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# Crypto is coming for Fortnite – whether it likes it or not - Decrypt

Decrypt / Andrew Hayward

6-7 minutes

Epic Games' enormously popular battle royale shooter Fortnite made headlines this week after it shut down—but only for a couple of days. Epic cannily replaced the game's vibrant map with a [black hole](#), which fans stared at until it revealed the game's [Chapter 2](#) update, adding a brand-new environment, fresh gameplay elements, and a refreshed interface.

With some 250 million total players as of this past spring, Fortnite is a cultural sensation that goes beyond core gamers—and it's big business too. The game may be free to download and play, but in-game costumes and other paid perks have generated huge revenues for Epic—[\\$2.4 billion](#) in 2018 alone. Naturally, that's got the blockchain community asking: when will Fortnite include crypto?

You can't (yet) spend cryptocurrency in the game itself, but both Fortnite and Epic Games have already crossed paths with crypto and blockchain in a number of ways. Can in-game integration be far behind? Here's a look at the ever-growing intersection between Fortnite and crypto.

## You can bet on Fortnite matches with crypto

Fortnite is one of the fastest growing esports around, and Epic Games has facilitated its growth by pumping the competitive scene full of prize money and large-scale tournaments. According to [Esports Earnings](#), Fortnite competitions have awarded more than \$84 million to date in prize money, with July's Fortnite World Cup responsible for about \$33 million of that.

With sports inevitably comes betting—and yes, esports betting is definitely a thing. [Unikrn](#) is one of the most popular esports betting sites, allowing users to bet on the outcomes of official competitive matches, as well as matches from popular Twitch streamers.

Unikrn betting is based on the platform's own [UnikoinGold](#) token, which can be bet on professional Fortnite matches, wagered in your own in-game battles, and used to enter prize giveaways. The esports industry is rapidly ballooning in size and value, with esports analytics service [Newzoo](#) estimating a \$1.1 billion total value this year and nearly \$1.8 billion in 2022. Betting will only grow more appealing as more and more people get hooked on esports—and crypto is already making inroads on the industry.

## You could (briefly) buy Fortnite merch with Monero

For a brief moment at the start of the year, you could actually buy Fortnite merchandise through an official Epic Games store using Monero (XMR). Monero developer Riccardo Spagni seemed (understandably) thrilled about the news, and [suggested](#) that it was chosen for its privacy-centric approach compared to Bitcoin.

However, there was a snag in the excitement: Epic Games [didn't actually mean](#) to enable Monero support. After a few days, the option was disabled and company founder and CEO [Tim Sweeney tweeted](#), "Actually, Fortnite's brief foray into crypto was accidental. We worked with a partner to open a merchandise store, and somewhere along the way Monero payment was enabled."

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While that official crypto dalliance was sadly unintentional, you can actually purchase V-Bucks—Fortnite's premium, in-game currency—with Bitcoin, Ethereum, Litecoin, Dash, and Dogecoin, right now. However, it's through a third-party service, [Bitrefill](#)... and it's via a very simple workaround. Essentially, you choose which game system or platform you play on, and then you're sent a gift card code for that store. You can use then use that code to purchase V-Bucks and load up on silly character skins, colorful weapons, and fancy dance moves (really).

## Epic Games is actually excited by blockchain tech

Epic's swift shutdown of Monero support in its merch shop might seem like a sign that the company doesn't see a future in cryptocurrency and blockchain technology, but worry not: Sweeney tweeted that they're into it, but just not ready to roll it out to a huge, mainstream audience.

"Many of us at Epic are big fans of the decentralized computing tech underlying cryptocurrency, however a lot more work is needed on volatility and fraud-proofing before bringing it to such a broad audience that includes younger gamers," [he tweeted](#) in January, [adding that](#), "Epic doesn't have any cryptocurrency partners and aren't in any crypto partnership discussions with anyone. We do read lots of papers and talk to smart people to learn more in anticipation of an eventual intercept."

Since then, though, Epic Games has changed its tune; in May this year, it [announced a partnership](#) with [The Abyss](#), a blockchain gaming platform that allows game developers to tap into Epic's Unreal Developers Network. Studios that put their games on the platform can accept Abyss Tokens for both the games themselves and in-game purchases.

The crypto industry, meanwhile, continues to chip away at the rock face. Recently, devs for the Nano cryptocurrency unveiled a beta [plug-in](#) for Unreal Engine 4—the game engine that [underpins](#) Fortnite—that lets users pay for in-game items in the Nano cryptocurrency as well as earning Nano for in-game tasks such as killing enemies and participating in tournaments.

Call it baby steps, but it's certainly something. Sweeney's comments suggest that a crypto future for Epic Games could just be a matter of time—and surely interest from the blockchain community is huge, considering how much money flows through both Fortnite and the video game industry as a whole (an estimated [\\$152.1 billion](#) in 2019). Until then, we're sure to see more unofficial crypto initiatives spring up around Fortnite's fringe.