

Researchers uncover likely creator of Bitcoin

April 18 2014



The primary author of the celebrated Bitcoin paper, and therefore probable creator of Bitcoin, is most likely Nick Szabo, a blogger and former George Washington University law professor, according to students and researchers at Aston University's Centre for Forensic Linguistics (UK).

Their research also challenges the claim that Dorian S. Nakamoto is the main author of the paper, an assertion made in Newsweek last month that has been strongly denied by Mr Nakamoto.

The study, nicknamed 'Project Bitcoin', was undertaken by a team of 40 final-year forensic linguistics students led by Dr Jack Grieve, Lecturer in Forensic Linguistics at Aston University. It looked at linguistic similarities between the Bitcoin [cryptocurrency](#) paper and the writing of eleven other individuals that are regularly referred to as possible authors: Dorian S. Nakamoto, Vili Lehdonvirta, Michael Clear, Shinichi Mochizuki, Gavin Andresen, Nick Szabo, Jed McCaleb, Dustin D. Trammel, Hal Finney, Wei Dai, and Neal King, Vladimir Oksman & Charles Bry.

Bitcoin is an internet-based virtual currency which allows users to buy goods and services online. The payment system, introduced in 2009, is supposedly easier and safer than sending money via more traditional means. Using Bitcoin to pay for items also means avoiding credit card, foreign exchange or cash handling fees.

Dr Grieve said: "The number of linguistic similarities between Szabo's writing and the Bitcoin paper is uncanny, none of the other possible authors were anywhere near as good of a match. We are pretty confident that out of the list of people regularly referred to as possibilities, Nick Szabo is the main author of the paper, though we can't rule out the possibility that others contributed.

"Our study adds to the weight of evidence pointing towards Nick Szabo. The case looks pretty clear-cut. Szabo is an expert in law, finance, cryptography and computer science. He created 'bit gold', a precursor to Bitcoin, and was looking for collaborators in 2008. Did Nick Szabo create Bitcoin? We're not sure, but we think he probably wrote the paper so it's certainly worth a closer look."

The results showed that of the eleven Szabo is by far the closest match, with a large number of distinctive linguistic traits appearing in both the Bitcoin paper and Szabo's blogs and other writings. This includes the use

of: the phrases "chain of...", "trusted third parties", "for our purposes", "need for...", "still", "of course", "as long as", "such as" and "only" numerous times, contractions, commas before 'and' and 'but', hyphenation, '-ly' adverbs, the pronouns 'we' and 'our' in papers by a single author; fragmented sentences following colons and reflexive (-self) pronouns.

In total hundreds of documents written by the eleven possible authors were considered, including over 40 academic papers written by Szabo which are available on his personal website.

The study also questioned why the most-cited textual feature of the Bitcoin paper is the fact that it contains double spaces after full stops. The Bitcoin paper was drafted using Latex, an open source document preparation system. Without the base .tex for the Bitcoin paper, which is not available, researchers are unable to tell if the author double spaces between sentences. However, the study noted that Szabo uses Latex for all his publications.

Provided by Aston University

Citation: Researchers uncover likely creator of Bitcoin (2014, April 18) retrieved 20 March 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2014-04-uncover-creator-bitcoin.html>

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