

# **Biography of a Software Engineer - Vitalik Buterin (CSU33012 Assignment)**

Ethereum- a well-known name amongst those who have dabbled in cryptocurrency or who have any interest in it. A less known name, however, is Vitalik Buterin- the person behind Ethereum. My essay will be about Vitalik as little is known about the creator of Bitcoin, Ethereum's bigger brother, yet still had a big impact on the creation of Ethereum. I also feel quite strongly about cryptocurrency so I'd like to express my thoughts and opinions on it, and finally, I chose Vitalik as he has the same name as me.

As a software engineer, I have the power to change the world, for the better or the worst. One example is recently I saw a video of a software engineer who created an A.I. installment, called EEEVEE, to be integrated into the house smart system to aid his friend in a wheelchair. For example, this A.I. would detect the wheelchair coming close to the front door, check that the person's phone was also in the same location, unlock and open the door, and once the person has left the house, close and lock the door. The Engineer mentioned that unfortunately, his friend got a heart palpitation recently, the A.I. detected the hand gesture for help and immediately reacted, it called the police, gave them all the required information so that no time was wasted on call tracing and once the police and ambulance arrived at the house, unlocked and opened the door for them. The police and medics later mentioned that once they entered the house, they could hear a voice saying; "location: living room", this allowed the person in the wheelchair to get help within four minutes with the help of software. This inspired me and made me realize that I don't want to be a software engineer for the money or the perks but rather to target my skills to help the world, be it people, animals, or the environment, Vitalik's invention/ software does the opposite of this.

Cryptocurrency, seemingly an innocent invention that could aid people in generating wealth, however, that's not all it is, and there are hidden dangers behind it! While cryptocurrency might have earned many people a fortune, especially for those who caught onto this concept earlier, others who tried to grab onto the hype train of cryptocurrency, later on, might have lost thousands if not millions due to the unpredictable nature of fluctuations of this currency. An example of this can be seen by checking the price of Ethereum over the months. At the beginning of May, Ethereum was €3,220, at the end of June the price was €1,532, this means people would have lost over half of their investments. Another danger could be thieves, as in the case of 2. Monty Munford, a tech journalist who seemingly had an early hint of the cryptocurrency boom and decided to invest £25,000 into Ethereum seeing as it had the potential to have a similar 100,000% rise to Bitcoin. At first, he saw an income in money but quickly that income faded and morphed into a loss, especially

during the cryptocurrency fall in 2018. Once Monty finally dared to have a look at his losses, he found that not only did he lose some money, but as a matter of fact, he lost all of this money as it was transferred to another private key, without trace or hope of getting it back, or in other words stolen. So not only is there a risk of losing money due to the fluctuating price of the cryptocurrency, but also there's a chance that it can be stolen without a trace.

The real reason why I feel so strongly against cryptocurrency is that it has such a negative impact on the environment. This is a topic which is close to my heart as I feel very strongly about nature and the environment. Due to cryptocurrency becoming such a mainstream topic, people who already have some capital, have decided to rather than invest in cryptocurrency, to 3. "mine" it instead, which is the act of trying to create new cryptocurrency coins by solving complex mathematical equations. This can be done using a graphics card or a multitude of them, the more powerful the graphics card the faster the algorithm can solve these complex mathematical problems, especially if you have multiple of them, you can probably guess where this is going. This resulted in the emergence of "mining farms" which are facilities with a multitude of graphics cards to solve these mathematical problems, and as you already know, graphics cards have large power consumption which means these farms absorb mass amounts of energy which damages the environment. As previously mentioned, Ethereum was inspired by Bitcoin meaning that any controversy around Bitcoin can also be attached to Ethereum and Vitalik. This means that the article about 4. Bitcoin consumes more energy than Argentina can also be linked to Ethereum. Finally, if you look at the origin of the world's energy, you can see that 80% of the world's energy comes from fossil fuels and fossil fuels have the biggest impact on global warming.

Although I'm not blaming Vitalik and his creation of Ethereum as his intentions were pure- to create a decentralized currency to not be controlled by the government, he didn't take into account the impacts his creation could have on people and the world. Vitalik didn't want people to lose money directly from his creation but for people like Monty a simple missight from Vitalik could have a massive impact on their lives, and not a positive one, and Vitalik didn't intend for this creation to have such a massive impact on the environment but once again, a missight from him meant more damage to our already-damaged environment. Personally, Vitalik is a great engineer, however, he'll be an inspiration of what to avoid in my career rather than a beacon of what to strive towards.

## **Sources:**

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