The Open Web and Education
A Brief Overview

Blockchain has steadily grown to become one of the most innovative and revolutionary technologies of the 21st century; capturing the interest of entrepreneurs, venture capital firms, financial institutions and other corporations. Blockhain's scope, however, goes well beyond the financial and business world. It has a tremendous range of use cases in every industry, education included.

There are two major discussions of the field of education and blockchain technology: one is focused on applying blockchain in the educational field, and another aims at fostering education on blockchain technology. Concretely, the first field looks at how the blockchain can be used to document, verify and share data on learning, knowledge, skills, and abilities, as well as the academic awards that represent them, in a more private and efficient way. The second looks at how to make blockchain adoption easier by filling the knowledge gap that prevents individuals and companies from benefiting from blockchain.

Blockchain in Education: Ongoing Projects

As a general purpose technology, integrating blockchain with an education system can change the way diplomas are verified, academic papers checked for plagiarism, and who is able to access what classes. Educational initiatives are only starting to experiment with these new ideas, with plenty of room for development into the future.

Blockcerts is an open-standard platform used for creating, issuing and verifying certificates using blockchain technology. It was implemented thanks to the collaboration between Learning Machine and MIT Media Lab. Having all records of academic scores and honours on a blockchain facilitates more efficient hiring processes as the credibility of student's documents can be easily checked. Academic records (grades, transcripts, and diplomas) are in fact stored on the Blockcerts blockchain so that there is an immutable record of past academic history. As a result, students' academic records will be stored forever and future employers will be able to verify them immediately.

Woolf University is the collaboration of a team of Oxford academics to create the first blockchain university. Woolf University uses blockchain to provide a system of one-to-one education that is a cheaper alternative for students while also being more remunerative for teachers. By facilitating the storying and checking of information, it halves the costs of administrative procedures, which can then be used to provide cheaper services and increase salaries.

Blockchain Education for Business Innovation

Education, specifically about blockchain, and generally about the open-web, is still in its infancy for much of the professional and academic world. While certain business schools may feature discussions about Bitcoin or Enterprise Blockchain, there is little exposure to the rest of the world of crypto-innovation relating to NFTs, DeFi, new forms of crowdfunding and tokenization, and much more. While this especially relates to new business opportunities, it is also a topic that should be promoted across intellectual categories: In economics, finance, political science, computer science, philosophy and ethics, and much more.

Finally, there is the prospect of an innovation imbalance between certain regions of the world: Places where blockchain and the open-web are not taught across disciplines are at risk of falling behind - not in the next ten to fifteen years, but the next twenty to forty.

Blockchain2Business is a training project that has been set up to train companies and entrepreneurs on the correct application of blockchain and how it can innovate in various industrial sectors. It is the result of the collaboration of two companies operating in the blockchain world: Swiss Crowd and AB Innovation Consulting. Their main idea is to build an academy for training on blockchain technologies to facilitate adoption and innovation of the business sector.

The Blockchain Education Network is an international nonprofit organisation that is dedicated to forming a network of academics, researchers, and students from different fields to disseminate and foster education and research on the topic of blockchain. It is now the largest and longest running network of blockchain academics across the world, and it has born various startups that have already "seen the light" of blockchain.

A Roadmap of Future Opportunity

Blockchain technology provides incredible opportunities for overcoming economic stagnation. As we go through the crisis and recover, the imperative should be to encourage experimentation with the aim of creating sustainability and prosperity. What has yet to be fully grasped about the Open Web is just how diverse and innovative certain crypto-based solutions can be: Non-Fungible Tokens, Validator Staking, Decentralized Finance in its many manifestations, as well as asset tokenization and fractionalization providing entirely new ways of handling value.

The adoption of blockchain for businesses can play a fundamental role for economic recovery, but for it to succeed we need more education on this technology and fill the knowledge gap between early adopters and the rest of the population.

Topics to Discuss

Future of Blockchain Innovation for the Business World

The Crypto Learning Curve: How To Break Into the Space

Teaching Crypto At Universities: Future Curriculums

Blockchain University: A Global Education Program?

How Will Teaching Youth Crypto & Blockchain Affect Future Development?

Can countries look to blockchain and crypto for economic development? What kind of new models await creation?

NEAR

NEAR Protocol is a 3rd Generation Blockchain Platform built with scalability and usability in mind. The NEAR Ecosystem is home to a number of cutting edge projects in the crypto space that hold the promise of building the Open Web. Geographically diversified, NEAR features headquarters across 3 continents (USA, San Francisco; China, Shanghai; Switzerland, Zug). The NEAR Community, NEAR Guilds, and the NEAR Team are growing the NEAR Ecosystem to be a home for native crypto, enterprise blockchain, and emerging technology solutions around the world. Learn more about NEAR at NEAR.org or join the discussion on Telegram.