

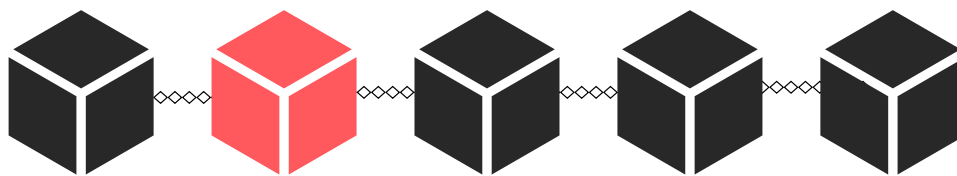
The Open Web and Philosophy

A Brief Overview

Blockchain has steadily grown to become the most innovative and revolutionary technology of the 21st century. Its ability to transfer value across networks in ways that obviate the need for traditional intermediaries allows for the development of different patterns of interactions between humans, having broad implications for various areas of our lives. Blockchain, for instance, could become a tracking register for much of world activity; essentially the whole of a society's memory, a tool for more profoundly automating human patterns, and integrating human and technological activity (Melanie Swan, 2015).

This has triggered interesting philosophical questions that are only starting to be addressed. What is blockchain technology, and how can that be categorised? What new things is blockchain technology helping us to know, and with what proof or truth standard? How is blockchain technology valorised and adopted, and what behavioural norms does that give rise to?

Blockchain technology can then be looked at philosophically from many perspectives: ontologically, epistemologically, ethically, and more. The ontological and epistemological perspectives are at the moment the most developed angles within the literature. Nevertheless, there is plenty of opportunity for further research as blockchain is only starting to gain a place in the philosophical domain.



How Can Blockchain Be Approached By Philosophers?

To this day, there are little publications on the topic, the most notable being the symposium organised by Melanie Swan and Primavera De Filippi (2017). That launched a series of papers on the philosophy of blockchain.

Following Halping and Monnin's *Philosophical Engineering: Toward a Philosophy of the Web* (Halping and Monnin, 2014), the symposium starts from the premise that philosophy can help us better understand the trajectory that technological development is taking.

Philosophy can help trace the theoretical frameworks needed to understand what blockchain is and what opportunities and challenges it constitutes for individuals and societies at large. It is then crucial to create a broader interdisciplinary discussion among academics in order to create the needed concepts to analyse how blockchain should be understood, its role in society, and the ethical implications of its application.

Topics to Discuss

Living Digital: A New Transhumanistic Age?

Blockchain As Permanent Memory

Collective Memory and Transparency As a System

Blockchain and Governance: A Paradigm Shift in Political Philosophy?

Social Ethics And Immutable Data: The Dangers Of Never Being Able To Forget.

Self, Society and World: Rapid Technology Development in Life.

Current Literature

Halpin, Harry, and Alexandre Monnin, eds. 2014. *Philosophical Engineering: Toward a Philosophy of the Web*. Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Francesca Marino, *La Filosofia della Blockchain*, Mimesis, 2019

Nicolae Sfetcu, "Philosophy of Blockchain Technology - Ontologies", SetThings (February 1, 2019), MultiMedia Publishing (ed.), URL = <https://www.setthings.com/en/e-books/philosophy-of-blockchain-technology-ontologies/>

Melanie Swan, Primavera de Filippi. Towards a Philosophy of Blockchain. Metaphilosophy, Wiley, 2017, 48. fahal-01676883f

Melanie Swan, Transhuman Crypto Cloudminds. [Humanity Plus magazine. Global Essay Competition Winner: Mutual Benefits of Blockchain and Transhumanism 2018](#), Pages 1-12.

Melanie Swan, Blockchain Enlightenment and Smart City Cryptopolis. [CryBlock'18 Proceedings of the 1st Workshop on Cryptocurrencies and Blockchains for Distributed Systems](#). Munich, Germany. June 15, 2018. Pages 48-53.

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](https://near.org) or join the discussion on [Telegram](#).