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Ethereum's Big Developer Event

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The world’s second largest blockchain network is set to host its annual developer conference this week.

To be held in Shanghai, [Devcon2](#) is expected to draw upwards of 700 attendees, with a lineup featuring many notable developers of the smart contract blockchain. On hand for talks and panels will be ethereum creator Vitalik Buterin, lead Casper developer Vlad Zamfir and creator of the Solidity programming language, Christian Reitwiessner.

Also speaking are members of enterprise financial firms, including [Microsoft](#) and Thomson Reuters, with more rumored to be in attendance.

Given the recent trials and tribulations of the emerging technology, however, the tone of this year's Devcon, seems likely to change. As the project is seeking to bounce back from the events of this summer, which saw a notable project collapse and its community locked in fierce debate, the dialogue is likely to provide color on how its leaders believe it can move forward from past

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challenges.

A look at the schedule reveals a heavy focus on security and scalability – two issues that are top of mind for developers working on blockchain projects globally. Further, there is likely to be a focus on use cases that highlight how the public ethereum blockchain, as well as private implementations, can be used today.

Heading there yourself or watching the livestream? Here’s our round-up of the events on our schedule.

1. Ethereum in 25 Minutes – Vitalik Buterin

To warm up before the more technical presentations, ethereum creator Vitalik Buterin will briefly break down the smart contract blockchain’s core components, describing technical terms such as “uncles” and “gas” and what they mean for the network.

The talk is likely to be a must-see for those looking to get up to speed with the project and its various complexities by offering a big-picture view of its goals and vision.

Given the long relevancy of some of Buterin’s earliest talks, this new presentation could prove to be one for the time capsule.

2. Swap, Swear and Swindle. Swarm Incentivization – Viktor Trón and Dr Aron Fischer

One of the long-term goals of ethereum is to use the blockchain to build a next-generation World Wide Web (Web 3.0), one that tears out its current underpinnings and replaces it with a new setup that doesn’t rely on big intermediaries.

But that vision will require a lot of steps, one of which is a lesser-known protocol called Swarm.

With the relatively high price to transact on the ethereum network currently, it remains prohibitive for users to store data directly on the ethereum blockchain. Swarm, which operates similarly to BitTorrent, could allow contracts to be smaller in size, while delivering large quantities of data off of the blockchain.

In this talk, developers Viktor Trón and Dr Aron Fischer will explain how the system for storing files functions, how it encourages people to use it, and why it will be key to the future of the network.

3. A Correct-by-Construction Asynchronous Casper Protocol – Vlad Zamfir

Ethereum is slated to change drastically in the years ahead.

Arguably central to this vision is the migration of the network from ethereum’s current proof-of-work blockchain to one that uses a transaction validation mechanism known as proof-of-stake (POS). Announced in 2015, 'Casper' is the nickname for the technology, one that promises to resolve historical issues with POS validation and that remains a big question mark on the network’s roadmap.

Here, ethereum developer Vlad Zamfir is likely to shed light on a process that has mostly occurred behind closed doors.

4. State Channels: Systemic Security Considerations and Solutions – Joseph Poon

Continuing with the focus on scaling solutions, two presentations will explore 'state channels', networks that live a layer above the blockchain that aim to expand the volume of transactions and smart contracts that ethereum can handle.

The talk is likely to be notable as it is slated to be given by the creator of the Lightning Network, the best-known off-chain payment channel network, but one that is envisioned for use on the bitcoin blockchain.

In interview, Poon said his talk will outline security concerns that ethereum developers should watch out for when building their own similar off-chain micropayment networks, as well as his

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recommendations for how similar ethereum projects can advance harmoniously.

Poon told CoinDesk:

“My intention is to facilitate cross-chains so that cryptocurrency exchanges can be further decentralized.”

As it remains one of the rare slots on the schedule that promotes cross-blockchain developer collaboration, this talk could prove one to watch.

5. Panel: Smart Contract Security in Ethereum

Given the collapse of The DAO, this panel could prove one to watch.

There’s been particular emphasis of late on designing smart contracts that are more secure and easier to use, and much of the blame (at least in the public’s eye) has fallen on ethereum’s new smart contracting language, Solidity.

Following The DAO’s collapse, big banks like Barclays and smaller startups have been investing time and energy in alternative smart contracting languages.

As such, while the panel will focus on the “implications and developments” of smart contracts, panelists including Solidity creator Dr Christian Reitweissner and ethereum creator Vitalik Buterin may be best served by making the case for the continued development of their open-source tools.

6. Formal Verification for Solidity – Dr Christian Reitweissner

'Formal verification' – keep your eyes on the term, as it’s likely to be a buzzword as we head into the fall and winter months.

Given the problems with smart contracts mentioned above, there’s ample interest in developing ways of determining if the technology is secure before it’s deployed. With the interest and money of large financial institutions on the line, it’s safe to say that ensure formal verification for ethereum’s Solidity language is top of mind for the network.

Here, Solidity creator Dr Christian Reitweissner will be presenting on formal verification for the smart contracting language, and any new developments here are likely to impact decision-making in the industry in the months ahead.

7. Imandra Contracts: Formal Verification for Ethereum – Dr Grant Passmore

See, we told you it was a hot topic!

We don't know a lot about “Imandra contracts” (other than they use artificial intelligence), or how they could help mathematically verify ethereum’s code , but given the background above, the talk is likely to be focused on shaping the discussion of the security of the network and its tools.

8. Mist Vision and Demo – Alex Van de Sande

The browser of the ethereum network, Mist, has perhaps been overlooked given the emphasis on the inner-workings of ethereum.

However, as decentralized applications seek to hit the market, they’ll need a user-friendly interface, and this Mist demo is likely to show how far the ethereum community has come in making progress toward this goal.

9. Ethereum Blockchain Initiatives at Thomson Reuters – Dr Tim Nugent

One of just a few enterprise institutions at the conference with a solo speaking slot, this talk from Dr Tim Nugent will shed light on internal R&D at the mass media firm.

As mentioned in past interviews, executives at Thomson Reuters are bullish on use cases including data delivery and digital identity.

As more institutions open up about their creations on ethereum, this will certainly be one to watch, providing insights into how enterprises believe they could leverage ethereum and its technology in the months and years ahead.

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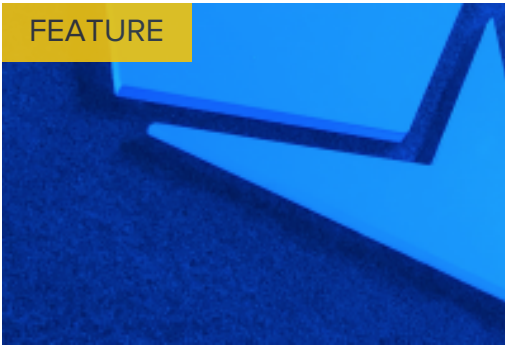
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