- In order to execute certain functionality, smart contracts will sometimes require context from the outside world

- Since a smart contract has no way of natively acquiring that info, oracles are trusted third party entities that provide it

- Oraclize is the most popular oracle service for the Ethereum blockchain

- Oraclize provides a smart contract API that is easy to use, and can return data from a variety of sources

- Oraclize can query HTTP API endpoints and receive a JSON or XML response

- It also has access to WolframAlpha (NLP computation engine), and can retrieve data from IPFS

- It also has the advanced query types: random, computation, nested, identity, decrypt