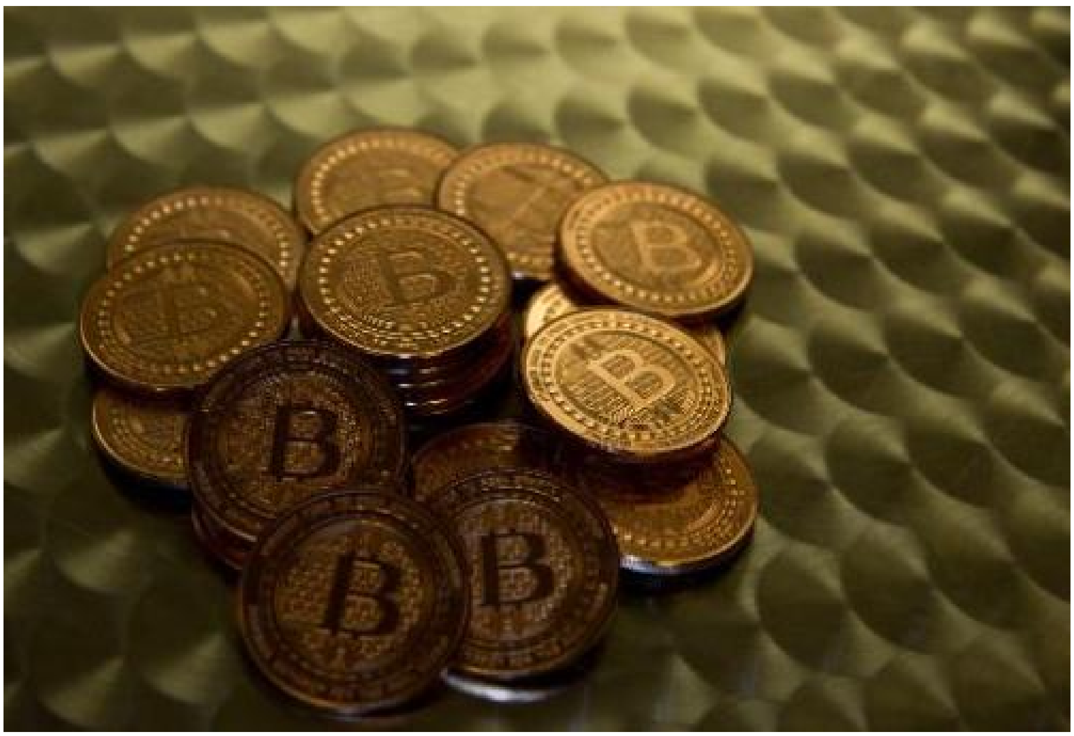
Coinbase taking Bitcoin wallet platform to Europe

September 10 2014, by Glenn Chapman



Coinbase is taking its Bitcoin wallet to Europe with an aim of enticing more people there to use the digital currency, which it touts as the world's most widely used alternative currency, with about $5.3 billion worth of it in virtual circulation

San Francisco-based Coinbase is taking its Bitcoin wallet to Europe with an aim of enticing more people there to use the digital currency.

Coinbase on Wednesday launched in 13 European countries, including

France, Spain, Italy, Belgium and the Netherlands.

"While US adoption is trending strong, Bitcoin offerings in other markets have not been as easily accessible to the average person," Coinbase said in a statement.

"We are looking to change this."

More than 1.6 million customer accounts have been opened at Coinbase since it was founded in June 2012, the company says.

A reported 36,000 merchants are using Coinbase.

People will be able to open accounts to buy Bitcoin from, or sell it to, Coinbase in euro-backed transactions connected to authorized European bank accounts.

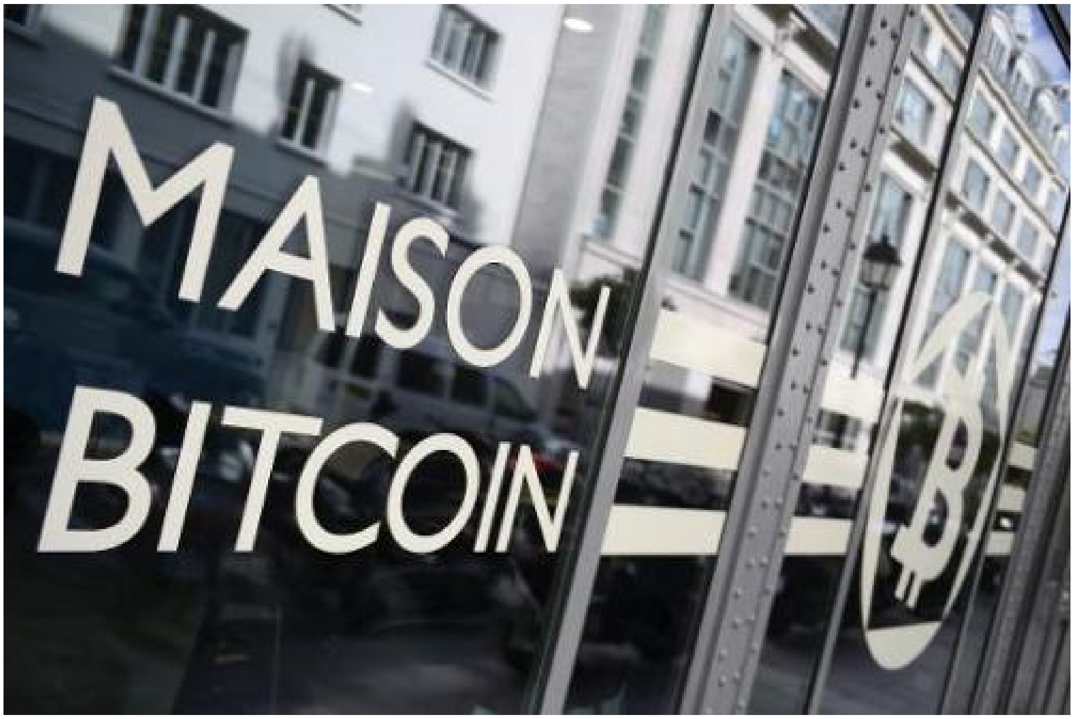
During a test period at the outset of the launch, Coinbase will limit customers to 500 euros worth of Bitcoin transactions daily.

The digital wallet platform touted Bitcoin as the world's most widely used alternative currency, with about $5.3 billion worth of it in virtual circulation.

"Allowing consumers the ability to buy from and sell Bitcoin to Coinbase in these additional countries is a major step for the entire Bitcoin community," the company said, adding that it is hoping to expand to more countries soon.

MtGox collapse

The British government in August expressed plans to further explore the potential of digital currencies such as Bitcoin.



La Maison du Bitcoin in Paris on June 20, 2014

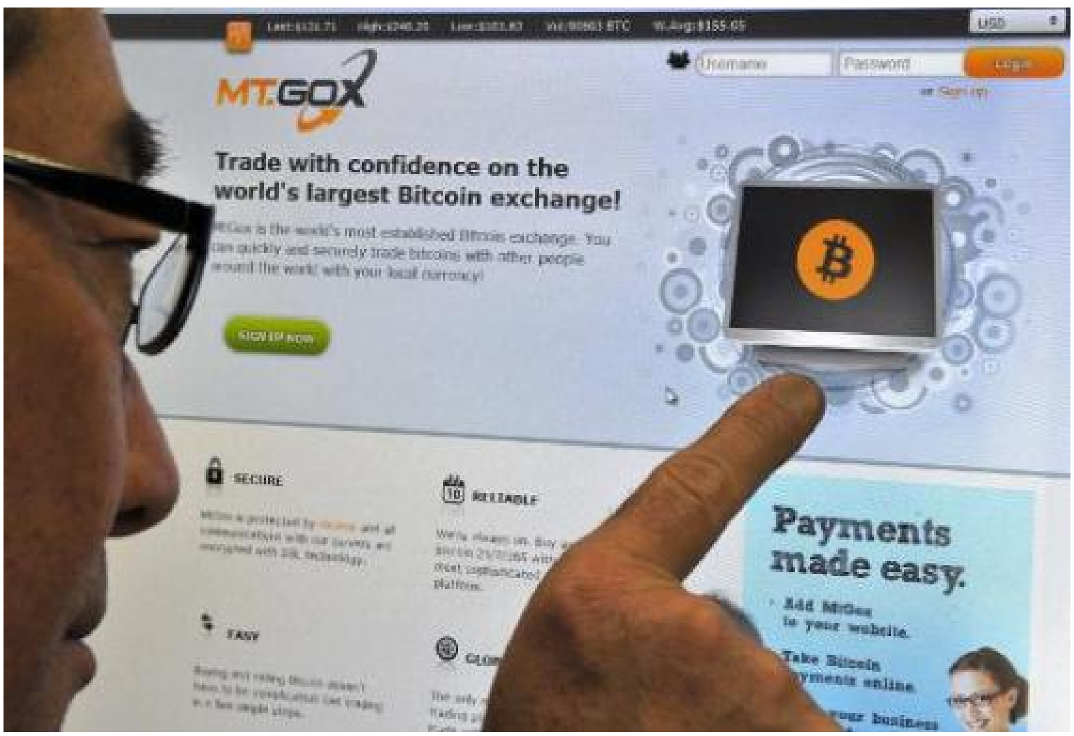
Bitcoin—a virtual currency that can be used to pay for goods from a computer or mobile device—is not currently subject to legislation.

Several countries have warned users of the risks associated with Bitcoin, such as their susceptibility to fraud because of the difficulty of tracing transactions.

Bitcoin investors voiced anger in July after the first creditors' meeting for failed Tokyo trading exchange MtGox, whose spectacular collapse hammered the digital currency's reputation and left a trail of unanswered questions.

More than 100 investors, mostly expatriates, attended the meeting at a courthouse in the Japanese capital, demanding to know how some $500 million worth of Bitcoin disappeared from the disgraced company's digital vaults earlier this year.

People who attended the meeting said former MtGox chief Mark Karpeles and a court-appointed lawyer managing the firm's bankruptcy proceedings gave no clear answer about what happened to their money.



A man looking at the bitcoin exchange website MtGox in Tokyo on February 25, 2014

Bitcoins are generated by complex chains of interactions among a huge network of computers around the planet and are not backed by any government or central bank.

MtGox, which once boasted handling around 80 percent of global Bitcoin transactions, froze withdrawals in February. It claimed there was a bug in the software that underpins the virtual currency, making it vulnerable to thieves.

It soon filed for bankruptcy protection, saying it had lost 850,000 units of the crypto-currency valued at some $500 million at the time.

The company later said it had found about 200,000 of them in a "cold wallet"—a storage device such as a memory stick that is not connected to other computers.

Some creditors still expressed confidence in the future of digital currencies despite the huge blow to Bitcoin's reputation.

© 2014 AFP

Citation: Coinbase taking Bitcoin wallet platform to Europe (2014, September 10) retrieved 24 April 2024 from https://phys.org/news/2014-09-coinbase-bitcoin-wallet-platform-europe.html

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.