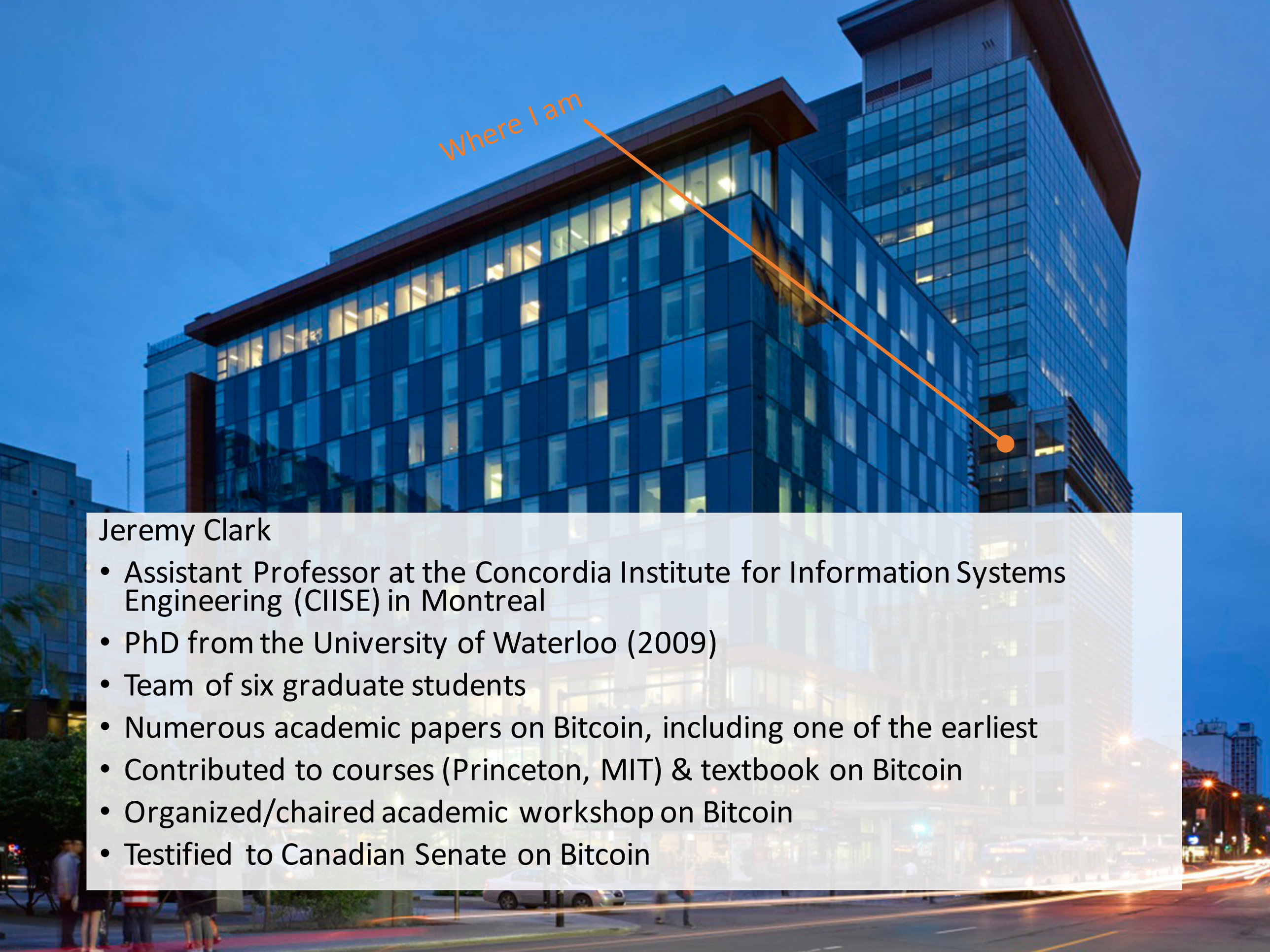
Ledgers: Past, Present, Future

Jeremy Clark



Jeremy Clark

- Assistant Professor at the Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering (CIISE) in Montreal
- PhD from the University of Waterloo (2009)
- Team of six graduate students
- Numerous academic papers on Bitcoin, including one of the earliest
- Contributed to courses (Princeton, MIT) & textbook on Bitcoin
- Organized/chaired academic workshop on Bitcoin
- Testified to Canadian Senate on Bitcoin

cryptocurrency

Bitcoin's Academic Pedigree

THE CONCEPT OF CRYPTOCURRENCIES IS BUILT FROM FORGOTTEN IDEAS IN RESEARCH LITERATURE

ARVIND NARAYANAN AND JEREMY CLARK

If you've read about bitcoin in the press and have some familiarity with academic research in the field of cryptography, you might reasonably come away with the following impression: Several decades' worth of research on digital cash, beginning with David Chaum,[1,2] did not lead to commercial success because it required a centralized, banklike server controlling the system, and no banks wanted to sign on. Along came bitcoin, a radically different proposal for a decentralized cryptocurrency that didn't need the banks, and digital cash finally succeeded. Its inventor, the mysterious Satoshi Nakamoto, was an academic outsider, and bitcoin bears no resemblance to earlier academic proposals.

This article challenges that view by showing that nearly all of the technical components of bitcoin originated in the academic literature of the 1980s and '90s (see figure

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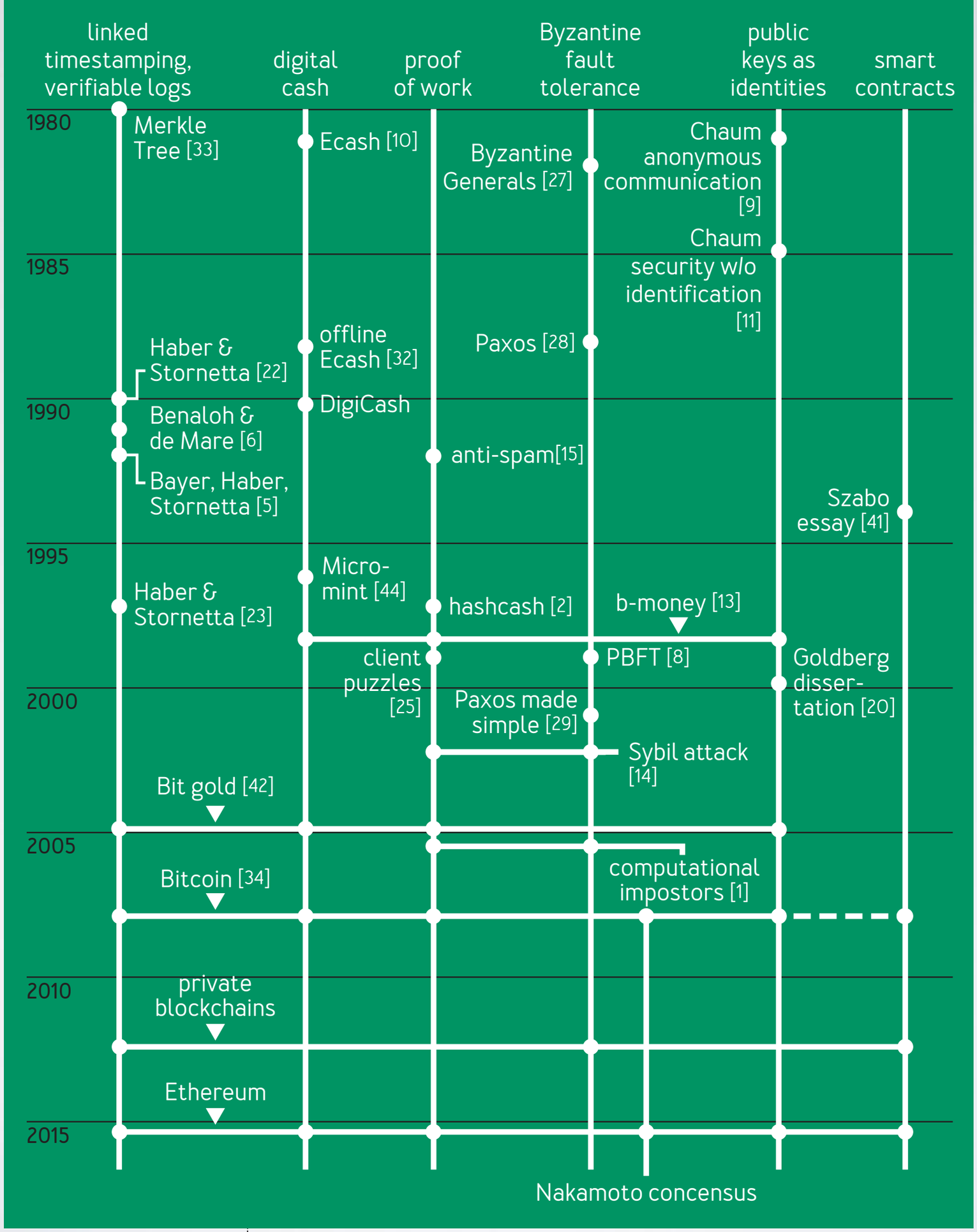
linked timestamping, verifiable logs
digital cash
proof of work
Byzantine fault tolerance
public keys as identities
smart contracts
1980
1985
1990
1995
2000
2005
2010
2015
Merkle Tree [33]
Ecash [10]
Byzantine Generals [27]
Chaum anonymous communication [9]
Chaum security w/o identification [11]
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Bitcoin [34]
private blockchains
Ethereum
Nakamoto concensus

Ledgers

Used historically to record credits
Eventually augmented with coins

Linked time-stamping

Proposed in the early 90's
Provides a data-log that is append-only
Integrity (not confidentiality)

Digital Cash

Proposed in the 1980s
Much interest in the 90s

ACC
Agora
AIMP
Allopass
b-money
BankNet
Bitbit
Bitgold
Bitpass
C-SET
CAFÉ
CheckFree
ClickandBuy
ClickShare
ComerceNet
CommercePOINT
CommerceSTAGE
Cybank
CyberCash
CyberCents
CyberCoin
CyberGold
DigiGold
Digigold
Digital Silk Road
e-Comm
E-Gold
Ecash
eCharge
eCoin
Edd
eVend
First Virtual
FSTC Electronic Check
Geldkarte
Globe Left
Hashcash
HINDE
iBill
iKP
IMB-MP
InterCoin
Ipin
Javien
Karma
LotteryTickets
Lucre
MagicMoney
Mandate
MicroMint
Micromoney
MilliCent
Mini-Pay
Minitix
MobileMoney
Mojo
Mollie
Mondex
MPTP
Net900
NetBill
NetCard
NetCash
NetCheque
NetFare
No3rd
One Click Charge
PayMe
PayNet
PayPal
PaySafeCard
PayTrust
PayWord
Peppercoin
PhoneTicks
Playspan
Polling
Proton
Redi-Charge
S/PAY
Sandia Lab E-Cash
Secure Courier
Semopo
SET
SET2Go
SubScrip
Trivnet
TUB
Twitpay
VeriFone
VisaCash
Wallie
Way2Pay
WorldPay
X-Pay

Digital Cash

Proposed in the 1980s
Much interest in the 90s
Traditionally focused on digital coins
Bitcoin: ledger-based money

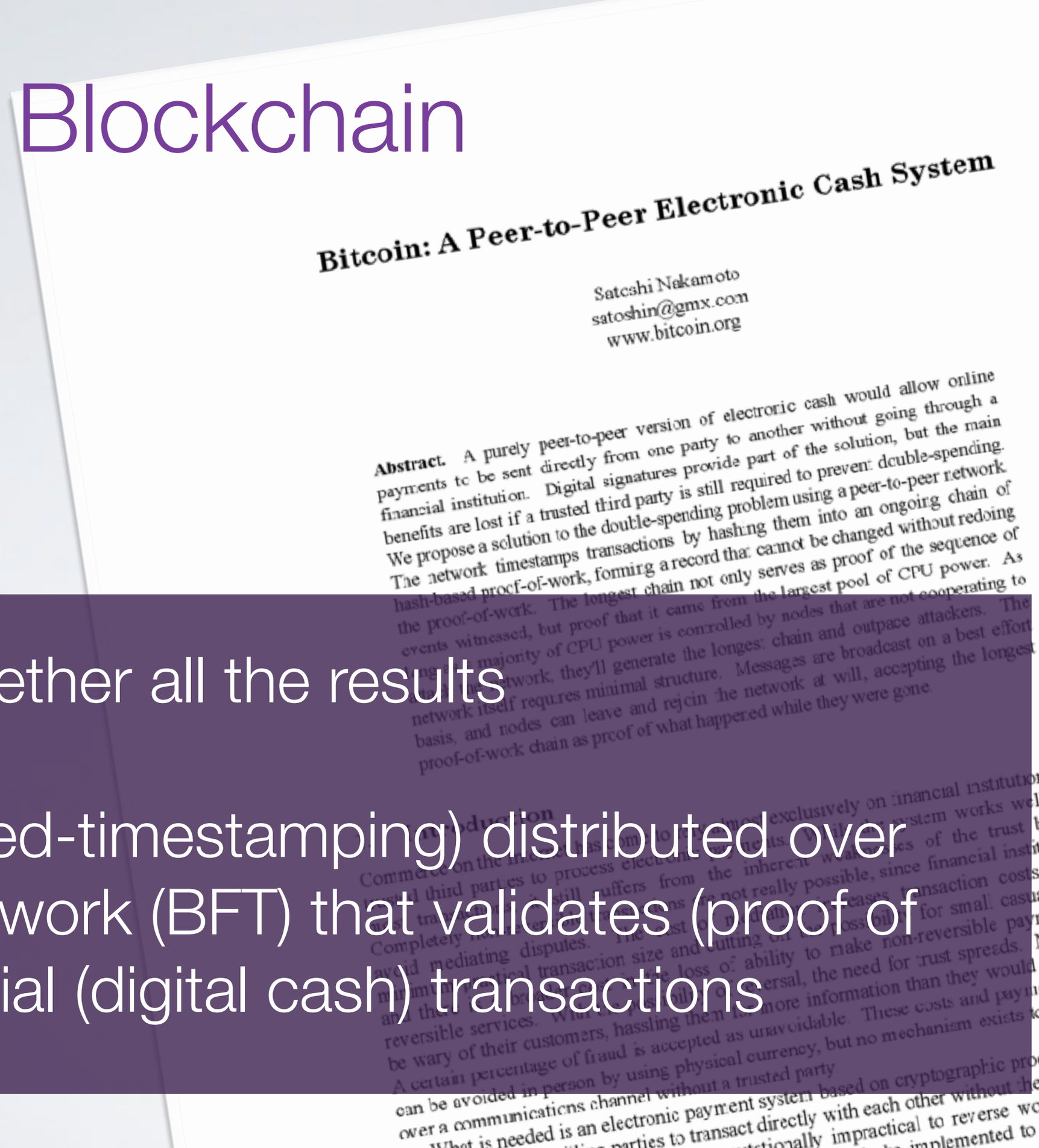
Byzantine Fault Tolerance

Distributed network anyone can join
Agree on ledger updates by voting
One vote per _____ ?

Proof of work

An amount of computational effort
Postage stamp for email
Voting in an open network

Bitcoin's Blockchain


Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System

Satoshi Nakamoto
satoshin@gmx.com
www.bitcoin.org

Abstract. A purely peer-to-peer version of electroric cash would allow online payments tc be sent directly from one party to another without going through a financial institution. Digital signatures provide part of the solution, but the main benefits are lost if a trusted third party is still required to prevent double-spending. We propose a solution to the double-spending problem using a peer-to-peer network. The network timestamps transactions by hashing them into an ongoing chain of hash-based proof-of-work, forming a record that cannot be changed without redoing the proof-of-work. The longest chain not only serves as proof of the sequence of events witnessed, but proof that it came from the largest pool of CPU power. As long as a majority of CPU power is controlled by nodes that are not cooperating to attack the network, they'll generate the longest chain and outpace attackers. The network itself requires minimal structure. Messages are broadcast on a best effort basis, and nodes can leave and rejoin the network at will, accepting the longest proof-of-work chain as proof of what happened while they were gone.

Weaves together all the results

Ledger (linked-timestamping) distributed over an open network (BFT) that validates (proof of work) financial (digital cash) transactions

Future Distributed Ledgers

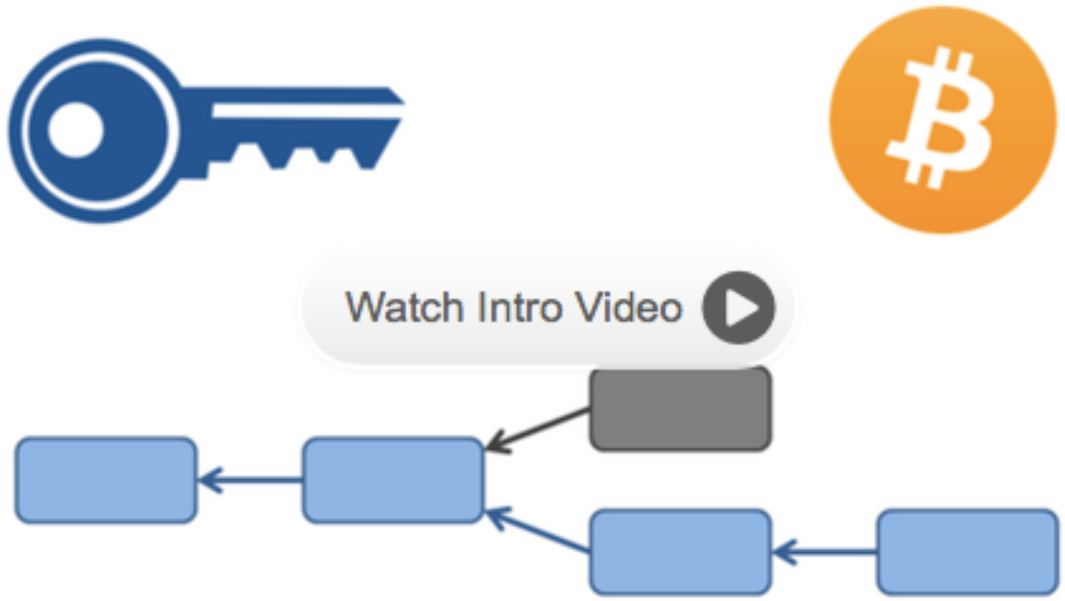
Ledgers for running code (smart contracts)
Remove the proof of work (permissioned)
Layering on confidentiality

More resources

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Bitcoin and Cryptocurrency Technologies

There's a lot of excitement about Bitcoin, but also a lot of confusion about what Bitcoin is and how it works. We're offering this course focusing on the computer science behind Bitcoin to help cut through the hype and get to the core of what makes Bitcoin unique.



About the Course

To really understand what is special about Bitcoin, we need to understand how it works at a technical level. We'll address the important questions about Bitcoin, such as:

How does Bitcoin work? What makes Bitcoin different? How secure are your Bitcoins? How anonymous are Bitcoin users? What determines the price of Bitcoins? Can cryptocurrencies be regulated? What might the future hold?

After this course, you'll know everything you need to be able to separate fact from fiction when reading claims about Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies. You'll have the conceptual foundations you need to engineer secure software that interacts with the Bitcoin network. And you'll be able to integrate ideas from Bitcoin in your own

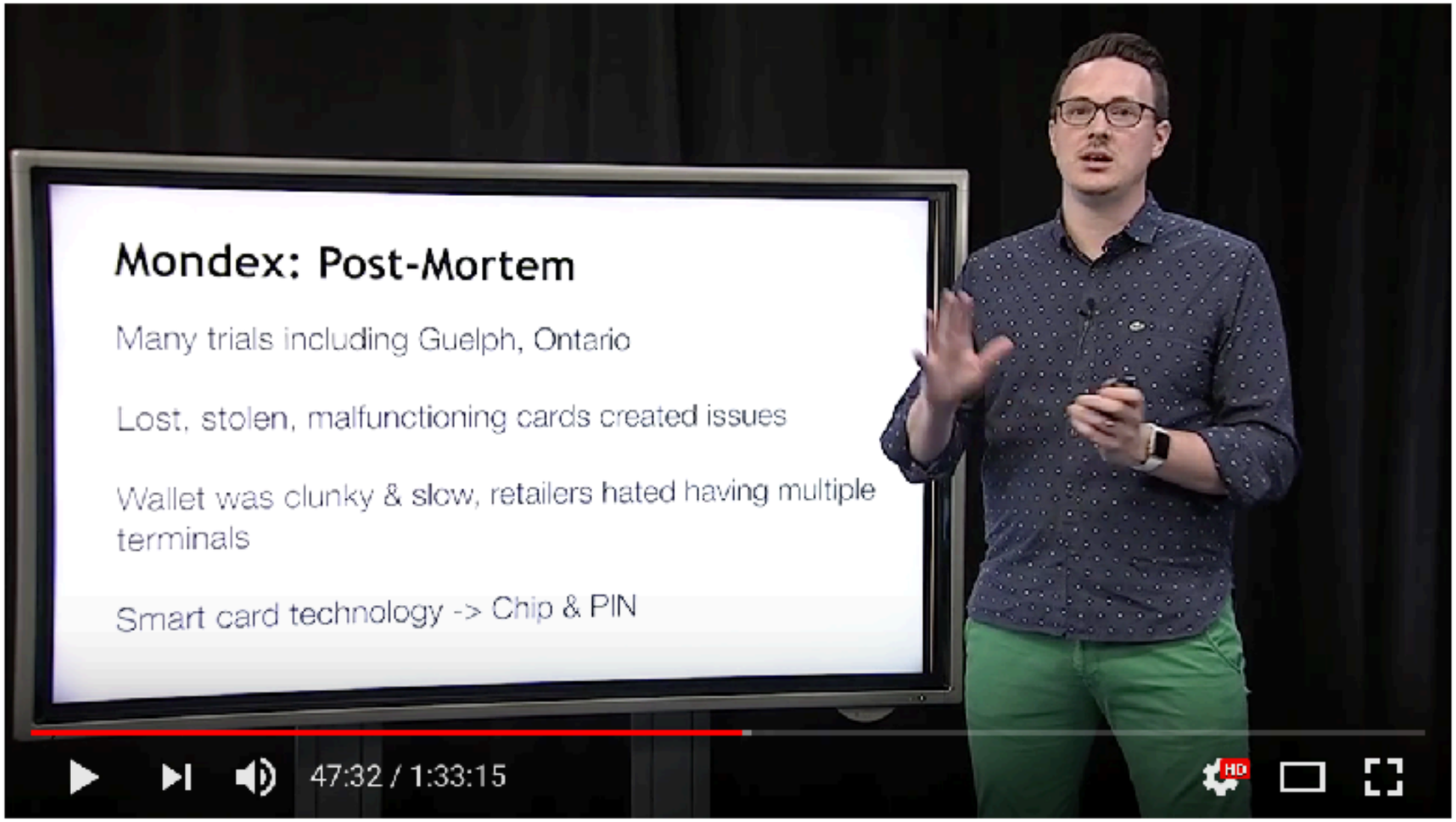
Sessions

September 4, 2015 - April 22, 2016

Go to Course

Course at a Glance

- 7 weeks of study
- 3-6 hours/week
- English



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Bitcoin and Cryptocurrency Technologies

Arvind Narayanan, Joseph Bonneau, Edward Felten,
Andrew Miller, Steven Goldfeder

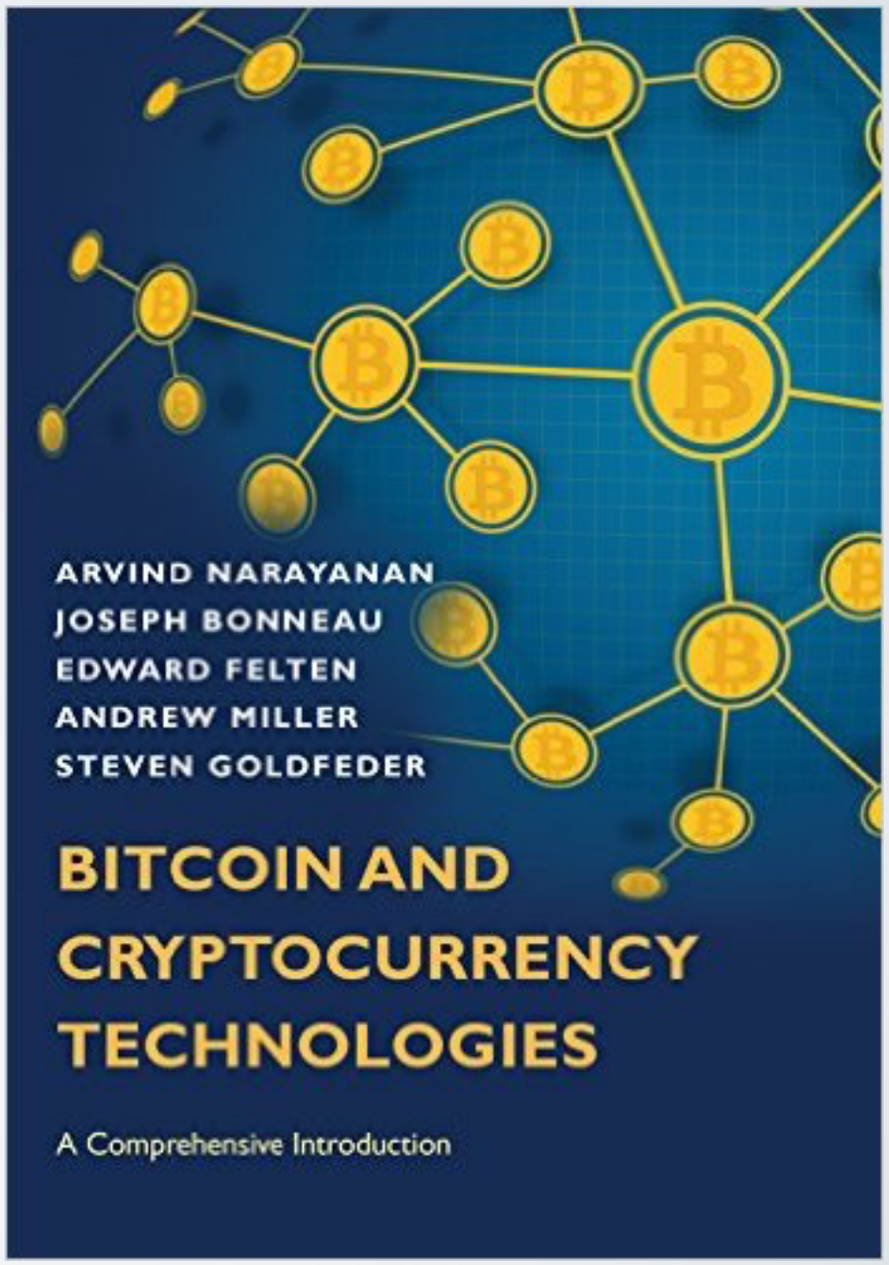
with a preface by Jeremy Clark

Draft — Feb 9, 2016

Feedback welcome! Email bitcoinbook@lists.cs.princeton.edu

For the latest draft and supplementary materials including programming assignments, see our Coursera course.

The official version of this book will be published by Princeton University Press in 2016. If you'd like to be notified when it's available, please sign up here.



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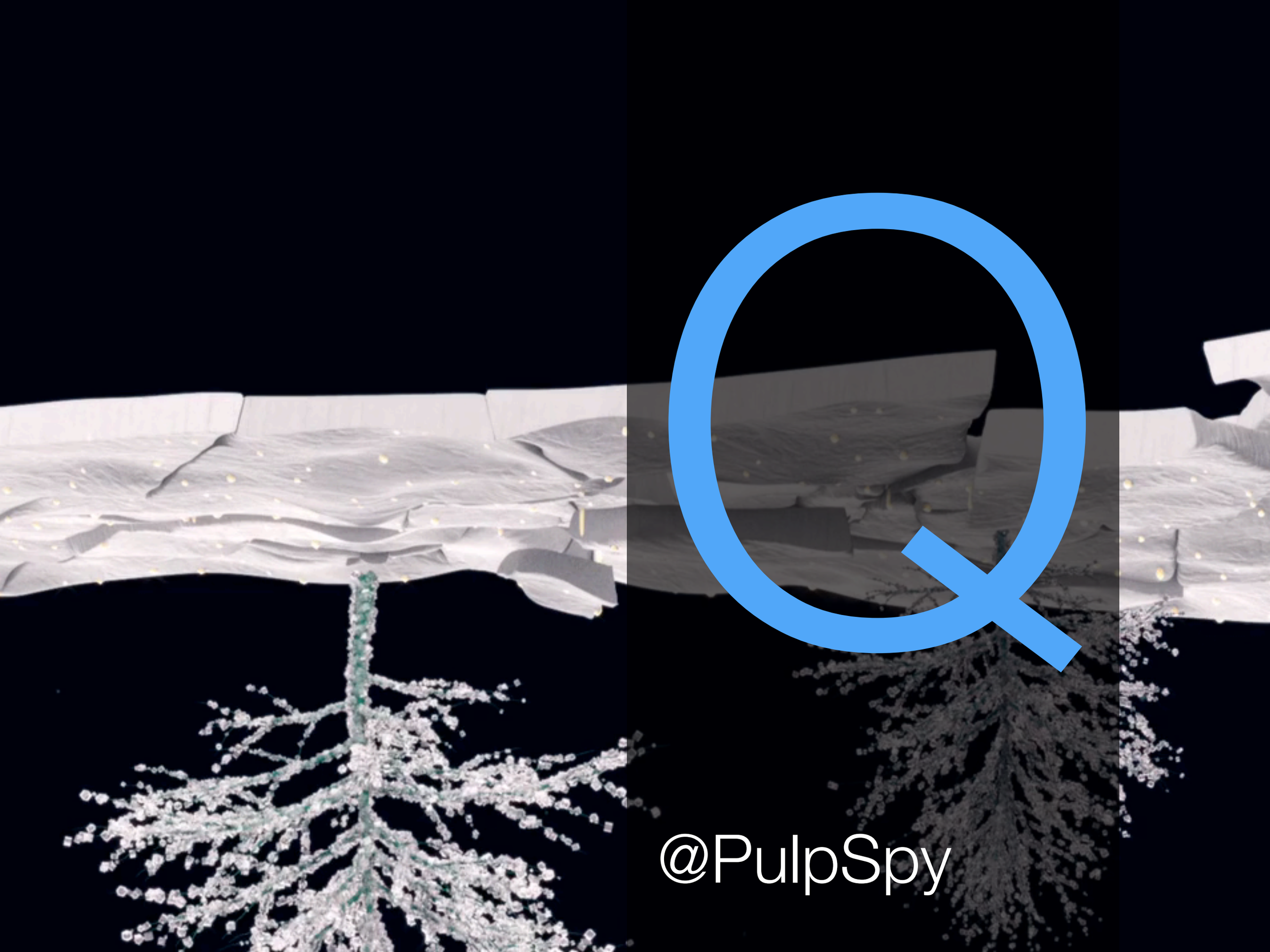
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