

By Joseph Young

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Kenyan Government Uses IBM Blockchain to Prevent Academic Certificate Fraud

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The Kenyan (<https://cointelegraph.com/news/bitcoin-and-m-pesa-what-stands-between-them>) government is utilizing Blockchain to develop an immutable and transparent education management system. The Ministry of Information, Communication and Technology (ICT) is

currently collaborating with IBM to enable schools and other educational (https://cointelegraph.com/news/bitcoin-acceptance-depends-largely-on-cryptocurrency-education) institutions to issue academic certificates on a cloud-based Blockchain network.

In a recently released report, the Association of International Educators (NAFSA), which represents over 10,000 members and 3,500 institutions located across 150 countries, revealed that academic fraud is becoming a serious issue for prominent and reputable universities and colleges.

A section of the report read: (https://www.nafsa.org/_/File/_/ie_janfeb11_fraud.pdf)

"George Gollin, a University of Illinois physics professor who has investigated diploma mill frauds such as that of St. Regis, says that based on his research, he estimates that 200,000 academic degrees are sold by illegal degree providers in the United States each year."

In an attempt to reduce the issuance of fraudulent academic degrees and restrict the market of illicit academic certificate production, the Kenyan government is closely working with IBM to launch an academic certificate issuance platform on a Blockchain network.

IBM Blockchain

Specifically, the ICT ministry is utilizing IBM's enterprise-grade Blockchain solution, which is currently being implemented by leading corporations and financial institutions to supplement operations in a more secure and transparent ecosystem.

Nyimbi Odero, the ICT ministry's innovation adviser, stated during a talk at the Strathmore University in Nairobi that students soon will not be able to list manipulated exam outcomes or university performance. More importantly, Odero also noted that the platform would allow companies or other relevant parties to verify student credentials on an efficient Blockchain platform.

Odero stated: (http://allafrica.com/stories/201612200631.html)

"The government of Kenya, working with IBM is currently implementing a Blockchain-based education certificate management system so that if you are a Kenyan student, you can't fake your exam outcomes."

Security issues

To date, the IBM Blockchain solution or any of its products haven't been tested on a commercial scale. Large-scale corporations or banks have yet to announce successful testing or launch of an IBM Blockchain-based product. Thus, the Kenyan government must consider other working products such as Blockcerts (<https://medium.com/mit-media-lab/blockcerts-an-open-infrastructure-for-academic-credentials-on-the-blockchain-899a6b880b2f#.3u0a5yvax>) which are based on a secure Blockchain, like Bitcoin.

Introduced in October, Blockcerts is an open infrastructure for academic credentials built on top of the Bitcoin network. Inspired by MIT Media Lab's project, Blockcerts provides a decentralized credentialing system by prioritizing security.

When it comes to certificate issuance, security must be the utmost priority of the Kenyan government. The utilization of private networks like IBM could result in the same case with centralized databases, which would leave its Blockchain-based platform vulnerable to data theft.

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