



MIT Media Lab Digital Currency Initiative

Quarterly Newsletter Q4 2018

Hello,

Welcome to the first quarterly newsletter from [MIT Media Lab's Digital Currency Initiative](#). I'm Neha, the Director of the DCI. The DCI was founded at MIT in 2015 and our mission is to empower individuals by making it as fast and easy to move value across the world as it is to move information. We want to work on technology that helps people take control of their own destinies and data, and create a more open and fair financial system.

We see our mission as mostly aligned with the greater cryptocurrency ecosystem. However, we think the DCI plays a very specific role within that ecosystem in researching, educating, and convening for the public good. Here's an update on each of those fronts. If you have any feedback we would love to hear from you! We also invite you to follow us [@mitDCI on Twitter](#) for more regular updates.

- Neha

P.S. We hope this is the start of a more communicative relationship, but if you don't want that, please unsubscribe at the bottom!

Projects and Research

We continued our work on the Lightning Network and [demoed a Lightning Network-powered vending machine for Media Lab members](#) ⚡👉



- Tadge Dryja expanded research on [UTreeXO](#), an UTXO accumulator, and released a paper on [Static-Memory-Hard Functions](#) with Quanquan C. Liu and Sunoo Park.
- Cory Fields [disclosed a bug](#) in Bitcoin Cash, forcing us to take a step back and write about [responsible disclosure and security in the cryptocurrency ecosystem](#).
- Robleh Ali outlined his proposal for a [cellular structure for a digital fiat currency](#).
- Wlad and Cory continue to work on Bitcoin Core. (Fun fact: they've contributed 14% of all Bitcoin Core commits since the DCI started in April 2015!)



In collaboration with the MIT Press, we [released the first issue](#) of Cryptocurrency Research Review, the start of a long-term experiment to "build a field" in cryptocurrency and blockchain technology. We'd love your feedback.

👉 [Subscribe here!](#) 👉

Education

First off, thanks to our student co-ops who completed their internships last term!



Trey del Bonis, Northeastern University,



Nabeel Younis, Boston University,

- We founded the DCI Working Groups program, which connects MIT students to our member companies for research. In 2017-2018, we had [eight working groups](#). This school year we have nearly 60 students across 14 working groups.
- DCI advisor Gary Gensler taught a new [Blockchain and Money class](#) at MIT Sloan this fall.
- Neha and Tadge taught a [Cryptocurrency Engineering and Design](#) course last spring (and are turning it into a MOOC; let us know if you're interested in contributing).
- Gary wrote [an article for Coindesk](#) on his economic and policy predictions for 2019.
- We hired [Rhys Lindmark](#) as [Head of Community and Long-Term Societal Impact](#).

Events and Presentations

We started a new podcast on technology, society, and ethics called *Grey Mirror*.

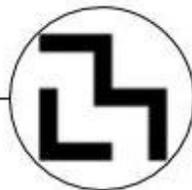
[Subscribe and listen to the first episode with Tadge Dryja on uTreeXO here.](#) 🎧



- We're co-hosting the "Business of Blockchain" event with *MIT Technology Review* on May 2, 2019, featuring speakers like Peter Van Valkenburgh and Haseeb Qureshi. [Get your tickets here!](#)
- Neha spoke at [WIRED's 25 Summit](#) with Alexis Ohanian.
- Neha was interviewed on [Epicenter](#).
- We hosted a workshop to analyze the security of proof-of-work.

Speakers at DCI

Sept
2018



Dec
2018

- Berkman Klein Center's Samer Hassan on the [Collaborative Economy](#)
- Prathima Muniyaapa on [Indigenous Economic Paradigms](#)
- Elena Giralt on Crypto in Venezuela
- Hugo Benedetti on [The Economics of Digital Token Cross-Listings](#)

A quick smattering of events that we attended or spoke at:

- Neha → [CryptoSprings](#), [Dagstuhl](#), [UChicago](#), [Real World Crypto](#)
- Tadge and Cory → [Scaling Bitcoin](#)
- Tadge and Gert-Jaap → [Lightning Development Summit](#)
- Trey → [Chaincode Lightning Residency](#) (talk)
- Rhys → [Devcon4](#) (curated [Society & Systems](#) track)
- Alin and Gary → [MIT Research and Development Conference](#)

Finally, catch us at these events in early 2019:

- Tadge attending the [Stanford Blockchain Conference](#), Jan 30-Feb 1, Stanford
- Neha speaking at the Brookings Global Economy Workshop, Feb 4, Washington D.C.
- Rhys speaking at [ETHDenver](#), Feb 15-17, Denver
- Neha, Tadge, and Cory attending [Financial Cryptography](#), Feb 18-22, St. Kitts

Thanks as always for your curiosity and a special thank you to the Media Lab member companies who support the DCI! Please respond to this email directly if you have any feedback, questions, or if we can help you in any way. We'd love to hear from you!

See you in 2019. Thanks again!



Happy new year from the DCI!



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