



BLOCKCHAIN AND THE LAW

Harvard University Press, 2018

Since Bitcoin appeared in 2009, the digital currency has been hailed as an Internet marvel and decried as the preferred transaction vehicle for all manner of criminals. It has left nearly everyone without a computer science degree confused: Just how do you “mine” money from ones and zeros?

The answer lies in a technology called blockchain, which can be used for much more than Bitcoin. A general-purpose tool for creating secure, decentralized, peer-to-peer applications, blockchain technology has been compared to the Internet itself in both form and impact. Some have said this tool may change society as we know it. Blockchains are being used to create autonomous computer programs known as “smart contracts,” to expedite payments, to create financial instruments, to organize the exchange of data and information, and to facilitate interactions between humans and machines. The technology could affect governance itself, by supporting new organizational structures that promote more democratic and participatory decision making.

“Blockchain and the Law should be required reading for anyone serious about understanding this major emerging element of our technological ecosystem.”

—*Yochai Benkler, author of The Wealth of Networks.*

“A well-written and comprehensive book that cuts through the blockchain hype. It not only highlights the powers and limitations of blockchain technology, but solidly grounds it in a larger social and legal context.”

—*Bruce Schneier, author of Data and Goliath.*

“Blockchain and the Law perfectly links technical understanding with practical and legal implications. Blockchains will matter crucially; this book, beautifully and clearly written for a wide audience, powerfully demonstrates how.”

—*Lawrence Lessig, Harvard Law School.*



June 13th, 2018

16:00-17:30

Please join us to a thought-provoking book discussion:

Blockchain and the Law: The Role of Code

Authors: Primavera De Filippi and Aaron Wright

Harvard University Press, 2018

Blockchain and the Law urges the legal systems to catch up. That is because disintermediation—a blockchain’s greatest asset—subverts critical regulation. By cutting out middlemen, such as large online operators and multinational corporations, blockchains run the risk of undermining the capacity of governmental authorities to supervise activities in banking, commerce, law, and other vital areas. De Filippi and Wright welcome the new possibilities inherent in blockchains. But as *Blockchain and the Law* makes clear, the technology cannot be harnessed productively without new rules and new approaches to legal thinking.

Location: **WZB Berlin Social Science Center**

PROGRAM

Chair

Liav Orgad (WZB, IDC, EUI)

16.00 – 16.30

Book Talk

Primavera de Filippi (CNRS Paris, Harvard)

16.30 – 17.00

Discussants

Jeanette Hofmann (WZB Berlin)

Lawrence Lessig (Harvard Law School)

17.00 – 17.30

Q&A