a currency doesn't heavily appreciate. Most cryptocurrency users firstly measure the value of an item in USD, then convert that value to Bitcoin. Prices need to stabilise so that people can measure the cost of goods and services directly in tokens. This is where having stable and controlled price mechanisms will greatly advance the uses of these tokens as true currencies.

Lastly, Bitcoin struggles as a storage of value. Yes, prices have increased dramatically, but volatility and an unprecedented bull market have led to a situation where investors may lose thousands or tens of thousands if they withdraw at premature or 'corrective' times.

Overall, Bitcoin is a poor currency. It may be a fantastic long-term storage of wealth, and may be great at providing access to a global market with a lack of central control, but fundamentally it's bad at being a currency. This doesn't mean that it's worthless, but enthusiasts and believers need to continue to revolutionize and progress.

This is where the benefits of UB shine. Through the implementation of its aforementioned features, the next phase in the cryptocurrency revolution can begin. Coupling a global payments system with price stability, near instant payment speeds, miniscule fees, and smart contract functionality will allow the coin to overcome its current boundaries, thus providing the foundation for the wide-spread adoption and implementation that those in the industry are looking for.

UB.com
UnitedBitcoin

OBJECTLEDGER

Written by: Dave Medinis
Website: www.ObjectLedger.com

The Problem
Supply chain management in manufacturing is incredibly inefficient and wasteful. Each year manufacturers waste over $2.8 trillion on administrators, accountants, clerks, consultants, IT specialists and software programs that can all be eliminated with a Blockchain-based solution. ObjectLedger is this solution.

From Fortune 500 companies down to startups, business owners will no longer be forced to use overpriced, archaic methods to introduce their products to consumers. Common explanations for the rapid decline of the US manufacturing base often center on outsourcing due to foreign competition, regulations, and high labor costs. However the data tells a different story. Looking at the distribution of product realization costs and how they trend over time, it is clear that accounting and administration inefficiencies behind the manufacturing process are responsible for the largest portion of non-value added costs in the operational ledger (income statement), which ultimately causes the manufacturing relocation decisions many companies are forced to make.

By moving accounting and supply chain management for the world's physical objects to the Blockchain, ObjectLedger will drastically improve the efficiency of these systems. In so doing, ObjectLedger has the potential save the global industrial economy hundreds of billions of dollars annually. ObjectLedger is the next logical step in merging the industrial revolution with the information revolution. It brings the power of the Blockchain to manufacturing, streamlining the process of converting the physical building blocks of our lives into the products we use every day.

The Solution
The last few years in the cryptocurrency space have been about theory, potential usability and innovation, but it is our sincere belief that 2018 will be the year where the emergence of transactable business-oriented Blockchains truly takes precedent, and cryptocurrencies with actual functionality finally start to demonstrate legitimate value in solving real-world business problems. ObjectLedger plans to utilize Blockchain and deep learning AI technology to solve massive inefficiencies in supply chain and manufacturing. Our goal with ObjectLedger is to put control back into the hands of the creators and manufacturers.

The ObjectLedger is a hybrid of real-time object-based performance monitoring software that records the physical transactions of the manufacturing process, combined with a cryptocurrency transaction to create an irrefutable record in the Blockchain of the cryptocurrency and its associated virtual object. This system eliminates the need for hundreds of billions of dollars worth of non-value added participants in the manufacturing process. ObjectLedger duplicates the actual manufacturing process by creating virtual objects that represent the physical objects flowing through the manufacturing plant. The objects are physically identified with a tag embedded with the unique serial number of the Object Token cryptocurrency transaction. This is the link that identifies the physical object with the transaction in the Blockchain. These tags allow people to quickly, securely and efficiently identify the physical objects and verify them using Blockchain accelerated transactions. This system, we believe, is the natural next step in the progression from barcode scanners, to RFID and now to ObjectLedger technology.

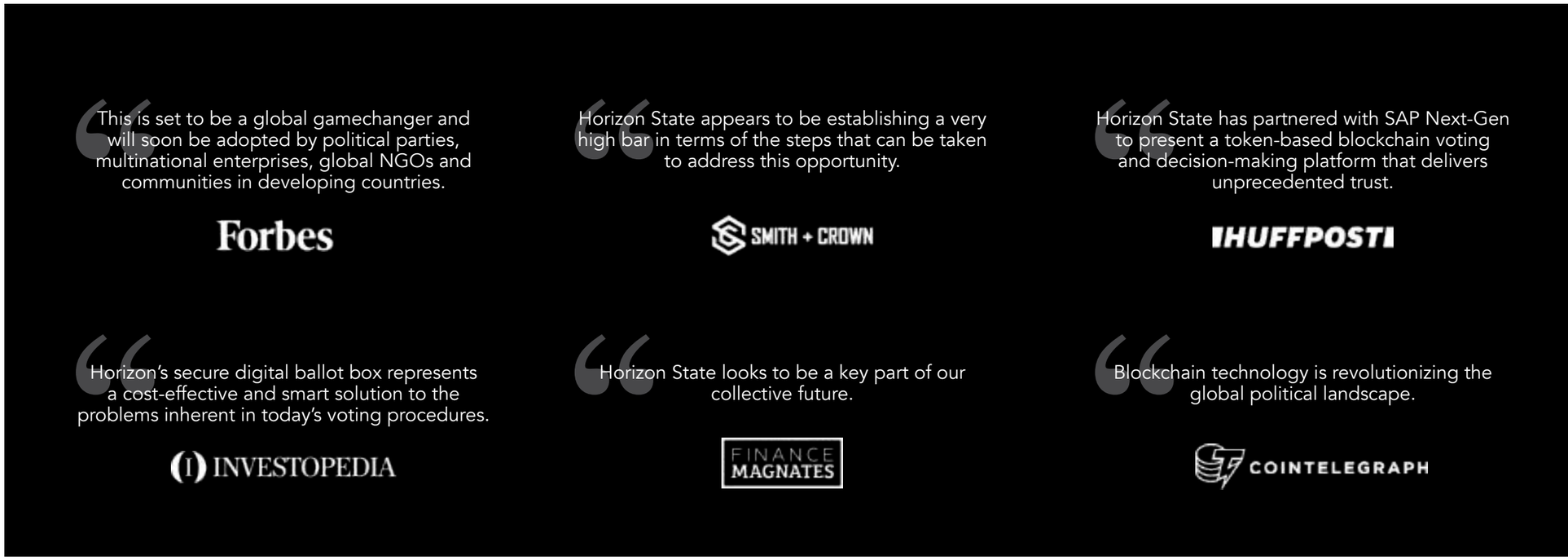
The ObjectLedger team is comprised of supply chain engineers and executives with over 100 years of combined experience bringing physical products to life for some of the world's largest companies, across a diverse range of industries. Our executives have long held relationships with some world's top manufacturers and OEMs, and are deeply embedded within the manufacturing ecosystem they are rebuilding with ObjectLedger technology.

For more information on gaining early access to our pre-sale whitelist, visit us at. **www.ObjectLedger.com**

Horizon State Interview

HORIZON STATE INTERVIEW

Interviewed by: Stefan Sathianathen
Website: www.horizonstate.com



Jamie Skella

Horizon State Co-founder

Horizon State is the future of voting and collaborative decision making. Horizon State has built a token-based blockchain voting and decision-making platform that delivers unprecedented trust through the integrity and post-unforgeable attributes of blockchain technology. Horizon State delivers a secure digital ballot box that cannot be hacked, wherein results can never be altered, and voter identities are protected.

How does Horizon State improve voting over traditional paper methods?

Jamie Skella (JS): Horizon State betters traditional methods in many ways, but I like to break these down into three key categories: cost, efficiency, and security. So far as cost and efficiency is concerned, our platform enables 10x improvements across the board. Using Australia's marriage equality vote as an example, we'd have shaved months off of the time it took to orchestrate, and reduced the expense from $120 million to about $2 million. Then there's the immeasurable improvement of security: the record of the result applied to blockchain technology is perfectly secure; it's tamper proof. This is a stark contrast to the reality of the marriage equality postal vote, where votes ended up in the wrong hands, and hundreds were even left out in the rain.

Other than cost-cutting, why would a company or government use Horizon State?

JS: It's important to call out that it's not just governments who can benefit from this technology, but enterprise and NGOs as well. Cost cutting and efficiency gains aside, it's the security of the vote that is most compelling - having an unhackable, accountable, and transparent system is a tremendously good way to install additional confidences and trust with any kind of constituency.

Why do you think blockchain technology should be used for solving problems?

JS: Blockchain isn't a great fit for every problem, but surprisingly to some, it does in fact present many use cases which could shift society in profound ways. Be it peer-to-peer energy trading instead of your national energy provider, truly decentralised and crowd sourced file storage instead of using Dropbox, or Spotify without Spotify where you have direct financial relationships with the artists you listen to.

What's your opinion on the Bitcoin/Cryptocurrency Bubble?

JS: From the perspective of investing speculatively in new financial assets such as Bitcoin, many idle observers are calling this a bubble. I wouldn't necessarily disagree, but I also hesitate to call it a bubble. As the saying goes: "money is the bubble that never pops". If societies reach consensus on what holds value, for any reason, it does. If enough people believe something can be used as a medium for exchange, it's hard to change that belief. Gold has few applications, yet we still value it highly. Fiat currencies are no longer backed by gold, yet the value remains. In-game items are digital, but often priced highly, especially when scarce. From the perspective of speculative investments in blockchain startups and utility tokens, I think it's clearer that we are in a bubble. Many of these startups are currently far overvalued, and corrections will have to happen. Like all startups, in the vicinity of 90% of these blockchain ones will fail, but like the dot-com bubble, we'll see some incredibly important businesses rise from the cumulative ashes of their former peers. The question is: have you invested in the Pets.com of blockchain, or the Google of blockchain? It's important to remember that after the dot-com pop, we still saw some of the most important innovations and businesses the world has ever seen arise from it.

What is an interesting project that you like, other than Horizon State?

JS: I'll have to give a shout-out to fellow Australian startup, Power Ledger. The team over in Perth had a tremendously successful token sale, and have a real world use case that I think is a very important one: the democratisation and decentralisation of energy trade. I very much look forward to a future where I can sell excess power from my solar tiles and battery pack, helping create a more sustainable future for our planet.

HORIZON STATE

UCOT
A SMART IOT ECOSYSTEM

Written by: Leon Liu
Website: www.ucot.world

Championed by established business alliances.

John Baird
UCOT CEO

As the function connecting manufacturers to suppliers and consumers, the supply chain plays a pivotal role in the commercial world. Thanks to globalisation, we live in a world where different components within the supply chain can seamlessly integrate into a supply chain, regardless of geographic differences. For example, the adoption of Internet-of-Things (IoT) expedites the process in which, say, mobile phones are designed in California, manufactured in China and can be sold in Australia or other retailers around the planet. (China Daily, 2017)

However, this poses multiple threats to the operations and efficiency of supply chains. As supply chains often involve different countries and regions presently, especially for big international corporations, the regulatory and legal issues are, undoubtedly, of significance, and the risk of supply chains data being hacked or tampered is exacerbated. Stakeholders lean on the reliability and traceability of supply chains data, which is difficult to achieve with traditional supply chain solutions.

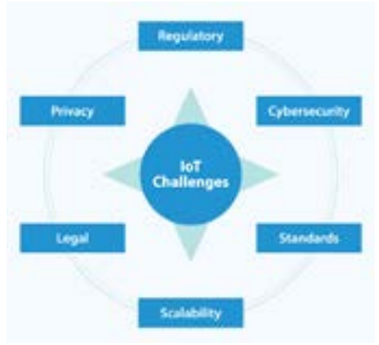


Figure 1: Supply chains integrated with IoT are facing multiple challenges (EY 2016)

Blockchain technologies are attractive due to their tamper-resistant capacity and traceability, which can be used to upgrade existing supply chains solutions. And one of the pioneers in this field is UCOT (Ubique Chain of Things), which provides a decentralized, secured and structured ecosystem underpinned by 5G telecommunication. This enables stakeholders, such as suppliers and consumers in the supply chain, to gain access to accurate and reliable information.

Through various modules designed for Registration, Supplier, Manufacturer, Digital Chip Tracking and User Interface, users of UCOT are able to easily record and/or track information in supply chains even just on mobile phones. This eases the pain of unnecessary costs of tracking data and maintaining supply chains, which are of concern to companies endeavoring to lower their costs and thus to boost profitability, as PwC (2013) explains. Consumers would find UCOT as a trustworthy resort to the lack of confidence in suppliers who implement only traditional supply chain solutions, while suppliers and manufacturers would be benefited from this as well. The tamper-resistant and self-repair capacities of blockchain technology also empower supply chains not only to detect but to restore the tempered data as well, thereby advancing data's autonomous and self-sufficient attributes.

UCOT can lead to diverse applications. In order to accommodate to varying customer demand, companies can utilize UCOT to configure their supply chains for different customer segments. By doing so, companies

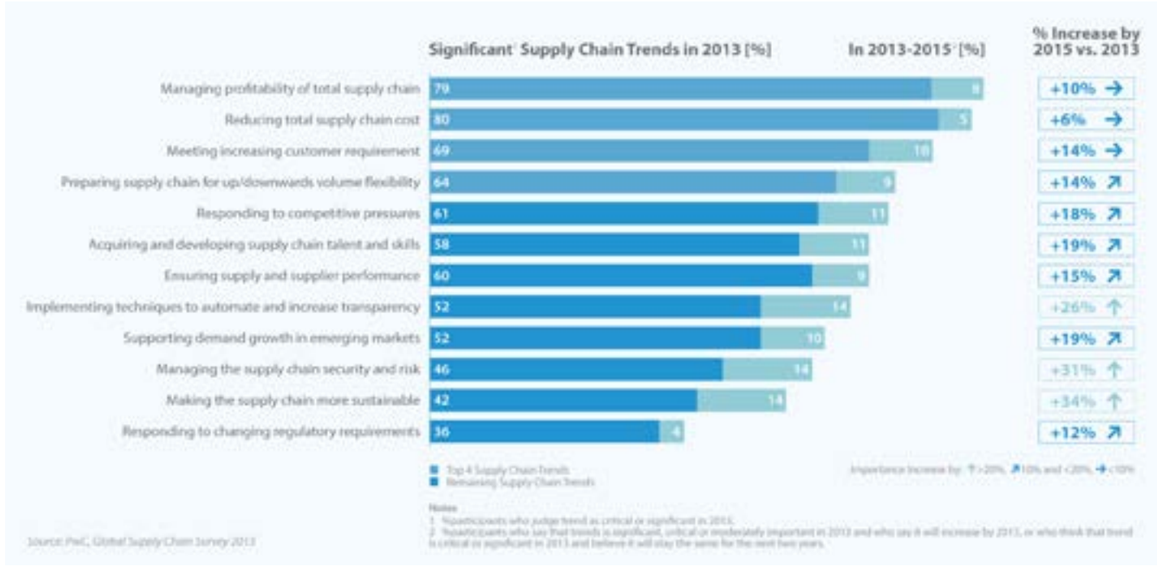


Figure 2: Profitability of the supply chain (1st) and reduction of total supply chain cost (2nd) are top priorities for companies (PwC 2013)

are also able to effectively concentrate on trustworthiness. fewer well-designed and consumer-oriented supply chains for specific consumer groups. Again, this would also help companies lower their cost in supply chains.

Supply chains, in addition, are subject to the ever-changing commercial market. To be able to survive, the key prerequisites for them are adaptability and sustainability. Sustainability involves issues regarding the environment, geography, governance, management and social awareness. But to achieve it, companies would need to keep track of every bit of data produced in supply chains, and traditional supply chain solutions are unsuitable to process the increasingly complex data as discussed above.

With its sophisticated features, UCOT can be applied to keep precise and punctual records of data in supply chains and to give insightful information regarding issues of sustainability. Origins of the products, for instance, would be recorded and saved in the UCOT ecosystem, and downstream users would be able to check data against local regulations or to ensure the whole process is eco-friendly as required by some NGOs or government bodies, with high UCOT would help companies embark upon a new phase of the usage of the supply chain. Providing data security and traceability attributable to Blockchain and its tamper-resistant capabilities, UCOT enables both suppliers and customers to gain access to authentic and reliable information about the supply chain at a holistic level by providing services including origin verification, supply chain management, and certification, among others.

UCOT comes backed with well versed veterans of the blockchain industry, such as Ryan Xu, Leigh Travis and Phil Cvetovac. University of Technology Sydney and the University of New South Wales have jumped on board as research partners for this project and will aid in advancing the technical underpinnings of it. UCOT is also championed by established business alliances like DigitalX, Blockchain Global and Chang Jiang International Express.

Aug 17 - Preparation
Project launch, technology core team established

Oct 17 - Angel Round
Token sales (TSP) angel round completed

Nov 17 - Private Sale
Token private sales completion and Ucot.world wesbsite construction

Jan 18 - UBI Sale Completion
Crypto token (UBI) sale completion

Feb 18 - Substitution Coin
Substitution coin being issued and listed

May 18 - Version 1.0
Testing Completion, Version 1.0 goes online

Jun 18 - Protocol
Manufacturing facilities established for tracking & communication protocal

Dec 18 - Industry Solution
Business solution integrated at industrial level

BLOOM

ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT THROUGH BLOCKCHAIN

Written by: Michael Kitchener
Website: www.hellobloom.io

Bloom

A prominent trend in the various applications of Blockchain that have flourished through the emerging ICO market is in 'banking the unbanked.' Blockchain technology has found a noble use-case in providing credit and banking services to those who, due to living in developing economies, could not otherwise access them contributing to economic empowerment of such people and thus fighting global inequity. (Schmidt & Sandner, 2017)

The past few years have boasted several impressive projects undertaking such missions, many of which have thus far seen success. Most of these projects are geographically localised in their target market – for example: OmiseGo is aimed towards those in South East Asia and The Ripio Credit Network targets those in Latin America.

One project with a broader scope in its sights is Bloom who have created a credit lending platform with a protocol that is capable of identity attestation, risk assessment and credit scoring. The team consists of various computer science graduates and researchers from Stanford University with prestigious backgrounds and successful past endeavours.

Bloom's niche within the credit lending sector of Blockchain technology lies in the solutions they aim to provide to several key issues they have identified with the status quo of the credit system.

Firstly, the current system is plagued by the risk of credit theft – anyone who wishes to borrow is required to reveal private information about themselves thus leaving them exposed to identity theft in that such data allows an attacker to open new lines of credit. (MacBean, 2014)

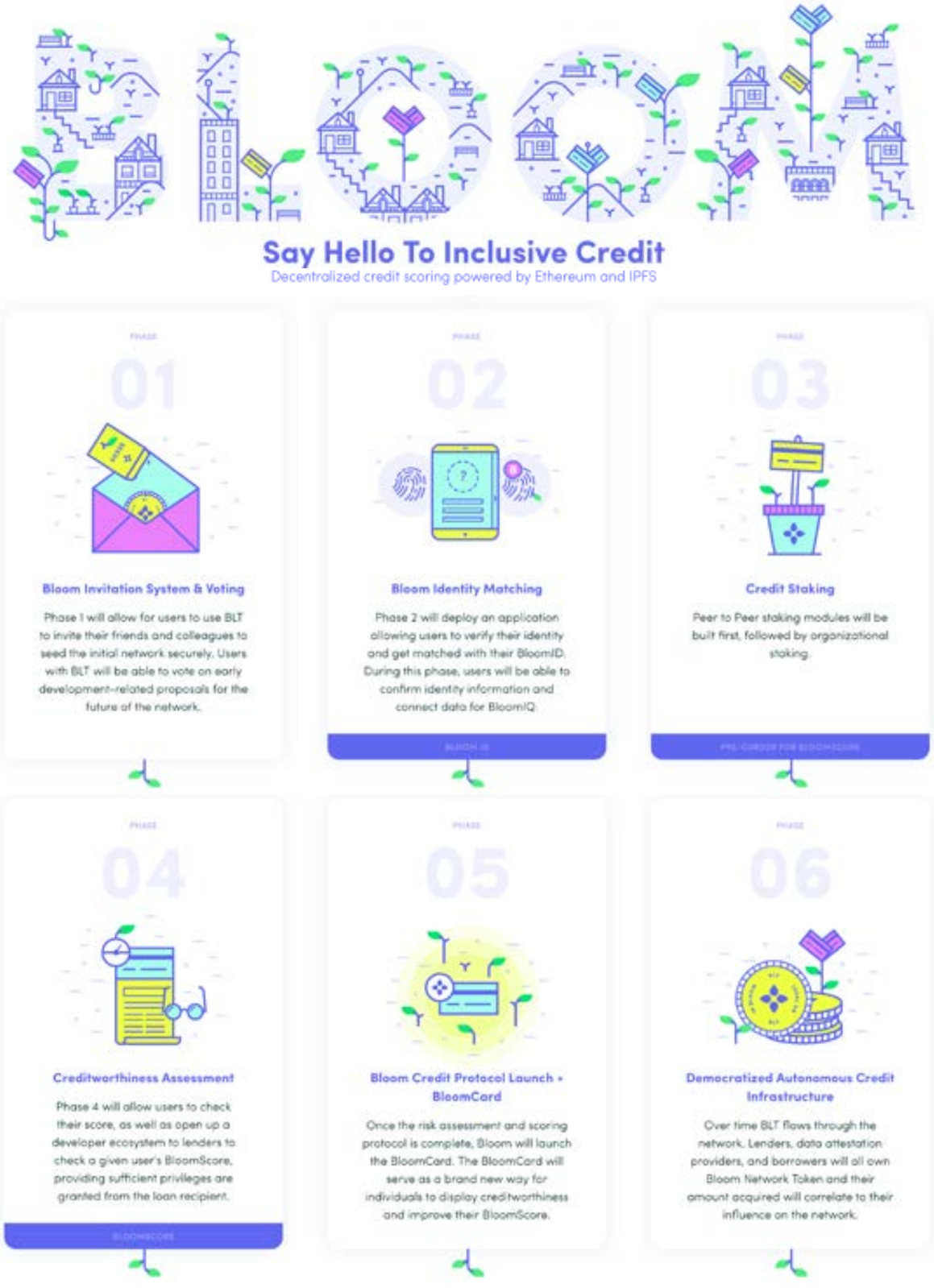
When individuals relocate geographically they must also re-establish credit scores due to the fact that, currently, credit scores cannot be brought across borders. Additionally – with respect to the unfair difficulty same face in accessing credit – the fact that credit systems rely upon historical debt repayment information is an obstacle for new users who have no history.

Due to this limited identity and repayment data – borrowers in markets suffering from underdeveloped financial infrastructure struggle to gain access to credit.

Finally, there is a distinct lack of competition in credit scoring since credit data is scored by a single provider.

What Bloom does is allow for any lender who is authorised by a borrower to securely issue credit to said borrower – this system is facilitated by three features. The BloomID is a feature that allows users to create an identity with third parties who can verify identity information. The BloomIQ is a system that reports and keeps a record of debt obligations associated with a BloomID, and the BloomScore is an indicator of an individual's reliability and likelihood of paying off debt.

This should provide globally accessible, reliable credit scores and thus facilitate access to credit to those who are unfairly barred via the current systems. As such, Bloom, and many similar projects illustrate the potential of Blockchain applications to contribute to economic empowerment through the removal of systematic barriers that are restricting growth and economic development in developing nations.



FINTECH'S BIG ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND THE FUTURE

Written by: Stefan Sathianathen

2017 was the year of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. Yet, while this was all happening, people have overlooked the tremendous accomplishments that the fintech industry has accomplished (Ferkoun, 2013). The three most promising areas in the fintech industry are cloud and core processing, smarter machines and customer relations. Over the previous few years these three areas have been the largest gainer in overall share of applications. These three industries are the few that the majority of the public will be affected by in the coming years as companies adopt a more technological stance. As consumers look for better products, companies with products driven with technology will see additional success.

Cloud and core processing solutions are being used everyday by consumer even if they didn't know. The cost of running servers and hosting data has dramatically dropped over the last decade. Instead of building your own server and hosting your application by yourself, its cheaper to outsource that work to companies like Amazon's AWS, Microsoft's Azure and Google's Google Cloud. With the rise of these cloud computing platforms, the time for Bank's to abandon the aging centralized systems that rely on mainframes, that were built in the 1980's. For a bank to move their core processing solutions to the cloud, security concerns must be solved. Banks are eager for the cost savings, as you pay are you use while using the cloud. As an illustration if you were a bank that was truly cloud based, you may dedicate 100 servers for online banking. Then when everyone gets home from work and pays their bills in the evening, you may more capacity to a 1,000 servers. But when everyone goes bed, you can downsize to 50 servers. This happens automatically, so that cloud customers are not paying for servers that they are not using. Once banks, can get approval from their regulators that running core processes on the cloud is safe, they will happily start making the move, but until then the dying expensive way of running your own servers will continue for banks (Capgemini Financial Services, 2011).

Smarter, faster machines are still in develop and more software and products will rollout within the next year, that will make life easier and interesting in some aspects. In 2017, we saw the rise of smart speakers. Amazon Echo's and Google Home's dominated many of the best gift of the year lists. These smart speakers are computers that lack a keyboard and graphical user interface. People interact with the speakers using voice, which then the speaker carries out the requested task. People can query news, set reminders, listen to music and even call people. Another intelligent machine that has risen is Siri, Apple's personal intelligent assistant. Siri's capability has immensely increased since it was first introduced. Back in 2011, when Siri was first introduced,it was only capable of answering very structured questions. Today you can talk to Siri as it were another person. It really has grown to become a personal assistant some people have come to depend on. The capability of these intelligent agents have just touched the brink of what is possible.

Customer relation software solutions were the least known area that people noticed have entered their life. Bots can now answer basic questions, provide feedback to customers and help easy the customer service load (Schniederjans, Cao, & Ching, 2012). These messaging bots starting to branch out of messaging for support, into the area of advice. In combination of the rising research and success in smarter, faster machines these bots can crunch large numbers to help make recommendations to consumers. For example, the next time you go to buy a coffee, you might get a message recommending you to spend less and put some of those savings towards a goal you are saving up for. It's scary to think about how much data that the bot will be crunching to know that you are at a coffee store, you are going to buy a coffee and that you need to save more money. This is a simple example, but in time, as AI and fintech bots advance in sophistication, one's imagination is the only limit in the ways bots are going to help us simplify financial management.

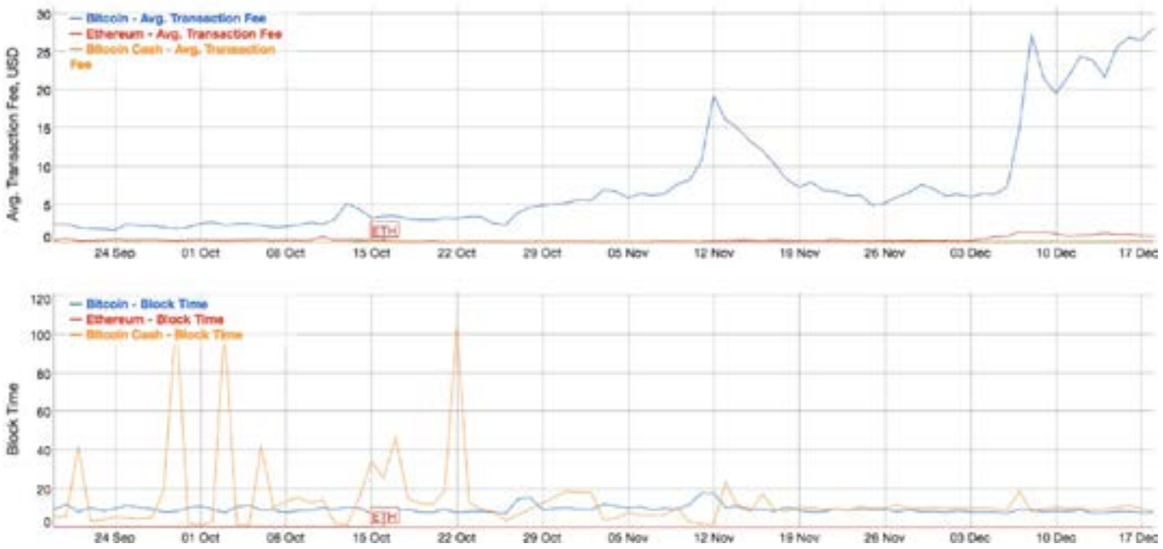
Fintech in 2018 is going to continue entering our lives even if we don't recognize it. Soon you'll be able to ask Alexa to pay the minimum on you credit card bill and she will recommend that you pay off in full considering your bank balance. Alexa will then advise you that you need to start saving more money if you want to reach a certain monetary goal before a certain date. The power of fintech applications and their ability to change our lives are no longer a dream. The time has come for change.

Opinion Piece: Fintech's Big Accomplishments and the Future

Fintech in 2018 is going to continue entering our lives even if we don't recognize it.

MY THOUGHTS ON HARD FORKS FOR 2018

Written by: Stefan Sathianathen



1.
Bitcoin, Ethereum, Bitcoin Cash Avg. Transaction Fee historical chart. (bitinfocharts.com)

2.
Bitcoin, Ethereum, Bitcoin Cash Block Time historical chart. (bitinfocharts.com)

2018 will be the year of the hard forks. With both Bitcoin and Ethereum networks suffering heavy congestion due to the increased transactions this year, core developers need to start scaling significant cryptocurrencies. Recent forks have been able to improve the efficiency of Bitcoin, allowing users to use it for its intended purpose, transacting money. By forking, projects can help decrease transaction fees and make block times more secure while reducing the time necessary for a block. The best way for Bitcoin to continue to add value and be used as a standard of value for cryptocurrencies is for a significant fork that changes the current PoW system to a system that requires less energy use. For Bitcoin and Ethereum to continue to lead the cryptocurrency market, they need to continue to adapt their core technologies to keep up with an ever-changing technology market.

Bitcoin forks are continually being debated, the intentions of developers and miners conflict causing a mass uproar. Developers are continually trying to improve Bitcoin and adapt its core code thereby allowing Bitcoin to endure rapid changes in the cryptocurrency market. As the primary focus of miners are to maximize profits, new software updates are continuously changing mining algorithms so that it becomes easier to mine. This long standing battle of which forks should be adopted is what helps make Bitcoin superior to other cryptocurrencies. Having said that, when forks finally do happen, the community receives an excellent product that improves Bitcoin substantially.

	Bitcoin	Bitcoin Cash
Max Tokens	21 Million	21 Million
Block Size	1 MB	8 MB
Block Time	10 Minutes	10 Minutes
Average Transaction Per Block Maximum Block Size /Average Transaction Size	1000000 Bytes / 495 Bytes = 2020 Transactions	8000000 Bytes / 495 Bytes = 16161 Transactions
Transaction Per Second Transactions / 600 Seconds (Average Time per Block)	2020 Transactions / 600 Seconds = 3.37 Transactions Per Second	16161 Bytes / 600 Seconds = 26.935 Transactions Per Second

An excellent example of a successful Bitcoin fork is Bitcoin Cash. Bitcoin Cash's fork was the first of many to follow. Bitcoin Cash's primary object was to increase the block size and adjust the mining algorithm. In Bitcoin Cash, the block size is 8 MB allowing for more transactions to occur in a block. By increasing the block size, the transactions per second increased helping cryptocurrencies get a step closer to competing with payment processing giants such as Visa, who can handle 2,000 transactions a second. Bitcoin Cash's potential has convinced core Bitcoin developers to swap over to Bitcoin Cash. These developers have been very critical of Bitcoin as it continues to grow without making the necessary changes needed to compete with traditional financial markets.

United Bitcoin is a promising Bitcoin fork that will go into full effect in early after forking in early December. United Bitcoin is a fork that will help Bitcoin be used as a currency for daily transactions. Because of Bitcoin's extreme volatility businesses have been hesitant to accept it as a form of payment. UnitedBitcoin overcomes this issue buy pegging the price of UnitedBitcoin's to fiat currency. To peg the value of UnitedBitcoin to a fiat currency, UnitedBitcoin will have a team that will act similar to those of a central bank. With a central bank in place, UnitedBitcoin can attempt to keep the tokens growing at a healthy level when compared to traditional assets. Additionally, UnitedBitcoin will integrate smart contracts into their blockchain giving UnitedBitcoin the ability to carry out tasks and execute transactions automatically. Smart contract integration will drastically increase the potential of UnitedBitcoin in everyday lives as it opens numerous doors, allowing extensive use. By improving Bitcoin, UnitedBitcoin is creating a future where Bitcoin can survive as a currency.

Opinion Piece: The Case for Privacy Coins

THE CASE FOR PRIVACY COINS

Written by: Daniel Russo

It has been a massive bull run for cryptocurrencies throughout 2017, with the only major selloff occurred around Christmas. We also saw a massive influx of retail investors near the year end who were also inexperienced and sensitive to price volatility. Quite frankly, I believe many of them would be bag holding for some time. For this reason, the trend for cryptocurrency in 2018 is uncertain. My belief is that privacy coins like Monero, Verge and PIVX would be more than likely to see a rise in this coming year.

Monero runs an open-sourced protocol known as CryptoNote, which is its primary source of anonymity. Most cryptocurrencies use an unchanging signature when verifying transactions, whereas Monero's CryptoNote uses ring signatures, which is similar to a joint bank account with multiple signers, but with the actual signer remaining unknown. A one-time spend key -- officially known as a stealth address -- is generated by the sender of XMR (Monero's coin), with the recipient being the only party who can detect and spend those funds. In other words, the transaction isn't linkable to the sender, making it an attractive option for those seeking anonymity and privacy.

My belief is that privacy coins would be more than likely to see a rise this coming year.

Verge, which is possibly the best-performing cryptocurrency in the entire space, is another key player. Between Dec. 31, 2016 and Dec. 23, 2017, Verge's coin (XVG) increased in value by more than 1,500,000%. Verge's methodology is that it relies on Tor and I2P networks in order to make IP addresses untraceable. Furthermore, its Simple Payment Verification technology ensures transaction settlement in around five seconds, which is far and away better than many of its peers. With a number of secure mobile wallets already being offered, including the Tor Android Wallet, it's clearly a coin that's making a lot of noise.

Governments and central banks became more aware and wary of the Blockchain and Fintech innovation, with China outright banning exchanges and ICOs, and the US proposing a Bill which allows the IRS to access investor's private keys and track their funds. Privacy coins are less vulnerable to government regulations, meaning if governments were to put additional restrictions on major coins like Bitcoin, Ethereum and Ethereum Classic, we can expect a massive shift of market capitalization to privacy coins. Despite the overwhelming demand for bitcoin, 99% of bitcoin purchases are for speculation purposes. It is too slow and terrible at scaling for any substantial practicality. Privacy coins such as Monero have much faster transaction speeds and would be more meaningful as a medium of exchange, even if it be for tax evasion or other illegal underground activities. Nevertheless, this makes a strong case for an organic increase in the value of privacy coins in 2018 and beyond.

To understand why the Chinese government will restore crypto exchanges in the future, you have to understand why they banned them in the first place.

Opinion Piece: Blockchain Will Reignite China in 2018

BLOCKCHAIN WILL REIGNITE CHINA IN 2018

Written by: Hongrui Shen

In September 2017, the Chinese crypto ban marked arguably the biggest obstacle the crypto space has ever encountered since its existence, with bitcoin losing 50% of its value. Chinese exchanges moved their servers overseas and investors flocked to Japanese exchanges. Only less than a week after, the Chinese government found itself to be shocked by how fast did the crypto market recover, and stronger than ever, and soon to realize banning crypto was a grave mistake. From September up to January of 2018, I have gathered enough clues to predict that China will be open arms to crypto in 2018 at the earliest, and here are the reasons.

To understand why the Chinese government will restore crypto exchanges, you have to understand why it banned crypto exchange in the first place. A common misconception of why Chinese government banned crypto was to prevent money laundering and tax evasions. I believe this is both far from the truth.

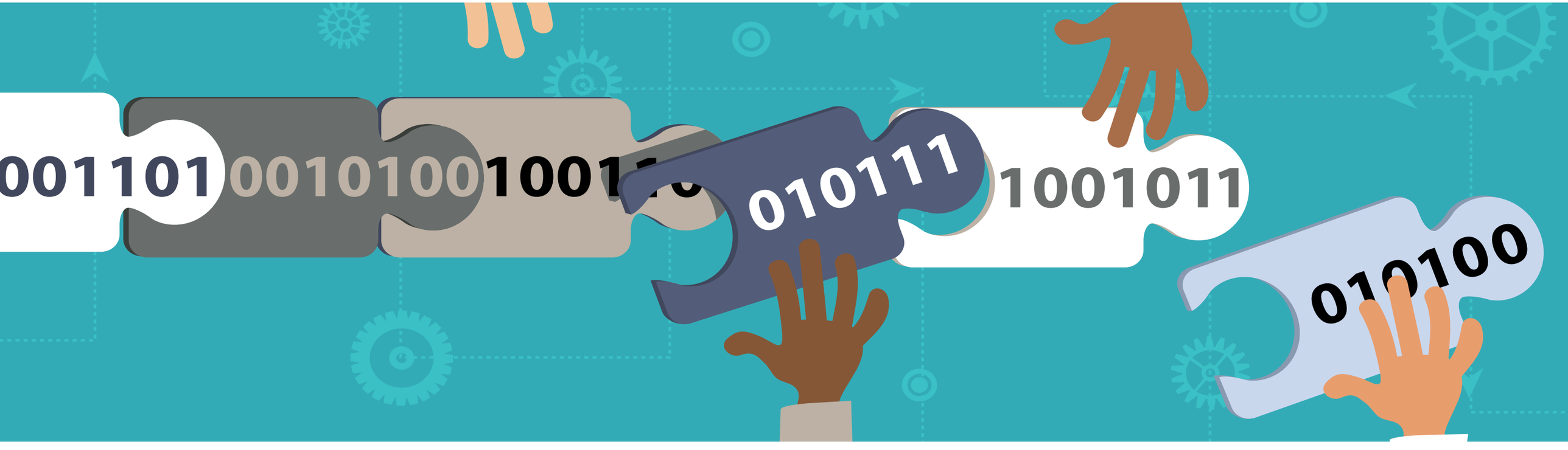
Tax evasion cannot be the root case either. In 2016, China had a tax revenue of 13 trillion yuan. more than enough money to build infrastructure and other services. I believe that the real reason China banned crypto was because it has threatened Chinese politicians' soft spot and money generating machine – the stock market. Unlike what many believed, Chinese politicians' wages aren't as generous as western politicians, their wealth mainly comes from connections with domestic businesses and stock market manipulation.

With the population turning away from stock and into crypto, the stock market has become unstable, and in turn, hurt their interest. Well, then why politicians don't put their hands into crypto to have a piece of meat as well? That is because crypto is new to them, and they have not figured the pattern, characteristics and behavior of this particular market. Make no mistake, Chinese government wants this piece of meat, but because they cannot control it, they banned it.

But how does this explain why china will re-enable crypto trading? Like I said, China quickly found out banning crypto was a mistake, and are now taking strategies to influence the crypto market. The government backed VeChain, is an example. During the Korean crypto ban FUD, VeChain was one of the few coins unmoved from the negative market sentiment, and was actually 30% up. It was likely artificially pumped up to make Chinese crypto appear superior. The Chinese government was also known to subsidize and nurture its domestic businesses and don't be surprised if VeChain is directly financially backed by the government.

Also, number of Chinese ICOs based on the NEO platform has increased in January. Take for example, The KEY and APEX ICO. This serves as evidence that China is trying to build up its own crypto space in competition with Ethereum based (ERC-20) ICOs. These are the steps taken by China so far, but we'll have to wait and observe more actions to be taken in the future in order to make a conclusion for certian. But one thing is for sure, for Chinese politicians to make maximum utility of this Blockchain boom, the larger Chinese population has to be involved as well.

Opinion Piece: The Inconvenient Truth About ICO Investment



THE INCONVENIENT TRUTH ABOUT ICO INVESTMENT

Written by: Junda Huang

The blockchain industry is inevitably related to cryptocurrencies operating the whole ecosystem, especially in financial markets. It seems like investors concentrate too much on the returns of digital currencies and initial coin offerings, instead of the ideas and originality of the blockchain technology itself. Demonstrably, the decentralisation and tamper-proof attributes are often neglected by rookie start-ups and investors alike. Having witnessed some fraudulent or poorly operated ICO projects in which investors lose a huge amount of their investment in the token market, some even deem all ICOs as an analogy to pyramid schemes. This is not entirely fair as the potential of blockchain is, to some extent, shadowed by this misled judgment.

Nevertheless, cryptocurrencies, featured mainly by Bitcoin and Ethereum, have been shaking financial markets, with their applications focussing on foreign currency exchange and trans-border and multinational trade. I believe blockchain technology, being the backbone of many touted ICO projects, should play a more significant role in market making. I have seen companies applying the blockchain to its supply chain management and data analytics services, which provides an insight into its products, customers, and costs. The reliable and prompt data sources facilitated through the decentralisation and trustless aspect of the Blockchain give the company the edge on customer behaviour analysis and cost management, as they would have a hard time making these outcomes and competing with other similar service providers without blockchain.

Investors should be learners of ideas and applications, not merely followers of the highest return.

Blockchain ICO

This indeed is the real strength of blockchain, while token trading should be merely a by-product of this process.

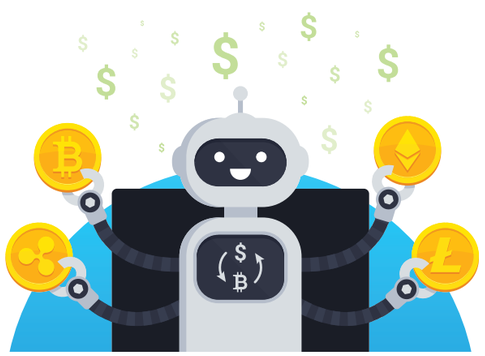
Despite all this, investors see the return and invest in a project without knowing what it is about, envisioning ‘pump and dump’ scenarios. This could easily form the distrust between investors and the cryptocurrency market, ultimately leading to its demise. Investors should be learners of the ideas and their applications, but not merely followers of the highest return. Currently, trading platforms are the judge of what tokens they allow to list and trade on their platforms. Instead, investors should also be able to decide which cryptocurrencies are profitable, on the basis of their knowledge of the technical aspect of ICO projects so that irrational investment decisions are less likely to made. I strongly believe that this mechanism has to be achieved and maintained in the near future in order for blockchain technologies and, thereby, the cryptocurrency market as a whole to evolve.

Opinion Piece: The Viability of Cryptocurrency

THE VIABILITY OF CRYPTO-CURRENCY

Written by: Kyle Crutchley

The value of cryptocurrency lies not just in what it is, but what it can be.



To the untrained observer, cryptocurrency may be the latest fad, an unsustainable bubble built upon the wealth of fools. With a little experience and personal insight however, we can see that this view is not only overly simplistic, but plain wrong. This is not the view of an experience trader, but rather an intern with one day's experience in the field of cryptocurrency.

Just the name cryptocurrency can lead to sneers of derision, particularly from those who see it as a speculative asset without any backing. Cryptos however, have their own unique strengths, which allow them to stand out from other, more traditional assets such as real estate, or stocks.

First of all, cryptos, and the success of any emerging cryptocurrency relies upon investors trusting the technology upon which they are based. A main criticism of cryptocurrencies is that people claim that you can not trust the technology that it is based on, that can any moment, an Mt.Gox moment will arrive and investors will be left penniless. Think about that claim, would investors choose to involve themselves in a crypto if they were not confident of the blockchain technology it was based upon? If the emergence of many new successful cryptos tells us something, it's that people believe in cryptocurrencies as a security.

Far from being a weakness of cryptocurrency, I believe that its decentralisation is a strength. Especially for a new currency, the fact many cryptos are decentralised prevents the abuse of currencies by certain entities, for instance by central banks in developing nations, or through political instability. The recent release of a 'crypto' in Venezuela may lead some to see cryptos as the purview of shysters, yet this 'crypto', if we can even call it that, is far from the norm. In the rest of the world however, Cryptos are fast becoming popular due in part to the potential for rapid growth, and compared to similar yield assets, the decentralisation of cryptos decreases the risk of failure, and allows it to maintain attractiveness compared to similar risky investments, while perhaps most importantly, allowing the fairer, more equitable distribution of resources, a feature that has become impossible when dealing with hard currencies and traditional assets.

Lastly, the value of cryptocurrencies lies not just in what it is, but what it can be. I was not convinced to begin with, but over time, albeit limited time, I have begun to see the potential cryptos offer, not just as an investment for today, but a means of exchange for tomorrow. There is not much difference between the infrastructure of a crypto like BTC, from INS. In the same way, cryptos can quickly lead to the integration of emerging economies, who would no longer have to deal in hard currency.

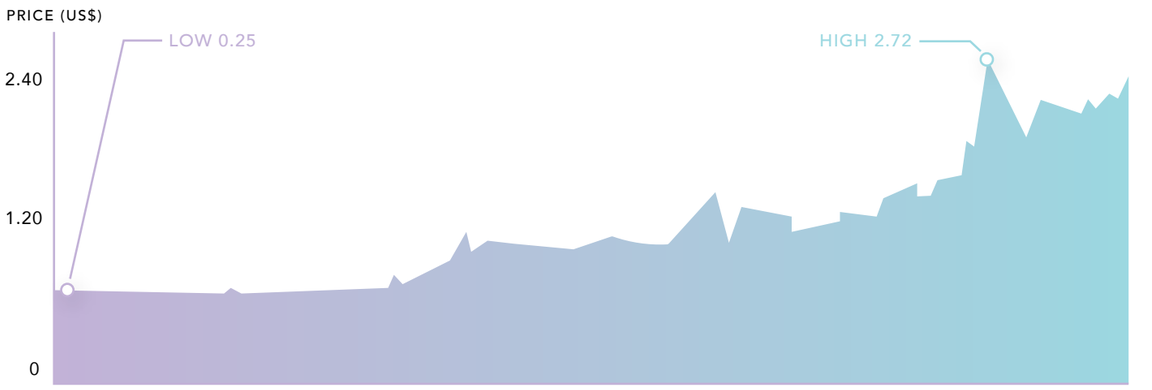
With the power of cryptos to integrate the global economies, and the attractiveness it has to investors around the world, there is no reason why cryptos can not emerge as an investment-grade asset rivalling traditional assets, with the means to change the world for the better through its decentralised blockchain features and its more equitable share of resources.

Enterprise Blockchain for Global Payments

RIPPLE

[XRP]

+926%	+1195%	100B	2.59	Binance, Bittrex Bitfinex, Kraken Poloniex	Stellar PayCommerce Streami
GROWTH PAST 30 DAYS	GROWTH PAST 90 DAYS	MARKET CAR ($)	PRICE ($)	WHERE TO BUY	COMPETITION



CATCH-UP

Ripple has recently announced partnerships with various large banks. Investors are hoping that Coinbase will soon list Ripple as the first altcoin on Coinbase.

BACKGROUND

Ripple is a real-time gross settlement system. It is built upon a distributed open source internet protocol, consensus ledger and native cryptocurrency. It was released in 2012, to enable secure, instant and nearly free global financial transactions of any size with no chargebacks.

COMPETITORS

Stellar, is another cryptocurrency focused on secure, nearly free global financial transactions. Stellar has integrated with multiple messaging platforms in various countries, enabling low cost financial payments for users.

UPCOMING EVENTS

9 Jan - The Digital Money Forum
26 Jan - Blockchain Connect Conference in San Francisco

“Not only does it have a clear use case, XRP is faster, cheaper and more scalable than any other digital asset. I strongly believe it will become the global standard in digital currencies.”

- Yoshitaka Kitao

PREDICTION

Bigger banks are taking more interest in Ripple as a technology that can replace the aging SWIFT network which handles US 5 trillion of transactions daily. Together with the ever growing list of already partner banks demand for Ripple will significantly rise well into 2018.

A Sustainable, Scalable and Interoperable Coin

CARDANO

[ADA]

www.coinmarketcap.com/currencies/cardano/

+827%	+5000%	26B	1.02	Binance Bittrex Coinnest	Ethereum NEO
GROWTH PAST 30 DAYS	GROWTH PAST 90 DAYS	MARKET CAR ($)	PRICE ($)	WHERE TO BUY	COMPETITION

CATCH-UP

After holding an ICO in 2016, the platform and token have been under nonstop development.

BACKGROUND

Cardano is a third generation cryptocurrency, Bitcoin is first and Ethereum second. It wants to solve the biggest issues that current coins face - sustainability, scalability and interoperability. Unlike Bitcoin it’s built with two layers, one for settlement and one where decentralized apps can be run. Having multiple layers allows changes to happen without forks.

COMPETITORS

Ethereum and NEO are strong projects that are known to many people. Ethereum is usually the second project people learn about when investing into the cryptocurrency ecosystem. NEO is dubbed as the Ethereum of China, with strong support from the Chinese market.

UPCOMING EVENTS

8 Jan - Third-Generation Blockchains Meetup in Boston
24 Jan - Inaugural Cardano London Meetup

“Working with Ada just feels right to us and it is a project that we feel we can identify with, not just something we just use and then throw away later.”

- Alfred Moesker

PREDICTION

Cardano was developed by peer reviewed academic research and is based off the Haskell programming language bringing security as Haskell is extremely secure and uses mathematical proof of correctness to verify code. Cardano needs to continue to stick tight to its roadmap allowing it to grow and reach new height in 2018.

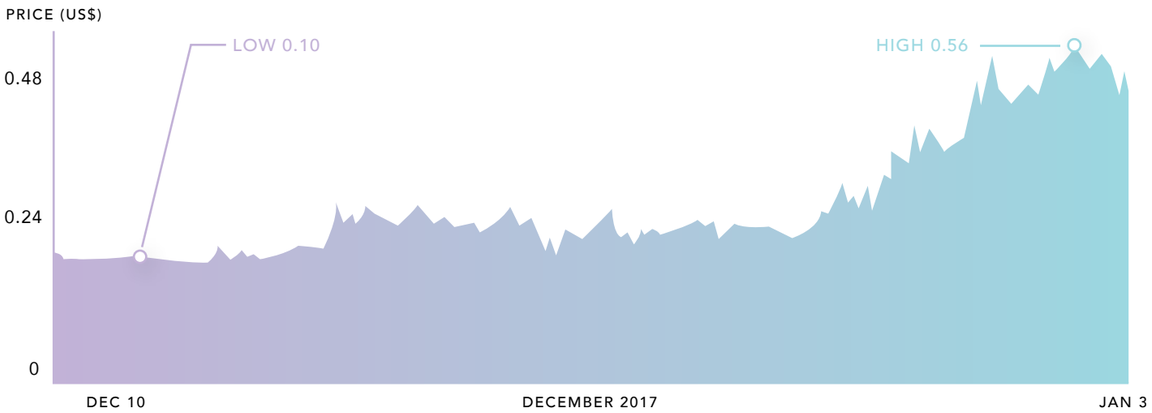
Smart Contract Security and Audit

QUANTSTAMP

[QSP]

www.coinmarketcap.com/currencies/quantstamp/

+590%	+762.5%	434M	0.70	Binance Huobi Kucoin	NONE
GROWTH PAST 30 DAYS	GROWTH PAST 90 DAYS	MARKET CAR ($)	PRICE ($)	WHERE TO BUY	COMPETITION



CATCH-UP

2017 saw more than $ 31 M stolen from smart contracts. Smart contract vulnerabilities are hard to solve as solidarity programmers are low in supply and high in demand. This opens up more contracts to hacks.

BACKGROUND

Quantstamp is the first security-audit protocol designed to find vulnerabilities in Ethereum smart contracts.

COMPETITORS

Quantstamp's competitors are those programmers who know solidarity which are very limited as solidarity is still a young language.

UPCOMING EVENTS

No upcoming events.

"Automation, Higher Security and Lower Cost."

- Richard Ma
Quantstamp Co-Founder

PREDICTION

The demand for Quantstamp will continue to rise well into 2018 as ICO and smart contracts become more of a norm.

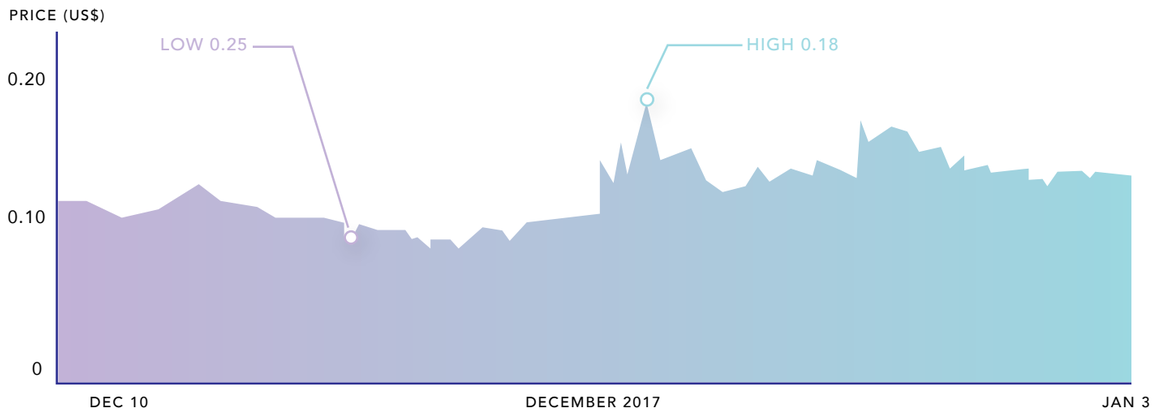
An Open Network for Smart Economy

NEO

[NEO]

www.coinmarketcap.com/currencies/neo/

+118%	+125%	7.5B	75.57	Binance Bittrex Bitfinex	Ethereum
GROWTH PAST 30 DAYS	GROWTH PAST 90 DAYS	MARKET CAR ($)	PRICE ($)	WHERE TO BUY	COMPETITION



CATCH-UP

NEO, has been on a bull run since early December. People are beginning to see the value of being able to build decentralized applications in any language on the NEO blockchain, unlike being restricted to solidarity in Ethereum.

BACKGROUND

NEO, also known as Antshares is considered China's Ethereum. It is the most successful virtual currency based in China and is the first open sourced blockchain there.

COMPETITORS

Ethereum is NEO's biggest competitor. Ethereum is widely used for ICO's and building decentralized applications.

UPCOMING EVENTS

26 Jan - Blockchain Connect Conference in San Francisco
30 Jan - NEO DevCon 2018 in San Francisco

"We want to be the place people go to when they want to do serious and reliable transactions"

- Hongfei Da

PREDICTION

As more transactions start to occur with cryptocurrency, networks such as Ethereum won'tbe able to handle the sudden scaling, allowing NEO's ability to process 10,000 transactions a second to help it take over. In addition, if China lifts ICO restrictions in 2018, NEO's use will be multiplied as Chinese companies will be inclined to use a Chinese developed blockchain.