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IBM Bridges Blockchain, AI With New Business Unit

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IBM is reorganizing its internal blockchain team into a business unit that encompasses its artificial intelligence and cloud computing efforts.

Called 'Industry Platforms', the division will be led by Bridget van Kralingen, IBM’s former senior vice president of Global Business Services. Further, as part of the launch, IBM's entire blockchain leadership will make the transition to the unit, [first announced](#) last September.

In addition to the work on blockchain tech, the business unit will lead IBM's efforts to bridge its financial services work with its Watson artificial intelligence initiative.

IBM CEO and chairman Ginni Rometty said of the move:

"The Industry Platforms business will bring clients radically optimized processes and marketplaces that leverage Watson, IBM Cloud, IBM Systems, blockchain, deep domain expertise and ecosystems of partners and developers."

"This is an important move by IBM as we increasingly focus on blockchain," the firm further stated.

The unit will house IBM’s global industry managing directors for banking and insurance, its client managing directors and other financial services industry solutions.

IBM's Global Business Services, in turn, will now be led by Accenture senior executive Mark Foster.

Building on blockchain efforts

Based in IBM's Armonk, New York headquarters, Industry Platforms will have company-wide responsibility for blockchain research and development, in addition to helping foster open technology standards with the stated goal of accelerating market adoption.


The new unit represents the next phase in IBM's blockchain push, building on past efforts that have seen the firm develop a range of prototypes and play a leading role in the Linux Foundation-


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led [Hyperledger Project](#).

In early 2015, IBM unveiled one of its [earliest blockchain projects](#), a proof-of-concept that integrated BitTorrent, Ethereum and TeleHash. Since then the company has been working to leverage Watson artificial intelligence with distributed ledger technology.

This past June, IBM [opened](#) the Watson Centre in Marina Bay Singapore, dedicated to developing artificial intelligence, with a focus on blockchain applications.

Update: A previous version of this article stated that IBM's Global Business Services is part of IBM's Industry Platforms.

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