Decentralized Social Networks

This lesson is an insight into the decentralized social networks and their benefits.

Before delving right into the *Federated architecture* & it's use in the *decentralized social networks*, let's have a quick heads up on what decentralized social networks are and why should you care about them? How different is a *decentralized social network* in comparison to a *centralized social network*?

Let's get on with it.

What Is A Decentralized Social Network?

Simply put, decentralized social networks have servers, spread out across the globe, hosted by individuals like you & me. Nobody has autonomous control over the network, everybody has an equal say.

Decentralized networks do not have to face any scalability issues. The scalability of a decentralized network is directly proportional to the number of users joining & active on the network.

We host our data from our systems instead of sending it to a third-party server. Nobody eavesdrops on our conversations or holds the rights to modify

our data at their whim.

You might have heard of the term *BYOD - Bring Your Own Device*. Decentralized social networks ask you to *Bring Your Own Data*.

What does it really mean?

In these networks, the user data layer is separate & they run on standardized protocols, specifically designed for the decentralized web. The data formats & protocols are consistent across the networks & apps.

So, if you want to get out of a particular social network. You don't lose your data; your data doesn't just die. You can carry your data with you & feed it into the app you sign up next.

Cool isn't it?

There are decentralized social networks active on the web such as *Minds, Mastodon, Diaspora, Friendica, Sola* etc.

Let's talk about some of the cool features decentralization offers.

What Are the Features Of Decentralized Social Networks?

Bring Your Own Data

As I've brought this up earlier, you can carry your data with you across the myriad of applications. And this is a really unique feature which the blockchain economy leverages especially in video games.

The in-game currency or content bought by the players, such as swords, powers etc. can be carried forward & used in other games based on the decentralized protocol. Even if the game studios take the game offline the in-game items bought still hold value. The purchased stuff in real sense stays with you.

Ensuring the Safety of Our Data

No more eavesdropping of private organizations on our data. We decide with whom we want to share our data with. The data is encrypted for everyone

including the technical team of the network. No selling of our data for personal profits.

Economic Compensation to the parties involved in the network

Networks like *Diaspora, Sola, Friendica* have come out with features that would financially compensate all the parties involved in the network.

Users get compensated for the awesome stuff they share online. People sharing their computing power to host the network get their compensation in the form of tokens or equity or whatever as per the economic policy of the network.

The teams involved in moderating the network, developers writing new features, get compensated by enabling content-relevant ads on the network or by the token-based economy of the platform.

It's a win-win for all.

Infrastructure Ease

A single entity does not have to bear the entire cost of the infrastructure since it is decentralized. The possibility of the network going down is almost zero.

An individual developer can build cool stuff without worrying about the server costs. The data just like a blockchain ledger is replicated across the nodes. So, even if a few nodes go down our data is not lost.

These social networks are written on protocols & software which are open source so that the community can keep improving on the code & keep building awesome features.

ActivityPub is one example of this, it's an open decentralized social networking protocol. It provides an *API* for modifying & accessing the content on the network. Also, for communication with other pods in the federation.

I've added this lesson to give you an insight into the decentralized web applications. What are they? How do they work? In the near future, these are going to grab a big chunk of the market share.

Decentralization in the Fintech industry is becoming the norm. It's always

good to stay ahead of the curve.

Now let's have a look into the *Federated architecture.*