

*Inaugural “Blacksburg Symposium” on the Political Economy of Financial Technologies*

**The Blacksburg Blockchain Symposium**

Disruption, Digitization, and Resilience

Friday April 20th, 2018

8.30am – 2.00pm

Location:

Goodwin Hall

Address 1.

Blacksburg, Virginia 24061, USA

*If we want things to stay as they are, things will have to change.*

Il Gattopardo by Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

The blockchain technology, and its most prominent application, the digital currency Bitcoin, are challenging the relationship between trust and authority. In many large communities and organizations, generating trust often requires a central authority figure, such a government. With the advent of this technology, trust can be achieved in a decentralized manner. There is thus an increasing need to address the economic, social, and political implications of this technology. With the inaugural “Blacksburg Symposium” on the political economy of financial technologies, we seek to foster a dialogue among entrepreneurs, policymakers, and academics to determine the emerging questions, problems, and dilemmas created by the blockchain technology.

Home to a diverse group of tech entrepreneurs, a top tier research institution with international experts in computer science, engineering, and political economy and a strong link between the university and business communities, Blacksburg, Virginia has witnessed the development of many blockchains, cryptocurrencies, and related applications. Situated within this singular community, the Global Forum on Urban and Regional Resilience of Virgina Tech is hosting the first “Blacksburg Blockchain Symposium” with the goal of exploring today’s socio-economic and regulatory challenges emerging around the blockchain, and how this new technology could both disrupt the status quo and enhance the resilience of financial and political systems.

The event will be divided into three main components: a welcoming dinner, a one-day conference involving local blockchain entrepreneurs, policymakers, and academics, and a student-led “idea-based” hackathon.

