

Generation Crypto: Hope, Risk, and Reality

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Introduction & Rationale

Gen Z, people born between 1997–2012, are dissatisfied with the traditional banking systems, which are considered slow, expensive, and analog, whose interest in decentralized finance is on the rise. Most of them in this age group prefer conducting their financial transactions via decentralized applications and stablecoins.

My data story explores how young adults (Generation Z and Millennials) engage with cryptocurrency as a perceived path to financial freedom in an age of inflation, job insecurity, and digital optimism. The project focuses on the emotional tension between hope, risk, and reality in the pursuit of digital wealth.

The rationale behind choosing this topic lies in the intersection between technology, economics, and human aspiration. Cryptocurrency is more than a financial instrument—it is a social phenomenon that reflects generational anxieties and dreams about the future.

Iteration 1: Data Selection:Statistics from Media

I conducted a news search on Google using the keywords “Gen-Z” and “cryptocurrency.” By reviewing reports from major media outlets, I collected information on this generation’s acceptance of and preferences for cryptocurrencies, their typical usage scenarios, and the broader systemic impact of crypto on young people’s financial behavior, investment strategies, and saving plans.

From these findings, I selected a representative set of data and used Canva to design a news brief that visualizes the core data portrait of this demographic.



Iteration 2: Mind Map: Characters

To connect the data collected from news media with everyday life, I decided to approach the topic through both personal and ethnographic perspectives.

As a young investor with five years of experience in cryptocurrency, I have personally experienced the dramatic rises and falls of the market — along with the emotions that come with them. Through this process, I've gained not only some financial growth but also an understanding of the mindset shared by many in my generation.

In parallel, I conducted informal surveys and online conversations with peers on social media to gather their stories about using and investing in cryptocurrencies. These qualitative insights — combined with quantitative data from major media sources — allowed me to construct a composite character who embodies the attitudes and experiences of Gen-Z crypto investors.

This character lives in Toronto, graduated from university two years ago, and works as a data analyst. Through a series of comics, I aim to visualize his journey — from curiosity to commitment, from volatility to reflection — as a human-centered data story about how cryptocurrency shapes the hopes, risks, and resilience of a generation. He represents a generation trying to build financial stability amid economic uncertainty. Through their perspective, the audience experiences both the allure and the emotional toll of investing in volatile digital markets.

Iteration 3: The Storyboard: Comic

In developing this project, I shared my creative concept with ChatGPT and collaborated on the generation of five storyboard sequences. The intention was to visualize the narrative through a black-and-white comic format that juxtaposes a 1960s retro aesthetic with the modern atmosphere of financial technology. This deliberate contrast between nostalgia and futurism aims to evoke a sense of visual tension and thematic resonance, reflecting the intersection of past ideals and contemporary digital economies.

The resulting storyboards were designed to capture both the emotional tone of the protagonist's journey and the broader cultural shifts surrounding cryptocurrency, offering viewers a visually compelling and conceptually layered experience.

Scene 1

Narrator: "For Gen-Z, the old rules of money no longer apply. Crypto feels like a ticket out of the system."



Scene2

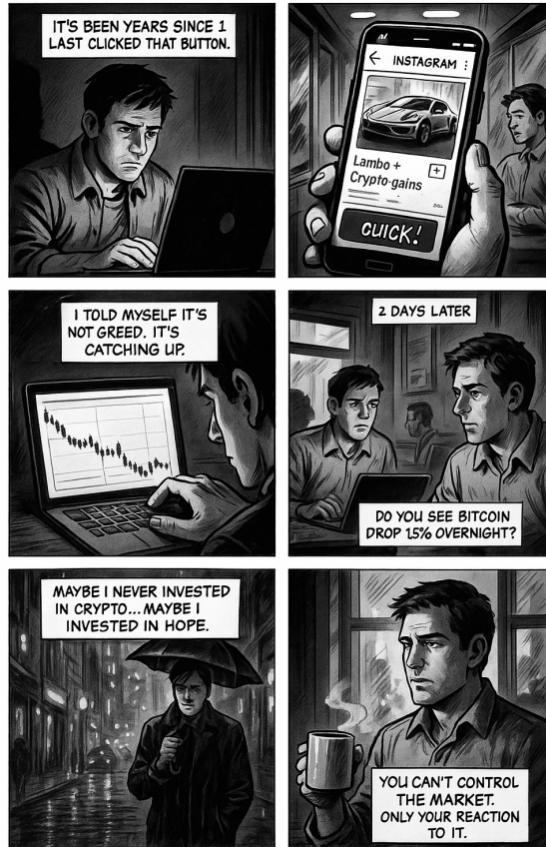
Narrator: " Everyone around me seemed to be making money overnight."

CRYPTO FOMO



Scene 3

Narrator: "Then came the crash. My savings disappeared faster than I blink."



Scene 4

Narrator: "Maybe freedom isn't just about risk—it's about understanding what we value."



Scene 5

Narrator: "Generation Crypto isn't defined by profit—it's defined by resilience."



Audience

The target audience is university-educated young adults aged 20–35 with basic data literacy. They are familiar with financial news and digital technology but may not have formal financial training. The story aims to evoke empathy and reflection on financial behavior, rather than simply explaining cryptocurrency mechanics.

References

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