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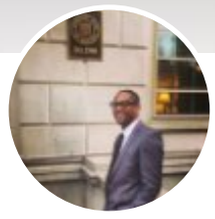

Collin Thompson
Blockchain. FinTech. IoT. Investor and Entrepreneur

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The Top 10 Blockchain Startups to Watch in 2016 and the Leaders who are Changing the Game.

Jan 8, 2016 | 475 views | 32 Likes | 1 Comment

Over the course of 2015, I've had the opportunity, to either meet or talk to, some visionary technologists and business leaders who are making some of the most transformative tools and applications in the blockchain space. Although many of these companies and leaders are working on applications for financial technology, you will see from the list, that there is more to the blockchain than just "disrupting the banks". I chose these companies not only for their creativity in showcasing the breadth and power of blockchain technology across industries, but also for their potential, their applied ideas, and their courage to innovate.

1. Provenance

Lead by Jessi Baker, Dr Jutta Steiner, these two ladies bring some serious technological chops. Both have a deep understanding of supply-chain engineering

and cryptography, which lends well to a very unique perspective on product "proof of existence" and transparency utilizing the blockchain. Provenance is a real-time data platform that empowers brands to take steps toward greater transparency by tracing the origins and histories of products. With their technology you can easily gather and verify stories, keep them connected to physical things and embed them anywhere online.

Being based in South East Asia, and although this is area host a few important financial services centres, an even larger opportunity for transformation lies within shipping, logistics, and commercial trade. The region is home to 4 of the top 5 shipping ports of the world; Shanghai, Shenzhen, Singapore and Hong Kong. Under this large industry umbrella, there is a variety of industry categories that would be well served by the provenance platform, one being the luxury goods industry. It's been an on-going battle to wipe out the scourge of counterfeit goods, which Provenance seems primed to mitigate. Outside of this area, one can only imagine what they their technology could mean for the art world as well.

2. Enigma

Coming in a close second on my list is a stealthy startup coming out of the MIT media lab called Enigma. Lead by Guy Ziskind, Oz Nathan, and advised by Prof. Alex Pentland, Enigma is a decentralized cloud platform that guarantees privacy. Private data is stored, shared and analyzed without ever being fully revealed to any party. It provides secure multi-party computation, empowered by the blockchain.

This is as futuristic and radical as the blockchain gets, and if proved, as it's still in beta, could be one of the most important innovations to come out in the space as

it solves some of the most difficult problems in technology today: privacy and security. This core function, layered on top of distributed cloud technology, is a dynamic combination that transforms how data is stored and retrieved; providing industries like finance, health, and civil services the underlying trust and security to truly unlock the potential of next generation mobile applications.

3. Consenys

Under the stoic leadership of Joseph Lubin, Consensys is an antifragile organization that is steeped in the theoretical frameworks of Ronald Coase. A hub and spoke model, that nurtures a loose federation of blockchain technologists all working in multiple verticals, yet leveraging their collective understanding and skills. Some of the companies under the Consensys umbrella are good enough to stand alone here on this top ten list especially Uport and Ujo music.

Look for Consensys to build upon their success with Block Apps and the Microsoft collaboration on Azure, as their federation and core team grows to bring some exciting innovations in the blockchain space.

4. Ethcore

A small offshoot of the Ethereum Project, lead by the project's Co-founder and core C Developer Dr. Gavin Wood. EthCore is an all star cast of hardcore developers and thought leaders, including Dr. Jutta Steiner and Vitalik Buterin, that aspire to enable businesses and organisations to capitalise on blockchain technology and benefit from the new opportunities it presents. They develop cutting-edge software solutions for enterprises and industries to unlock the full value of decentralised technology.

At the vanguard of blockchain technology, the Ethcore team is primed to be working on and driving alot of the change in the industry for multinational businesses and governments.

5. IPFS

Warning this company is about 10,000 ft high on the hardcore tech-nerd scale, but is extremely important none the less. IPFS is short of Interplanetary File System, and it does just what the name entails. Think of it as rewiring and re-routing the entire internet so that trains run and stop on time and go where they need to go all while greatly reducing redundancy. Designed by the visionary technologist Juan Benet, IPFS is a peer-to-peer distributed file system that seeks to connect all computing devices with the same system of files. In some ways, IPFS is similar to the Web, but IPFS could be seen as a single BitTorrent swarm, exchanging objects within one Git repository. In other words, IPFS provides a high throughput content-addressed block storage model, with content-addressed hyperlinks.

Look for more early stage startups and innovators to experiment with this open source technology to truly create some out next generation technologies.

6. Colony

One of the most thoughtful and ambitious projects in the blockchain this year, is lead by a former artist/designer named Jack Du Rose. Before Colony Jack was the jeweler who created the infamous Damien Hirst diamond skull. Jack and Colony are taking on “the future of work” and are dropping the future into our hands, and lap tops, now. They have created a beautifully designed decentralized autonomous organization, that replicates a company, except instead of being managed by fallible individuals, Colony harnesses the wisdom of the crowd using AI to make sure that the right things get done by the right people, at the right time. Now people can convene and collaborate on large scale projects, even startups, and have a way to manage and measure productivity, as well as provide the means for people to get paid. Colony allows creators to stock value in their own cryptocurrency called “nectar”.

Watch for startup accelerators, hackathons, and open source projects around the world start to take notice of what Jack and the Colony team have created, as it solves many of the organizational issues of talent and capital localization, as well as compensation for open source projects.

7. SlockIt

At the intersection of two of the hottest areas of technology today; IoT and blockchain technology. Slock.it explores how Ethereum light nodes embedded in connected cars, homes, and businesses could revolutionise the emerging Sharing Economy infrastructure by enabling anyone to rent, sell or share their property without a middleman. Lead by one of the Co-founders of the Ethereum project Stephan Tual and the Jentzsch brothers Simon and Christoph. The Slock.it crew has been at the vanguard of this intersection for a while, creating some interesting products around physical locks, mobility and connected devices.

8. Backfeed

Based in Tel Aviv with a well defined and broadly skilled team of engineers and thought leaders, Backfeed develops resilient technology and new economic models to support free, large-scale, systematic collaboration. Based on a distributed governance model, Backfeed protocols make it possible for people to easily deploy and maintain decentralized applications and organizations that rely on the spontaneous and voluntary contribution of hundreds, thousands or millions of people

Lead by Dr. Matan Field a theoretical physicist turned entrepreneur, who was also the founder of LaZouz a open-source and decentralized collaborative transportation system, is a founder that is challenging the notion of work and organizations in the age of globalization. Building on the emerging blockchain ecosystem, Backfeed develops grassroots-powered technology that enables scale-free human cooperation. The toolkits provided by Backfeed provide resilient infrastructure and innovative economic models that promote the viability and sustainability of decentralized communities as well as legacy organizations

through equitable distribution of co-created value

As an analogy, if the blockchain can be regarded as the TCP/IP (communication layer of the internet), Backfeed is building a canonical protocol and platform (akin to the HTTP protocol and the web browser) to enable blockchain-based decentralized collaboration, as easily as one would deploy a website today.

9. Ethereum

Enough has been said about Ethereum and the precocious and visionary leader Vitalik Buterin, so I really don't have the capability to add much more other than; the courage and verve of the project, and team, are inspiring and everyone should watch what the Ethereum puts out this year. I wish them the best in growing and scaling the project so that more innovation can spring from their insights.

10. Plex

These guys are small and just starting out, but I got a chance to talk to the

founder Terek Judi and I really liked his focus and ambition. Plex.Ai is a automotive telematics platform that uses Ethereum, machine Learning and Artificial intelligence to give insurance companies real time, remote, diagnostics on a car and the driver.

Insurance is such a staid and very well monied industry and one that deserves more attention from the blockchain community, especially with the coming of automated driving.

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So, there's my list. all great teams and products working on some seriously interesting problems and opportunities to help transform industries and the world through the use of imagination and the blockchain. Anyone that has scaled a startup will know that it's an unglamorous process that takes a significant amount of energy and coordination with no guarantee of success. I applaud all the founders and teams above for thier vision and courage.

I'm always interested in meeting blockchain entrepreneurs, and technologists who are creating innovative IoT products, so please feel free to contact me here on linkedin , or by email at collin@intrepid.ventures

Collin Thompson is the Co-founder, and Managing Director of Intrepid Ventures, a venture development firm that invests, builds, and accelerates Blockchain and IoT companies solving the world's most difficult problems. Collin focuses on early stage investments, innovation and business design for corporations, governments and entrepreneurs working with Blockchain Technology.

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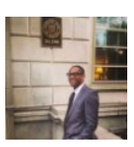

Written by
Collin Thompson

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Adi Ben-Ari 1st
Co-Founder at Applied Blockchain

Great list. IPFS is the one to watch.

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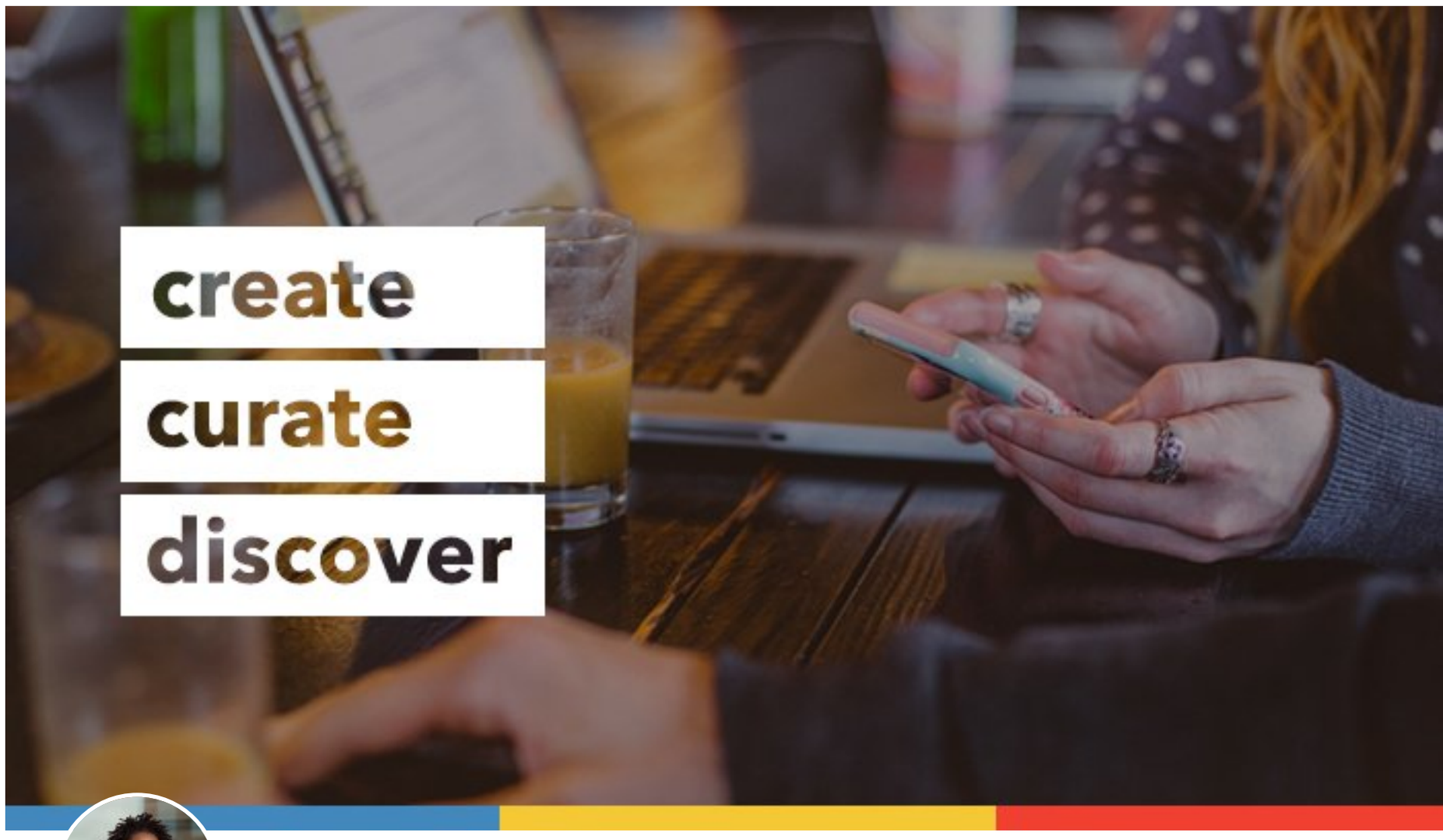

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Meet LinkedIn's Campus Editors, the Students Creating, Discovering and Curating Student Voices

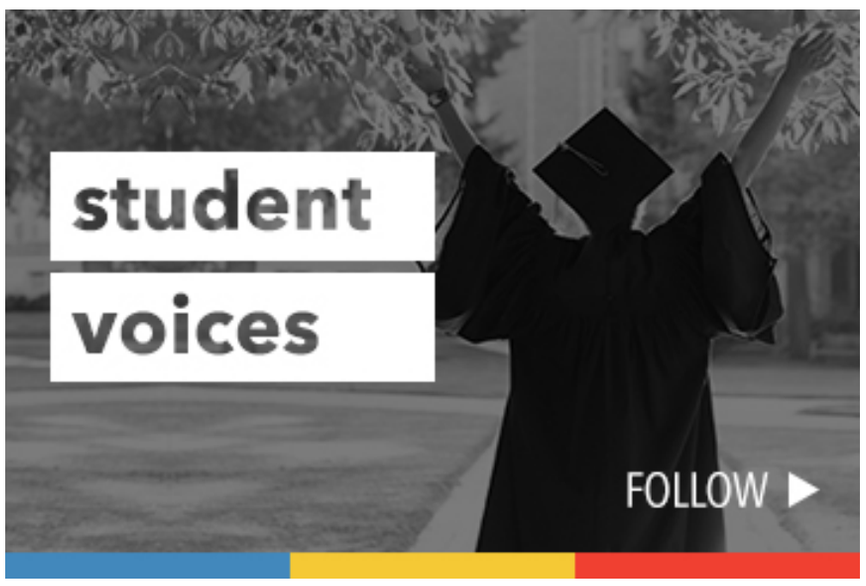
Jan 13, 2016 | 4,639 views | 63 Likes | 5 Comments

Social media has reinvented the job search. Resumes have been replaced with LinkedIn profiles, new openings are being shared directly with followers, and personal brands are defining career paths. This new normal requires millennial job seekers to stand out, especially college students.

Late last year we invited students to tell us why they'd be a great Campus Editor—someone who would not just contribute posts to LinkedIn, but help their peers do the same. We launched the program in conjunction with our broader work to make sure students get the insights they need to develop their professional brand online, gain visibility and capture the attention of recruiters, potential employers, and people in their desired industry. (About 45% of readers are leaders in their trades, including managers, VPs, CEOs etc.).

Now it's time to unveil the students who were selected to represent their campus

and mobilize their peers to write about the things that matter to them. These posts have included experiences in the classroom and beyond, obstacles they've overcome, assignments they've repurposed, their inspirations, and thoughts on trends and timely topics.



From Babson College to San Jose State University, there are 23 Campus Editors from schools across the U.S. who are creating, discovering and curating the best student voices on their campus for LinkedIn's 400+ million members.

They're coming up with ideas, helping their peers shape their content and discovering promising writers and unheard student voices. They're also quelling student's fears about sharing their ideas on a public platform. One of my favorite parts of my job is talking to the students regularly about what I see working and offering feedback to help them get better.

Here are some of my favorite posts from the program thus far. I invite you to check out the Campus Editors' profiles and follow them.

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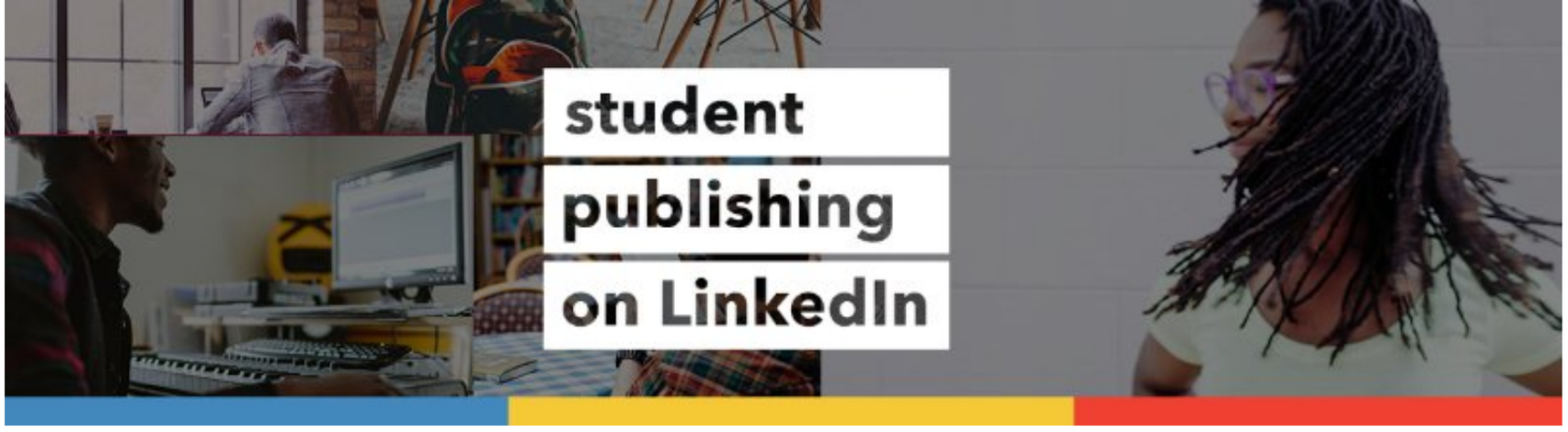
Want to be a Campus Editor? Email StudentPublishing@linkedin.com and we'll alert you once applications reopen in the spring.

Need ideas? Check out the 2016 Student Editorial Calendar.

Click here to learn more about LinkedIn's Student Publishing Initiative.

#StudentVoices



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Written by
Maya Pope-Chappell

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