

Microsoft announces the Coco Framework to improve performance, confidentiality and governance characteristics of enterprise blockchain networks
Thursday, August 10, 2017 01:00:00 PM (GMT)

REDMOND, Wash., Aug. 10, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- Microsoft Corp. on Thursday announced the Coco Framework, a first-of-its-kind innovation that will advance enterprise adoption of blockchain technology. Current blockchain protocol technology requires complicated development techniques to meet the operational and security needs of enterprises. The Coco Framework reduces this complexity, and when integrated with blockchain networks addresses critical needs for commercial adoption like high-transaction speed, distributed governance and confidentiality. Providing these foundational capabilities opens up more complex, real-world blockchain scenarios across industries — like financial services, supply chain and logistics, healthcare and retail — further proving blockchain's potential to digitally transform business.

"Blockchain is a transformational technology with the ability to significantly reduce the friction of doing business," said Mark Russinovich, chief technology officer of Azure at Microsoft. "Microsoft is committed to bringing blockchain to the enterprise. We have listened to the needs of our customers and the blockchain community and are bringing foundational functionality with the Coco Framework. Through an innovative combination of advanced algorithms and trusted execution environments (TEEs), like Intel's Software Guard Extensions (SGX) or Windows Virtual Secure Mode (VSM), we believe this takes the next step toward making blockchain ready for business."

When integrated with a blockchain network, key benefits of the Coco Framework include these:

- Transaction speeds of more than 1,600 transactions per second
- Easily managed data confidentiality without sacrificing performance
- A comprehensive, industry-first distributed governance model for blockchain networks that establishes a network constitution and allows members to vote on all terms and conditions governing the consortium and the blockchain software system

"We are thrilled to work with Microsoft to bring blockchain to the enterprise," said Rick Echevarria, vice president, Software and Services Group and General Manager, Platforms Security Division at Intel. "Our mutual customers are excited by the potential of blockchain. Intel is committed to accelerating the value of blockchains powered by Azure on Intel hardware, by improving the scalability, privacy and security of the solutions based on our technologies."

The Coco Framework by design will be compatible with any ledger protocol and can operate in the cloud and on premises, on any operating system and hypervisor that supports a compatible TEE. Initial Coco Framework implementations will include R3 Corda, Intel Hyperledger Sawtooth, J.P. Morgan Quorum, and Ethereum.

"The R3 Corda platform was built for enterprises. We designed it with the financial industry from the ground up to solve real business problems, but we also knew it had to be deployable and manageable in today's complex IT landscape," said David E. Rutter, CEO of R3. "No other distributed ledger technology platform is as interoperable or easily integrated, and partnering with Microsoft is another milestone in our mission to facilitate a world of frictionless commerce."

A technical white paper and demonstration are available today for business leaders and developers looking to learn more about the Coco Framework. Microsoft will launch the framework on GitHub in 2018 as an open source project and will work with customers and partners, as well as the blockchain technical and business communities, to continue advancing foundational blockchain technology.

More information on the Coco Framework, including links to our technical white paper and technical demo, can be found at <http://www.aka.ms/cocoframework>.

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Countries: United States

Industries: Computer Electronics, Hardware & Software, Multimedia, Internet & Wireless Technology

Languages: English

Primary Identifiers: MSFT-US

Related Identifiers: MSFT-US

Subjects: New Products & Services