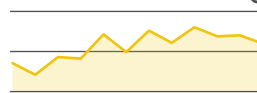TRENDING
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Hyperledger On the Verge of Merging Blockchain Code from IBM, Digital Asset

Michael del Castillo (@DelRayMan) | Published on March 25, 2016 at 20:50 GMT   NEWS

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This morning the technical steering committee for the open-source Hyperledger project was on the verge of unanimously voting to formally merge the codebases donated by three of their founding members, thus laying the foundation of a new enterprise-grade blockchain.

Yet a single committee member, who was not identified by name, became the lone dissenting voice – a move that, for now, curtailed the effort to merge code contributed by startups Blockstream and Digital Asset, as well as tech giant IBM.

The meeting, a face-to-face gathering of participants of the first Hyperledger Hackathon dedicated to creating an open-source blockchain platform on which parties can conduct a wide range of transactions, was by no means a failure.

"It was really encouraging to see the core companies working together, and some new joiners," said Philip DesAutels, the event's emcee, and senior director at the Linux Foundation, which hosts the project. "This is a really encouraging start for an open-source project."

Established in December 2015 the Hyperledger Project is an effort headed by the non-profit Linux Foundation and comprised of 30 founding members. Its mission is to build an enterprise-grade distributed ledger framework.

Proof of concept creation

One of the more notable items brought up during the meeting was the disclosure that a proof-of-concept had been successfully created using the combined code bases from Blockstream, Digital Asset and IBM.

Robert Fajta, senior developer at Digital Asset Holdings, announced the move.

"By the end of yesterday we achieved a proof-of-concept integration of these three code bases," he said.

The proof-of-concept combined Blockstream's validation code, IBM's OBC/UTX Chaincode and Digital Asset Holding's client layers. For the actual test, an account was loaded with 100,000 satoshis and a fee charged of 5,000 satoshis. Fajta asked for a round of applause from the audience, which was given.

"Our task is not done yet," said Fajta. "There are further things we need to do. It was just a proof of concept."

Dissenting vote

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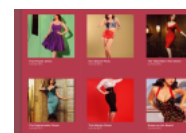Subscribe to our free newsletter and follow

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The enthusiasm of the moment transitioned into the part of the meeting dealing specifically with the technical steering committee, including some big names from across industries. DesAutels seemed keen to pass a measure that would formally allow for the integration of the three code-bases so future testers and participants of potential future hackathons could use the unified code.

"The recommendation from the team is that we do merge the code-bases," said DesAutels. "I put it to the technical steering, is that the path we proceed to?"

The vote was informal. After establishing a quorum, one after another, sounds of agreement came from the audience.

"I agree whole-heartedly," said one audience member. "You're good?" DesAutels asked another. "Is there anyone not in agreement?"

"I'm a little concerned about making an agreement until I see something in writing," an unidentified voice announced, followed by a brief silence. "I'd feel better if we had a little more progress on the requirement side."

And just like that, the hopes of a seamless transition to the next phase of development were dashed.

Technically, DesAutels could have called for a vote, and with at most a 2/3 majority required according to the charter, he would have likely won. But the host, apparently not wanting to alienate the voter, conceded – albeit a bit stubbornly.

"This is open-source, we can take this wherever we want, but we do need to move forward," he said. "There's consensus even if there's not unanimity. I will write it up though."

Planning for the next meeting is scheduled to start next week after the holiday weekend is over. Another informal vote was held to help determine the location of the meeting, with an overwhelming vote to hold it in the Eastern Coast of the US. The West Coast, Paris, Amsterdam, and Budapest were also suggested.

Work on white paper

At today's meeting members also reviewed the efforts of their first-ever Hyperledger Hackathon and pushed ahead on the group's first whitepaper. J.P. Morgan Chase executive director, David Voell reviewed the progress of the whitepaper.

The draft itself is being written using Google Docs, where changes can be proposed by members but only implemented with consensus. Interestingly, to get things started, Voell said the group quite literally copied an earlier whitepaper written by IBM and replaced "IBM" with "Hyperledger."

"It was a good place to start off," he explained.

But now the content is being tailored to the members' specifications, with the goal of presenting a clear explanation of what will distinguish the Hyperledger Project from efforts specifically mentioned, including bitcoin and Ripple.

"What we want to point out here is there are a lot of use-cases [bitcoin and Ripple] are not appropriate," said Voell. The current version of the whitepaper can be read here and comments will be reviewed on 6th April.

Hyperledger   Linux Foundation

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