

"Early in life I had noticed that no event is ever correctly reported in a newspaper..." — George Orwell

### **Bitcoin Prediction Markets**

Getting Politicians to work harder, by getting voters to act lazier.

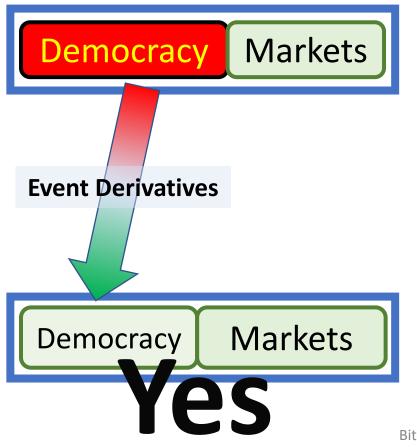


#### About Me

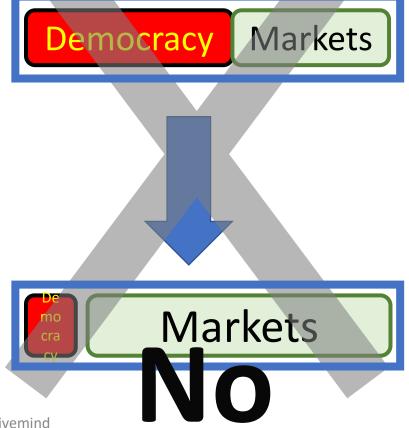
- Southern CT
- Case Western: BA Economics, MS Applied Math, MBA
- Consulting
- Yale Econ Department, Statistician, pre-PhD
- Bitcoin
  - Truthcoin.info blog,
  - Scaling Bitcoin I, II, III and IV; TABconf, BoB, Bitcoin2019.

#### Improvement; NOT Replacement

#### <u>Improvement</u>



# Replacement



### Talk, in One Slide

- Problem: Politicians are installing bad policies into society, and getting away with it.
- **Solution:** Make it easy to: detect imperfect politicians, and fire them asap.

 Specifically: Create blockchain assets whose ultimate valuation reflects politician's competence. Citizens glance at spot prices, just before voting.

#### For Example, Voter might see:

Average, over years 2020-2024	Incumbent Party	Rival Party
Total Government Spending (\$/person)	\$12,568	\$10,407 better
Total Money Earned by all Citizens (\$ billions)	\$16,427	\$17,009 Slightly better
Total Deaths, all causes (thousands of people)	2,917	2,901 basically the same

## Agenda

- 1. Background
- 2. Electoral Feedback
- 3. Event Derivatives
- 4. Synthesis
- 5. Getting Everyone to Trade and to Care

#### Background Knowledge

- 1. Idea has intellectual history.
- 2. (At least) one decent project exists.
- 3. No ICO, No Utility Token

#### Name-Dropping: Finney, Merkle

#### Intrade's Conditional Prediction Markets

By Hal Finney · July 29, 2008 7:14 pm · @ Comments (24) · « Prev · Next »

We have often discussed the possible benefits of prediction markets for reducing bias. One key element that could be particularly useful is a conditional prediction market, where betting claims are based on outcomes conditional on some factor we want to evaluate. Robin recently mentioned the possible benefit from <u>market claims on longevity or health conditional on</u> various interventions.

Unfortunately, there are few prediction markets in the world, and fewer conditional ones, so it is hard to know how practical this institution may become. Thanks to an initiative by OB contributor <a href="Peter McCluskey">Peter McCluskey</a>, Intrade – the large, real-money prediction market – has added conditional claims

## "There are only a few people alive today worth listening to. Robin Hanson is one of them."

 Ralph Merkle, co-inventor of asymmetric (public/private) key cryptography, inventor of cryptographic hashing, and of the Merkle tree.

#### More Supporters

#### **ECONOMICS**

#### The Promise of Prediction Markets

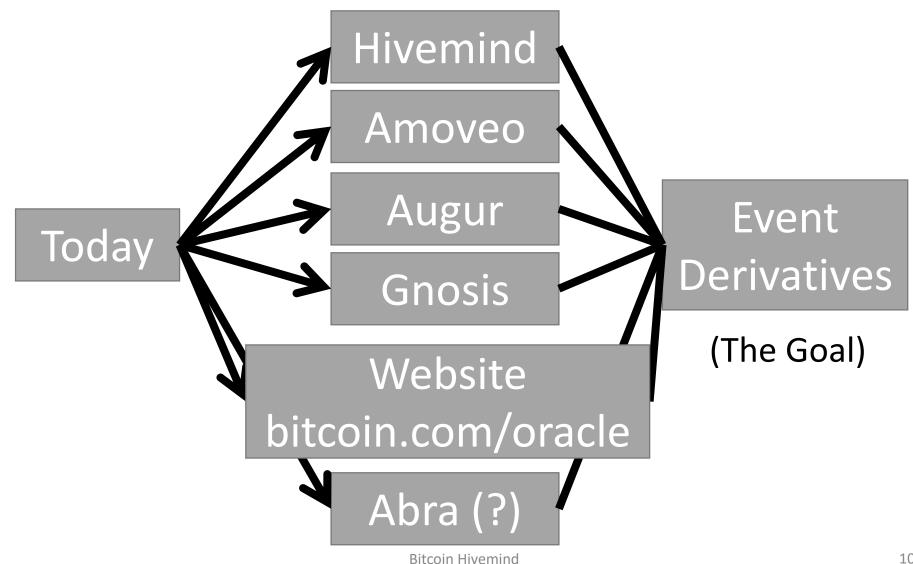
Kenneth J. Arrow,<sup>1</sup> Robert Forsythe,<sup>2</sup> Michael Gorham,<sup>3</sup> Robert Hahn,<sup>4\*</sup> Robin Hanson,<sup>5</sup> John O. Ledyard,<sup>6</sup> Saul Levmore,<sup>7</sup> Robert Litan,<sup>8</sup> Paul Milgrom,<sup>1</sup> Forrest D. Nelson,<sup>9</sup> George R. Neumann,<sup>9</sup> Marco Ottaviani,<sup>10</sup> Thomas C. Schelling,<sup>11</sup> Robert J. Shiller,<sup>12</sup> Vernon L. Smith,<sup>13</sup> Erik Snowberg,<sup>14</sup> Cass R. Sunstein,<sup>7</sup> Paul C. Tetlock,<sup>15</sup> Philip E. Tetlock,<sup>16</sup> Hal R. Varian,<sup>17</sup> Justin Wolfers,<sup>18</sup> Eric Zitzewitz<sup>19</sup>

The ability of groups of people to make predictions is a potent research tool that should be freed of unnecessary government restrictions.

Prediction markets are forums for trading contracts that yield payments based on the outcome of uncertain events.

Information Revelation Through Time

#### We Need at Least One Solution, to the Blockchain Oracle Problem



#### Truthcoin

#### Peer-to-Peer Oracle System and Prediction Marketplace

Paul Sztorc<sup>1</sup>

truthcoin@gmail.com

https://github.com/psztorc/Truthcoin

1 M5tVT tynuqiS7G oq 8hbh 5 UBcxLaa 5 XQb 8

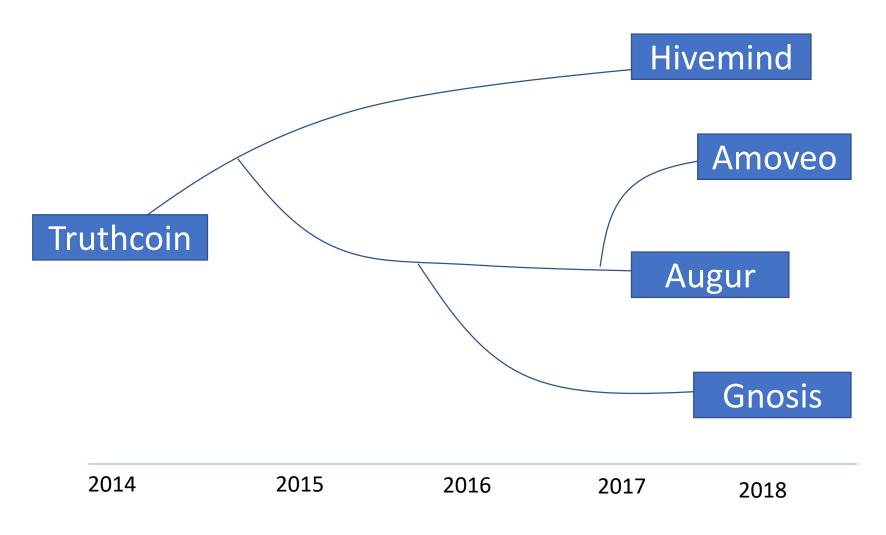
Version 1.5 – 12/14/2015

**Abstract.** Bitcoin can support financial derivatives and smart contracts, but the main benefits are lost if a trusted third party is required to inform these contracts. Instead, I propose a proof-of-work sidechain which collects information on the creation and state of Prediction Markets (PMs).

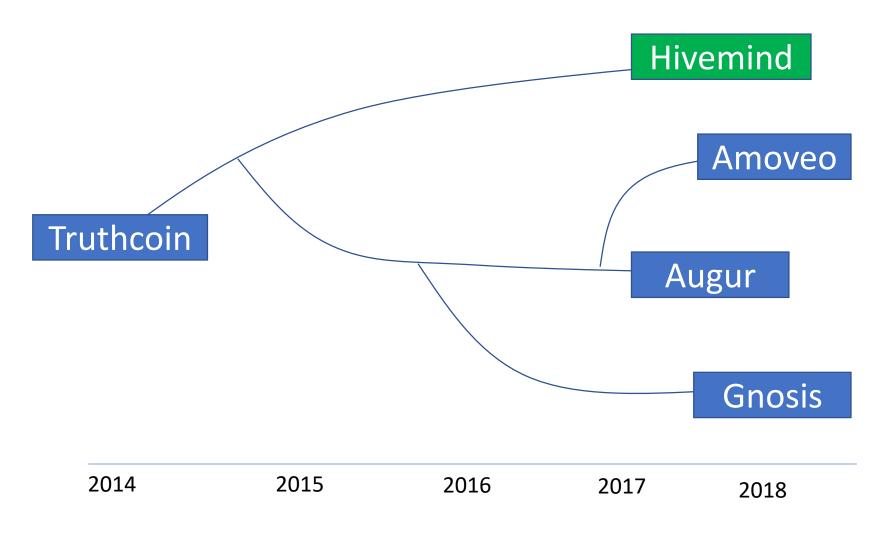
#### Paper Reviews (~2015)

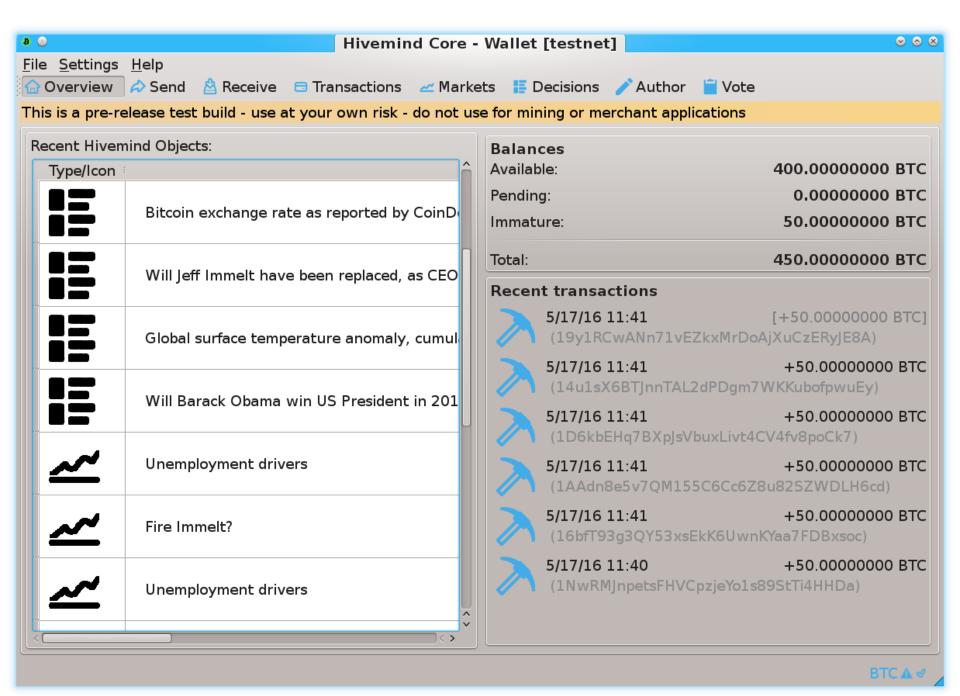
- "...may be the most important invention since Bitcoin itself."
- Roger Ver
- "I'm very optimistic about the feasibility of this project."
- Andrew Poelstra
- "...a real project with interesting use cases."
- Dr. Adam Back
- "...at least it's clever crazy rather than stupid crazy. :)"
- Peter Todd

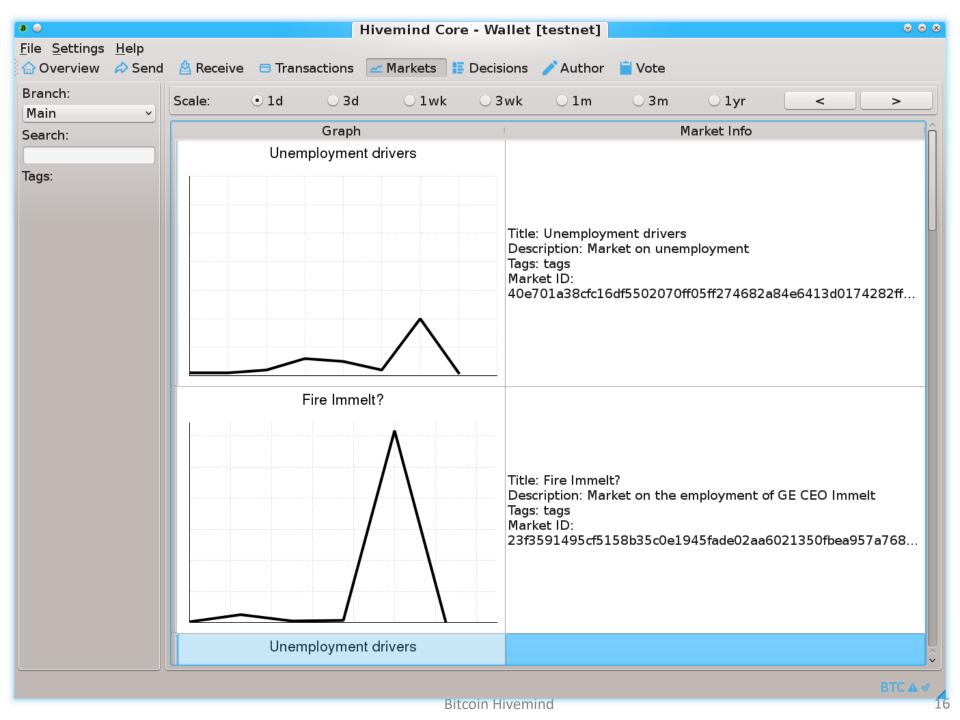
### Multiple Implementations

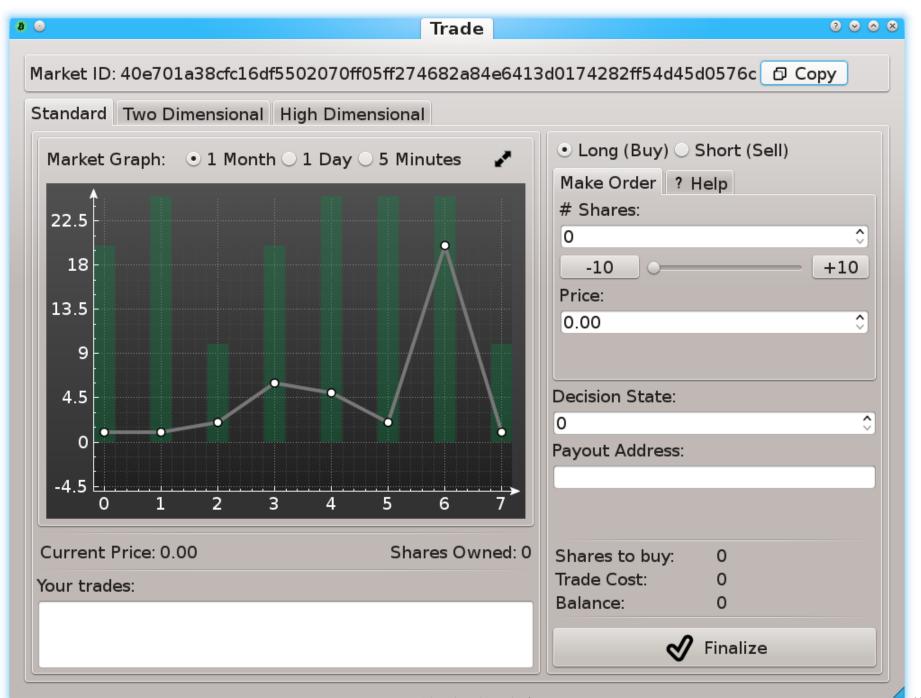


### Multiple Implementations









#### Background Knowledge

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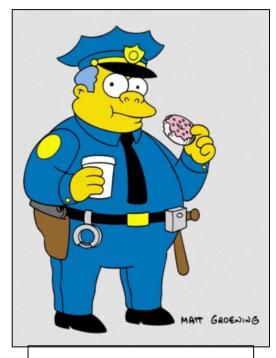
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#### Why does the Public Sector Disappoint?



**Mayor Quimby** 

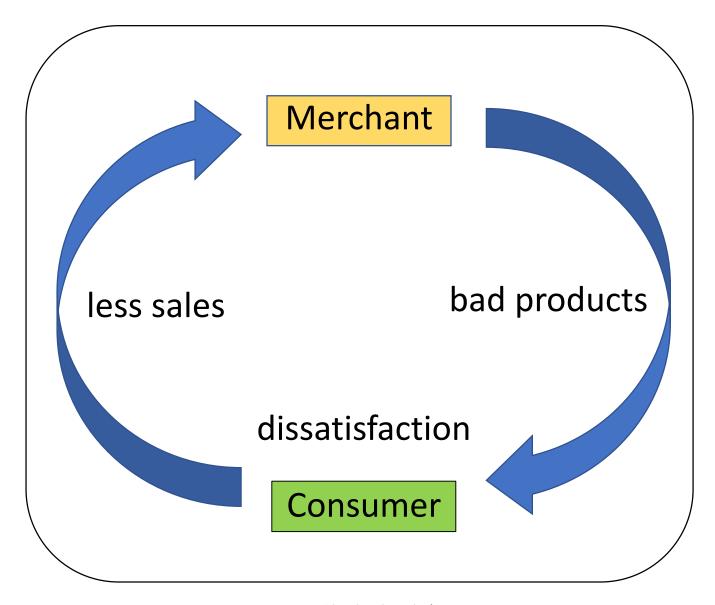


**Chief Wiggum** 



Giant D\*\*\*\*h vs. T\*\*d Sandwich

#### Feedback (Free Market)

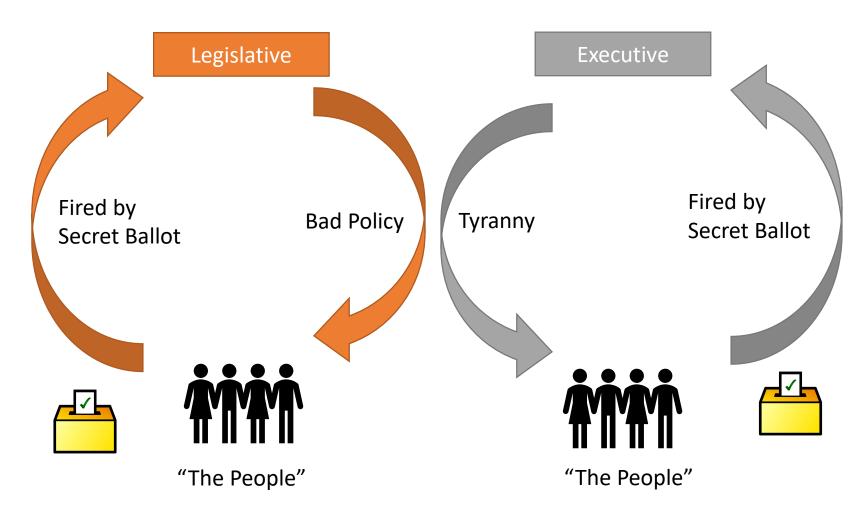


#### Feedback (Democracy)

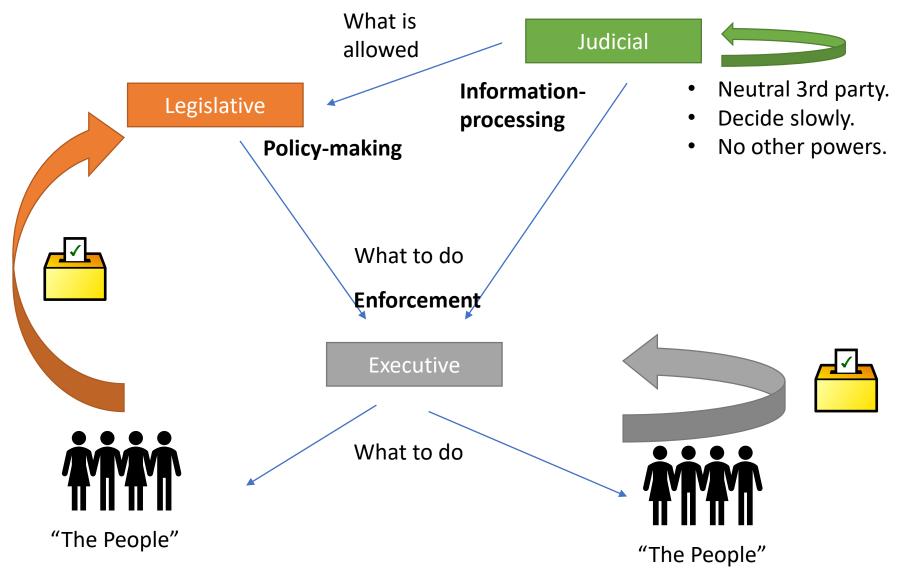


**Ballot Box** 

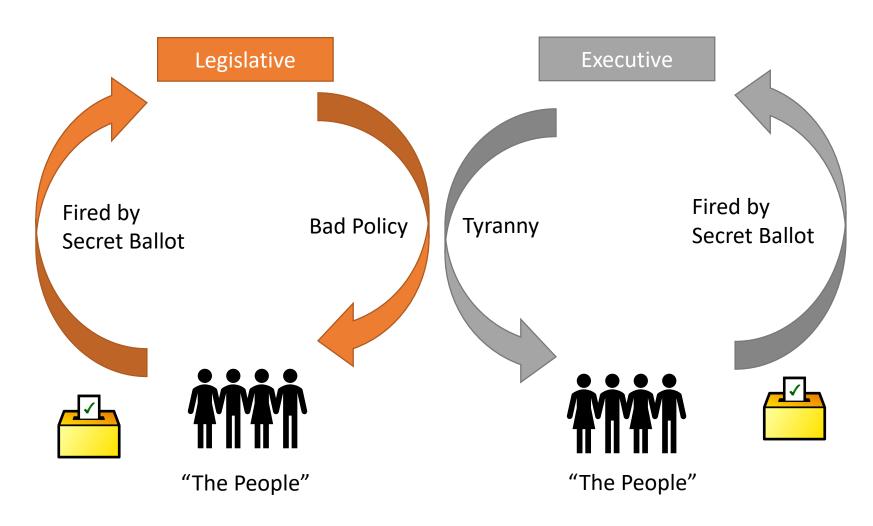
#### Feedback to Remove Errors



#### Post-Enlightenment Political Technology



#### Feedback to Remove Errors



#### Feedback: Market vs Electoral





- 1. Frequency
- 2.

#### Feedback: Market vs Electoral

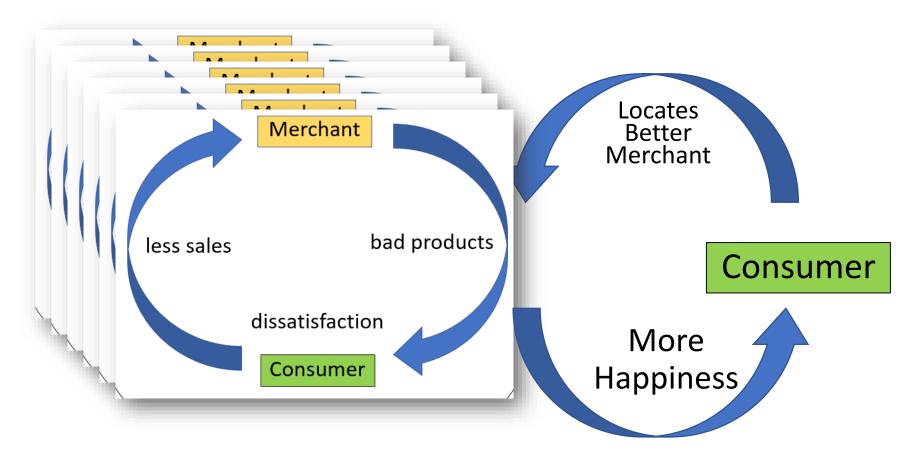




- 1. Frequency
- 2. Research

#### Research = Search for Alternatives

Disappointing sale → search for alternatives.



#### Costs/Benefits of Research

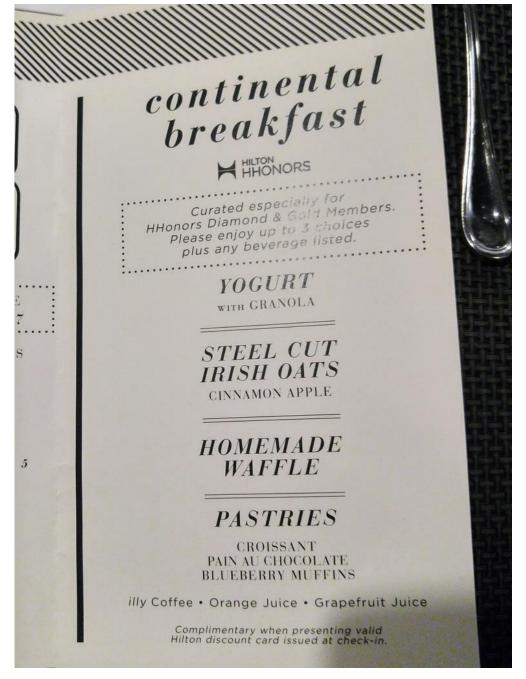
	Cost	Benefit	Quantity
Private Sector (Non-interactive)	100%	100%	Efficient
Public Sector (Interactive)	100%	~ 0 %	Shortage

<u>71%</u> of Americans can't even <u>name</u> their Congressional Representative (Delli-Carpini and Keeter (1997))

Let alone: rival candidates, or policies or their effects.

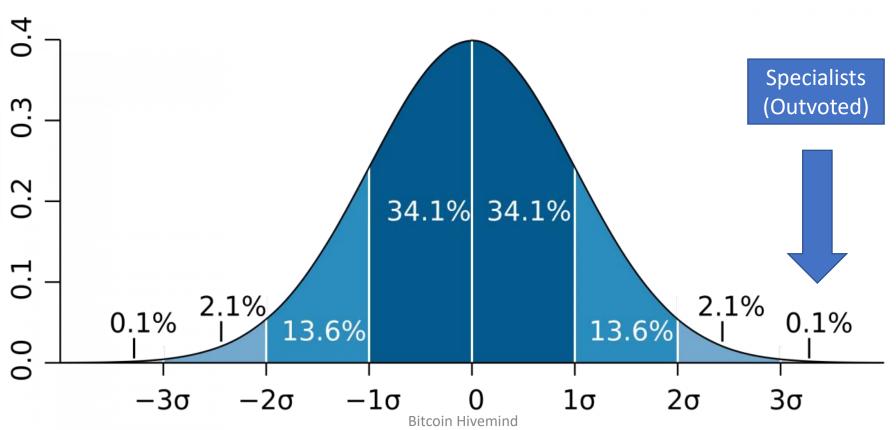
Bitcoin Hivemind

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#### Educating People = Won't Solve Problem

- Worth Doing? Yes.
- But: Layperson = NOT an expert specialist, by definition.



## Agenda

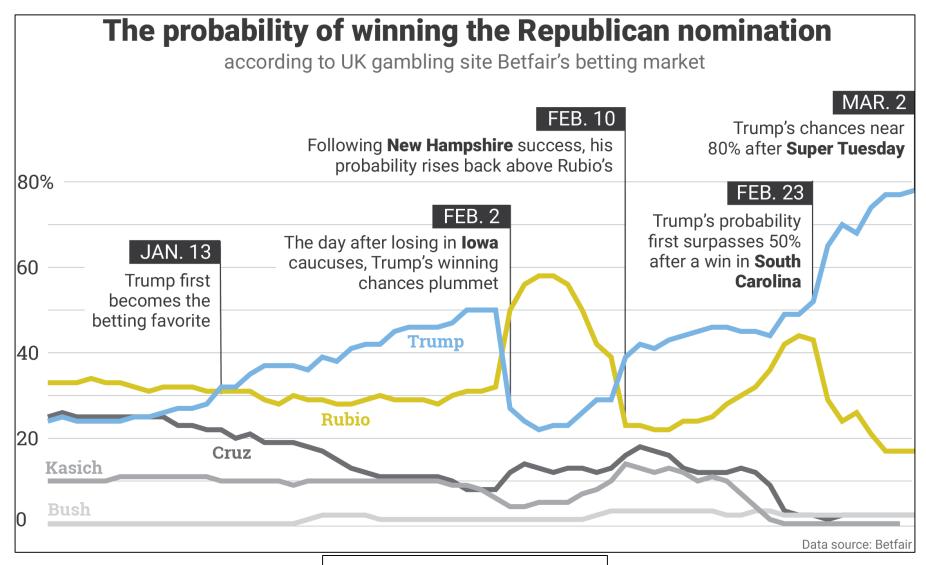
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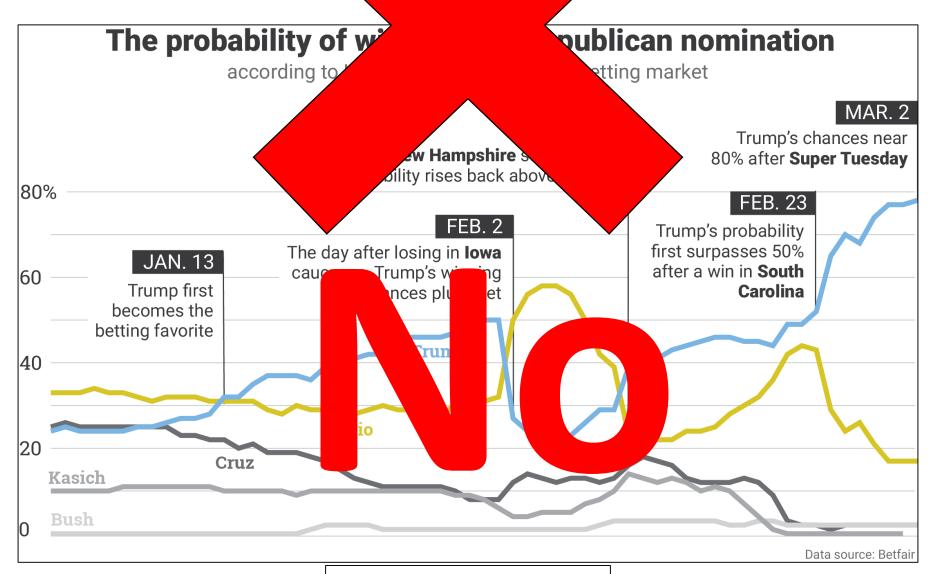
## Event Derivative (InTrade.com) - 2012 global warming (also called a "prediction market")



#### Betting on who will win



### Betting on W



## Nine Slides on Multivariate Betting

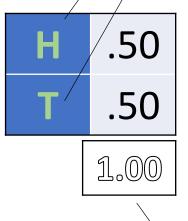
# (1/9) Probability -- Review

202	Heaus	
283	Heads	
284	Heads	
285	Tails	
286	Heads	
287	Heads	
288	Heads	
289	Tails	
290	Heads	
291	Heads	
292	Tails	
293	Tails	
294	Tails	
295	Tails	
296	Heads	
297	Heads	
<b>297</b> 298	Heads Tails	
298	Tails	
298 299	Tails Tails	

Some future event (coin flip).

Heads has 50% likelihood.

Tails has 50% likelihood.





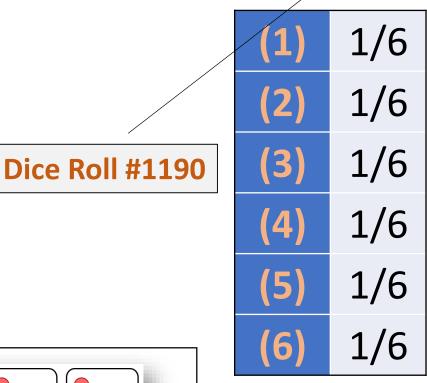


Coin Flip #303

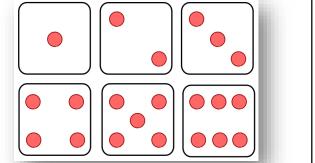
Total probabilities add up to 100%.

## (2/9) Probability -- Review

Some future event (dice roll).

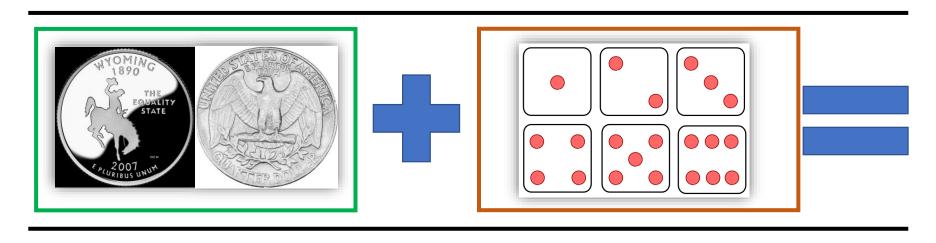


Each outcome has one-sixth likelihood.



1.00

### (3/9) – Two Random Events, Taken Together



#### **Dice Roll #1190**

Coin Flip #303

	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Н	1/12	•	•	·	•	•
Т	1/12	1/12	1/12	1/12	1/12	1/12

.50

"margin"

1/6 (1/6) 1/6 1/6 1/6

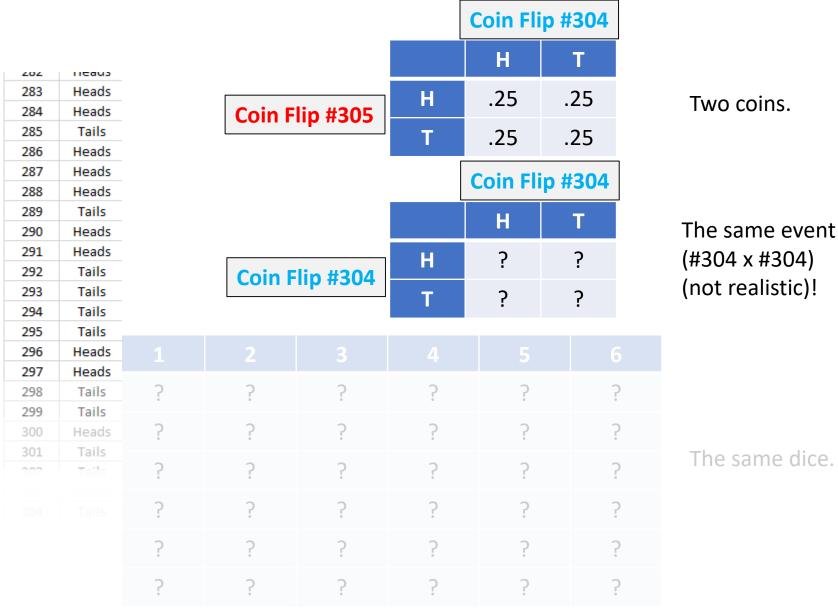
1/6 1/6 1.0 "margin"

Rolling a two AND flipping a tails.

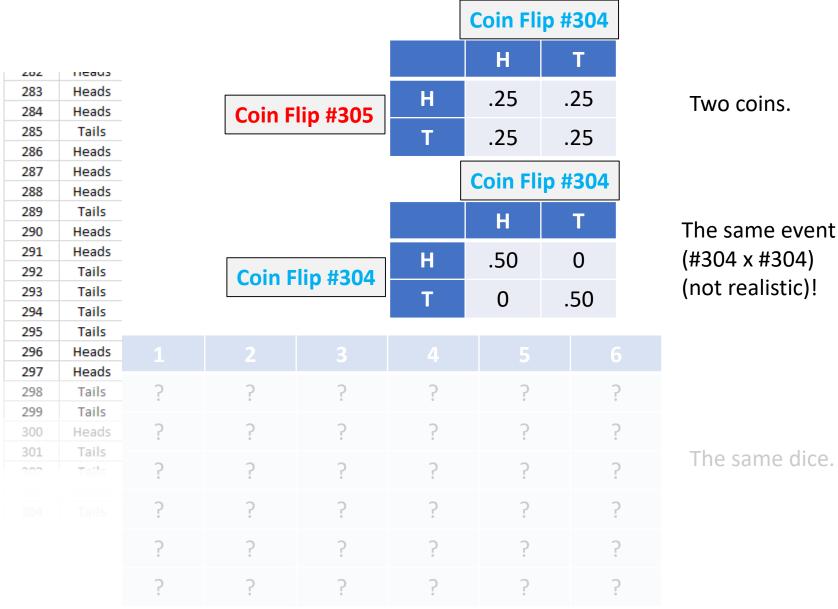
Rolling a two.

Flipping a tails.

#### (4/9) -- Conditional Probability Taught Quickly



#### (5/9) -- Conditional Probability Taught Quickly

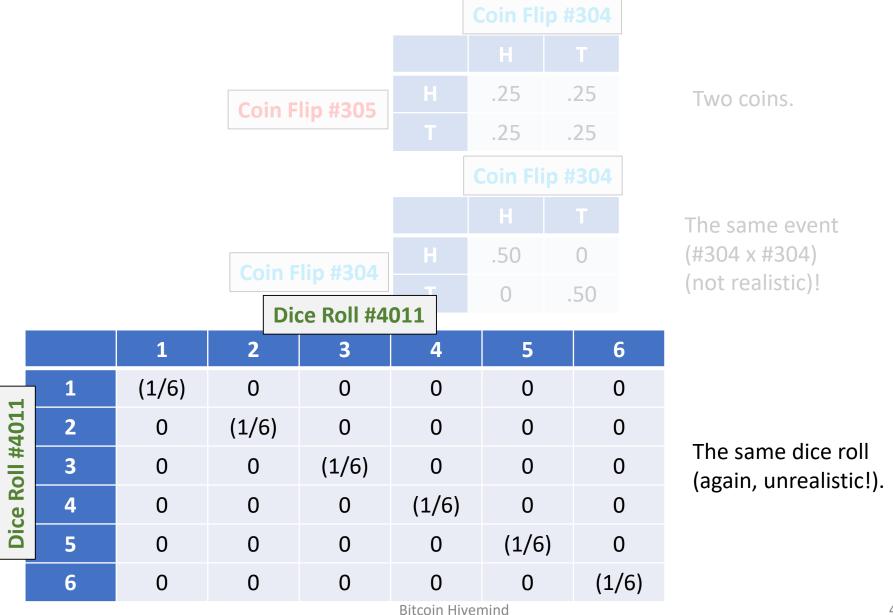


#### (6/8) -- Conditional Probability Taught Quickly



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#### (7/9) -- Conditional Probability Taught Quickly



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## (8/9) "Clumping" = Related

Coin Flip #304

H T

H .50 0

T 0 .50

Coin Flip #304

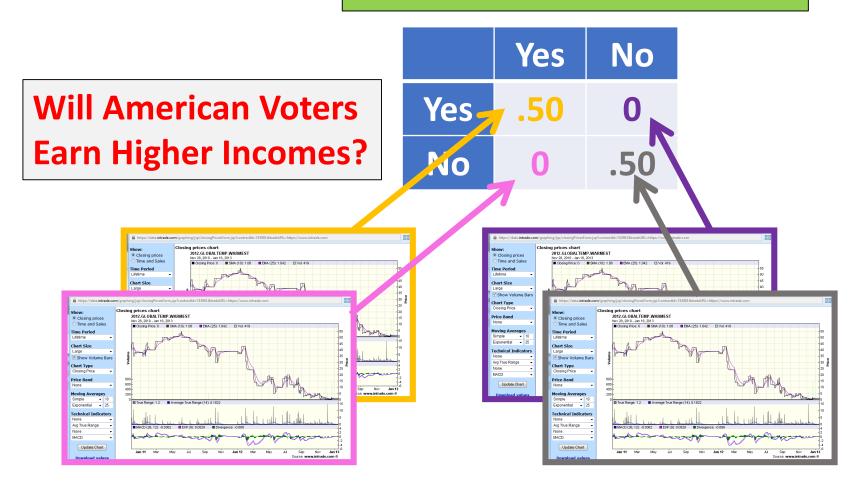
#### Will Candidate X be Elected?

Will American Voters Earn Higher Incomes?

	Yes	No
Yes	.50	0
No	0	.50

# (9/9) Synthesis – Just Four Different Event-Derivative Markets

#### Will Candidate X be Elected?



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#### **Basic Arithmetic**

"Good Economy" in 2021 ( <5% Unemployment )?

"Good Economy" (Conditional Likelihood)

Nov 2020 Election Winner Someone Else

**Democrat** 

Republican

Elon Musk

0.0005	0.0005	0.001	50%
.42	.19	.61	31%
.23	.15	.38	39%
.00	.009	.009	100%

.6505

.3495

## Voter Sees on Election Morning (For Example):

Average, over years 2020-2024	Incumbent Party	Rival Party
Total Government Spending (\$/person)	\$12,568	\$10,407 better
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# The plan will collapse if...

- ...no one cares enough to...
  - ... trade in these markets, or
  - ... look at them on election day.

"No Trade"

"No Attention"

#### <u>4. วงบนบรรร</u>

5. Forcing Everyone to Trade and To Care

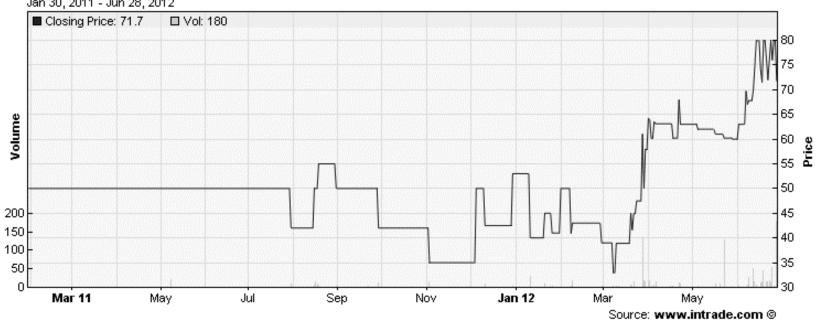
#### Problem 1: No Trade



How do we get knowledgeable people to trade in these markets?

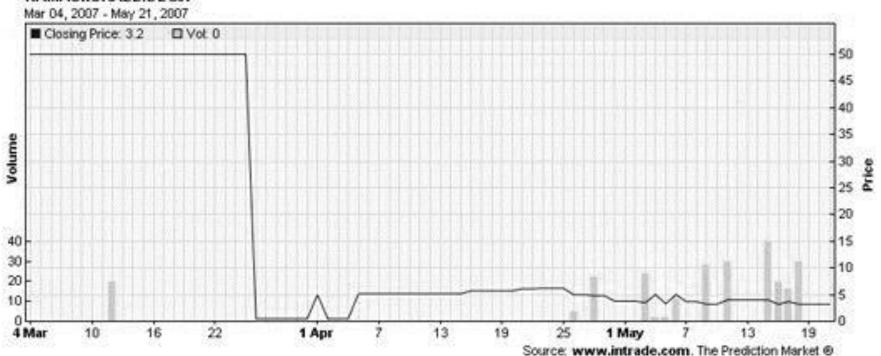
#### HEALTHCARE.UNCONST.DEC13

Jan 30, 2011 - Jun 28, 2012



Volume: \$200, or \$1000 (?)

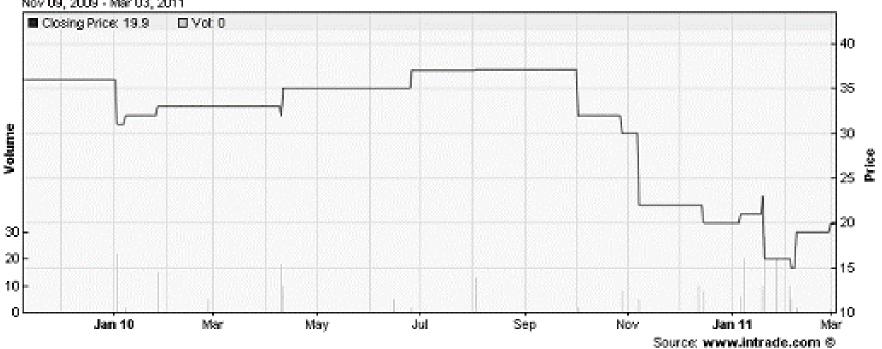
#### HAMAS, ISRAEL, DEC07



Volume: \$40, or \$20 (?)

#### US.RECESSION.2012





Volume: \$30, or \$60 (?)

#### "No Trade"

#### Prediction Markets "Fail" To Mooch

By Robin Hanson · July 19, 2012 12:00 am · 🗣 9 Comments · « Prev · Next »

What is new about prediction markets? To many the key new idea is

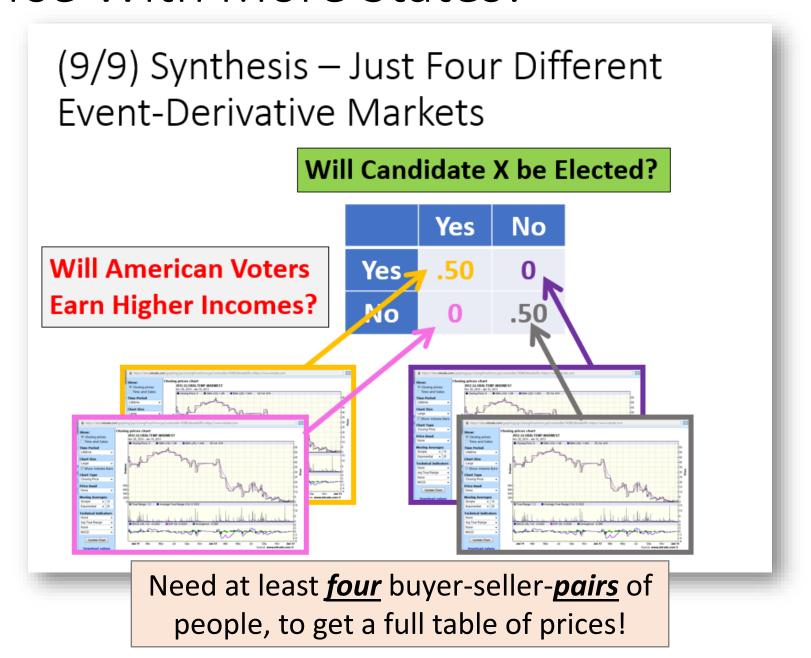
<u>Consensus Point</u> to set up) is very different – to answer key business questions, firms *pay* lots to create markets, to fund employee participants, and to subsidize market makers

Alas there's been a lot more interest over the last few years in the getwork-for-free concept than in the pay-for-info concept. And more alas, recent discussions of "prediction market failures" are mostly on their failures to mooch. Case in point #1, Casey Mulligan today:

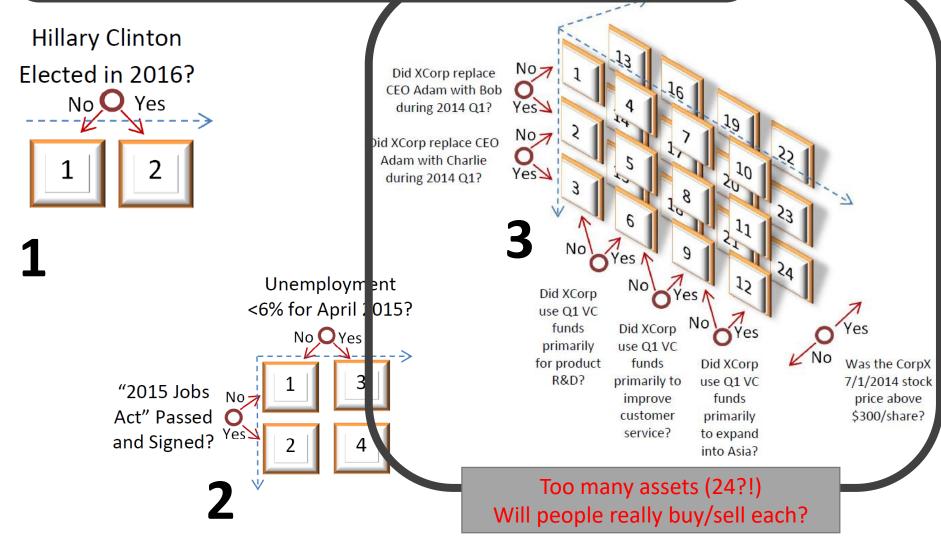
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"No trade"

#### Worse With More States!



# Ideally: Many States



# 100% Synthetic (No Consumption) = VERY Worse

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Consumption: insurance, recreational gambling.

#### Problem 2: No Attention



- Consider:
  - Election Outcome sensitive to Voter Turnout.
  - Voter Turnout sensitive to lack of knowledge.
- PMs provide knowledge, and can influence outcomes.

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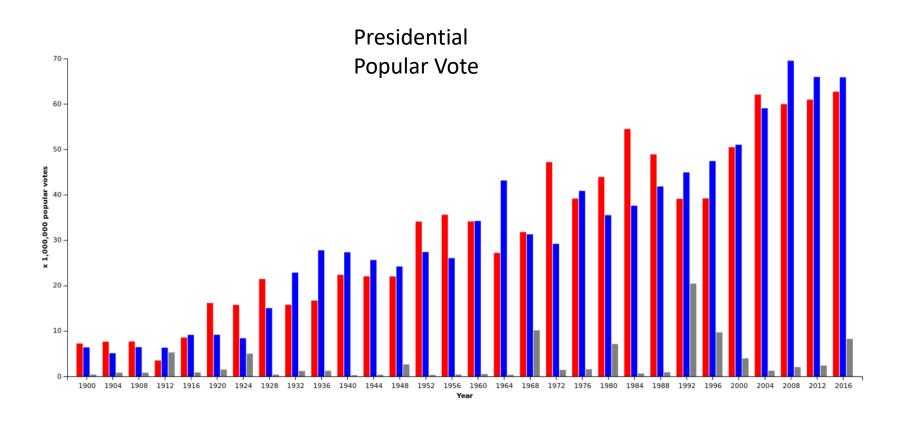
# People will be checking their phones on election day



# People will be checking their phones on election day

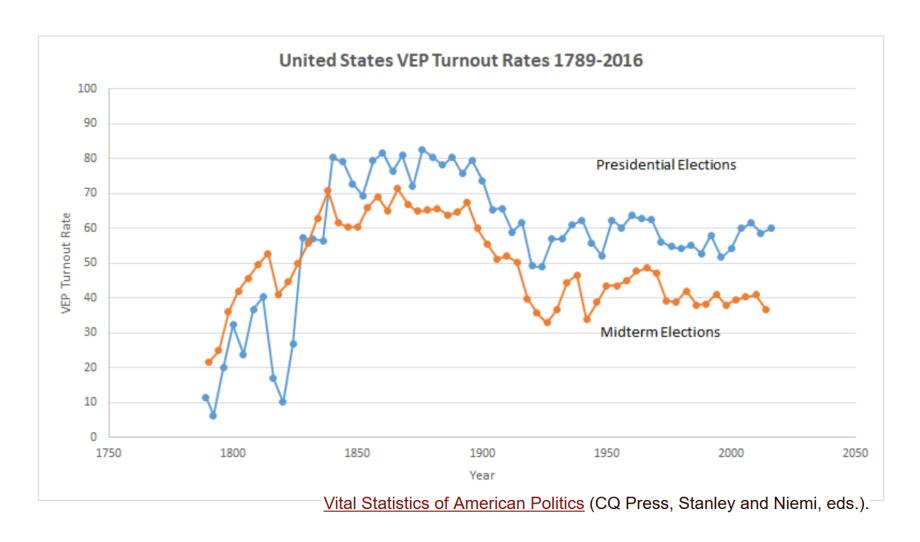


# Popular Vote – Victory Margins Are Very Narrow



Wikipedia Commons

### Low Voter Turnout



Bitcoin Hivemind

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### Congressional Approval

#### Congress' Job Approval Ratings, Yearly Averages

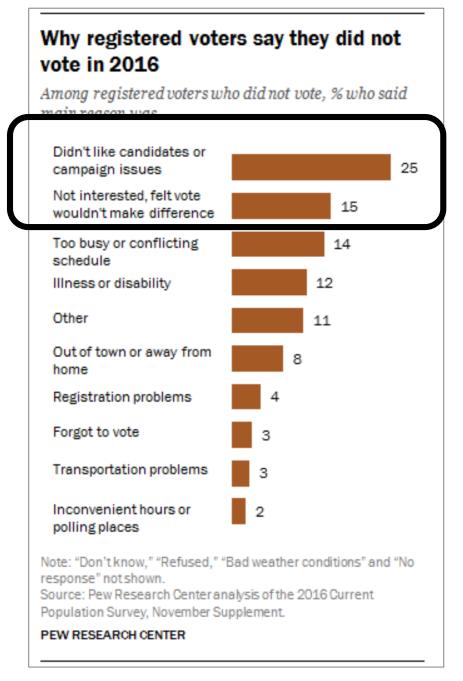
Do you approve or disapprove of the way Congress is handling its job?

#### % Approve



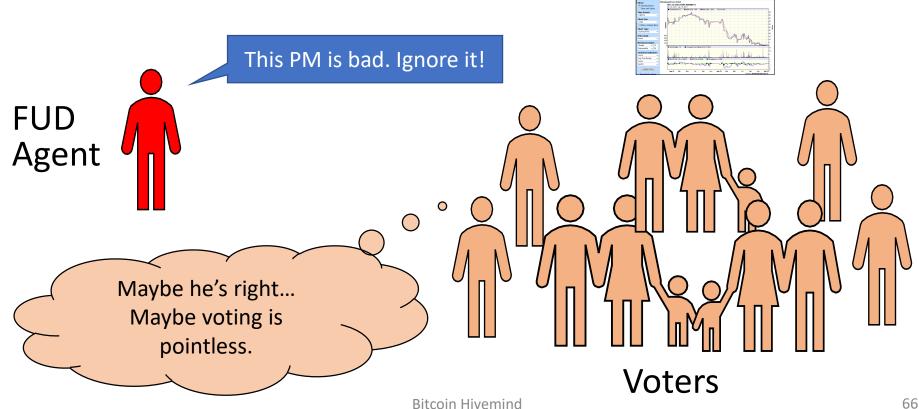
Note: Gallup did not measure congressional job approval in 1984-1985.

# Why Turnout Low: Voters Admit Feeling Overwhelmed



#### At This Point

- Critics (and/or tyrants) will have to say either:
  - Ignore all PMs, or
  - PMs are great, but ignore this one specifically.



66

#### Track Record of Accuracy

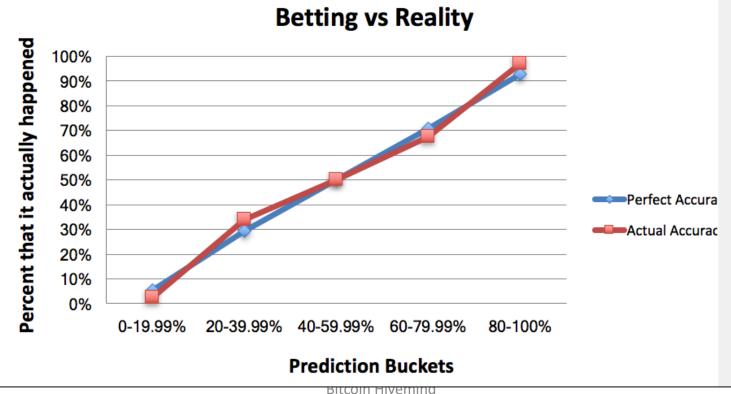
ross dozens of races and states in 2016

How accurate has this site been

When a candidate favored by bettors loses, it's easy to fall into the trap of thinking the bettors were "wrong". But remember that when bettors give someone, for example, a 65% chance to win -- that also means the bettors give the person a 35% chance to lose.

The following graph shows how closely the betting tracked reality.

The blue line shows what predictions would look like if they were perfect. Where the red line differs from the blue line, the predictions were off somewhat:



# Very Old Idea!

The Long History of Political Betting Markets: An International Perspective

Paul W. Rhode (University of Michigan) Koleman Strumpf (University of Kansas School of Business)

March 2012

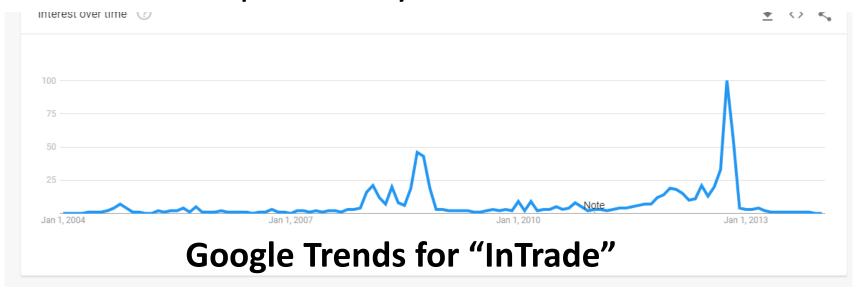
#### Abstract:

Political future markets, in which investors bet on election outcomes, are often thought a recent invention. Such markets in fact have a long history in many Western countries. This paper traces the operation of political futures markets back to 16th Century Italy, 18th Century Britain and Ireland, 19th Century Canada, and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Australia and Singapore. In the United States, election betting was a common part of political campaigns in the pre-1860 period, but became increasingly concentrated in the organized futures markets in New York City over the post-1860 period.

- "Gamblers have also long wagered on the selection to offices in the Catholic Church. Quotes of betting odds on papal succession appear as early as 1503 when such wagering was already considered "an old practice.""
- "As far back as the reign of William the Third, foreigners had observed that, on matters great and small, the only sure test of English [UK] opinions was the state of the odds"
- "William Cooper of Cooperstown, New York enjoyed the strong betting backing of his friends during his race for Congress in 1796."

"From what I see of the betting ... I do not think that Mr. Roosevelt will need my vote. I am sure of his election." -Andrew Carnegie, 1904

### "Natural Popularity"



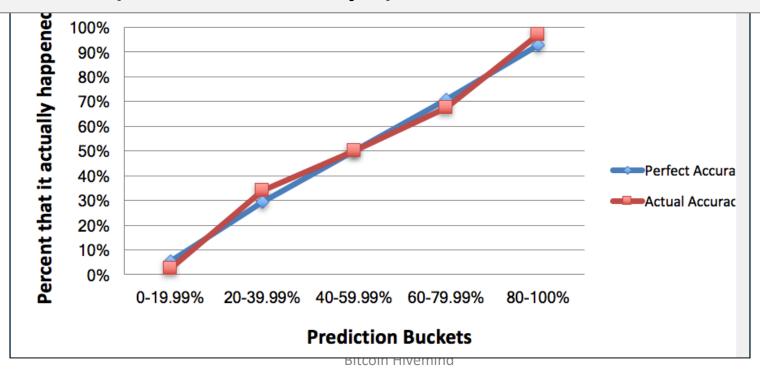
TV Appearances (esp during '08, '12)





# "Ramp it up" Over Time Lowbrow → Highbrow

- Sports (SuperBowl, March Madness)
- E-Sports
- Arts (Oscars, Tonys).



### PMs Evade Bias/Capture

- Most events have an <u>unclear interpretation</u> leading to <u>bias</u>.
  - Debates are one example.
  - Democrats are certain that the democratic candidate "won" the debate. Republicans are certain that the republican candidate won.
- PMs have only one interpretation (expectation of candidate's performance), and it is the same for everyone.

## Tiresome Politician Rhetoric Is Irrelevant

- As this idea becomes influential, politicians will start competing on these metrics.
- But in order for their numbers to go up, they'll need to actually <u>hit</u> the target in reality.
- For example: Politician could announce that they want everyone to die, and plan to kill everyone, but unless traders believe that the politician can follow through with this plan, the 'deaths' numbers won't budget an inch.
- Layperson already knows that politicians are liars.
   (Will prefer this.)

### Proving Market Health

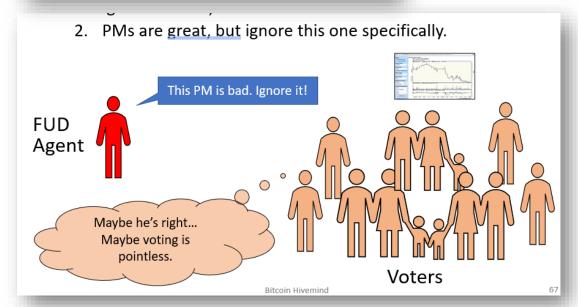
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"No trade"

 "Standing Army" of automatic traders



 Market such that \$X can always be earned, if prices are wrong....even if no one else on Earth is trading!

#### "No Trade"

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"No trade"

Hanson's Response:
Instead of expecting
everything for free, why
don't you <u>buy</u> the
information?

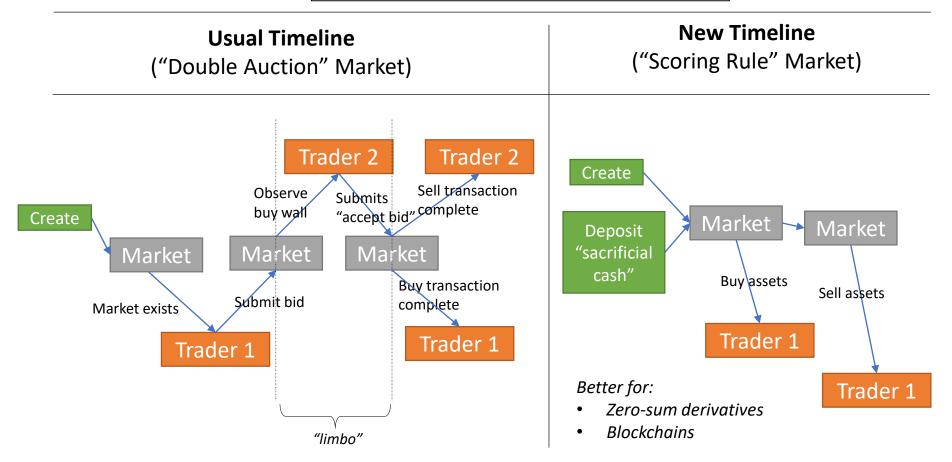
No, a market *can* single-task, with no other function than prediction, and no other trader motive than selfish financial profit, *if* someone who wants the info will pay to subsidize the market. It is only when you want people to answer your question for free that you'll have to piggyback on their having some other reason to trade.

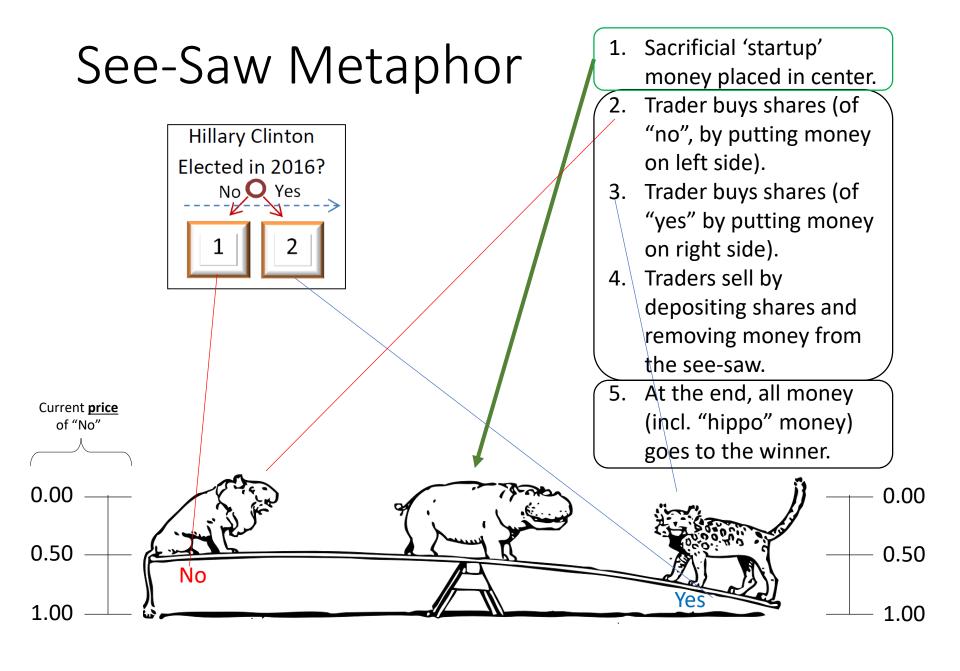
Of course there's no guarantee that your willingness to pay for some info exceeds other folks' cost to supply that info. Supply and demand curves need not intersect at a positive quantity. But that's hardly a failure of an info exchange mechanism.

How? By using a MSR, with a "sacrificial trade" that loses against all outcomes at once.

#### Permanent Liquidity (via MSR)

- No "offers" Ie, No Bids/Asks.
- No interaction between buyer/seller.
   (Instead, traders interact w/ protocol.)
- No "limbo"



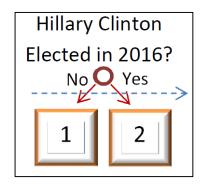


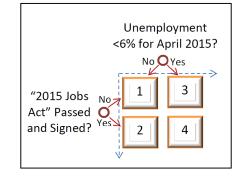
## Permanent Liquidity

No "offers" – Ie, No Bids/Asks. No interaction between buyer/seller. Instead, traders interact w/ protocol.

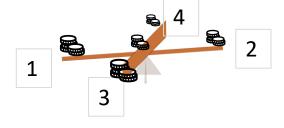
					I	
		Shares Outstanding		LMSR (Market Account)	Update Cost (User Pays)	Interpretation
	Time	a=0	a=1	0		
	1	0	0	4.8520	4.852030	
	2	(1)	0	5.3699	0.517842	Bought 1 Shar
	3		6	8.7893	3.419407	Bought 6 Shar
	4	18	6	19.1591	10.369869	Bought 17 Sha
Je	5	18	18	22.8520	3.692882	Bought 12 Sha
<u> </u>	6	32	18	32.8885	10.036466	Bought 14 Sha
	7	32	30	35,9232	3.03472	Bought 12 Sha
₹	8	39	30	40.7086	4.785379	Bought 7 Shar
3	9	39	43	46.1339	5.425344	Bought 13 Sha
F 0w	10	57	43	57.8885	11.754556	Bought 18 Sha
	11	57	61	64.1339	6.245444	Bought 18 Sha
	12	61	61	65,8520	1.718090	Bought 4 Shar
	13	61	40	61.3401	-4.511919	Sold 21 Share
	14		40	45.9232	-15.416894	Sold 19 Share
	15		9	42.0625	-3.860733	Sold 31 Share
	16		4	42.0307	-0.031826	Sold 5 Shares
	End		Full co	ollateralization. 42.0307	Account Balance	Market resolv
				42.0000	Redemptions	Individuals re

## See-Saw → Tray



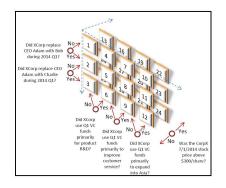


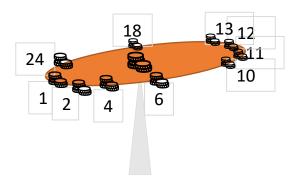




2 states

4 states





n states

## Playing To Our Strengths

#### • Weaknesses:

- Hard to leave the two party system.
  - Idealism/Reform hampered by collective-action problem.
  - Especially hard wrt campaign finance / cronyism / corruption.
    - Tweet about 1 mill, \$100, if more than 10% pick a lower number you get nothing.
- Near-infinite variety of possible reforms → disunity, diffusion of effort; self-fulfilling futility.

#### Strengths

- Popular Recall the low turnout rate.
- Better Ideas

## "Freedom Fund" — Where to get the money?

- When the time comes, it might be easy.
- Draw a comparison to three other types of donation activity:
  - Donations to Presidential Candidates
  - SuperPAC donations
  - Donations to Annenberg Political Factcheck

- Funding raised:
  - (Q1 2019 : BS \$18.20M 6wks; KH \$12M; PB \$7M; EW \$6M)
  - SuperPACs: \$1.79 *Billion* in F.Y. 2016
  - Annenberg Political FactCheck Charity: \$1.16 million in FY 2016

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### It Might Be Easy

- 1. Frequency only once every 2 / 4 / 6 years.
- 2. Amount One market can hold liquidity for log(n) elements; each element needs to have only enough to be <u>persuasive to most voters</u>; most voters have household net worth of around 50K.

**Total** needed, all-inclusive, could be as little as: \$5 million / 4 years

- 3. Unification All dissatisfied (or merely concerned / patriotic)
- 4. 100% Efficiency All donated funds contribute directly to the reform purpose. No overhead, none goes to me, none can possibly be wasted, blockchain-enforced.
- 5. Uncensorable, Private, & Attributable No one can stop you from donating; 100% on-blockchain; can add an [OP Return] message to your donation.

## Thank You!

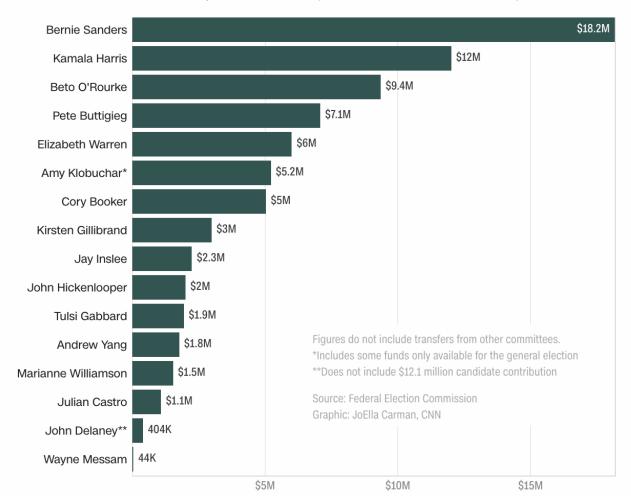
Questions?

	Politician's Campgain	SuperPACs	NonProfit Orgs	"B"-Amping
Funds Raised				
Unity of Purpose				
Efficiency				
Privacy / Censor-free				

**Funds** Raised by Democratic Candidates in Just a Single Quarter, **FEC** 

#### Bernie Sanders leads the pack in early fundraising

Amount raised from individuals by each Democratic presidential candidate in the first quarter



#### Skyhooks

- Persuasion
- Switching Voting
- Some kind of (one-time) revolution

Bitcoin Hivemind

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## Crane. Not Skyhook

## Crane

Lift via: Physics
Xfers weight to different part of ground.

Skyhook

Lift via: Magic Jnexplained force.

### Crane. Not Skyhook

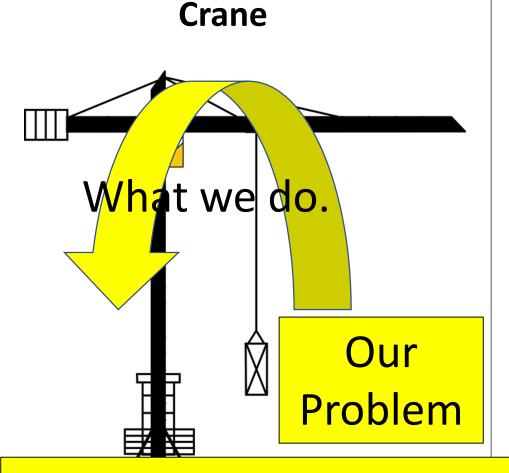
## Crane

Lift via: Physics Xfers weight to different part of ground. Skyhook

Lift via: Magic

Unexplained force.

#### Crane. Not Skyhook



Things other people do.

(Actually they wont do them.)

Everything that needs to change, we can do unilaterally.

Lift via: Magic Unexplained force.

# **Crane**

#### Skyhook

