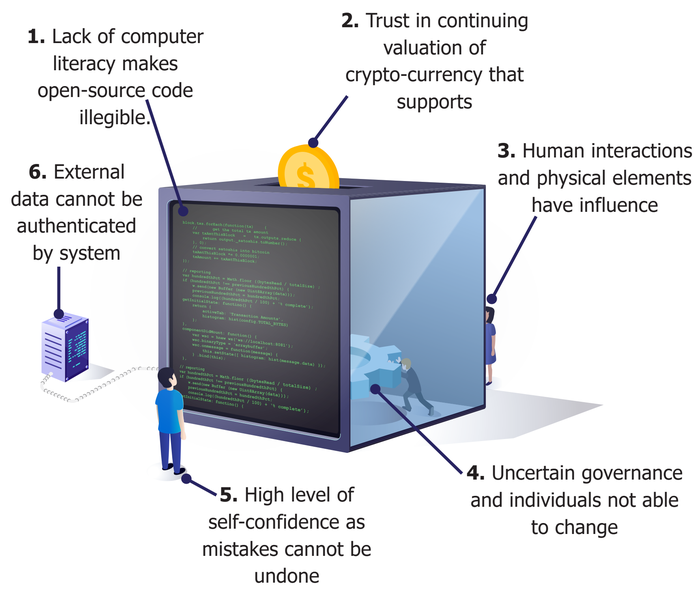
Blockchain: A Proof of Trust

Blockchain decentralizes the exchange of value and reduces costs by removing middlemen. It assumes distrust amongst peers and enforces interactions through hard code. However, trust must still be placed in the technology. The goal of this thesis was to explore the topic of designing for trust in blockchain technology. Several components involve uncertainty and thus require trust. Also, companies who initiate blockchain systems are confronted with a social and emtional challenge. Setting up an ecosystems forces them to open up to competitors before having to switch to a new form of trust relationship. Viral Art is an activity designed to help Cognizant's clients experience this shift first-hand.

THEORETICAL

Blockchain ecosystem elements that require trust from users:



PRACTICAL

An in-depth blockchain case study showed that in practice:

No trust that blockchain technology can impact the real world

Setting up smart contracts is already a risky undertaking

Joining parties have to be trusted for the data they bring

People tend to adhere to old trusting concepts when evaluating blockchain

It is hard to grasp or experience the real value of blockchain technology

Blockchain ecosystems bring new and uncomfortable interactions

THE DESIGN: 'VIRAL ART' BOARD GAME

Cognizant should take on the role as 'ecosystem builder' and support clients and partners with active blockchain experiences to accelerate trust in the technology. This will also help in getting comfortable with the new type of interactions it brings. To help this process the following brief was setup:

Offer clients a 'risky' activity which allows them to have an experience with blockchain technology that highlights the new type of relationships.

Viral Art is a game that takes participants through three different trust relationships: distrust amongst peers for direct interactions, forced trust in an expensive middleman who provides security and finally trusting a collectively run system (blockchain simulation).

The goal is to get participants familiar with the emotional impact of the technology and get a sense of what it means to run such a system with peers.

As part of a workshop with clients, discussions can be held that highlight blockchain's trust boundaries and how the learnings of the game translate to a client's own network.

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