

# The Cryptoanarchy Technology Pyramid

Frank Braun

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2018-10-26

# Cryptoanarchy

*“Computer technology is on the verge of providing the ability for individuals and groups to communicate and interact with each other in a totally anonymous manner. [...] These developments will alter completely the nature of government regulation, the ability to tax and control economic interactions, the ability to keep information secret, and will even alter the nature of trust and reputation.”*

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- Cryptoanarchy is **not** a philosophical utopia, but the attempt to shape life and society with **disruptive technologies**
  - Fork in the road: total surveillance state or a cryptoanarchist libertopia?
- ⇒ People with computers vs. the state

# What is Cryptoanarchy? (30 years later)

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# What is Cryptoanarchy? (30 years later)

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*"The realization of anarchy by means of cryptography."*

- "Cryptoanarchism undermines observation and attribution, and is ultimately subversive."
- "Technologies of non-attribution, untraceability, opaqueness and confidentiality are the political tools of Cryptoanarchy."

# Cryptoanarchy mission

Build an unobservable and non-attributable economy from scratch.



This presentation is neither:

- comprehensive,
- rigorous,
- scientific,
- polite,
- balanced,
- or Bitcoin maximalist,

nor does it try to be.



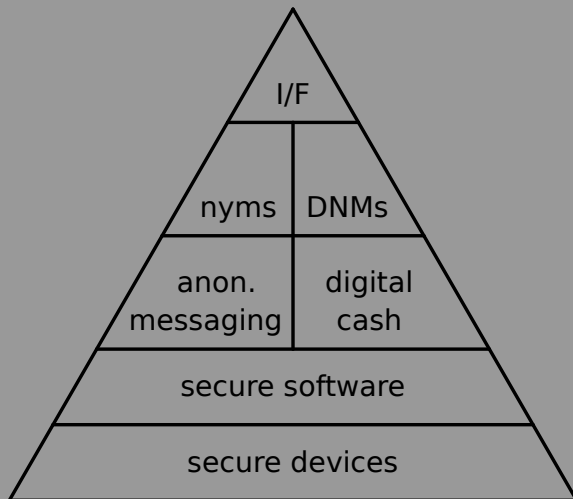
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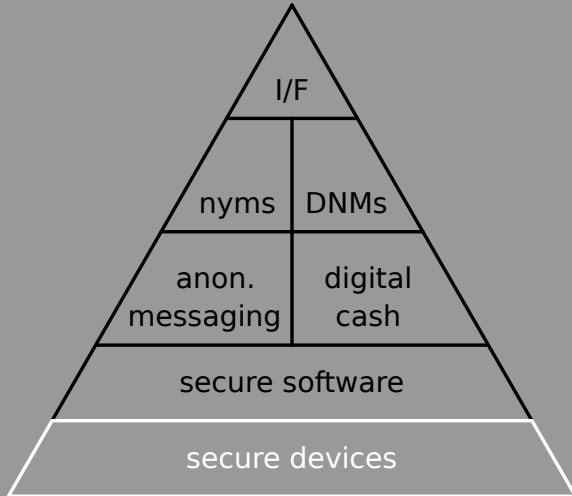
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This rant will cover a very large area, take the best, leave the rest!

# The Cryptoanarchy Technology Pyramid / Stack



## secure devices



## processor level (the good)

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- Direct Anonymous Attestation (DAA): a cryptographic primitive which enables remote authentication of a trusted computer whilst preserving privacy of the platform's user.

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- baseband processors with proprietary operating systems!

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- open-hardware movement

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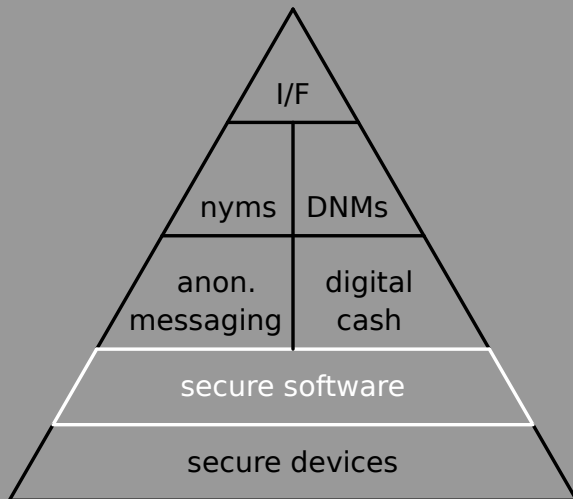
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## secure software



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- MirageOS: library OS to construct unikernels

# programming language level

practical:

- Golang



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specifications / model checking:

- TLA+

## formal verification (examples)

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- Ivory/Tower used in DARPA's HACMS program to create unhackable hardware (drones):

*"The HACMS Red Team was given six weeks and full access to the source code for both vehicles to evaluate their cyber security claims. They were unable to compromise the security of either vehicle."*

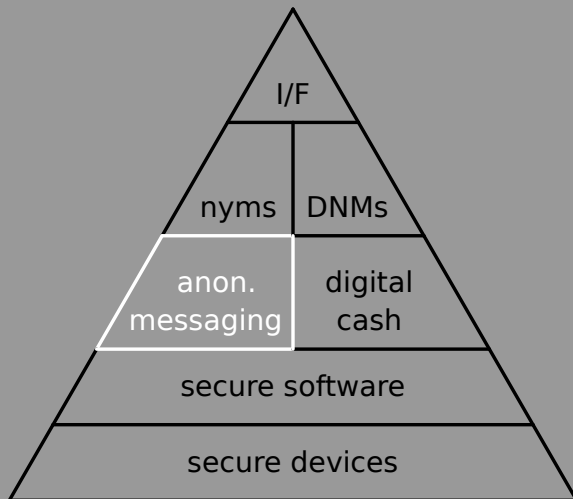
*—<http://loonwerks.com/projects/hacms.html>*



# tooling level

- Git distributed version control
  - collaboration tools
  - secure code delivery with multi-party signatures
- Codechain

# anonymous messaging



## anonymous messaging (theory)

*Anonymity Trilemma: Strong Anonymity, Low Bandwidth  
Overhead, Low Latency—Choose Two*  
*D. Das, S. Meiser, E. Mohammadi, and A. Kate,*  
*Cryptology, Report 2017/954*

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**Abstract:** This work investigates the fundamental constraints of anonymous communication (AC) protocols. We analyze the relationship between bandwidth overhead, latency overhead, and sender anonymity or recipient anonymity against **a global passive (network-level) adversary**. We confirm the trilemma that an AC protocol can only achieve two out of the following three properties: strong anonymity (i.e., anonymity up to a negligible chance), low bandwidth overhead, and low latency overhead.

## anonymous messaging (mix networks)

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- **but**: mostly forgotten





# anonymous messaging (the good)

This slide unfortunately left blank.

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(not considered here: Matrix, Riot, Keybase, Threema, etc.)



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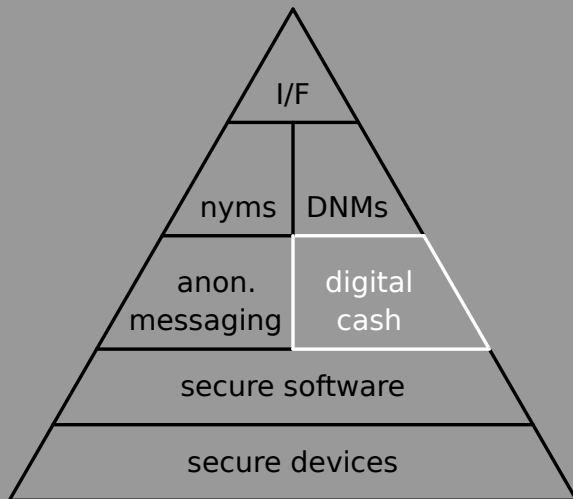
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'Nuff said.

# digital cash



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- fungibility (diamonds are not fungible)

# what is digital cash?

anonymous electronic money



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- ⇒ declared **bankruptcy** in 1998

# digital cash (the ugly)

- Bitcoin
- most altcoins<sup>1</sup>
- blockchain in general

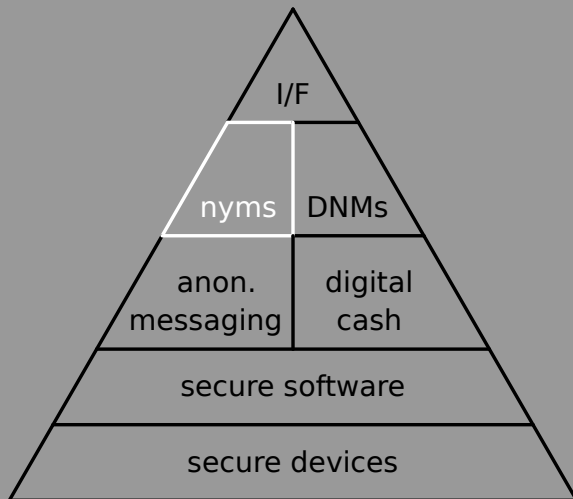
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<sup>1</sup>Monero & Zcash are half decent





## pseudonyms & reputation



# pseudonyms & reputation

- provable pseudonyms are necessary to build reputation systems

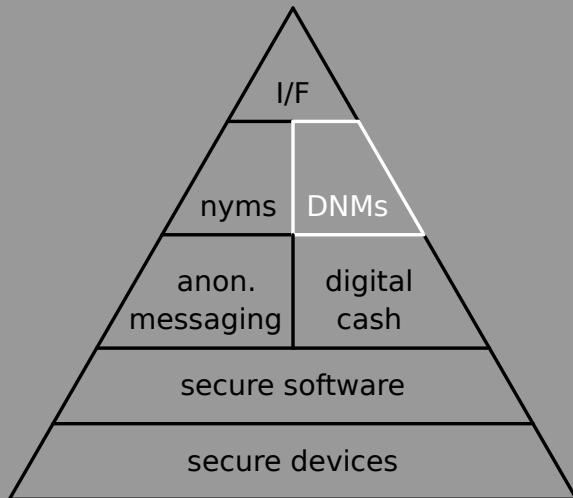
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- PGP is waaaaaaaay beyond its shelf life, time to retire it.

## dark net markets (DNMs)



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Now we have all our necessary components together.

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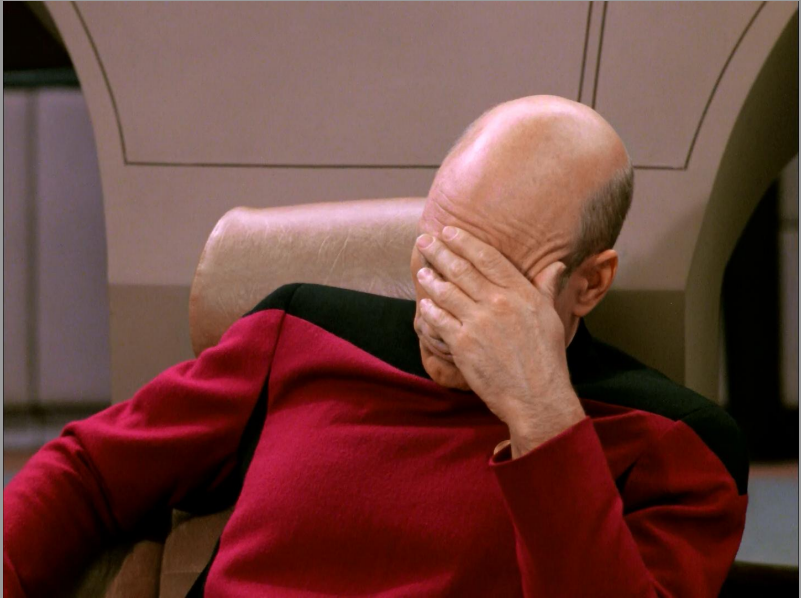
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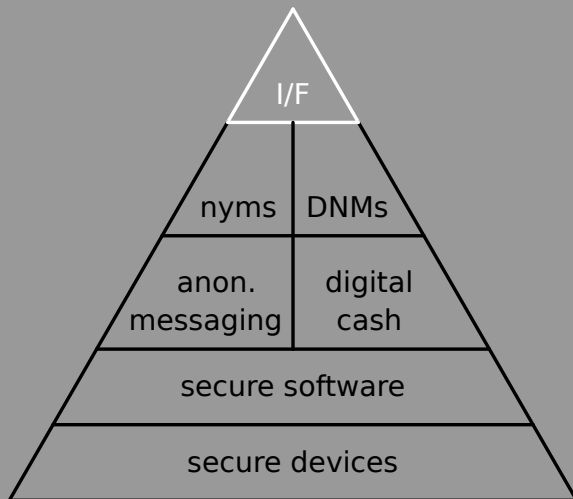
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- and use it to build a marketplace on a delivery mechanism with:
- huge attack surface,
  - that makes it easy to fingerprint users
- (Tor Browser).



# lesson in here

you cannot build a pyramid on quicksand

# physical interfaces (I/F)





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Shocking news: physical beings operate in the physical world.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup>And meatspace is a bitch.

## physical interfaces (examples)

drones:

- open-source fixed-wing long-distance drones
- ⇒ total disruption of smuggling (a.k.a. as "your ticket to fame")
- physical mix nets for drones
- drone drop shipping

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physical structures:

- trading rooms
  - Faraday bar
  - T.A.Z.: The Temporary Autonomous Zone, Hakim Bey, **1991**
- Smuggler's talk tomorrow

# dissecting the pyramid

- 1 things are moving on the secure devices and secure software layer (but that's common CS research, often military funded)

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<sup>3</sup>counter-example: The Second Realm - Book on Strategy, Smuggler, 2010

# dissecting the pyramid

- 1 things are moving on the secure devices and secure software layer (but that's common CS research, often military funded)
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  - current blockchain hype is derailing anonymous digital cash
- 3 meatspace has been ignored for way to long in Cryptoanarchy theory<sup>3</sup> and practice

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# conclusion

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ask yourself:

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ask yourself:

*Do I want to live in a comic book dystopia or do I want to be a free human being?*

# final thoughts

Timothy C. May, 2018:

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- “Most things we think of as problems are not solvable with crypto or any other such technology (crap like ‘better donation systems’ are not something most people are interested in).”
- “If one is involved in dangerous transactions – drugs, birth control information – practice intensive ‘operational security’...look at how Ross Ulbricht was caught.”

# final thoughts (cont.)

Timothy C. May, 2018:

- “Mathematics is not the law”



# final thoughts (cont.)

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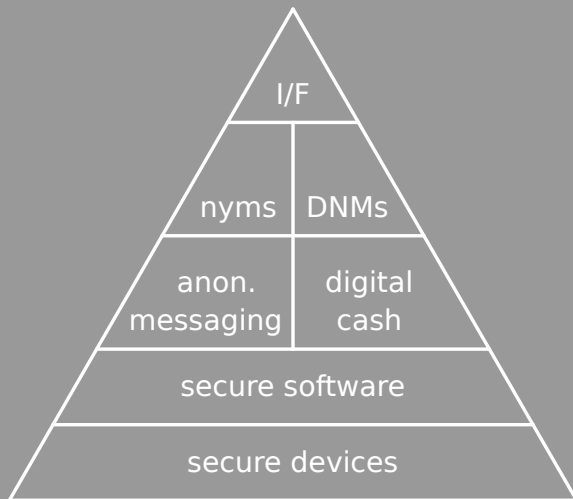
- “Mathematics is not the law”
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- Be interested in liberty and the freedom to transact and speak to get back to the original motivations. Don't spend time trying to make government-friendly financial alternatives.

## final thoughts (cont.)

Timothy C. May, 2018:

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- Crypto remains very far from being usable by average people (even technical people)
- Be interested in liberty and the freedom to transact and speak to get back to the original motivations. Don't spend time trying to make government-friendly financial alternatives.
- Remember, there are a lot tyrants out there.

# the future?



help make it happen!



acknowledgments: J. "smuggler" Logan & Arto Bendiken

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contacts:

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[the-cryptoanarchy-technology-pyramid.pdf](#)



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thank you very much for your attention! questions?