

Blockchain Technology Overview: Architecture, Consensus, and Future Trends

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Abstract: Blockchain, the backbone of Bitcoin, has lately gained a lot of attention. Blockchain acts as an inflexible tally, allowing deals to take place in a decentralised manner. Blockchain- grounded operations are arising in a variety of diligence, including fiscal services, character systems, and the Internet of effects (IoT), among others. still, numerous hurdles of blockchain technology, including as scalability and security issues, have to be answered. This paper provides an in- depth look of blockchain technology. First, we present an explanation of blockchain armature before comparing colourful common agreement ways utilised in different blockchains. In addition, technological hurdles and recent advancements are compactly bandied. We also bandy implicit blockchain future trends.

Keywords: Blockchain, decentralization, consensus, scalability.

I. INTRODUCTION

Cryptocurrency is presently a buzzword in both assiduity and academics. Bitcoin has been one of the most successful cryptocurrencies, with its capital request surpassing\$ 10 billion in 2016(1). Deals in Bitcoin use a specifically erected data storehouse structure. The network may take place without the involvement of a third party, and the introductory technology used to develop Bitcoin is blockchain, which was originally suggested in 2008 and stationed in 2009(2). Blockchain may be allowed of as a public tally, with all married deals kept in a series of blocks. This chain expands as fresh blocks are regularly added to it. For stoner security and tally thickness, asymmetric cryptography and distributed agreement ways have been employed. Decentralization, continuity, obscurity, and auditability are all abecedarian aspects of blockchain technology. With these characteristics, blockchain may significantly reduce costs and enhance effectiveness. Blockchain may be utilised in a variety of fiscal services, including digital means, remittance, and online payment, since it allows payments to be completed without the involvement of a bank or a conciliator (3), (4). It may also be used in other sectors similar as smart contracts (5, 6), public services (7, 8), the Internet of effects (IoT), character systems (9), and security services. These diligence profit from blockchain in a variety of ways. To begin with, blockchain is incommutable. Once a sale is stored in the blockchain, it cannot be altered. Blockchain may be used to attract guests for businesses that demand great trust ability and honesty. Likewise, blockchain is distributed and may exclude the single point of failure. Situation with a single point of failure. Smart contracts, on the other hand, might be executed automatically by miners once they're put on the blockchain. Although blockchain technology offers enormous pledge for the development of unborn Internet services, it faces a number of specialized obstacles. To begin with, scalability is a major challenge. Bitcoin block size is presently limited to 1 MB, and a block is booby-trapped every 10 twinkles. As a result, the Bitcoin network is limited to 7 deals per second, making it unable of managing with high-frequency trading. Larger blocks, on the other hand, need further storehouse space and slower network propagation. This will precipitously lead to centralization as smaller people choose to keep their accounts. This is a massive blockchain. As a result, balancing block size and security has proven to be a delicate task. Second, it has been demonstrated that miners can earn further than their fair share of income by employing a selfish mining approach (10). Miners conceal their booby-trapped blocks in order to earn further plutocrat in the future. As a result, branches might do frequently, impeding blockchain growth. As a result, some remedies to this problem must be proposed. likewise, it has been demonstrated that sequestration oohing may do in blockchain indeed when individualities solely use their public and private keys to conduct deals. likewise, current agreement styles like as evidence of labour and evidence of stake are agonized by major issues. For illustration, evidence of labour consumes a devilish quantum of power energy. While the miracle of the rich getting richer may arise during the stake agreement evidence procedure. There's a wealth of

blockchain literature available from a variety of sources, including blogs, wikis, forum bulletins, scripts, conference papers, and journal publications. Schorske et al. (12) conducted a specialized analysis of decentralised digital currencies similar as Bitcoin. Unlike (12), our study focuses on blockchain technology rather than digital currency. Nomura Research Institute published a specialized paper on blockchain (13). Unlike (13), our study focuses on cutting-edge blockchain exploration, covering current developments and unborn prospects.

II. BLOCKCHAIN ARCHITECTURE

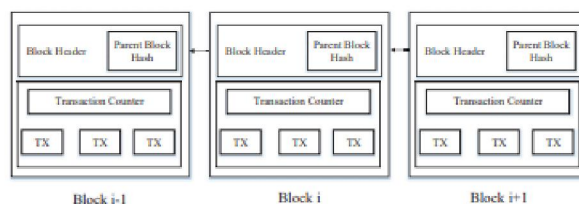


Fig. 1: An example of blockchain which consists of a continuous sequence of blocks.

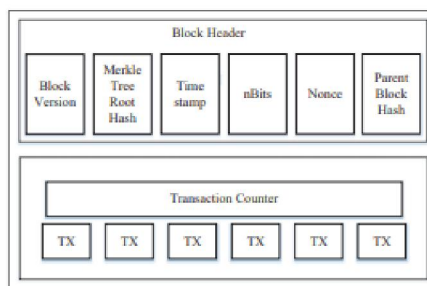


Fig. 2: Block structure

Blockchain is a series of blocks that, like a traditional public tally, include a total list of sale records (14). Figure 1 depicts a blockchain in action. With A block has just one parent block, which is a previous block hash given in the block title. Uncle block hashes (children of the block's forebearers) would likewise be kept on the Ethereum blockchain (15). The first block in a blockchain is known as the birth block, and it has no parent block. The internals of blockchain are also completely explained.

Block, A

- As illustrated in Figure 2, a block is made up of the block title and the block content. The block title, in particular, contains
- Block interpretation specifies which set of block confirmation criteria should be used. Merkle tree root hash the sum of all the hash values in the block.
- Timestamp the current time in seconds since January 1, 1970. iv) nits a valid block hash's thing threshold
- Parent block hash a 256-bit hash value indicating the antedating block.
- Nonce a 4-byte field that generally begins with 0 and rises with each hash calculation (farther explanation in Section III).

A sale counter and deals make up the block body. The maximum number of deals that a block can include is determined by the block size and the size of the sale. Every sale. To authenticate sale authentication, Blockchain employs an asymmetric cryptography approach (13). In an untrustworthy terrain, a digital hand grounded on asymmetric cryptography is utilised. We'll now demonstrate digital autographs shortly.

Block, B.

Electronic hand Each stoner has a private key and a public key. The private key, which must be kept secret, is utilised. to subscribe the deals. The digitally inked deals are circulated across the whole network. A typical digital hand consists of two phases subscribing and verification. For illustration, stoner Alice wishes to communicate with another stoner Bob.

(1) During the hand step, Alice encrypts her data with her private key and delivers the translated result as well as the original data to Bob.

(2) During the verification step, Bob uses Alice's public key to validate the value. In this manner, Bob could snappily determine whether or not the data had been tampered with. Blockchain's crucial Characteristics In conclusion, blockchain possesses the following pivotal parcels.

- Decentralized administration. In a typical centralised sale, each sale must be vetted by a central trusted agency (e.g., the central bank), performing in cost and performance backups at central waiters. In discrepancy to the centralised system, no third party is needed in blockchain. Blockchain agreement ways are used to save data thickness in a distributed network.
- Perseverance. Deals can be vindicated presto, and honest miners won't accept invalid deals. Once a sale is incorporated on the blockchain, it's nearly hard to abolish or rewind. Blocks containing incorrect Deals might be set up right down.
- Sequestration. Each stoner can communicate with the blockchain using an aimlessly created address that doesn't expose the stoner's true identity. It should be noted that blockchain cannot Because of the essential restriction, we can insure absolute sequestration protection. The Bitcoin blockchain contains information about druggies. Unspent sale Affair (UTXO) model balances Any sale must make reference to preliminarily unspent deals. Once the current sale is published in the blockchain, the status of the preliminarily appertained unspent deals changes from unspent to spent. As a result, deals can be readily verified and traced. Because public blockchain is accessible to the whole globe, it can attract a large number of druggies and active communities. Every day, new public blockchains arise. The institute blockchain might be used in a variety of marketable operations. Hyperledger (18) is now creating a marketable institute. Fabrics for blockchains. Ethereum has also made tools available for the creation of institute blockchain

III. ALGORITHMS OF CONSENSUS

How to gain agreement among untrustworthy bumps in blockchain is a revision of the intricate Generals (BG) Problem, which first stated in (20). A group of generals who command a piece of intricate home in the BG issue. The megacity is girdled by an army. Some commanders like to strike, while others prefer to withdraw. still, if only a portion of the generals attack the megacity, the attack will fail. As a result, they must decide whether to assault or retreat. It's delicate to achieve an agreement in a distributed setting. It's also a difficulty for blockchain because the network is scattered. There's no central knot in blockchain that assures distributed knot checks are all the same. Some procedures are needed to insure that checks in separate bumps are harmonious. harmonious. Following that, we will bandy numerous typical ways to reaching an agreement in blockchain.

3.1 Consensus Erecting Strategies

Pow (evidence of work) is a Bitcoin network agreement medium (2). Someone in a decentralised network has to be named to record the deals. The most straightforward system is arbitrary selection. Random selection, on the other hand, is open to assaults. So, if a knot wishes to publish a block of deals, it must first demonstrate that it's doubtful to attack the network. In utmost cases, the task entails computer calculations. In Pow, each network knot computes a hash value of the block title. Miners would routinely modify the nonce in the block title to get colourful hash values. When one knot reaches the thing value, it broadcasts the block to all other bumps, and the other bumps must mutually check the hash value's delicacy. If the stumbling block When this new block is vindicated, other miners will add it to their separate blockchains. Miners are bumps that calculate hash values, and the Pow fashion is known as mining in Bitcoin.

3.2 Comparison of agreement algorithms

Distinct agreement algorithms have different benefits and downsides. Table II compares several agreement ways, and we apply the features listed. by (32). • operation of knot individualities. PBFT must know the identity of each miner in order to choose a primary in each round, whereas Tender mint must know the validators in order to choose a proposer in each round. Bumps could fluently join the network for Pow, Po's, DPOS, and Ripple. • Energy conservation. Miners in Pow constantly hash the block title to attain the asked value. As a result, the volume of power needed to process has

soared. In the case of Po's and DPOS, miners must still hash the block title to get the target value, but the labour has been important dropped as the hunt space has grown. is intended to be confined. There's no mining in the agreement process for PBFT, Ripple, and Tender mint. As a result, it saves a lot of energy. • permitted opponent power.

TABLE II: Typical Consensus Algorithms Comparison

Property	PoW	PoS	PBFT	DPOS	Ripple	Tendermint
Node identity management	open	open	permissioned	open	open	permissioned
Energy saving	no	partial	yes	partial	yes	yes
Tolerated power of adversary	< 25% computing power	< 51% stake	< 33.3% faulty replicas	< 51% validators	< 20% faulty nodes in UNL	< 33.3% byzantine voting power
Example	Bitcoin [2]	Peercoin [21]	Hyperledger Fabric [18]	Bitshares [22]	Ripple [23]	Tendermint [24]

In general, 51 hash power is regarded as the threshold for gaining network control. still, selfish mining system (10) in Pow systems might let miners earn further plutocrat by using only 25 of the mincing power. Tender mint and PBFT are intended to manage up to one- third of imperfect bumps. Ripple has been shown to save delicacy if the number of conking bumps in a UNL is lower than 20. • Give an illustration. Bitcoin is a Pow cryptocurrency, whereas Peercoin is a new peer- to- peer Po's cryptocurrency. likewise, Hyperledger Fabric use PBFT to achieve agreement. DPOS is the agreement algorithm used by Bit shares, a smart contract platform. Ripple is a protocol perpetration. Tender mint is developing the Tender mint protocol. Tender mint and PBFT are permissioned protocols. Because knot IDs are supposed to be known by the whole network, they may be utilised commercially rather than intimately. Pow and Po's are applicable for public blockchains. An institute or private blockchain may elect PBFT, Tender mint, DPOS, or Ripple. Progress in agreement algorithms A good agreement algorithm is synonymous with effectiveness, safety, and ease. Several enterprises have lately been launched. to enhance agreement algorithms in blockchain. New agreement algorithms are being developed in order to handle specific blockchain enterprises. The abecedarian conception of Peer Census (33) is to separate block conformation and sale evidence in order to dramatically boost agreement performance. likewise, Kraft (34) presented a new agreement approach to ensure that a block is created at a generally harmonious pace. It's well understood that a high block product rate jeopardises Bitcoin's security. To address this issue, the Greedy Heaviest- Observed Sub-Tree (GHOST) chain selection rule (35) is suggested. rather of the longest branch system, GHOST weights the branches, and miners can pick which bones to use introduced a new agreement fashion for peer- to- peer blockchain systems in which the block is conceded to be generated by anybody who offers noninteractive substantiation of retrievability for previous state shots. Miners simply need to save outdated block heads rather of complete blocks in such a system.

IV. DIFFICULTIES AND RECENT ADVANCES

Despite its enormous pledge, blockchain faces colourful hurdles that hamper its wide use. We list some important problems and recent advances as follows:

4.1 Flexibility

The blockchain is getting decreasingly bloated as the number of deals increases. Each knot must keep all deals in order to validate them on the blockchain because they must determine whether or not the source of the current sale is unspent. likewise, due to the original limitation of block size and the time interval utilised to construct a new block, the Bitcoin blockchain can only reuse about 7 deals per second, falling short of the need of processing millions of deals in real-time. Meanwhile, because block capacity is limited, numerous minor deals may be delayed because miners prioritise deals with big sale volumes. figure. There have been several proffers to overcome the scalability issue of blockchain, which may be divided into two orders Blockchain storehouse optimization. Because it's more delicate for in order for each knot to operate a full dupe of the tally, Bruce proposed a revolutionary cryptocurrency system in which outdated sale records are deleted (or forgotten) by the network (37). The balance of everyone-empty addresses is stored in a database called account tree. A featherlight customer might potentially prop in the resolution of this issue. Blockchain is

being redesigned. Bitcoin- NG (Next Generation) was proposed in [39]. The abecedarian idea of Bitcoin- NG is to separate traditional blocks into two crucial blocks for leader election and macroblocks for sale storehouse. Time is divided into epochs by the protocol. Miners must hash to produce a crucial block in each time. Once the crucial block is formed, the knot is designated as the leader and is in charge of producing macroblocks. In addition, Bitcoin- NG extended the heaviest(longest) chain system, in which macroblocks have no weight.

4.2 Privacy Breach

Through the use of a public key and a private key, blockchain may maintain a certain level of anonymity. Users transact with their private and public keys without revealing their true identities. However, [40], [5] demonstrate that blockchain cannot ensure transactional privacy since the values of all transactions and balances for each public key are publicly available. Furthermore, recent research [41] shown that a person's Bitcoin transactions may be connected to expose user information. Furthermore, Biryukov et al. [11] described a method for linking user pseudonyms to IP addresses even when users are behind NAT or firewalls. In [11], each client is individually identifiable by the nodes to which it connects. Several strategies for improving blockchain anonymity have been proposed, which may be broadly classified into two types:

A. Blending

Users' addresses on blockchain are pseudonymous. However, because many users make regular transactions with the same address, it is still feasible to link addresses to their actual identities. Mixing services enable anonymity by sending cash from several input addresses to multiple output addresses. For example, user Alice with address A would like to send money to Bob with address B. If Alice conducts a transaction with input address A and output address B directly, the relationship between Alice and Bob may be disclosed. As a result, Alice might transmit payments to Carol, a trusted middleman.

B. Anonymous

Zero-knowledge proof is utilised in Zero coin [46]. Miners are not required to validate a transaction with a digital signature, but they must validate currencies that belong to the transaction. a list of valid coins. To avoid transaction graph analysis, the origin of payments is decoupled from transactions. However, it still shows the location and quantity of money. To remedy this issue, zero cash [47] was proposed. Zero-knowledge Succinct Non-interactive Arguments of Knowledge (ski-SNARKs) are used in Zero cash. The sums of transactions and the values of coins owned by users are concealed.

4.3 Mining for the sake of mining

Blockchain is vulnerable to assaults by selfish miners working together. Eyal and Sirer [10], in particular, demonstrated that the network is susceptible even if just a tiny amount of the hashing power is utilised to cheat. In a selfish mining technique, selfish miners hold their mined blocks without broadcasting them, and the secret branch is exposed to the public only if certain conditions are met. Because the private branch is longer than the current public chain, all miners would accept it. Prior to the publication of the private blockchain, honest miners are squandering their energy on a worthless branch, while greedy miners are mining their private chain without competition. As a result, selfish miners likely to earn more money. Many more attacks have been developed based on selfish mining to demonstrate that blockchain is not that safe. Miners in obstinate mining [48] might significantly increase their profit. Mining attacks are combined with network-level eclipse assaults. The trail-stubbornness is a stubborn method used by miners to continue mining blocks even after the private chain is left behind. However, in other circumstances, it can result in 13% advantages over a non-trail-stubborn equivalent. [49] demonstrates that selfish mining tactics generate more money and are more profitable for smaller miners than plain selfish mining. However, the advantages are minor. Furthermore, it demonstrates that even attackers with less than 25% of the computing resources can benefit from selfish mining.

V. FUTURE POSSIBLE DIRECTIONS

Blockchain has demonstrated its utility in industry and academics. We address potential future possibilities in four areas: blockchain testing, preventing centralization, big data analytics, and blockchain application.

5.1 Blockchain evaluation

Various types of blockchains have recently emerged, and over 700 cryptocurrencies are now listed in [52]. However, some developers may fake their blockchain performance in order to attract investors who are motivated by large profits. Furthermore, when consumers wish to integrate blockchain into their businesses, they must first choose which blockchain best meets their needs. As a result, a blockchain testing method is required to test various blockchains. Blockchain testing might be divided into two stages: standardisation and testing. All criteria must be developed and agreed upon during the standardisation process. When the blockchain is born, it may be validated using the agreed-upon criteria to see if it functions as well as the creators promise. In terms of the testing process, blockchain testing must be conducted using several criteria. For example, if a user in charge of an online retail firm is concerned about blockchain throughput, the inspection must test the average time from a user sending a transaction to the transaction being packed into the blockchain, capacity for a blockchain block, and so on.

5.2 Put a stop to the drive toward centralization.

Blockchain is intended to be a decentralised system. However, there is a trend toward centralization of miners in the mining pool. Currently, the top five mining pools possess more than 51% of the total hash power in the Bitcoin network [53]. Aside from that, selfish mining approach [10] demonstrated that pools with more than 25% of total processing capacity might earn more than fair share. Rational miners would be drawn into the selfish pool, and the pool might eventually approach 51% of total power. Because the blockchain is not meant to serve a few enterprises, some solutions to this problem should be presented.

5.3 Analytics based on big data

Blockchain and big data might work nicely together. We divided the combinations into two types here: data management and data analytics. Because blockchain is distributed and secure, it might be utilised to store crucial data. Blockchain might also confirm that the data is authentic. For example, if blockchain is used to store patients' health information, the information cannot be changed with and is difficult to steal. When it comes to data analytics, blockchain transactions might be employed for big data analytics.

5.4 Applications based on blockchain

Currently, the majority of blockchains are employed in the financial sphere; however, more and more applications for various industries are arising. Traditional industries might investigate blockchain and use it into their domains to improve their processes. User reputations, for example, might be kept on blockchain. At the same time, the emerging industry may employ blockchain to boost performance. For example, Arcade City [51], a ridesharing business, uses blockchain technology to create an open marketplace where riders may interact directly with drivers. A smart contract is a computerised transaction mechanism that performs a contract's provisions [54]. It has been advocated for a long time, and finally it may be executed. A smart contract is a code snippet in blockchain that may be performed automatically by miners. Smart contracts have the potential to change several industries, including finance and IoT.

VI. CONCLUSION

With its essential qualities of decentralisation, persistence, anonymity, and auditability, blockchain has demonstrated its potential to revolutionise established industries. We offer a complete review of blockchain in this article. We begin by providing an overview of blockchain technology, covering blockchain architecture and fundamental blockchain properties. The typical consensus algorithms utilised in blockchain are then discussed. We examined and contrasted these techniques in a variety of ways. Furthermore, we identified key hurdles and concerns that might stymie blockchain development and reviewed some existing solutions to these issues. Some potential future directions are also suggested. Blockchain-based apps are becoming increasingly popular, and we want to perform further research on them in the future.

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