

Note From The Editor

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It has been a particularly exciting year in the blockchain technology space. Interest in blockchain technology has been growing continually since Bitcoin was unleashed on the world, but 2017 will be remembered, I believe, as a year of unusually rapid growth.

This year's volume of *Ledger* continues to exemplify the interdisciplinary nature of blockchain research. From computer science and game theory (see, "Equihash: Asymmetric Proof-of-Work Based on the Generalized Birthday Problem" by Alex Biryukov and Dmitry Khovratovich, and "Bitcoin Mining as a Contest" by Nicola Dimitri), to education research and political science (see, "From Smileys to Smileycoins: Using a Cryptocurrency in Education" by Gunnar Stefansson and Jamie Lentin, and "What Diplomacy in the Ancient Near East Can Tell Us About Blockchain Technology" by Chris Berg). In this issue we even have an article about the use of cryptocurrencies to help fund scientific research (see "Funding Science with Science: Cryptocurrency and Independent Academic Research Funding" by Edward Lehner, Dylan Hunzeker, and John R. Ziegler).

What you do not see in this year's volume are all of the interactions among academics and scholars in disparate fields who are only beginning to discover each other. There have been several new centers of blockchain research announced this year at universities around the globe. Whereas entrepreneurs and investors were quick to network with each other in the early years, we academics have been making cross-disciplinary connections at a more measured pace. Nevertheless, we are optimistic about the formation of new blockchain-focused academic communities in 2018. We are also very excited about numerous developments this year that are yet to be published, be on the lookout for them!

As we did last year, we would like to thank our authors who spent countless hours writing the content and then choosing to submit their work to such a new journal. We would like to thank, again, the many reviewers that lent their expertise and time to critically read submissions and give feedback (which, as a reminder, you are able to read as our reviews are transparently provided along with the published articles). Credit is due, in large quantities, to our nearly-all-volunteer editorial team, who find the time at the margins (e.g., on the road, in between meetings, and at very late hours at night) to put this volume together. We are also very grateful for our extremely distinguished editorial board, which continues to grow and whose guidance continues to be invaluable. The journal, which is open access (free to read) and which does not charge author fees (free to publish), would not be possible without the support of our publisher: the University Library System of the University of Pittsburgh. Finally, we are extremely thankful for financial support from the Bitcoin Unlimited Community Organization and from Coin Center.

Yours,

Christopher E. Wilmer, Co-Managing Editor
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Peter R. Rizun, Co-Managing Editor
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