

Blockchain: What Is It and Does Your Business Need It?

🕒 READ TIME: 2 MINS

👥 AUDIENCE: BUSINESS & TECHNOLOGY

Blockchain has become a very well-known buzz word in the business world but quite often there is not an accompanying explanation of what it is. People are scrambling to include blockchain in their business operations without fully understanding what it is or how it may benefit the business. This article is here to explain what blockchain is in a digestible manner and why it may be useful to include blockchain in your business

A BRIEF INTRODUCTION

In short, a blockchain is a way to record data that is extremely hard to change later. This has benefits as it can make a system based on blockchain appear like an online ledger, providing everyone who participates with an identical copy of it. All participants check through this ledger to make sure any additions made are legitimate. Each page in this ledger has a code included that is a reference to the previous page so if anyone tries to add an illegitimate page it is obvious to all other participants as this code would not align anymore.

WHY BLOCKCHAIN?

As may be made obvious before, a blockchain is designed to be as transparent as possible. This does mean that blockchain is not applicable

to every single business as there are certainly many bits of data that should not be out in the open. However, blockchain can be run privately with only approved users being able to access it (allowing business collboarates to also use the private blockchain). A blockchain is an effective way to increase confidence that all other partners are acting in good faith



Does Your Business Need Blockchain?

with the data. Blockchain is also currently seeing a large amount of investment and so including blockchain within a business plan may be attractive to potential investors.

The levels of hype blockchain is getting is comparable to that of the internet in the late 90's and early 00's. Due to the hype from bitcoin, there is this perception that the technology itself is valuable and when applied to any problem, it will make money. However, a recent study of 43 blockchain use-cases from a range of companies claiming to reduce operational costs by 90% using blockchain found no or little evidence of any results.

However, many business users would not benefit from including blockchain due to its open nature and instead would be best served by opting for a more traditional data storage method such as a database. For data that is never meant to be public, a database would be more cost and energy efficient.



ABOUT US

Lancashire Cyber Foundry runs a programme designed to support businesses facing cyber challenges in Lancashire. Digital Innovation support is part of this programme but there is also business strategy support available too. This includes workshops dedicated to evaluation of the driving forces which will shape the world of today and beyond. Consider how your business is affected by external changes, now consider how much time your business spends evaluating them and planning for them.

The programme consists of two half-day workshops and one full-day workshop, alongside some online open learning elements. In addition, enrolling gives you access to our digital portal full of cyber innovation tools and services to better defend, innovate and grow your business. There is also time available to meet 1-to-1 with our business development team who can offer bespoke insight and signposting to the best next steps for your business.

To find out more about how your business can access support and register on one of upcoming cohorts contact us: cyberfoundry@lancaster.ac.uk

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Thomas Keany

Thomas Keany is a student intern with the Lancashire Cyber Foundry. He is due to graduate this year from Lancaster University with a degree in mathematics before going on to study for a master's degree in computational biology. Thomas has always found the software development side of things interesting, but particularly enjoys finding practical usages for newer ideas and technologies.