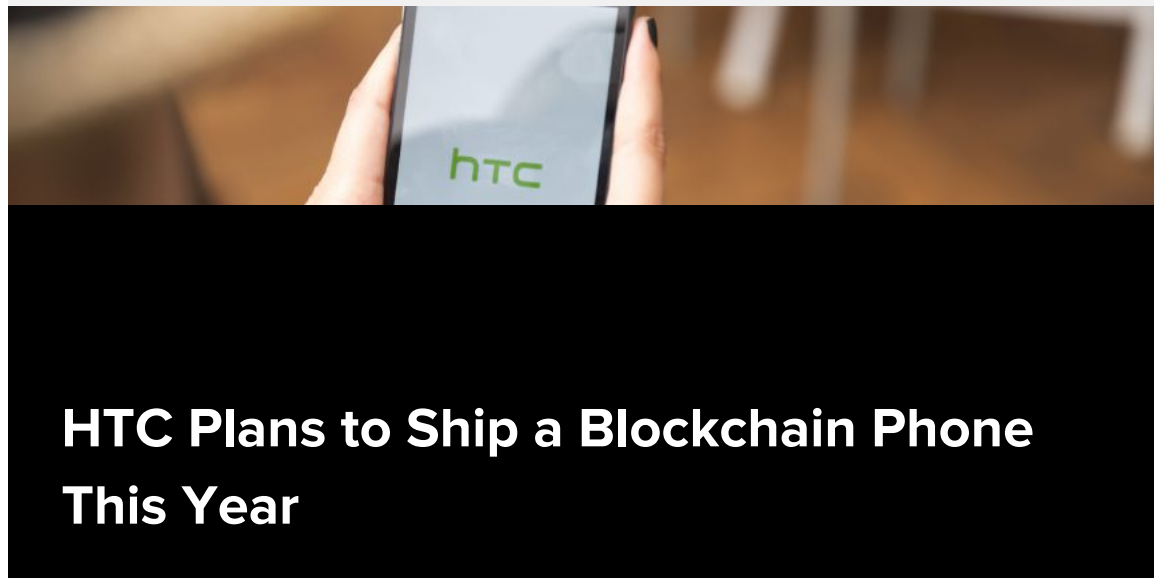



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HTC blazed trails in the late 2000s by bringing a smartphone to market based on the Android operating system. Now it wants to do the same with blockchain.

The Taiwanese electronics maker on Tuesday unveiled the Exodus smartphone, which would serve as both a mobile connecting point to the world of decentralized networks and a storage device for those who want to carry their crypto in their pocket.

According to Phil Chen – who previously founded HTC's Vive virtual reality product line and recently returned to the company to spearhead the Genesis project – the company aims to start distributing the device in short order.

"We're looking to ship by the end of this year," Chen told CoinDesk.

While HTC isn't the only company working on a blockchain-dedicated smartphone – Sirin Labs recently [raised \\$157 million](#) in an initial coin offering to build the "Finney" – it's by far the biggest company of its kind to undertake the effort.

And the way the product has been internally positioned indicates that HTC sees a powerful role for decentralized technologies, particularly for putting the power to control consumers' digital identities firmly in their own hands.

And Raymond Pao, associate vice president of VR new technology for HTC, said that "will be building the framework and phone that powers the decentralized web."

"We believe smartphones will be a critical component for the entire crypto ecosystem. This phone

will act as the hub, just like the PC did in the early days of the Internet," he told CoinDesk, going on to say:

"If we look at the industry, there are moving in two directions. One side is 100% centralized so that the platform company knows all the details of the users. The value the platform companies can provide is fully customized service to each single person. The more the user shares to the platform company, the better-customized services the platform companies can provide. On the opposite side, there are the users who care about their privacy more and want to own their information and identification. As the phone is the most personal device we use every day, we want to work on the decentralized eco-system with the users who care most about their privacy."

Focus on usability

Efforts like this point to a deepening relationship between mobile devices and blockchains.

From the plethora of smartphone-based wallet apps to the ability to send cryptocurrency by way of SMS, it's a combination that has driven both innovation and, for the unlucky, [theft](#).

But challenges aside, HTC is pursuing what could be the next big thing for smartphone development.

Speaking to CoinDesk, Chen said that the goal was to build a product that would provide a high level of security for digital assets stored in the device, but one that also offers an ease of use other crypto-wallets on the market lack.

In particular, the Genesis is set to include a digital storefront for distributed apps, or dapps, in addition to a built-in wallet. The idea is that this store will be connected to offerings around existing blockchain networks, including ethereum. The phone will also have an API built into it so that developers can build additional apps based on the integrated networks.

Indeed, HTC appears to be betting that the ubiquitous nature of the smartphone – data from [Statista](#) indicates that nearly 3 billion people today use smartphones worldwide – is a natural fit for blockchain, especially as it relates to greater control over one's information.

"We really care about this portable identity and users owning their identity and data, and we believe that the phone is the best place to do that," Chen explained.

Not going it alone

As a major smartphone maker, one might think that HTC is looking to jump into the market with guns blazing.

But according to Chen, the Taiwanese manufacturer is taking a decidedly different approach, reaching out to projects like ethereum and DFINITY as it looks to integrate those protocols into the Genesis phone.

"Right now, we're talking to ethereum, DFINITY, and we want to run their clients to optimize for their nodes," he explained. "We want to be the Switzerland for all protocols, ethereum etc, so the phone can do 20–30 percent of it in terms of verifying."

"At some point, somebody needs to build a mobile-centric protocol," he added.

The coming months, Chen went on to say, will see the slow release of additional information about the Genesis, including white papers, specifications and the like.

"We'll also be releasing some more white papers in the July–August time frame that have more of that, can have the phone be a node as opposed to mid-to-high-end servers," he told CoinDesk.

And in a nod to the crypto community, a forthcoming pre-sale for the phone will only accept bitcoin

and ethereum as payment.

"We're going to do a pre-sale, and we'll accept ethereum and bitcoin, for the pre-order," Chen explained.

[HTC phone](#) image via Shutterstock

Editor's Note: This article has been updated to reflect that HTC's forthcoming phone – originally referred to as the Genesis in internal documentation provided to CoinDesk – is now known as the Exodus.

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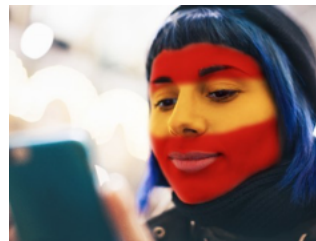
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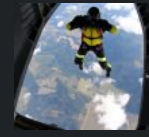
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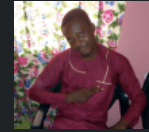
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