Decentralized Social Networks

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

We'll cover the following

- What is a decentralized social network?
- What are the features of decentralized social networks?
  - Bring your own data
  - Ensuring the safety of our data
  - Economic Compensation to the parties involved in the network
  - Infrastructure ease

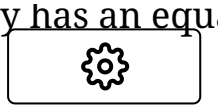
Before delving right into the *federated architecture* and its use in *decentralized social networks*, let's take a quick look at what decentralized social networks are and why you should care about them? How different is a *decentralized social network* compared to a *centralized social network*?

Let's get on with it.

What is a decentralized social network?#

Simply put, decentralized social networks have servers, spread out across the globe, and hosted by individuals like you and me. Nobody has

autonomous control over the network, and 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 and 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, which stands for Bring Your Own Device*. Decentralized social networks ask you to *Bring Your Own Data*.

What does this really mean?

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

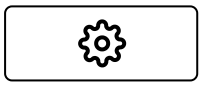
So, if you want to get out of a particular social network. You don't lose your data, and your data doesn't just die. You can carry your data with you and feed it into the app you sign up for next.

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 up earlier, you can carry your data with you across the myriad of applications, and this is a really unique feature that 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 and used in other games based on the decentralized protocol. Even if the game studios take the game offline the in-game items still hold value. The purchased stuff in a sense stays with you.

Ensuring the safety of our data#

No more private organizations eavesdropping on our data. We decide who we want to share our data with. The data is encrypted for everyone including the network's technical team. There's no selling our data for personal profits.

Economic Compensation to the parties involved in the network#

Networks like *Diaspora*, *Sola,* and *Friendica* have come out with features that 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, equity, or whatever, as per the economic policy of the network.

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

All parties win.

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 and software that are open source so that the community can keep improving the code and keep building awesome features.

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

I've added this lesson to give you an insight into decentralized web applications. What are they? How do they work? In the near future, these are going to consume 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 take a look into *federated architecture*.

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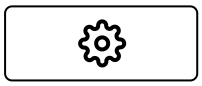

← Back

Next →

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