

Transactions and Blocks in Ridiculous Detail

Ryan X. Charles

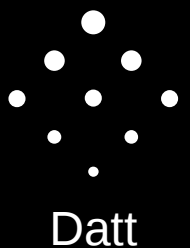
Blockchain University

San Francisco, Oct. 26 – Oct. 30, 2015



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Outline

Blockchain Overview

Number Formats

Public Keys, Signatures, & Addresses

Inputs & Outputs

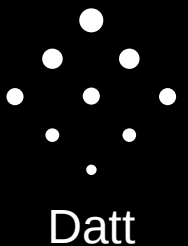
Transactions

Blocks



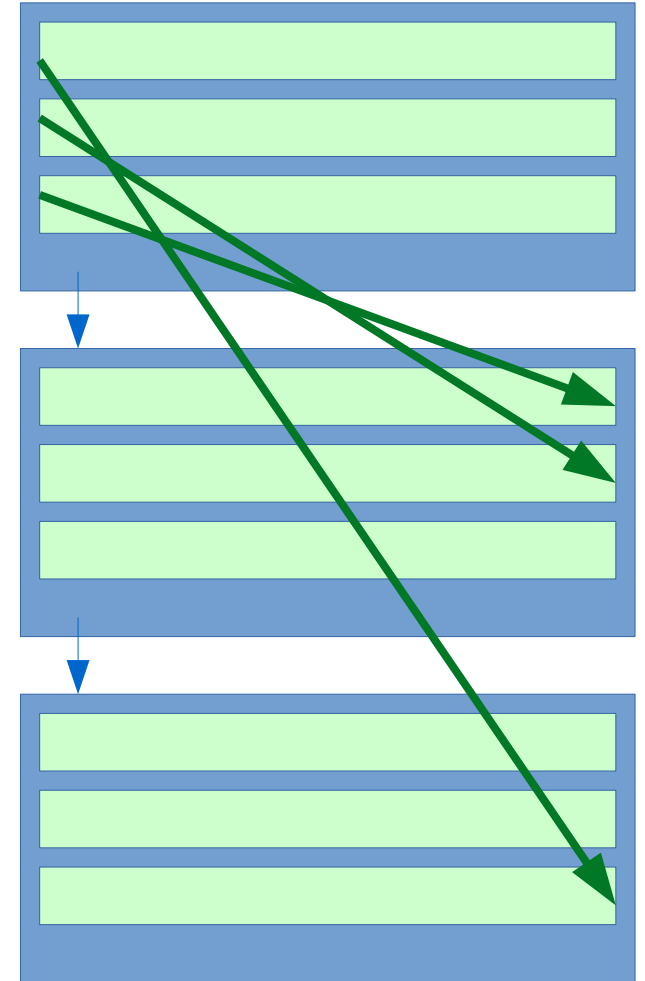
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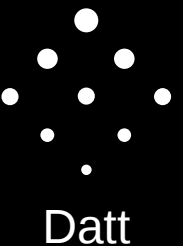
Blockchain Overview

- Blocks contain transactions and a proof-of-work hash
- Each block links to previous block
- Each transaction links to outputs of earlier transactions



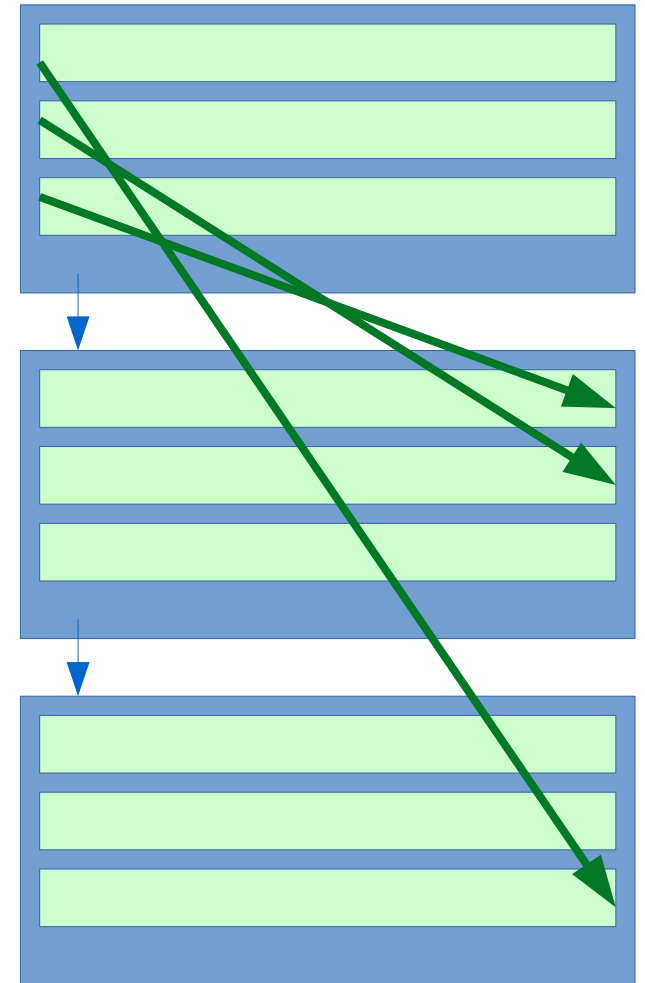
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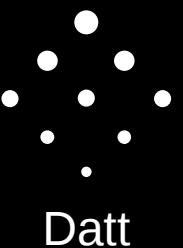
Blockchain Overview

- Genesis Block:
 - The First Block
- Coinbase Transaction:
 - First transaction in a block
 - Mining reward
 - Has “null” inputs



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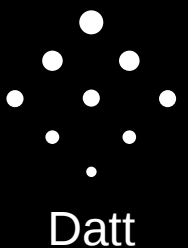
Blockchain Overview

- Each block has:
 - Proof-of-Work Hash (PoW)
 - Nonce
 - Meta data and transactions
- Example PoW with data “test data”
 - Nonce: 0, Hash: `df59bb7272f144dc7d3620e6f9e14234`
 - Nonce: 1, Hash: `460142d2a0349c13a48b422261d708eb`
 - Nonce: 2, Hash: `71be158053f58c9e1f094fb3f7da282e`
 - ...
 - Nonce: 146, Hash: `00f82186722b46b2adb57f321793e44f`

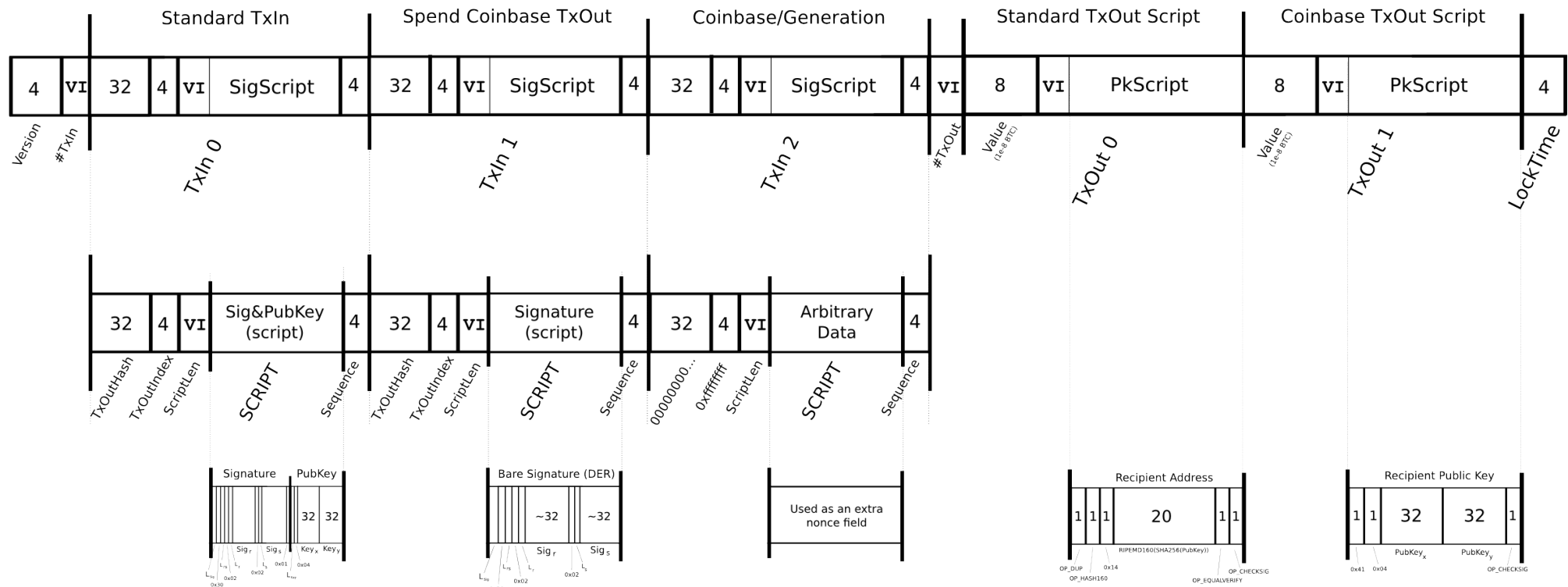


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Transaction Detail Overview

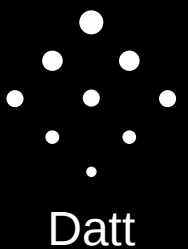


Summary: Transactions have inputs and outputs. Plot by Alan Rainer.



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Number Formats

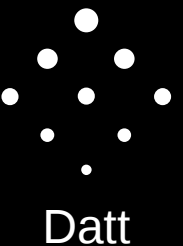
Which number format does bitcoin use?

- Big endian
- Little endian
- Sign+magnitude
- Two's complement
- Fixed point
- Floating point
- String
- 8 bit
- 16 bit
- 32 bit
- 64 bit
- 256 bit
- Custom variable size
- Another variable size



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Number Formats

Which number format does bitcoin use?

All of them.

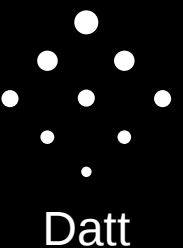
“I wanted to see how many number formats I could use in a single protocol, so I invented bitcoin.”

- Satoshi Nakamoto (apocryphal)



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Endianness

Big endian

- One thousand
- 1000 (decimal)
- 3e8 (hex)
- 3 232 (decimal bytes)
- 03 e8 (hex bytes)
- 00000011 11101000 (bin bytes)

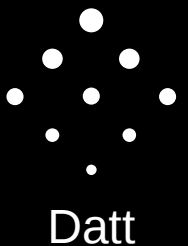
Little endian

- One thousand
- 0001 (decimal)
- 8e3 (hex)
- 232 3 (decimal bytes)
- e8 03 (hex bytes)
- 11101000 00000011 (bin bytes)



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Sign (+/-)

Sign magnitude

Most significant bit: 0 pos., 1 neg.

(4 bytes, big endian)

- -1 (decimal)
- -1 (hex)
- 128 0 0 1 (decimal bytes)
- 80 00 00 01 (hex bytes)
- 10000000 00000000
00000000 00000001 (bin bytes)


Two's complement

$X \rightarrow 2^N - X$, where N is bits

-1: $1 \rightarrow 2^{32} - 1 = 4294967295$

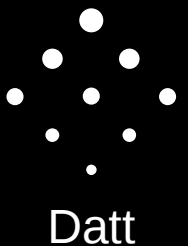
(4 bytes, big endian)

- -1 (decimal)
- -1 (hex)
- 255 255 255 255 (decimal bytes)
- ff ff ff ff (hex bytes)
- 11111111 11111111
11111111 11111111 (bin bytes)



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Sign (+/-)

Sign magnitude

Most significant bit: 0 pos., 1 neg.

(4 bytes, little endian)

- -1 (decimal)
- -1 (hex)
- 1 0 0 128 (decimal bytes)
- 01 00 00 80 (hex bytes)
- 00000001 00000000
00000000 10000000 (bin bytes)

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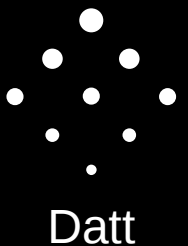
(4 bytes, little endian)

- -1 (decimal)
- -1 (hex)
- 255 255 255 255 (decimal bytes)
- ff ff ff ff (hex bytes)
- 11111111 11111111
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Decimal to Hex Examples

Decimal

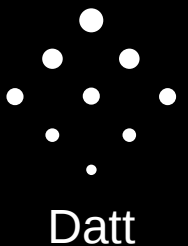
4 hex bytes, little endian

5	05 00 00 00 (unsigned)
5	05 00 00 00 (sign+magnitude)
5	05 00 00 00 (two's complement)
-5	05 00 00 10 (sign+magnitude)
-5	fb ff ff ff (two's complement)
-6	06 00 00 10 (sign+magnitude)
-6	fa ff ff ff (two's complement)



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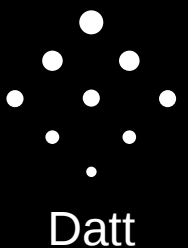
Varint (Compact Size)

- How to transmit the size of data?
 - Could always use 4 bytes
 - e.g., “600 bytes to follow” stored as 32 bit uint
 - Data size limited to max 4 byte int (4294967295 bytes)
- ...but **everyone** stores the blockchain.
 - 00 00 00 01 is 3 bytes of wasted space
 - Should use minimal # of bytes
- Bitcoin's “Compact Size”
 - Varies in size from 1 byte for small nums, 9 bytes for big



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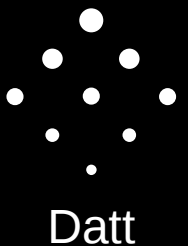
Varint (Compact Size)

- Compact Size, a.k.a. Varint
 - [header byte][0 – 8 extra bytes]
- Header byte:
 - 0-253: followed by 0 bytes; header represents size
 - 254: followed by 2 byte unsigned LE specifying size
 - 255: followed by 4 byte unsigned LE specifying size
 - 256: followed by 8 byte unsigned LE specifying size



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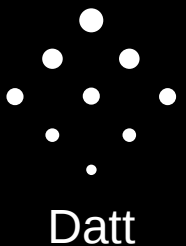
Varint Examples

Varint	Decimal
00	0
01	1
fc	253
fd 00 80	32768
fd 03 42	16899
fd 00 00	0
fe 00 00 00 80	2147483648
fe 00 00 00 00	0
ff 00 00 00 00 00 00 00 80	9223372036854775808
ff 00 00 0b ef 88 54 b1 f2	13123412341234



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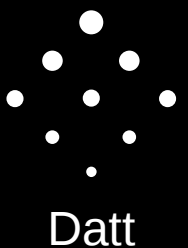
Big Integers

- Largest standard types in C++ are 8 bytes
- secp256k1 uses 256 bit = 32 byte numbers
 - e.g. N (order of curve), G (base point, x, y both big ints)
- Hash function often interpreted as 256 bit int
 - PoW hash is interpreted as little endian 256 bit
- Sometimes big endian, sometimes little endian
- Sometimes unsigned, sometimes sign+magnitude
 - AFAIK big ints never appear as two's complement
- Example, in big endian, hex:
 - N = `fffffffffffffffffffffffffffffffffebaaedce6af48a03bbfd25e8cd0364141`



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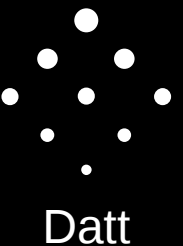
ScriptNum

- Numbers on the stack, used in numerical operations.
- 0 – 4 bytes, little endian, ...
- ...unless they overflow. Can be more 5 – 8 bytes.
- Script number operations are only valid on 4 byte numbers.
 - e.g., OP_ADD, OP_SUB



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Fixed Point

- Constant # of decimal places beyond the decimal point.
- 1 satoshi = 0.00000001 bitcoins
- Bitcoins, or BTC, always represented as fixed point decimal with 8 decimal places
- Satoshis are always unsigned integers
 - $2.1 * 10^{14}$ satoshis; fits comfortably within the precision of javascript's Number type
- Satoshis and bitcoins are NOT floating point
 - 10^{-9} is not a valid bitcoin amount



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Floating Point

- Variable # of decimal places beyond the decimal point.
- $(-1)^s * c * b^q$
- as string, e.g., "6e-45" or "-3.345e12"
- Standard binary format is IEEE 754
- Used to compute mining difficulty
- -6.123e90 in 8 byte BE double: d2c80bf4c18a3da4
- -6.123e90 in 8 byte LE double: a43d8ac1f40bc8d2



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Number Formats

“If a number format exists, bitcoin uses it somewhere.”

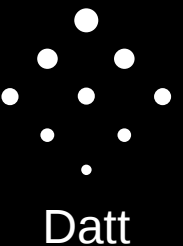
Satoshi Nakamoto (apocryphal)

- Big endian (keys, sigs)
- Little endian (hashes)
- Sign+magnitude (bigints)
- Two's complement (ints)
- Fixed point (BTC/satoshis)
- Floating point (mining)
- String (display, RPC, APIs)
- 8 bit (opcodes, varint)
- 16 bit (opcodes, varint)
- 32 bit (opcodes, varint)
- 64 bit (ScriptNum)
- 256 bit (privkeys, hashes)
- Custom variable size (data sizes)
- Another variable size (script ops)



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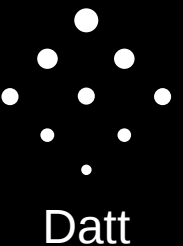
Public Keys

- $P = pG$
 - a public key (P) is a point equal to the private key (p; a big number) multiplied by G (the base point of the curve)
- $P = (x, y)$
- simplest representation is **[x][y]**
- However, y can be derived from x if you know whether it is odd or even
- ...therefore a more compact representation: **[y is odd][x]**



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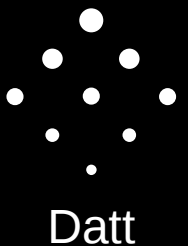
Public Keys

- DER format - the format public keys take in a transaction
- “Compressed” - pubkeys are almost always stored this way.
 - **[isOdd][x]**
 - x is 256 bit big endian unsigned integer
 - isOdd is either 2 (y is odd), or 3 (y is even)
- “Uncompressed” - obsolete, unnecessarily inefficient.
 - **[4][x][y]**
 - x, y are 256 bit big endian unsigned integers
- “Other” - header byte can also be 6 or 7, interpret same as uncompressed.
 - <http://sourceforge.net/p/bitcoin/mailman/message/29416133/>



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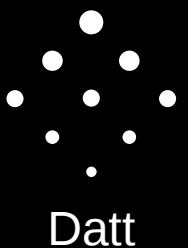
Signatures

- An secp256k1 ECDSA signature consists of (r, s), two 256 bit integers
- A “compact” signature, not present in the blockchain, is simply:
 - **[r][s]**, where r and s are both unsigned 256 bit integers
 - Usually encoded as base64, particularly with bitcoin message signing (again, not in the blockchain)



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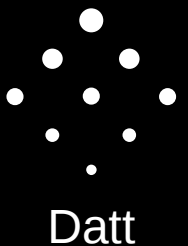
Signatures

- In the blockchain, a signature is encoded in this form:
 - **[DER signature][hashtype]**
 - hashtype is 1 byte: (SIGHASH_ALL, SIGHASH_NONE, SIGHASH_SINGLE) | SIGHASH_ANYONECANPAY
- DER signature:
 - **[h][l][rh][rl][r][sh][sl][s]**
 - h (0x30), l (length of what follows), rh (2), rl (length of r), sh (2), sl (length of s) are all 1 byte
 - r, s are *sign-magnitude* variable-size big integers, that are never negative
- Summary, in the blockchain: **[0x30][l][2][rl][r][2][sl][s][hashtype]**



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Opcodes

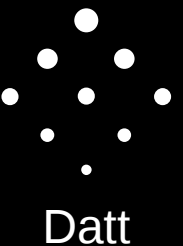
- One byte specifying an operation.

- OP_FALSE: 0x00,
- OP_0: 0x00,
- OP_PUSHDATA1: 0x4c,
- OP_PUSHDATA2: 0x4d,
- OP_PUSHDATA4: 0x4e,
- OP_1NEGATE: 0x4f,
- OP_RESERVED: 0x50,
- OP_TRUE: 0x51,
- OP_1: 0x51,
- OP_2: 0x52,
- OP_3: 0x53,
- OP_4: 0x54,
- OP_5: 0x55,
- OP_6: 0x56,
- OP_7: 0x57,
- OP_8: 0x58,
- OP_9: 0x59,
- OP_10: 0x5a,
- OP_11: 0x5b,
- OP_12: 0x5c,
- OP_13: 0x5d,
- OP_14: 0x5e,
- OP_15: 0x5f,
- OP_16: 0x60,
- OP_NOP: 0x61,
- OP_VER: 0x62,
- OP_IF: 0x63,
- OP_NOTIF: 0x64,
- OP_VERIF: 0x65,
- OP_VERNOTIF: 0x66,
- OP_ELSE: 0x67,
- OP_ENDIF: 0x68,
- OP_VERIFY: 0x69,
- OP_RETURN: 0x6a,
- ... ~175 total,
including push data



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Scripts

- Series of operations and data to be pushed to the stack.
- Bitcoin has a stack and an “alt stack” - no heap.
- Example: OP_5 OP_5 OP_EQUALVERIFY
- Hex bytes: 555588
- Example: 3 0x606060 3 0x606060 OP_EQUALVERIFY
- Hex bytes: 036060600360606088



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Transaction Inputs

- **[txhashbuf][txoutnum][scriptvi][script][seqnum]**
- txhashbuf: hash of input tx, 256 bits
- txoutnum: UInt32LE, which prev. output is being input
- scriptvi: varint for length of script
- script: scriptSig - executed after scriptPubKey
- seqnum: mostly unused UInt32LE for updating a transaction
- before it gets in a block, usually $(\text{uint})(-1) = 0\text{xff}\text{ff}\text{ff}\text{ff}\text{ff}\text{ff}\text{ff}$ (note two's complement)



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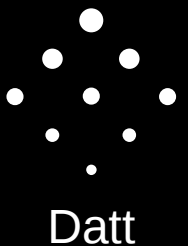
Transaction Outputs

- **[value][scriptvi][script]**
- value: UInt64LE - number of satoshis to send
- scriptvi: varint for length of script
- script: the scriptPubKey - executed before scriptSig



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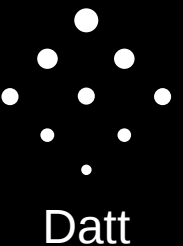
Transactions

- **[version][txinsvi][txins][txoutsvi][txouts][nlocktime]**
- version: UInt32LE, presently 1
- txinsvi: Varint, the number of inputs
- txins: the inputs concatenated together
- txoutsvi: Varint, the number of outputs
- txouts: the outputs concatenated together
- nlocktime: UInt32LE, block or time at which tx is valid, usually 0



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Transactions

- Random, simple example, in the blockchain:

- txid (reverse of hash):

f45fa87b3582858580734cb9c584264c8cfefeb4e5b49ed5ec58d31850f2296da9

- tx hash:

a96d29f25018d358ecd59eb4e5b4fe8c4c2684c5b94c7380858582357ba85ff4

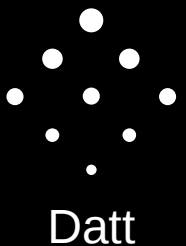
- tx:

0100000001795b88d47a74e3be0948fc9d1b4737f96097474d57151afa6f77c7879
61e47cc120000006a47304402202289f9e1ae2ed981cd0bf62f822f6ae4aea40c65
c7339d90643cea90de93ad1502205c8a08b3265f9ba7e99057d030d5b91c889a1b9
9f94a3a5b79d7daaada2409b6012103798b51f980e7a3690af6b43ce3467db75bed
e190385702c4d9d48c0a735ff4a9fffffffff01c0a83200000000001976a91447b8e
62e008f82d95d1f565055a8243cc243d32388ac00000000



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Transactions

- Parsing the transaction with fullnode:

```
fullnode> var tx =
```

```
Tx().fromHex('0100000001795b88d47a74e3be0948fc9d1b4737f96097474d57151afa6f77c787961e47cc120000006a47304402202289f9e1ae2ed981cd0bf62f822f6ae4aea40c65c7339d90643cea90de93ad1502205c8a08b3265f9ba7e99057d030d5b91c889a1b99f94a3a5b79d7daaada2409b6012103798b51f980e7a3690af6b43ce3467db75bede190385702c4d9d48c0a735ff4a9ffffffff01c0a832000000000001976a91447b8e62e008f82d95d1f565055a8243cc243d32388ac00000000')
```

```
fullnode> tx.toJSON()
```

```
{ version: 1,
```

```
  txinsvi: '01',
```

```
  txins:
```

```
    [ { txhashbuf: '795b88d47a74e3be0948fc9d1b4737f96097474d57151afa6f77c787961e47cc',
```

```
      txoutnum: 18,
```

```
      scriptvi: '6a',
```

```
      script: '71
```

```
0x304402202289f9e1ae2ed981cd0bf62f822f6ae4aea40c65c7339d90643cea90de93ad1502205c8a08b3265f9ba7e99057d030d5b91c889a1b99f94a3a5b79d7daaada2409b601 33 0x03798b51f980e7a3690af6b43ce3467db75bede190385702c4d9d48c0a735ff4a9',
```

```
    seqnum: 4294967295 } ],
```

```
  txoutsvi: '01',
```

```
  txouts:
```

```
    [ { valuebn: '3320000',
```

```
      scriptvi: '19',
```

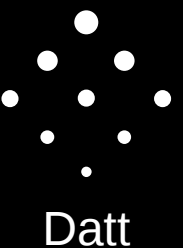
```
      script: 'OP_DUP OP_HASH160 20 0x47b8e62e008f82d95d1f565055a8243cc243d323 OP_EQUALVERIFY OP_CHECKSIG' } ],
```

```
  nlocktime: 0 }
```



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Transactions

- The one and only input:

```
fullnode> tx.txins[0].toJSON()
```

```
{ txhashbuf:
```

```
'795b88d47a74e3be0948fc9d1b4737f96097474d57151afa6f77c787961e47cc',
```

```
  txoutnum: 18,
```

```
  scriptvi: '6a',
```

```
  script: '71
```

```
0x304402202289f9e1ae2ed981cd0bf62f822f6ae4aea40c65c7339d90643cea90de93ad15
```

```
02205c8a08b3265f9ba7e99057d030d5b91c889a1b99f94a3a5b79d7daaada2409b601 33
```

```
0x03798b51f980e7a3690af6b43ce3467db75bede190385702c4d9d48c0a735ff4a9',
```

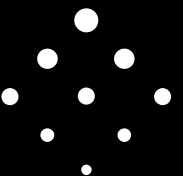
```
  seqnum: 4294967295 }
```

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Datt

Transactions

- The one and only output:

```
fullnode> tx.txouts[0].toJSON()
```

```
{ valuebn: '3320000',
```

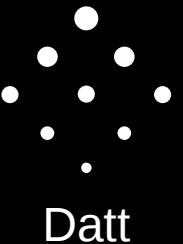
```
  scriptvi: '19',
```

```
  script: 'OP_DUP OP_HASH160 20 0x47b8e62e008f82d95d1f565055a8243cc243d323  
OP_EQUALVERIFY OP_CHECKSIG' }
```



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Transactions

- Input script:

71

0x304402202289f9e1ae2ed981cd0bf62f822f6ae4aea40c65c7339d90643cea90de93ad15
02205c8a08b3265f9ba7e99057d030d5b91c889a1b99f94a3a5b79d7daaada2409b601 33
0x03798b51f980e7a3690af6b43ce3467db75bede190385702c4d9d48c0a735ff4a9

- Output script:

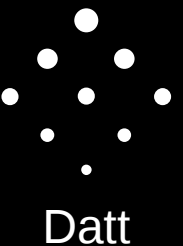
OP_DUP OP_HASH160 20 0x47b8e62e008f82d95d1f565055a8243cc243d323
OP_EQUALVERIFY OP_CHECKSIG

- ...will explain scripts in detail in another talk.



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Blocks

- Meta data
- List of transactions
- Block header
 - Contains hash of previous block (hence “block chain”, chain of blocks back to genesis block)
 - Contains Merkle root of transactions list



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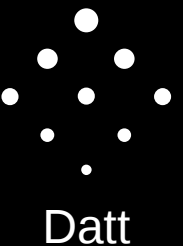
Merkle Trees

- How to download a piece of a file, and know that the piece is correct?
- Hash data one time:
- [data1][data2][data3][data4]
- [hash]
- ...must download all data pieces to confirm hash



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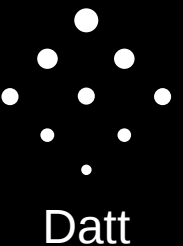
Merkle Trees

- Hash data in pieces:
- [data1][data2][data3][data4]
- [hash1][hash2][hash3][hash4]
- ...better, but must download all hashes, which still scales the same as the size of the data, $O(N)$



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Merkle Trees

- Hash data in a tree:
- [data1][data2][data3][data4]
- [hash1][hash2][hash3][hash4]
- [hash1'][hash2']
- [hash1'']
- ...best, only have to download branch of the tree that is relevant to the data piece you are downloading



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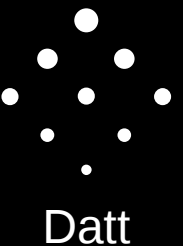
Merkle Trees

- Hash data in a tree:
- **[data1][data2][data3][data4]**
- **[hash1][hash2][hash3][hash4]**
- **[hash1'][hash2']**
- **[hash1'']**
- **...verified** in $O(\log(N))$



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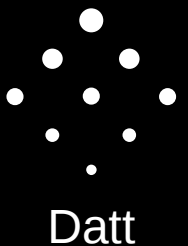
Merkle Trees

- Hash transactions in a tree:
- [tx1][tx2][**tx3**][tx4][tx5][tx6][tx7]
- [h1][h2][**h3**][**h4**][h5][h6][h7][h7] ← last one dup.
- [**h1'**][**h2'**][h3'] [h4']
- [**h1''**][**h2''**]
- [**h1'''**] ← merkle root
- ...**bolded** hashes must be downloaded to confirm tx3 is in the block



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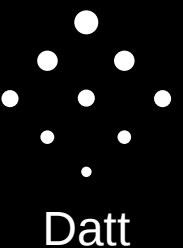
Merkle Trees

- Merkle trees are most useful for SPV nodes, so you can validate that your transaction (e.g., a payment to you) has in fact been placed in a block, without needing the full blockchain.



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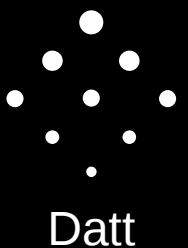
Note on Hashes

- Transaction and block hashes are reversed when displayed.
- i.e., they are internally little endian, but displayed big endian.
- e.g., displayed block hash is big endian:
 - 000000000000000001176c3c6922c5ade5c6c10ab69d0545a4abe07705dfd8e31
- But computed hash looks like this:
 - 318efd5d7007be4a5a54d069ab106c5cde5a2c92c6c376110000000000000000



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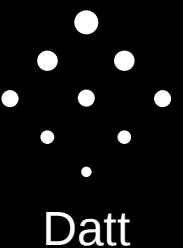
Target

- Hash that next block must be lower than
- Example block hash:
 - 0000000000000000001176c3c6922c5ade5c6c10ab69d0545a4abe07705dfd8e31
- Lower than hypothetical target:
 - 0000000000000000001200
- “Difficulty” is inverse of target
- Compact 4 byte floating point representation of difficulty stored in blocks, as “bits”



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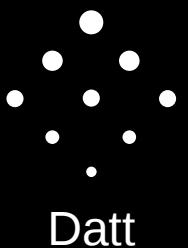
Proof-of-Work

- Finding a low hash requires iterating the nonce many, many times
- Hypothetical target:
 - 0000000000000000001200
- Lower hypothetical target:
 - 000000000000000000001200
- “Difficulty” is inverse of target
- ...requires exponentially more iterations ($2^8 = 256$) to find a hash lower than a target with one byte more zeroes



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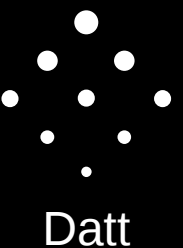
Block Header

- **[version][prevblockhash][merkleroot][time][bits][nonce]**
- version: UInt32LE, presently 2
- prevblockhash: 256 bits, hash of previous block
- merkleroot: 256 bits, root of transaction merkle tree
- time: UInt32LE, somewhat inaccurate time in seconds
- bits: 4 bytes, compact form of mining target
- nonce: 4 bytes, iterated for mining



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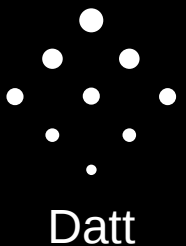
Block

- **[magicnum][blocksize][blockheader][txsvi][txs]**
- magicnum: UInt32LE, always 0xd9b4bef9
- blocksize: UInt32LE
- blockheader
- txsvi: Varint, number of transactions
- txs: list of transactions



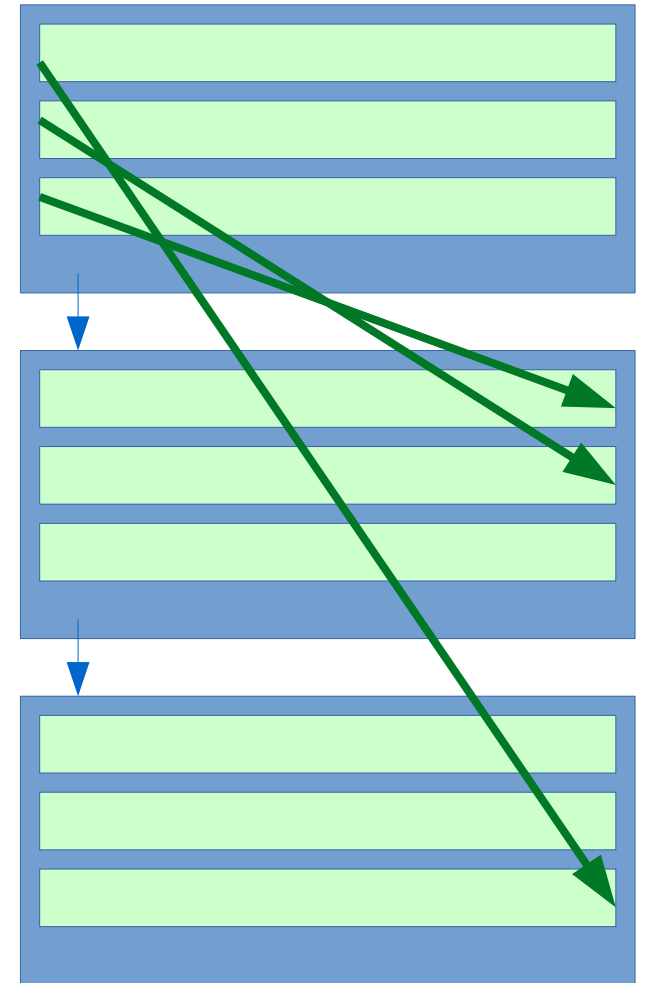
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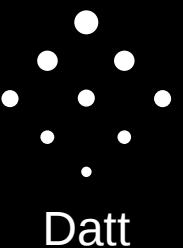
Summary

- Transactions have inputs and outputs – inputs link to earlier outputs
 - Coinbase transactions have null inputs, i.e. do not link to earlier blocks
- Blocks link to previous block
 - Genesis block has null previous block
- Plus lots of details



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Homework

- Try converting some numbers (0, 1, -1, 5, -5, 5000, -5000) into 2-byte big endian and little endian sign+magnitude and two's complement numbers. Show the results in hex bytes and binary.
- Using standard libraries, find a recent transaction and a recent block, and hash them, and confirm that you get the correct hashes (and recall that the display hash is the reverse of the actual hash)
- Using standard libraries, parse a recent transaction and a recent block and spit out the structure of the transaction and block in JSON.
- Using standard libraries, find a recent block, and build a merkle tree, and confirm you get the correct merkle root found in the block.
- Try to “mine” the statement “Blockchain University” by appending a nonce and finding a hash that starts with at least one 0-byte.
- Implement a bitcoin full node using only cryptography libraries and no standard bitcoin libraries.



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