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Blockchain tech and the consumer use case



by
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Microsoft has been working closely with its large enterprise customers to help them map out [blockchain strategies](#). But, as you might expect, the company is not ignoring blockchain in the [consumer space](#).

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As an example of how Microsoft is interested in watching blockchain tech for consumers, [Yorke Rhodes](#), global business strategist at Microsoft, pointed to a company called [Slock.it](#), which sells technology to control physical objects, such as locks, linked to [smart contracts](#) that run on the [Ethereum blockchain](#).

“The idea is that you can use blockchain to provide secure ways to share stuff that doesn’t necessarily involve an Uber or an Airbnb or a sharing economy company,” Rhodes said. “Slockit also has a consumer IoT hub. ... It’s basically a little computer that sits on the blockchain that’s also an IoT hub to connect other IoT devices in homes.” According to the Slock.it website, the technology gives “connected objects an identity, the ability to receive payments and the ability to enter complex agreements.”

As another example of a consumer-focused and [IoT-enabled blockchain](#) use case, Rhodes pointed to the idea of charging electric vehicles at places other than today’s dedicated charging stations. One of the gating factors in the sale of electric vehicles relates to the infrastructure around charging the vehicles: Long trips away from an owner’s home base are highly dependent on the location of existing charging stations.

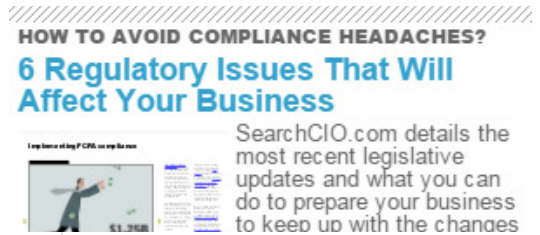
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going to charge from a distributed electrical outlet that

might be on the side of someone's building or someone's house or garage or gas station or whatever and be able to distribute the fees associated with that appropriately, and do it securely and make it all seamless to the consumer, you've started to create a much more significant charging infrastructure for electric vehicles."

Rhodes suggested that Microsoft may choose to embed blockchain tech into the operating system. "We could say, 'Hey, we have a great operating system adopted by tens and tens of millions of people. What if there is technology that we could build into the operating system and/or in the browser that would help Joe Consumer be on the blockchain by default?' He cautioned, however, that he doesn't know whether that will come to pass.

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