Some Simple Economics of the Blockchain

Christian Catalini

catalini@mit.edu blockchain.mit.edu



MIT Digital Currency Experiment (2014)

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Elo Sig

Memorial

Storrow Drive

Commonwealth Avenue

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Bay State Road

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SIL

Harvard Bridge

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blockchain.mit.edu

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Beacon

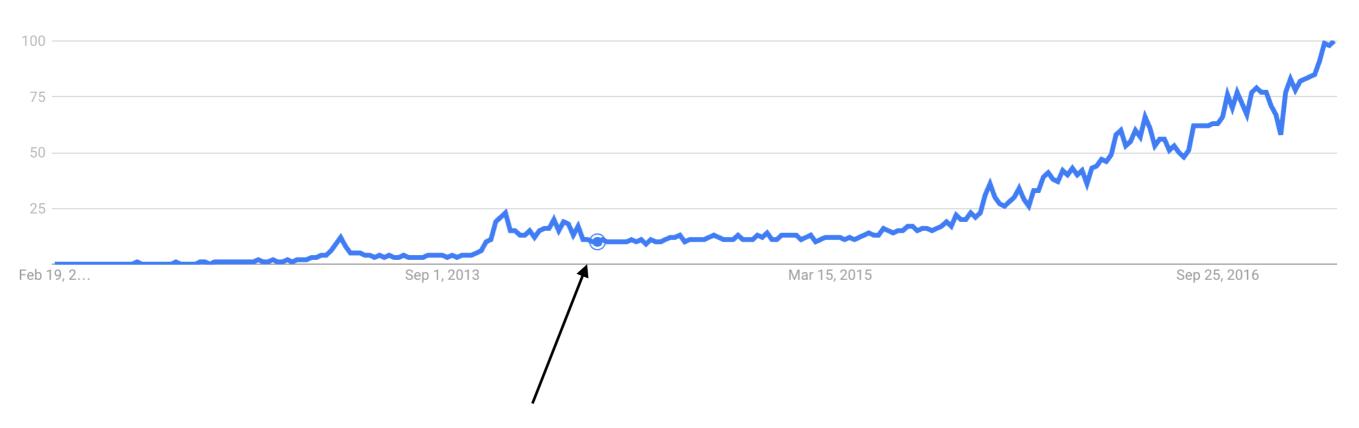
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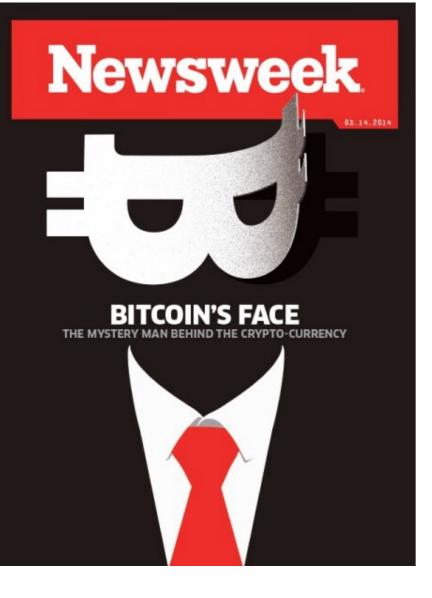
MIT Digital Currency Experiment (2014)



blockchain.mit.edu



From Fringe to Mainstream





OCTOBER 31ST-NOVEMBER 6TH 2015

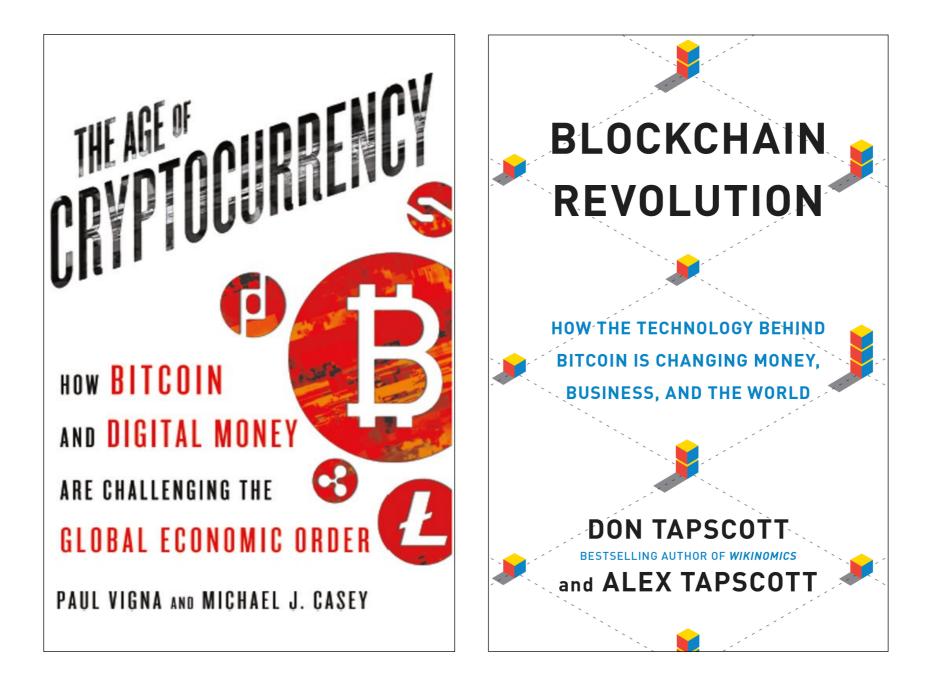
Our guide to America's best colleges Myanmar's free-ish election Those ever-creative accountants America takes the fight to IS Coywolves: the new superpredator

The trust machine How the technology behind bitcoin

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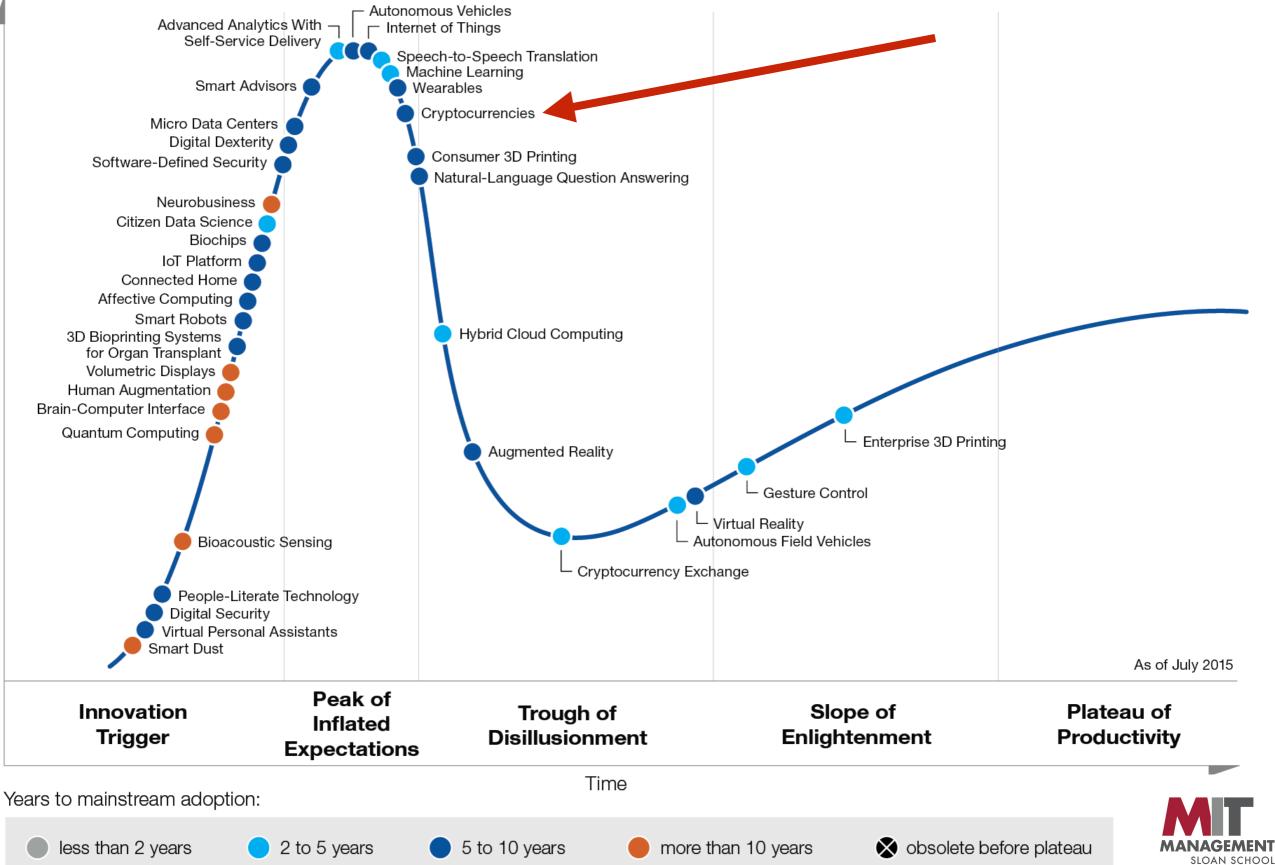


Most Revolutions Take Time!





Emerging Technology Hype Cycle



Competing Standards

All	- Currencies -	Assets -	USD -		
^ #	Name	Market Cap	Price	Circulating Supply	Volume (24h)
1	8 Bitcoin	\$17,276,000,748	\$1064.62	16,227,387 BTC	\$281,458,000
2	Ethereum	\$3,911,716,575	\$43.49	89,950,574 ETH	\$146,900,000
3	Dash	\$737,318,538	\$102.73	7,176,897 DASH	\$28,240,300
4	Monero	\$308,246,822	\$21.78	14,150,733 XMR	\$12,458,000
5	• Ripple	\$255,537,205	\$0.006844	37,338,114,912 XRP *	\$3,784,600
6	Litecoin	\$201,688,551	\$4.01	50,274,832 LTC	\$3,307,850
7	Ethereum Classic	c \$174,356,953	\$1.94	89,910,404 ETC	\$6,262,140
8	S NEM	\$141,027,300	\$0.015670	8,999,999,999 XEM *	\$2,243,740
9	& Augur	\$93,550,820	\$8.50	11,000,000 REP *	\$1,059,600
10	MaidSafeCoin	\$81,085,173	\$0.179173	452,552,412 MAID *	\$694,118
11	Zcash	\$65,782,375	\$72.38	908,869 ZEC	\$7,652,250



Even Within the Same Cryptocurrency, Competing Standards

FORTUNE

Bitcoin Prepares For an Ugly Breakup

David Z. Morris Mar 19, 2017



On Friday, a group of major cryptocurrency exchanges announced their planned response to the split of bitcoin into two separate pools of currency and processing power. That event, known as a "hard fork," is viewed as increasingly likely among bitcoin leaders, as a years-long debate about the network Chair technical limitations and broader vision comes to a head.

The marketplaces, including marquee portals BitStamp and Kraken, said on Friday that if a hard fork occurs, they will let users trade both conventional bitcoin, and any alternate version that emerges. The most likely bitcoin spinoff is known as Bitcoin Unlimited, which the world's largest bitcoin server group, or "mining pool," recently announced it would back.

Get Data Sheet, Fortune's technology newsletter.

Bitcoin has been pushed to the verge of this split by a years-long debate about what's known as **block size**. Under bitcoin's existing code, there's a tight limit on the amount of data that can be included in a batch of transactions, and as the network has grown in popularity, that limit has slowed the processing of payments. Moves that once took seconds to clear can now take hours, and all players seem to agree that some sort of change is necessary.

But there are competing visions about any fix's goals and methods. One bitcoin entrepreneur has summarized the divide as between a Bitcoin Unlimited contingent updating bitcoin to support many small transactions, and a Bitcoin Core cadre who believe in smaller changes, fewer transactions, and more stability.

Market Design

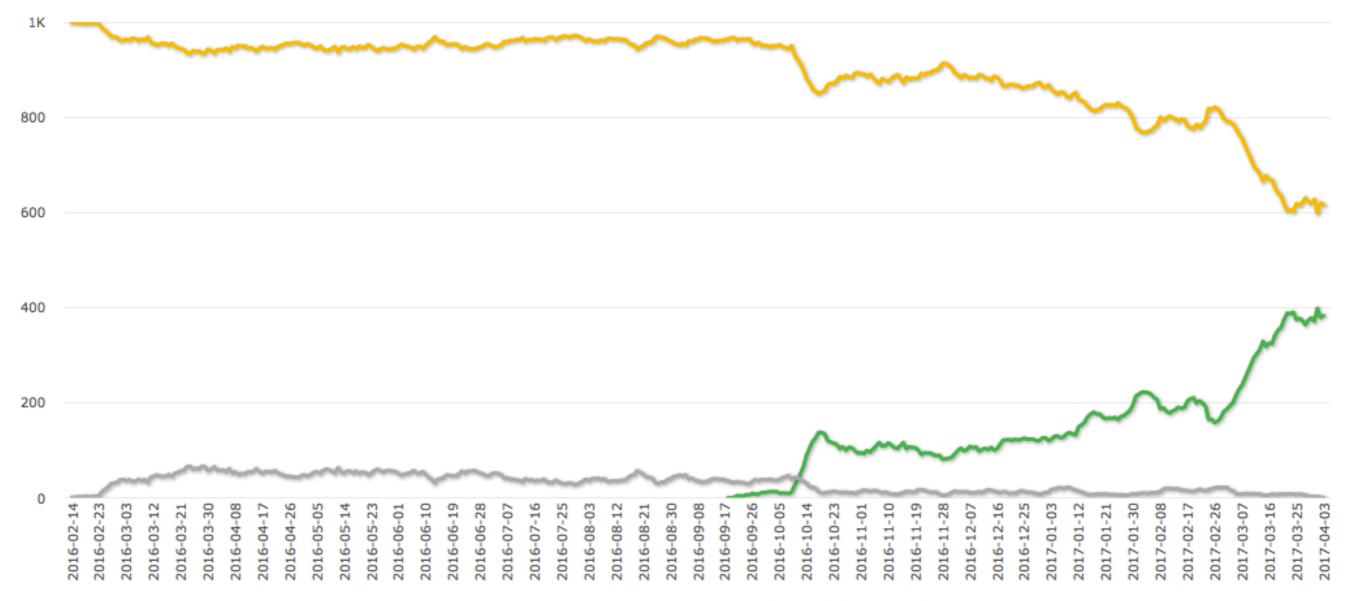
Transactions per second versus security (happening now!)

- Decentralization versus compliance
- Degree of privacy





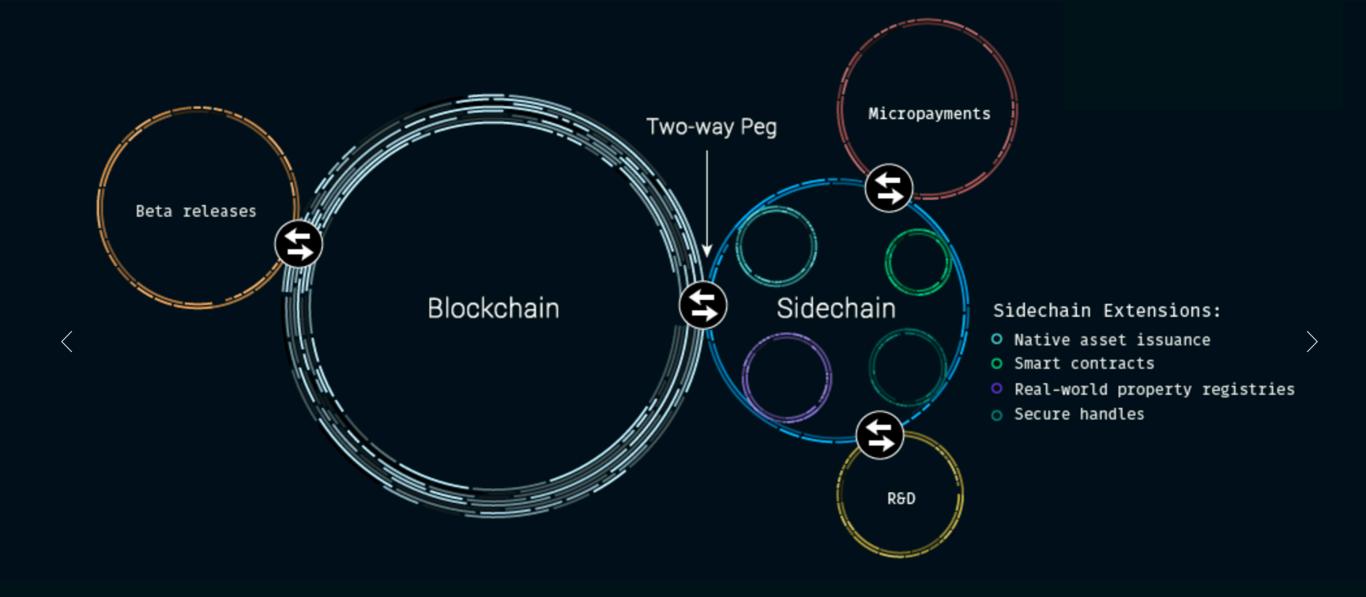
Battle for the Standard

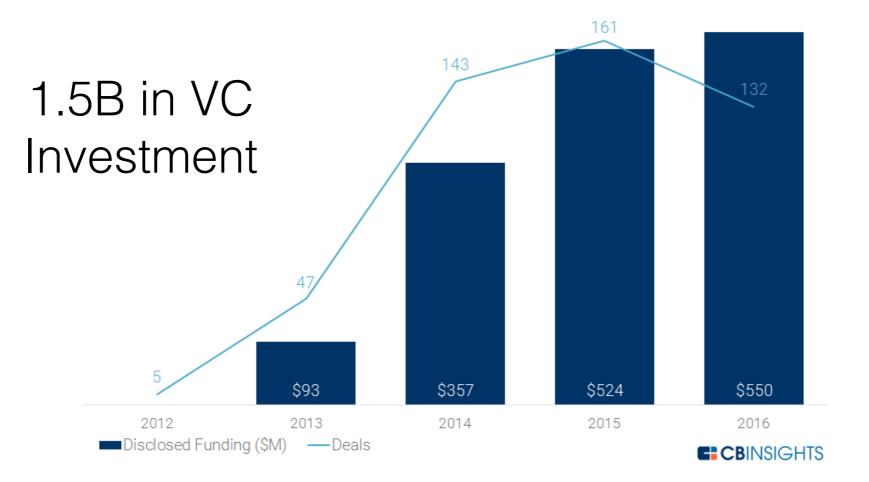


> New Bitcoin Blocks 4/3/2017



Entrepreneurial Experimentation



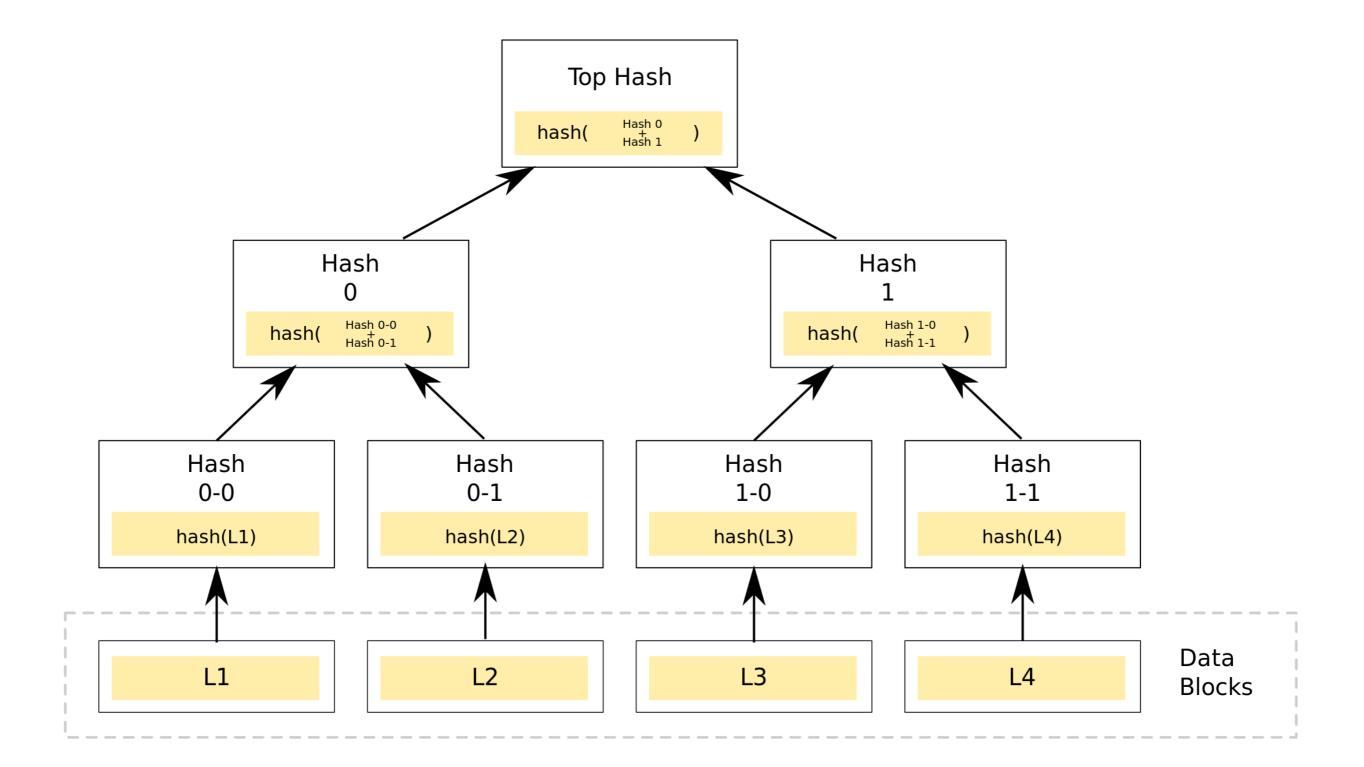


Most Well-Funded Global Bitcoin & Blockchain Startups 2012 – 2017 YTD (1/30/2017)

Rank	Company	Total Funding (\$M)					
1	Circle Internet Financial	\$ 136					
2	Coinbase	\$ 117					
3	21 Inc	\$ 116					
4	Ripple	\$ 94					
5	BitFury Group	\$ 90					
6	Blockstream	\$ 76					
7	Digital Asset Holdings	\$ 67					
8	Chain	\$ 44					
9	Харо	\$ 40					



Where is the Breakthrough?



The Blockchain



Transaction 2

Transaction 3

1st Block Hash

Transaction 4

Transaction 5



. . .

Transaction 6? Transaction 7?

1st Block

2nd Block

Mining the next block



The Blockchain

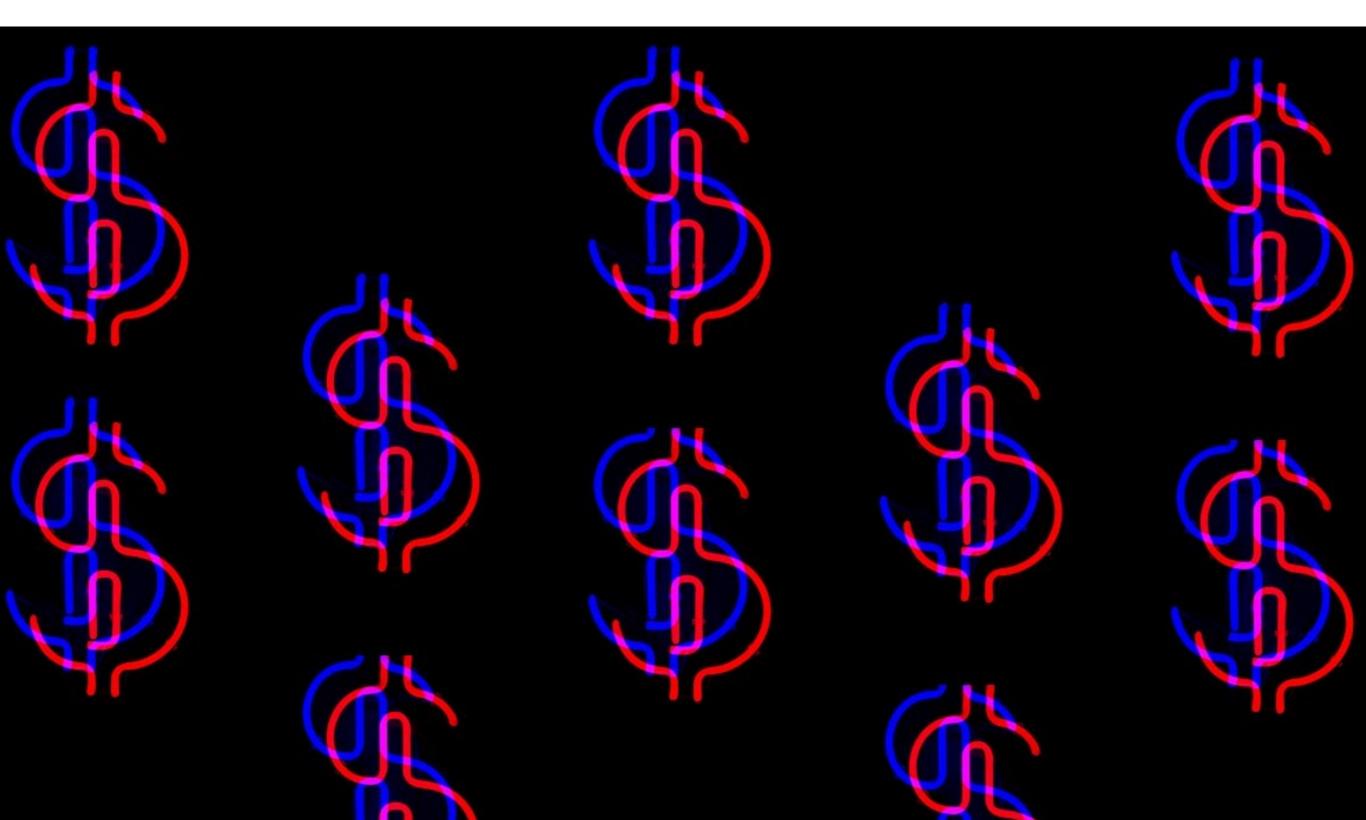


Computer Science Economics and Market Design

Law



Economists Like to Think of Technology Changes in Terms of Costs...



A Reduction in Two Key Costs

1. Cost of Verification

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70:	00	00	00	00-00	00	00	00-00	00	00	00-00	00	00	00						

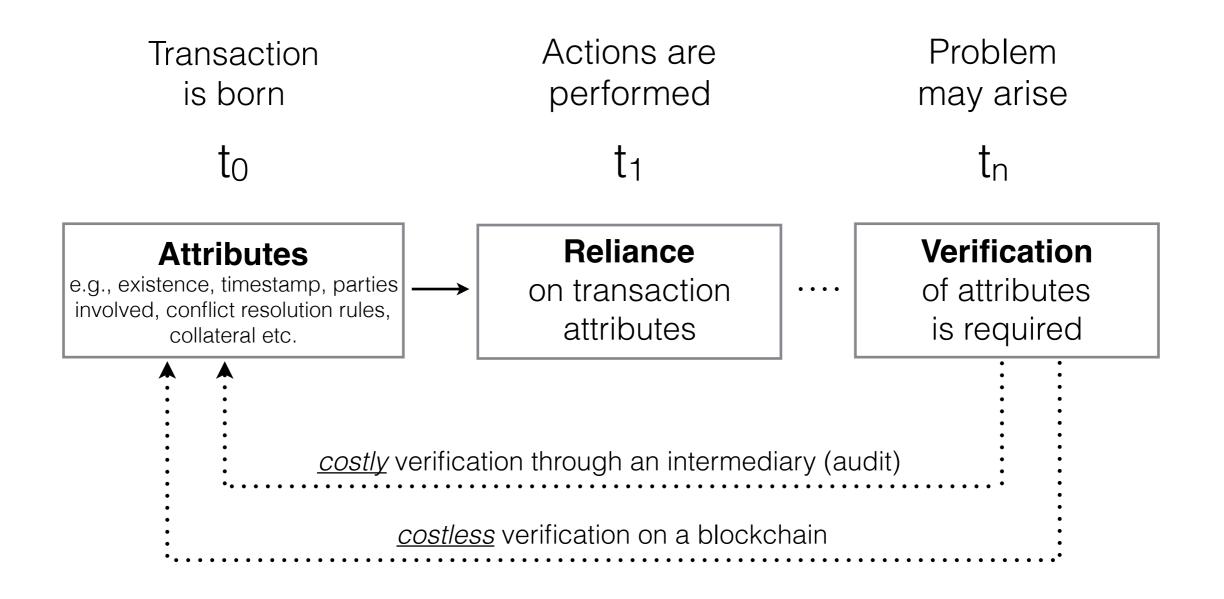
"00 c0 45 4c 9c 51 cd 01" translates to June 24th, 2012

2. Cost of Networking



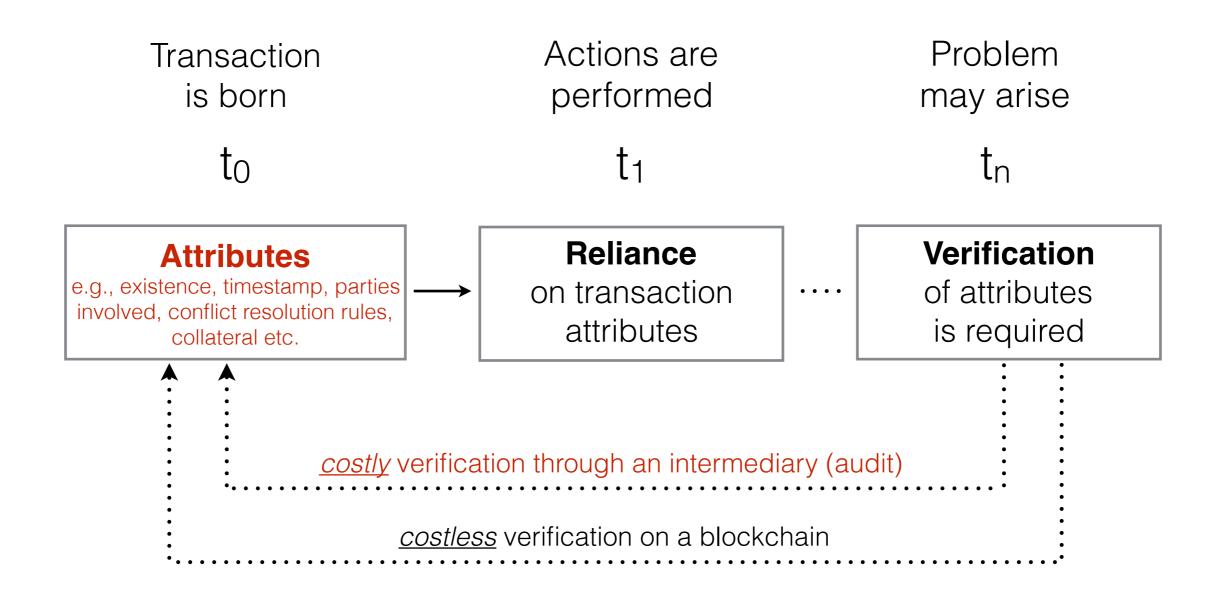


1. Costless Verification





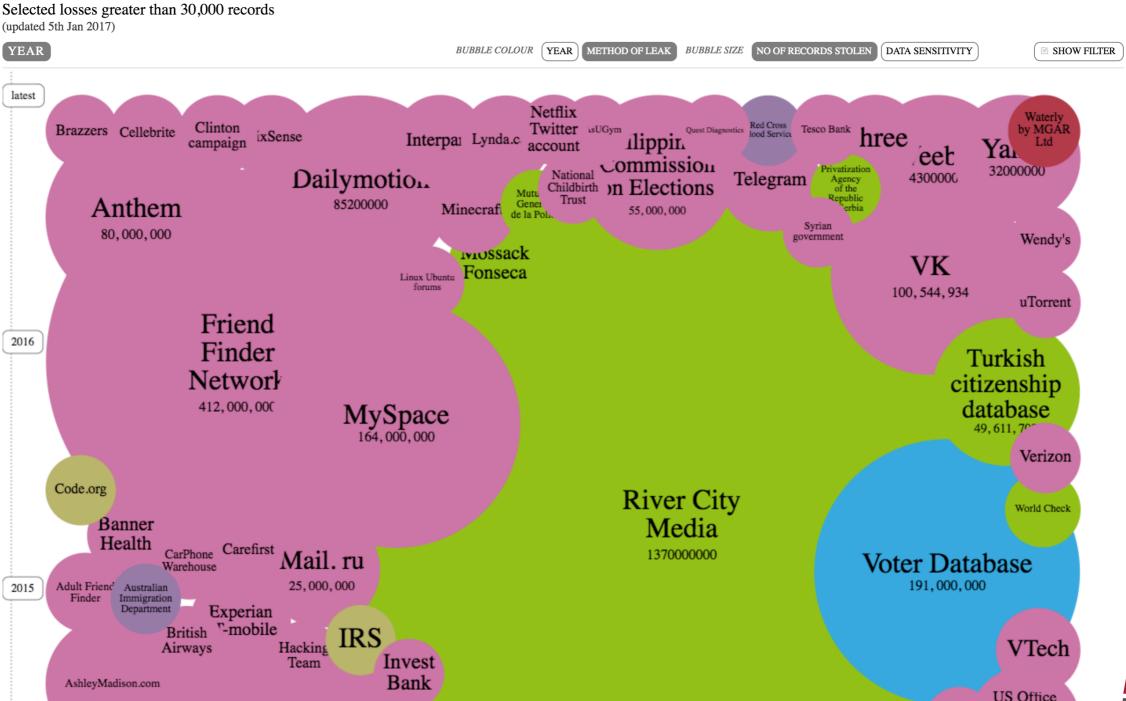
Information Leakage





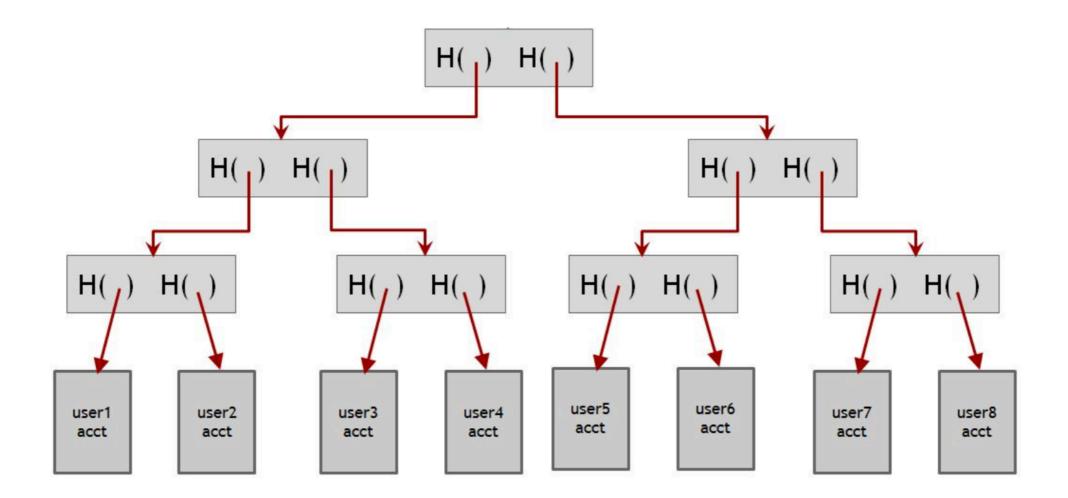
Information Leakage

World's Biggest Data Breaches





Data Integrity Through Costless Verification





- One could argue that we had the ability to crowdsource ideas, labor, capital, and other resources for some time...
- However current solutions rely on traditional intermediaries (typically **platforms**) to aggregate the intentions of the crowd, source expertise, redistribute returns



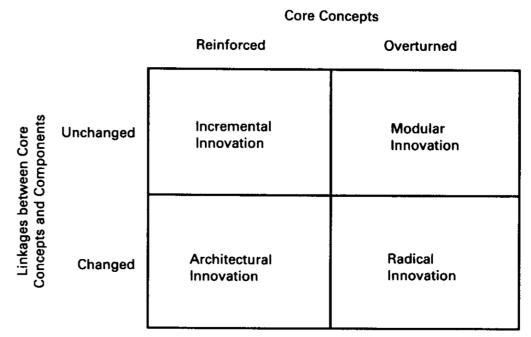




- The **architectural change** brought by cryptocurrencies is tied to their use of a native token to incentivize the growth, operations, and securing of a network
- "We show that architectural innovations destroy the usefulness of the architectural knowledge of established firms, and that since architectural knowledge tends to become embedded in the structure and information-processing procedures of established organizations, this destruction is difficult for firms to recognize and hard to correct"

- Rebecca Henderson and Kim Clark



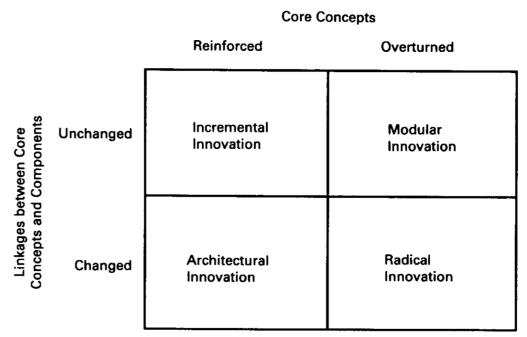


Henderson, R. M.; Clark, K. B., ASQ (1990) Architectural Innovation: The Reconfiguration Of Existing Product Technologies and the Failure of Established Firms



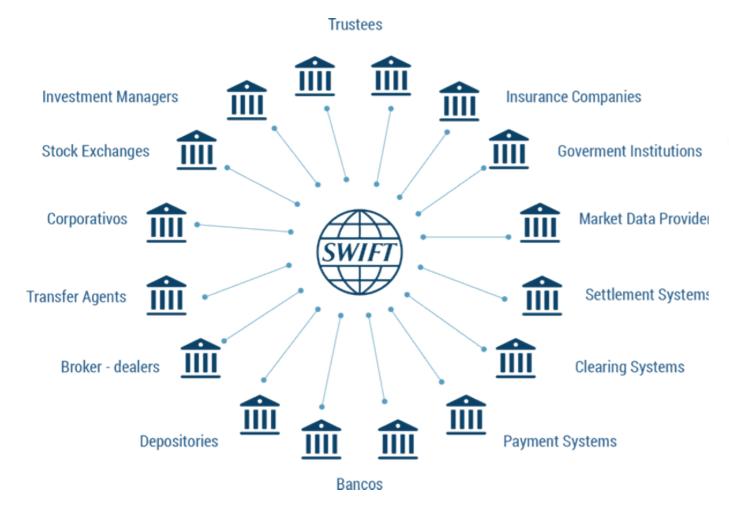
- Traditional networks (and platforms) rely on trusted nodes, reputation systems
 - e.g. SWIFT, ACH, Uber, Airbnb
- These nodes are costly to maintain, often labor intensive
- A cryptocurrency allows you to bootstrap an ecosystem without trusted nodes
 - e.g. in Bitcoin use PoW to provide incentives for maintaining and updating a shared ledger
- The role of internet-level consensus





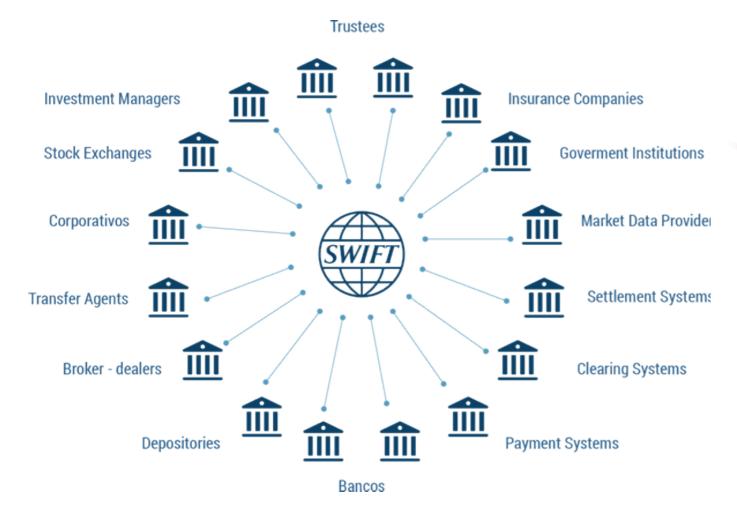
Henderson, R. M.; Clark, K. B., ASQ (1990) Architectural Innovation: The Reconfiguration Of Existing Product Technologies and the Failure of Established Firms

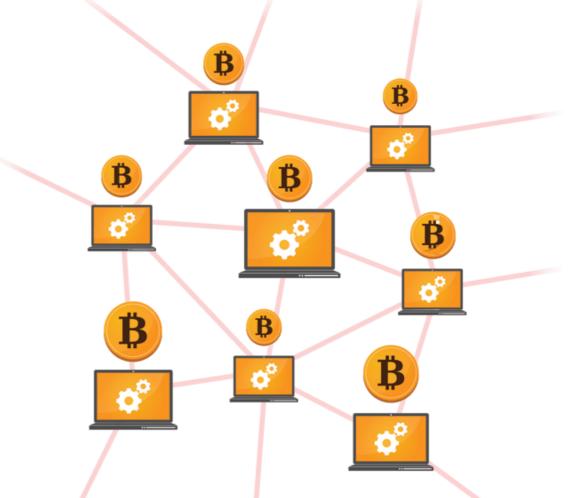




Cost of vetting and maintaining the integrity of the nodes Cost of computation (sunk commitment to the shared ledger)

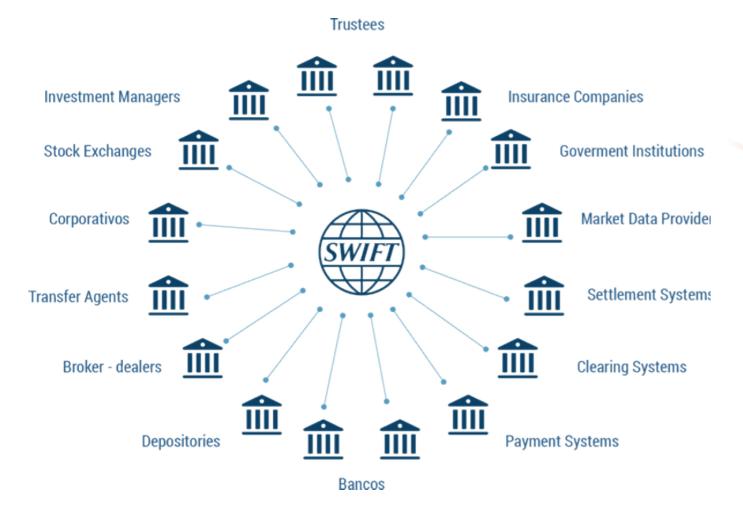


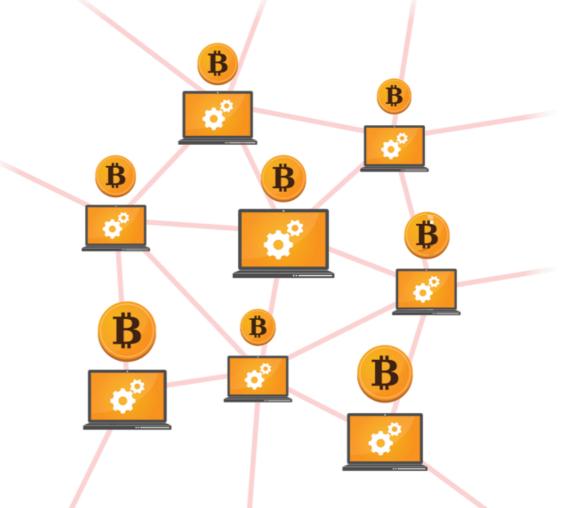




Security through trusted intermediaries / fiat. Typically fast (e.g. VISA) Security through protocol design, game theory. Currently slow (e.g. BTC)

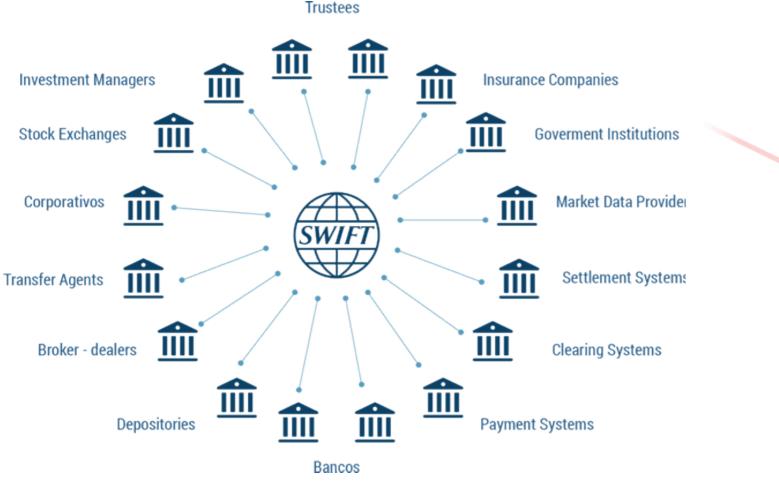


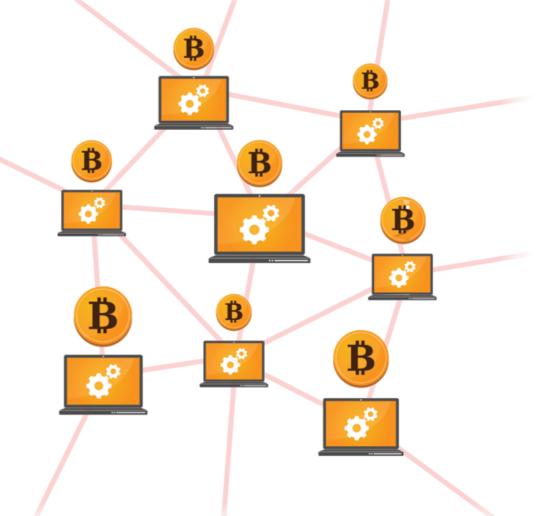




Ownership of the assets resides with the nodes, nodes certify txs Ownership of the assets resides with the users, no censorship



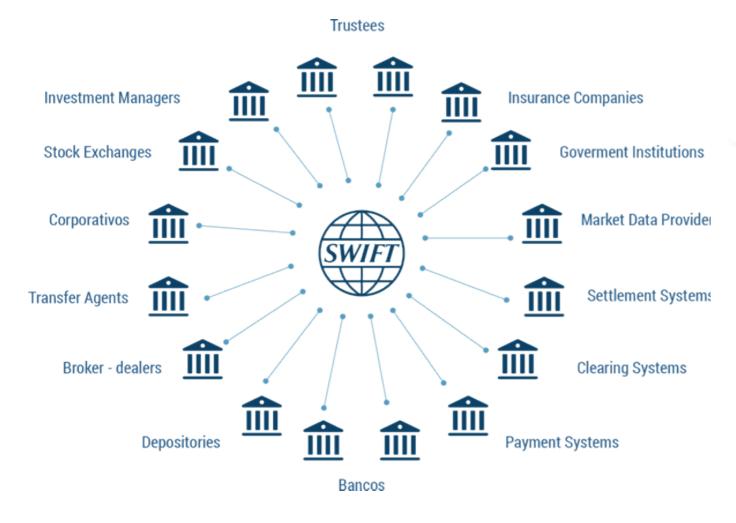


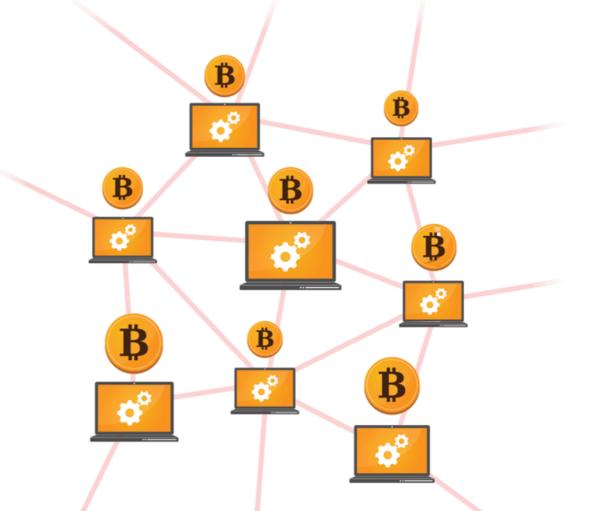


Innovation requires approval (compliance)

Permissionless innovation (no compliance)







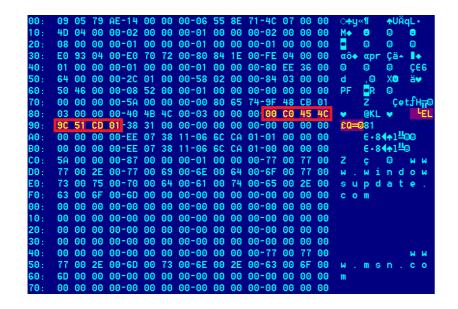
Trusted intermediaries retain market power

(e.g. payment rails, reputation scores etc)

Trusted intermediaries need to add value through market design layer (e.g. curation)

Economic Impact

1. Cost of Verification



Incremental innovation

- More verification!
- Data integrity from the ground up
- Privacy vs customization
- Economies of scale

2. Cost of Networking



Architectural innovation

- Increased competition

 (e.g. payment and settlement rails, reputation systems)
- Intermediaries can still add value through market design layer
- New ecosystems (e.g. permissionless ones)



A New Organizational Form?



"These operations are often **extremely costly**, sufficiently costly at any rate to **prevent many transactions** that would be carried out in a world in which the **pricing system worked without cost**"

- Nobel laureate Ronald Coase (1960)

- Decentralized and incentives-driven like a spot market
- Can replicate the complex forms of governance that take place within a traditional corporation



A New Organizational Form?



"If we possess all the relevant information, if we can start out from a given system of preferences, and if we command complete knowledge of available means, the problem which remains is purely one of logic." - Hayek (1945)

- A novel approach to value creation and value capture
- Intermediaries will still add substantial value to markets, but the nature of intermediation will change
- Economies of scale in matching demand and supply of labor, capital and ideas
- Lower infrastructure costs than incumbents?



Applications?





Here's The Thing With Ad Blockers

We get it: Ads aren't what you're here for. But ads help us keep the lights on. So, add us to your ad blocker's <u>whitelist</u> or pay \$1 per week for an ad-free version of WIRED. Either way, you are supporting our journalism. We'd really appreciate it.



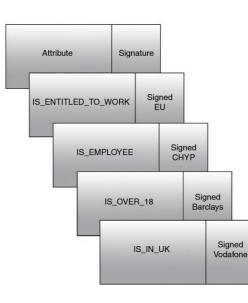


New Types of Platforms



IoT, AI Robotics

Fintech



Identity & Privacy

New Business Models

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You'll need to pay **5 mBTC** to do so, required by our embedding algorithm, and you are also invited to tip us with whatever value you find appropriate. Please pay to the following address:



Please send **5 mBTC** or more to: 1J7HtSNxYZBtCi7gv1FwpLZVD9a37myo4c

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IP & Smart Contracts

MANAGEMENT SLOAN SCHOOL

Central Banks

MENU

FINANCIAL TIMES

*my***FT**

Blockchain + Add to myFT

Nov 4th

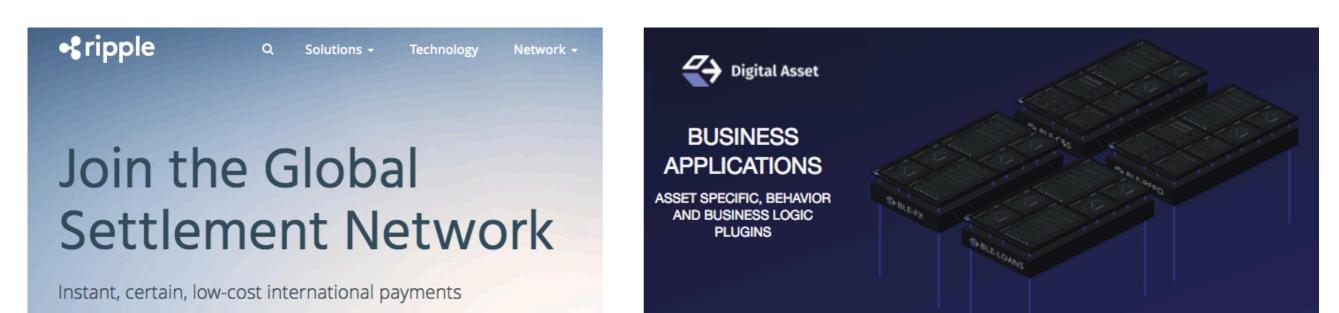
Central banks explore blockchain to create digital currencies

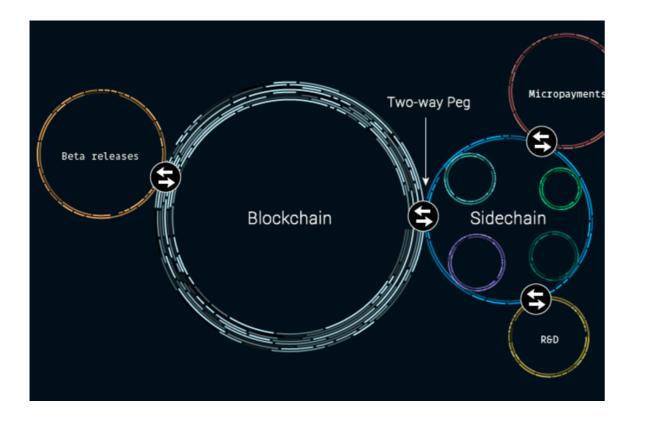
Trailblazers including UK, Russia, China seek to cash in on bitcoin breakthrough

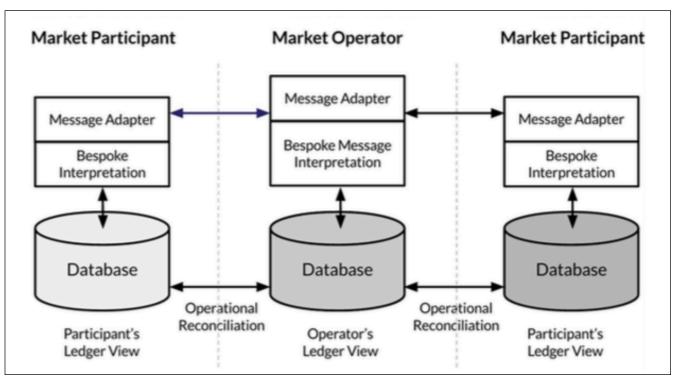


Finance



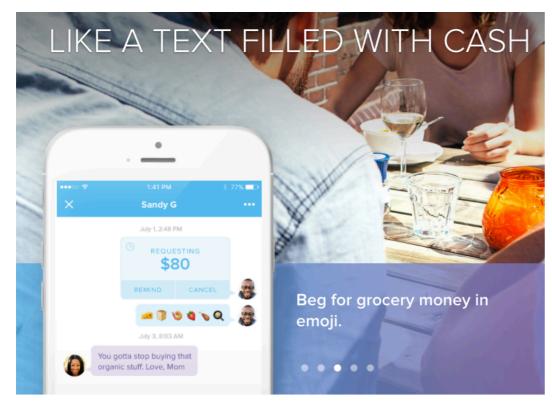






Money Transfer





DEPOSIT

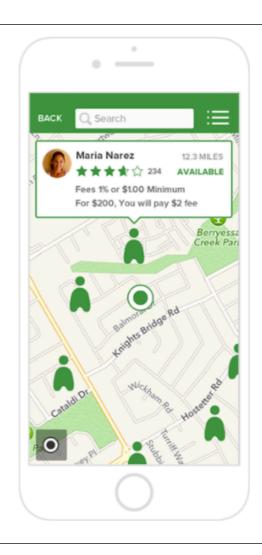
Fund your wallet with your bank account or use cash by visiting an Abra Teller in your area.

SEND

Use the Abra app to send or receive money worldwide with no fees. Buy things online wherever Abra is accepted.

WITHDRAW

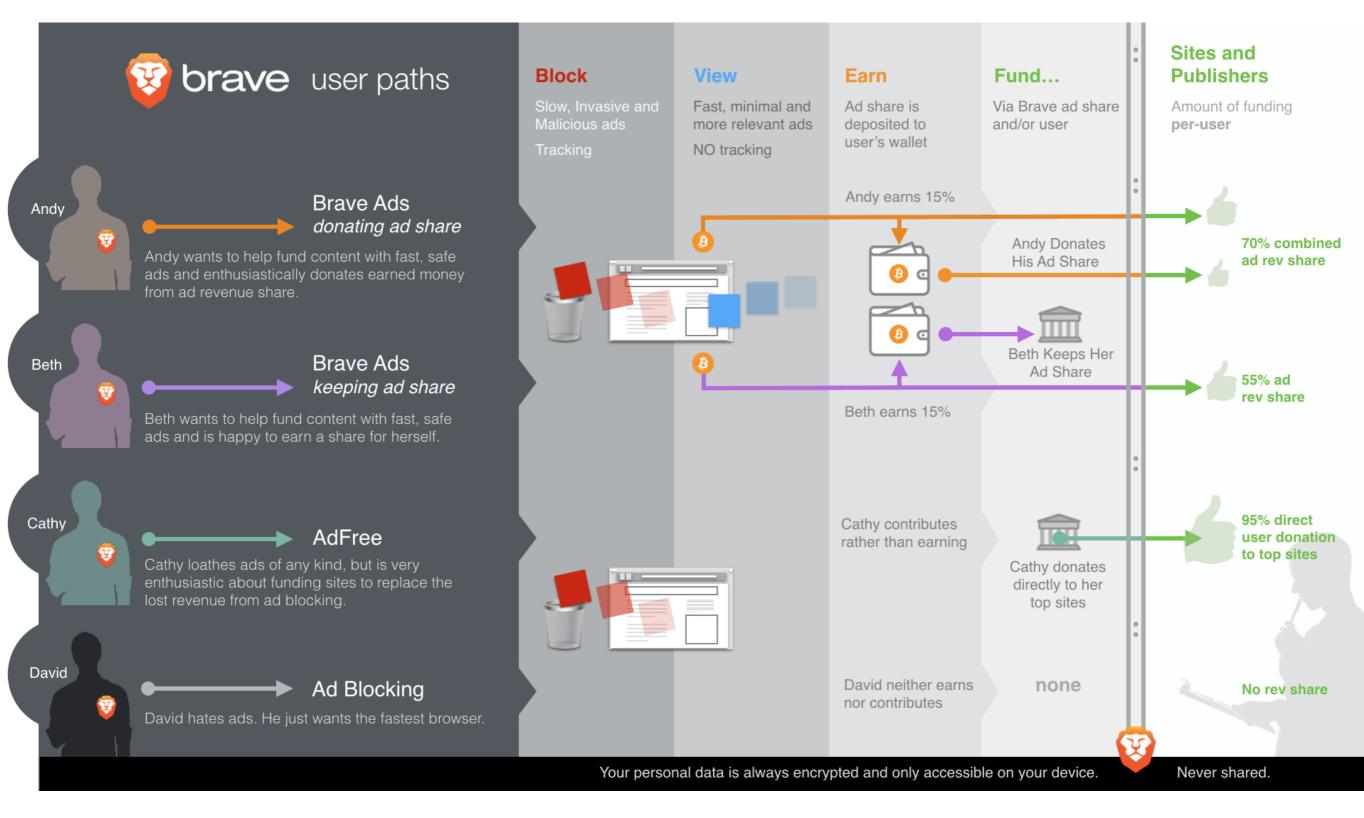
Use the app to transfer funds to your bank account, or find a nearby Teller to get cash.





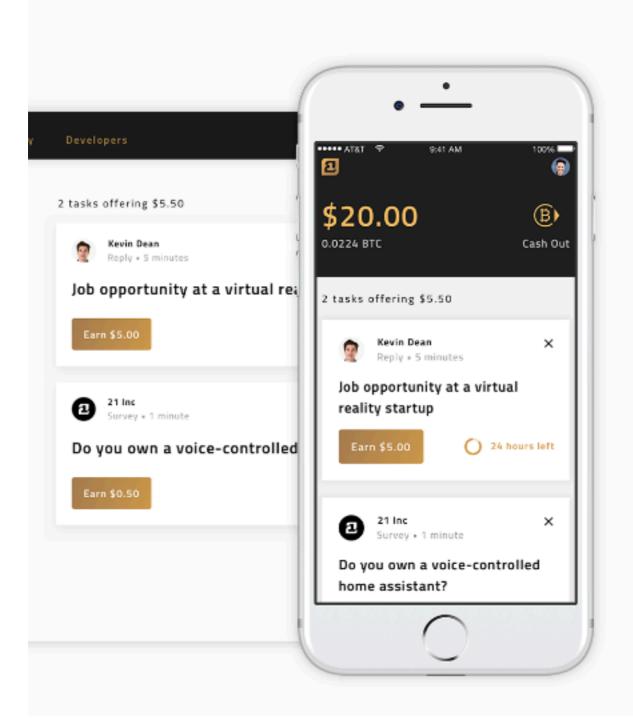
Micropayments







Crowdsourcing



Answer paid messages on mobile and web

Earn money while waiting in line for a coffee, during your morning commute, or when you're bored at work.

You get paid in bitcoin, so it works in any country.





Identity and Privacy

\$10 Million Settlement in Target Data Breach Gets Preliminary Approval

By HIROKO TABUCHI MARCH 19, 2015

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approval to a \$10 million settlement of a lawsuit brought by customers of <u>Target</u>, which experienced an online attack involving confidential customer data during the holiday season in 2013.

A federal judge on Thursday gave preliminary

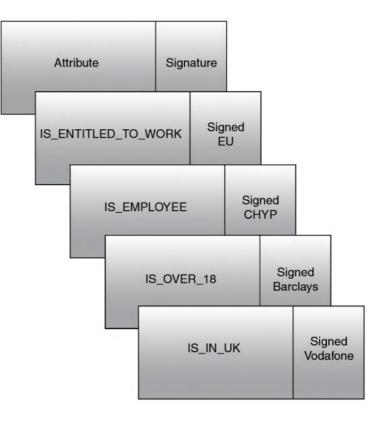
According to documents filed with the United States District Court in Minnesota this month, shoppers affected by the breach could be awarded up to \$10,000 each in damages. The settlement includes a draft of the form victims must complete to make claims, processed through a dedicated website.

Customers may still file objections to the terms of the proposed settlement, but Judge Paul A. Magnuson set a final hearing on the settlement for Nov. 10.



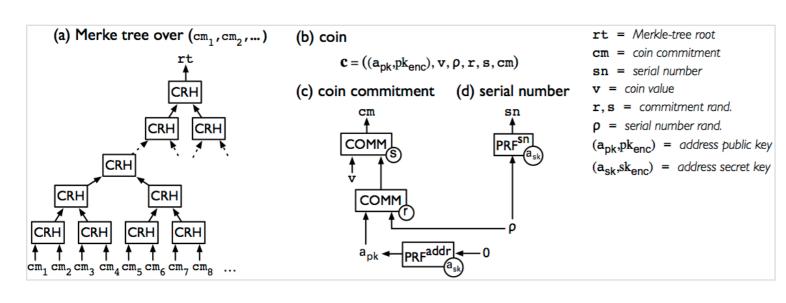
A Target store in Maine. Shoppers affected by a data breach could receive up to \$10,000 each. Robert F. Bukaty/Associated Press







Molly Snyder, a <u>Target</u> spokeswoman, said, "We are pleased to see the process moving forward and look forward to its resolution." The pending settlement was first reported by CNBC.

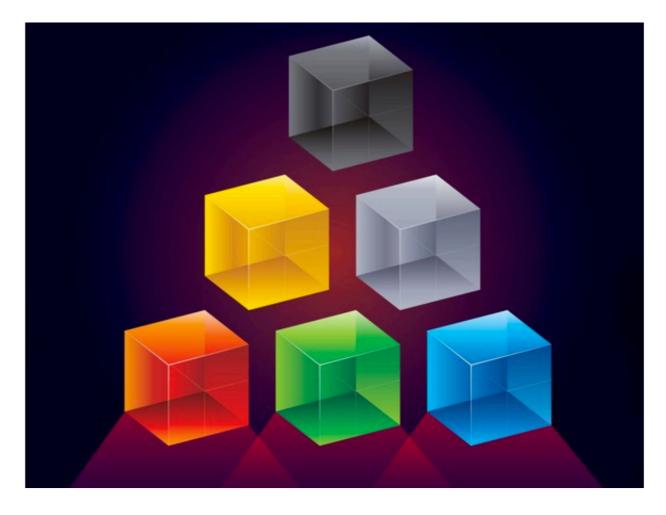


How Costless Verification Allows for Data Integrity and Privacy

CADE METZ BUSINESS 03.11.17 7:00 AM



GOOGLE DEEPMIND'S UNTRENDY PLAY TO MAKE THE BLOCKCHAIN ACTUALLY USEFUL





Smart Contracts

SMART TERM 1 Payment with Escrow \$	SMART TERM 1 x Payment with Escrow
IF payment to catalini IS 1 USD in Bitcoin BY Smart Term 1's expiration date 06/24/2015 13:52 GMT	IF the domain HAS a ranking between position and FOR the key phrase ON google.com
THEN Smart Term 1 is COMPLETED	BY Smart Term 1's expiration date GMT
AND is recorded as completed in the blockchain, making a secure record of verified performance RELEASING an escrow of 0 Bitcoin TO Account, Email or B	THEN Smart Term 1 is COMPLETED AND is recorded as completed in the blockchain, making a secure record of verified performance RELEASING an escrow of 0 Bitcoin TO Account, Email or B
OTHERWISE Smart Term 1 is FAILED AND is recorded as failed in the blockchain, making a secure record of verified performance	



SMART TERM 1 ESCROW

RELEASING an escrow of 0 Bitcoin TO Account, Email or B... V

The below Bitcoin address will receive Smart Term 1's escrow

144f5QHfjMD5XAwLSMRcCKuD4e6NhmNQvN

3 0 Bitcoin has been confirmed for Smart Term 1's Escrow



Provenance

Contact



🗘 everledger

What We Do Our Journey

Our Technology Press Coverage

Welcome to the digital vault of the future.

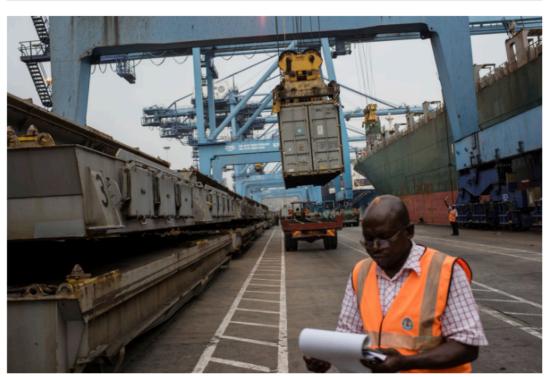
Everledger is a global startup that uses the best of emerging technology including blockchain, smart contracts and machine vision to assist in the reduction of risk and fraud for banks, insurers and open marketplaces.

FIND OUT MORE

Deal B%k WITH FOUNDER AND REW ROSS SORKIN

Blockchain: A Better Way to Track Pork Chops, Bonds, Bad Peanut Butter?

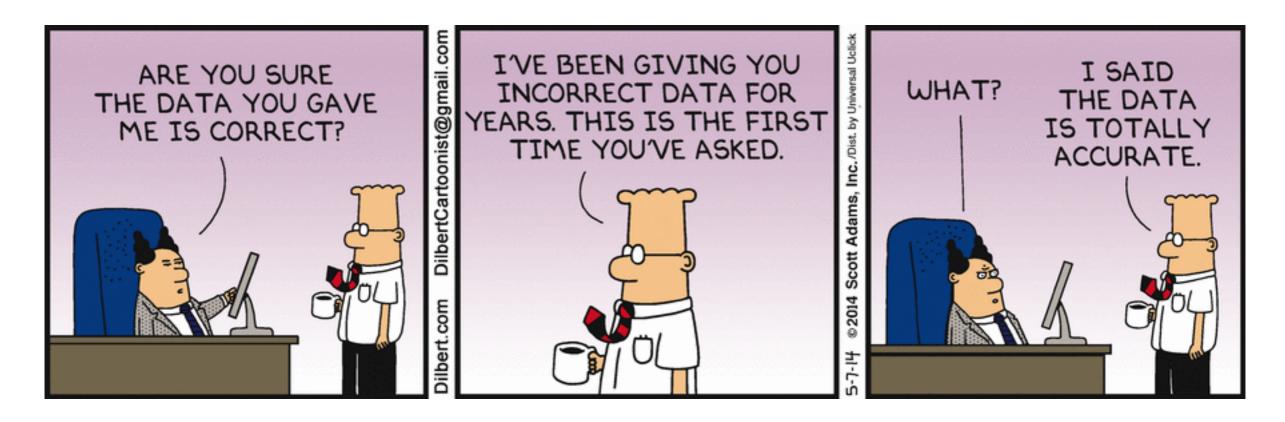
By NATHANIEL POPPER and STEVE LOHR MARCH 4, 2017



Cargo containers are loaded on a Maersk ship at the Port of Mombasa in Kenya. IBM has heated competition in the race to monitor transactions. Andrew Renneisen for The New York Times

Provenance





The immutability offered by a blockchain is only useful if the original information entered on it is accurate!

Intellectual Property and Digital Rights Management

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We can embed the document's digest in the blockchain for you!

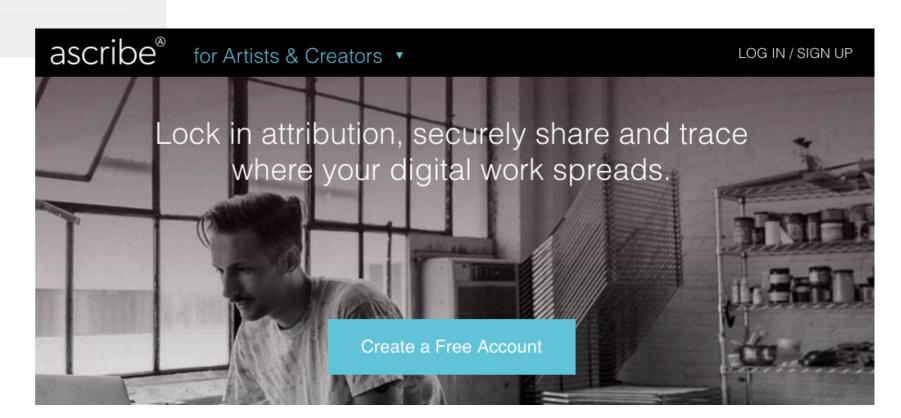
You'll need to pay **5 mBTC** to do so, required by our embedding algorithm, and you are also invited to tip us with whatever value you find appropriate. Please pay to the following address:



Please send **5 mBTC** or more to: 1J7HtSNxYZBtCi7gv1FwpLZVD9a37myo4c

||10

Waiting for payment... the page will refresh automatically when a payment is received.





THE WALL STREET JOURNAL. A Bitcoin Technology Gets Nasdaq Test

Pilot to take place in fledgling Nasdaq Private Market



WSJ's Michael Casey joins Paul Vigna on MoneyBeat to discuss how Nasdaq is testing bitcoinrelated technology as a way to manage pre-IPO trading among private companies. Photo: Getty

By **BRADLEY HOPE** And **MICHAEL J. CASEY** May 10, 2015 16 COMMENTS

Nasdaq OMX Group Inc. is testing a new use of the technology that underpins the digital currency bitcoin, in a bid to transform the trading of shares in private companies.





Dec 30, 2015

Previous Release | Next Release |

NASDAQ LINQ ENABLES FIRST-EVER PRIVATE SECURITIES ISSUANCE DOCUMENTED WITH BLOCKCHAIN TECHNOLOGY

Transaction by <u>Chain.com</u> Marks Significant 'Proof of Concept' and Major Step Forward in Use of Blockchain

Blockchain Holds Potential for 99% Reduced Settlement Time and Risk Exposure in Capital Markets

NEW YORK, Dec. 30, 2015 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Nasdaq (Nasdaq:NDAQ) today announced that an issuer was able to use its Nasdaq Linq blockchain ledger technology to successfully complete and record a private securities transaction - the first of its kind using blockchain technology. <u>Chain.com</u>, an inaugural Nasdaq Linq client and blockchain developer, documented its issuance of shares to a private investor using Nasdaq's blockchain-enabled technology. This transaction represents a major advance in the application of blockchain technology for private companies.



From Digital Assets...



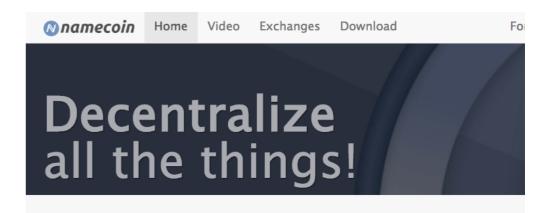


if tx.value < block.basefee * 200:

stop

if contract.storage[tx.data[0]] or tx.data[0] < 100:
 stop</pre>

contract.storage[tx.data[0]] = tx.data[1]



Namecoin is a decentralized open source in registration and transfer system based on th cryptocurrency.

What does it do?

- Securely record and transfer arbitrary names (keys).
- Attach a value (data) to the names (up to 520 bytes, more in the future).

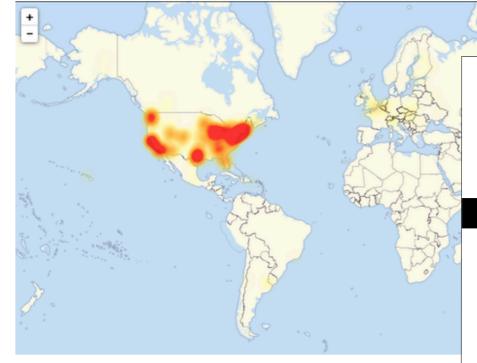
What can it be used fo

- Protect free-speech right the web more resistant
- Access websites using t TLS/SSL).



Internet Attack Disrupts Major Websites

By NICOLE PERLROTH OCT. 21, 2016



A map of the areas experiencing problems, as of Friday afternoon, accord



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Someone Is Learning How to Take Down the Internet

Over the past year or two, someone has been probing the defenses of the companies that run critical pieces of the Internet. These probes take the form of precisely calibrated attacks designed to determine exactly how well these companies can defend themselves, and what would be required to take them down. We don't know who is doing this, but it feels like a large nation state. China or Russia would be my first guesses.

First, a little background. If you want to take a network off the Internet, the easiest way to do it is with a distributed denial-of-service attack (DDoS). Like the name says, this is an attack designed to prevent legitimate users from getting to the site. There are subtleties, but basically it means blasting so much data at the site that it's overwhelmed. These attacks are not new: hackers do this to sites they don't like, and criminals have done it as a method of extortion. There is an entire industry, with an arsenal of technologies, devoted to DDoS defense. But largely it's a matter of bandwidth. If the attacker has a bigger fire hose of data than the defender has, the attacker wins.

Recently, some of the major companies that provide the basic infrastructure that makes the Internet work have seen an increase in DDoS attacks against them. Moreover, they have seen a certain profile of attacks. These attacks are significantly larger than the ones they're used to seeing. They last longer. They're more sophisticated. And they look like probing. One week, the attack would start at a particular level of attack and slowly ramp up before stopping. The next week, it would start at that higher point and continue. And so on, along those lines, as if the attacker were looking for the exact point of failure.

The attacks are also configured in such a way as to see what the company's total defenses are. There are many different ways to launch a DDoS attack. The more attack vectors you employ simultaneously, the more different defenses the defender has to counter with. These companies are seeing more attacks using three or four different vectors. This means that the companies have to use everything they've got to defend themselves. They can't hold anything back. They're forced to demonstrate their defense capabilities for the attacker.





About Bruce Schneier



I've been writing about security issues on my blog since 2004, and in my monthly newsletter since 1998. I write books, articles, and academic papers. Currently, I'm the Chief Technology Officer of Resilient, an IBM Company, a fellow at Harvard's Berkman Center, and a board member of EFF.



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Connectivity

Amazon's \$150 Million Typo Is a Lightning Rod for a Big Cloud Problem

A botched command inadvertently took down swaths of the Web, but it only serves to reveal that centralized Web services need to be built more robustly.

by Jamie Condliffe March 3, 2017





Log in /

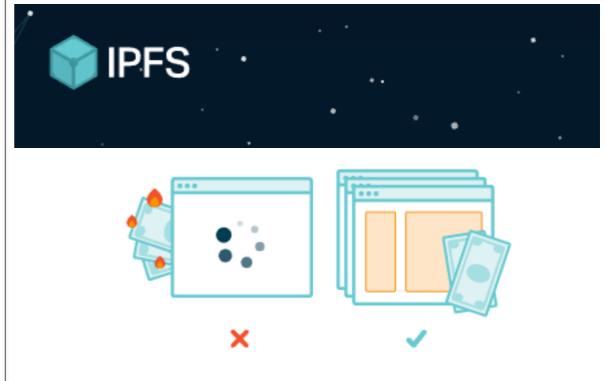
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Build on the New Internet

Build decentralized, server-less apps where users control their data.

Join the Community Install the	Software
Amazon S3 Dropbox Microsoft Azure Personal Drive BitTorrent	r – ¬ I – I Storage Layer
E: BLOCKSTACK CORE Web server zone file DB ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓ ↓	r − ¬ ı ← ı Routing Layer
Domain name Public key Zone file hash	r – ¬ I — J Virtualchain Layer
$ \longrightarrow \qquad $	
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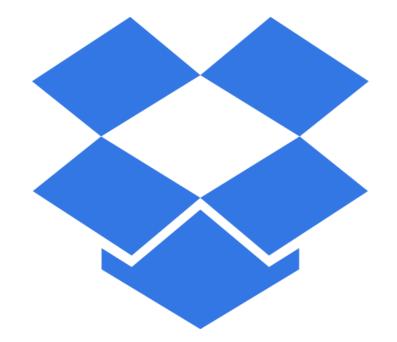
HTTP is inefficient and expensive

HTTP downloads a file from a single computer at a time, instead of getting pieces from multiple computers simultaneously. With video delivery, a P2P approach could save 60% in bandwidth costs.

IPFS makes it possible to distribute high volumes of data with high efficiency. And zero duplication means savings in storage.



...to Physical Assets





✓ Filecoin

Filecoin is a data storage network and electronic currency based on Bitco



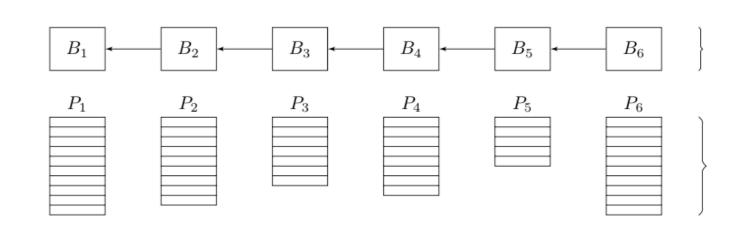
Earn Filecoin by renting disk space





Use Filecoin to store files in the network or to transact

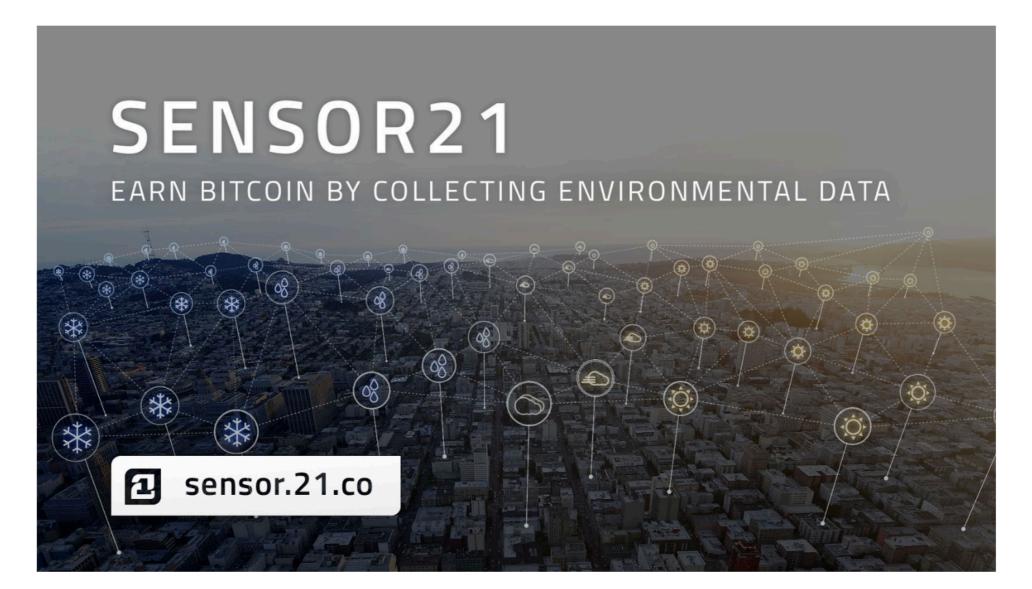
Exchange Filecoi currencies, like



... or Sensors

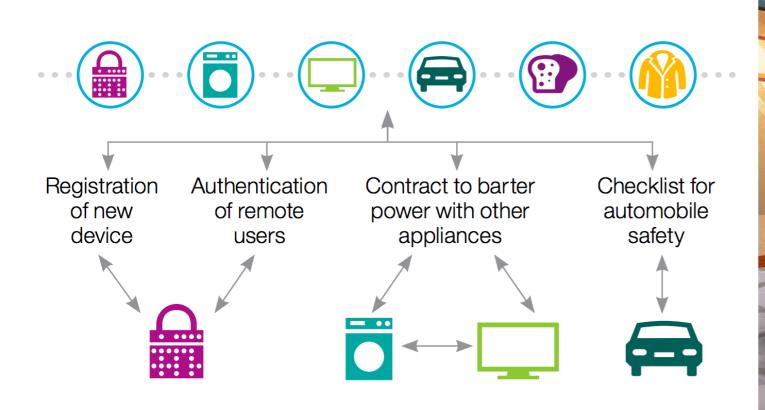
Sensor21: Earn bitcoin by collecting environmental data

By Tyler Pate, Jeremy Kun, and Balaji S. Srinivasan





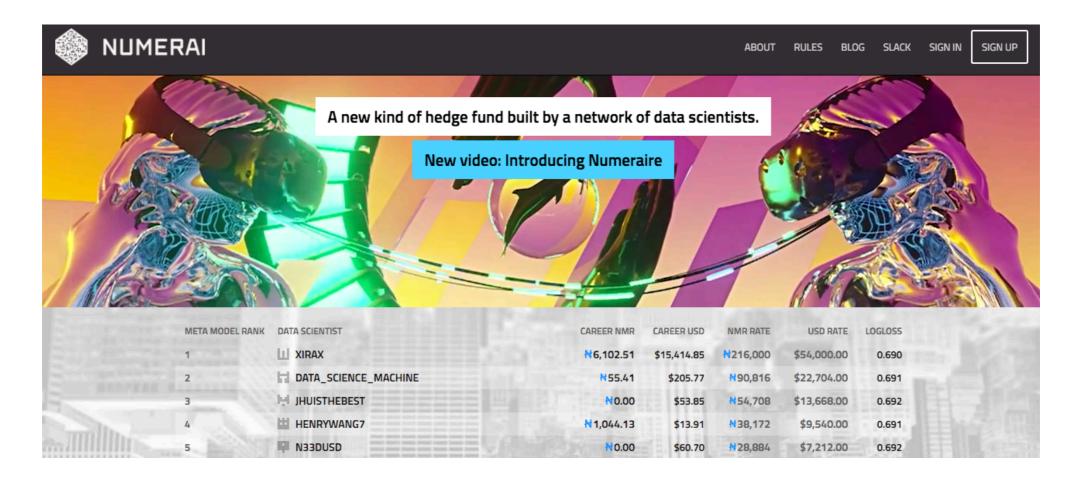
Internet of Things, Robotics, Al







The Firm as a Nexus of Contracts



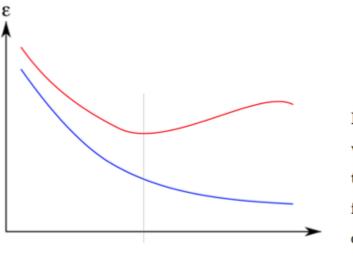
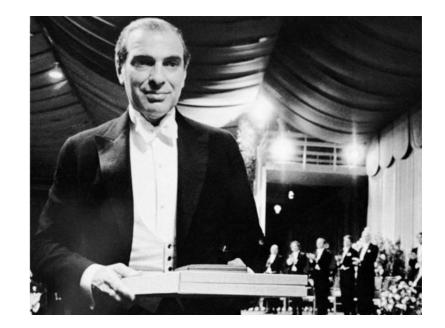


Figure 1: An overfitting curve where the blue test error continues to decrease with more submissions from data scientists, but the error on new data increases. [2]





Thank You!

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