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F2Pool: Chinese Pools Will Stick with Bitcoin Core



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Shortly after the sensational public break-up between Bitcoin and R3CEV - hire Mike Hearn, and the launch of several alternative Bitcoin implementations, the block-size dispute is reaching fever pitch. Bitcoin Classic, in particular, has been gathering support among companies, users and some developers. Significantly, a number of mining pools has also publicly come out in support of the Bitcoin Core fork led by Jonathan Toomim.

The second largest mining pool on the Bitcoin network, with some 23 percent of hashing power, China-based F2Pool, was said to be among the pools prepared to switch to Bitcoin Classic. Yesterday, however, rumors started to surface claiming that the Chinese pools had changed position, and will stick with Bitcoin Core.

Speaking to *Bitcoin Magazine*, F2Pool operator Wang Chun confirmed this is indeed the case.

“The rumors are true,” Chun said. “Miners in China were scared by Luke Dashjr’s proof-of-work changing pull request.”

The specific pull request Chun refers to was made by Bitcoin Core and Bitcoin LJR developer Luke Dashjr last week. Dashjr argued that a hard fork should be accompanied by a change of Bitcoin mining hashing algorithm, as it would render ASIC miners obsolete and could re-decentralize mining. Since Bitcoin Classic intends to democratize governance of the implementation, users could vote on the pull request; it had not received widespread support as of yet.

The pull request itself, however, was quickly closed by Bitcoin Classic lead developer Jonathan Toomim, who considered the idea too radical. He argued it shouldn't have been submitted to GitHub directly – but rather discussed on the voting page and Reddit.

Many Bitcoin Classic proponents believe that the pull request was a sabotage attempt against Bitcoin Classic. They reason that the proposal was specifically intended to strike fear into the hearts of the mining community; if the pull request were to be adopted, any investments made in mining hardware could quickly be made worthless.

When *Bitcoin Magazine* spoke to Wang Chun earlier this week, the pool operator had already nuanced his position. F2Pool's claimed support for Bitcoin Classic was misinterpreted, said Chun, stating:

“We did not say we would ‘support’ Bitcoin Classic. We used the word ‘welcome,’ to be exact.”

Earlier this week Chun did, however, emphasize that he wants the block size limit to be increased. Perhaps more important, Chun insists a hard fork is the desired solution to accomplish this – rather than a soft fork through Segregated Witness, as the Bitcoin Core development team intends.

“At the Scaling Bitcoin workshop in Hong Kong, almost every one of us agreed that block size should be increased, and should be increased as a hard fork, as there was no soft fork solution back then,” Chun explained. “Then, last minute, Segregated Witness was introduced. I admire Dr. Pieter Wuille's brilliant hack to deploy it as a soft fork. But despite being brilliant, the soft fork Segregated Witness is still a hack. A hack is dirty. Such a technology would be better implemented as hard fork.”

Chun has made a concrete hard fork proposal since – though the details of this proposal are not yet clear.

A hard fork solution is regarded as a measure of last resort by the Bitcoin Core development team. With hard forks, all full nodes on the Bitcoin network need to change their software to the latest version or risk being “forked off” the network, with potential unforeseen consequences. Soft forks, considered safer by most Bitcoin Core developers as they only require miners to change their software, have been rolled out several times.

But Chun, like the Bitcoin Classic development team, believes the Bitcoin network can grow more cleanly through a hard fork.

Chun:

“Since Segregated Witness will only allow for some 70 percent of added space, a 2-megabyte hard fork would allow for more headroom, which could end the debate for now. People will not only be more satisfied, they’ll also see that we can actually get something done, get something fixed... not just find some detour hack to leave the issue to the next generation.”

While Chun earlier this week indicated that support for Bitcoin Classic in absence of a hard fork was not completely off the table, it seems that has now changed.

After finishing this article, a second Chinese wallet service, HaoBTC, has confirmed to Bitcoin Magazine that Chinese pools will stick with Bitcoin Core, too.

Bitcoin Magazine will be closely monitoring this story as it progresses.

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