seeds

Building Social Good into Digital Products

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This paper is a work in progress, and is open for review and revision.

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Introduction to Existing Concepts

Centralized access to capital breeds scarcity thinking and behaviors, because it is foundationally zero-sum. This philosophy leads to fear, distrust, and a lack of generosity, as the energy and intention that goes into this system are about self-protection at the expense of the other.

Zero-sum thinking is increasingly obsolete, as technology affords us the ability to create tools that will generate value for all members of an ecosystem, at the expense of none. We believe that this is the way of the future, and that Seeds is an example of one of these such technological tools.

Alexander Hamilton is largely credited with establishing a centralized currency in the U.S. following the Revolutionary War[1]. While wide adoption of a central currency was necessary at that time to pull the individual States, who were deeply in debt, together, to imbue confidence in the new union, more than 220 years later this mode lends itself to a type of control of capital that is beneficial to the few at the expense of the many, and is long outdated.

Blockchain technology involves "a global network of computers" which "jointly manage the database that records... transactions." This is to say that a cryptocurrency like Bitcoin or Ethereum "is managed by its network, and not any one central authority. Decentralization means the network operates on a user-to-user (or peer-to-peer) basis."[2]

With the advent of distributed systems such as Bitcoin and Ethereum, we can now move capital transparently and quickly, to anyone in the world with internet access, without the need for reliance on third parties (like banks) to facilitate these transfers.

An Initial Coin Offering (ICO) is a "means of crowdfunding via use of cryptocurrency." "In an ICO, a percentage of the newly issued cryptocurrency is sold to investors in exchange for legal tender or other cryptocurrencies."[3]

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[1] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/First_Bank_of_the_United_States
[2] https://blockgeeks.com/guides/what-is-blockchain-technology/
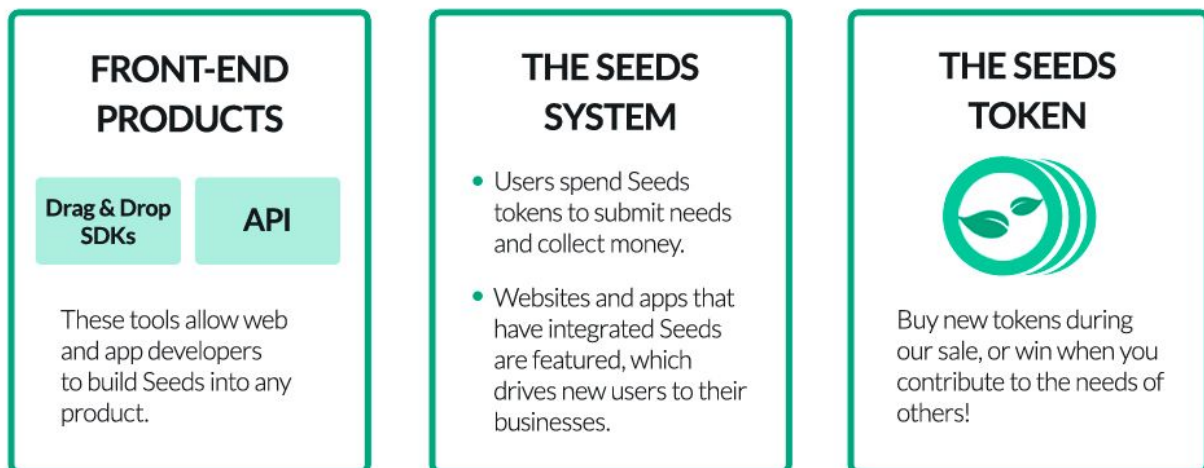[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Initial_coin_offering

What is Seeds?

Seeds provides a decentralized, transparent, distributed platform for submitting and fulfilling monetary needs, built on blockchain technology. Needs submitted to the Seeds system can be virtually anything. For example, requests for the money to buy a house, to pay for an education, to buy a dream trip, or to cover costs in an emergency could be submitted to Seeds - and fulfilled - with no strings attached. So long as it's legal and ethical, we would love to help you meet your needs.

When a need is submitted to the Seeds system, our recommendation algorithm displays it to the members of the ecosystem who will be most excited to contribute to fulfilling it. The need is shown to those users through the interface of the websites and apps who have built in one of the Seed front-end products.

Seeds can work on any digital platform that enables purchasing. A version of our core product has been used by customers and generating revenue beginning in 2014.

The full Seeds ecosystem consists of the following:

FRONT-END PRODUCTS

Drag & Drop SDKs | API

These tools allow web and app developers to build Seeds into any product.

THE SEEDS SYSTEM

- Users spend Seeds tokens to submit needs and collect money.
- Websites and apps that have integrated Seeds are featured, which drives new users to their businesses.

THE SEEDS TOKEN

Buy new tokens during our sale, or win when you contribute to the needs of others!

- A suite of front-end products which allow developers to integrate Seeds into any app or online product. Seeds shows non-paying users a tailored opportunity to help others while simultaneously making an in-app purchase. This increases the likelihood that a user will spend by up to 60%, boosting revenue for the app.
- **Seeds tokens (SEEDS),** the first blockchain-based smart contracts which facilitate generosity. allow you to make a Needs Request to be fulfilled through the Seeds distributed, peer-to-peer system. When a user contributes to fulfilling a need, s/he is automatically entered into a lottery that awards a fixed number of tokens at random, using

blockchain technology. Lottery winners can then use the tokens to submit other needs to be met through Seeds.
- The Seeds website, which showcases web and mobile apps that have integrated Seeds, driving new users to their products, and provides an interface to allow end-users to redeem a Seeds token to interact with smart contracts on the blockchain, enabling them to make a Needs Request to be fulfilled by the system.

Current Scope of Seeds

Seeds is a Delaware C-Corporation established in 2013. We've raised over $1 million in seed funding from investors including Bill Draper (Flurry, Kiva), Adam Draper of Boost VC (Coinbase, Filecoin), Shawn Byers (Andela, Change.org), Techstars, and others. We began generating revenue in 2014. The below is an overview of how it works.

1) A app or web developer, or the owner of a digital business, visits us at here. They find clear instructions about how to set Seeds up in 30 minutes or less, for free.
2) Once Seeds is set up, the tool shows the users of that app, or the visitors to that website, an opportunity to help others which is attached to an in-app item. Please see examples of the Seeds UX below.
3) The opportunity to help someone else while buying something they like makes the user nearly 60% more likely to spend - even when the social good opportunity is not tailored to that specific user . This helps the app or website make more money, the user feels good about making a difference, Seeds makes money, and those in need get the help they deserve. Everyone in the ecosystem wins.
4) Seeds moves the capital sourced in the app manually, using wire transfer, to vetted microfinance partners around the world. This is not cost-efficient, and it's slow. This need will be eliminated with the development of various new blockchain services for Seeds.
5) The microfinance institutions deploy and manage the capital, and then repay Seeds according to what's been established in a standard Loan Agreement. Future product development on the blockchain will eliminate this step as well (though microfinance institutions could request gift capital through Seeds if they'd like).

Examples of the User Experience Through Seeds Front-End Products

Shown below is an example of the Seeds UX in a productivity app called *Habitica*, one of our current customers. Seeds pulls non-paying users into the purchase flow, inviting them to buy an in-app item while simultaneously helping someone in need.
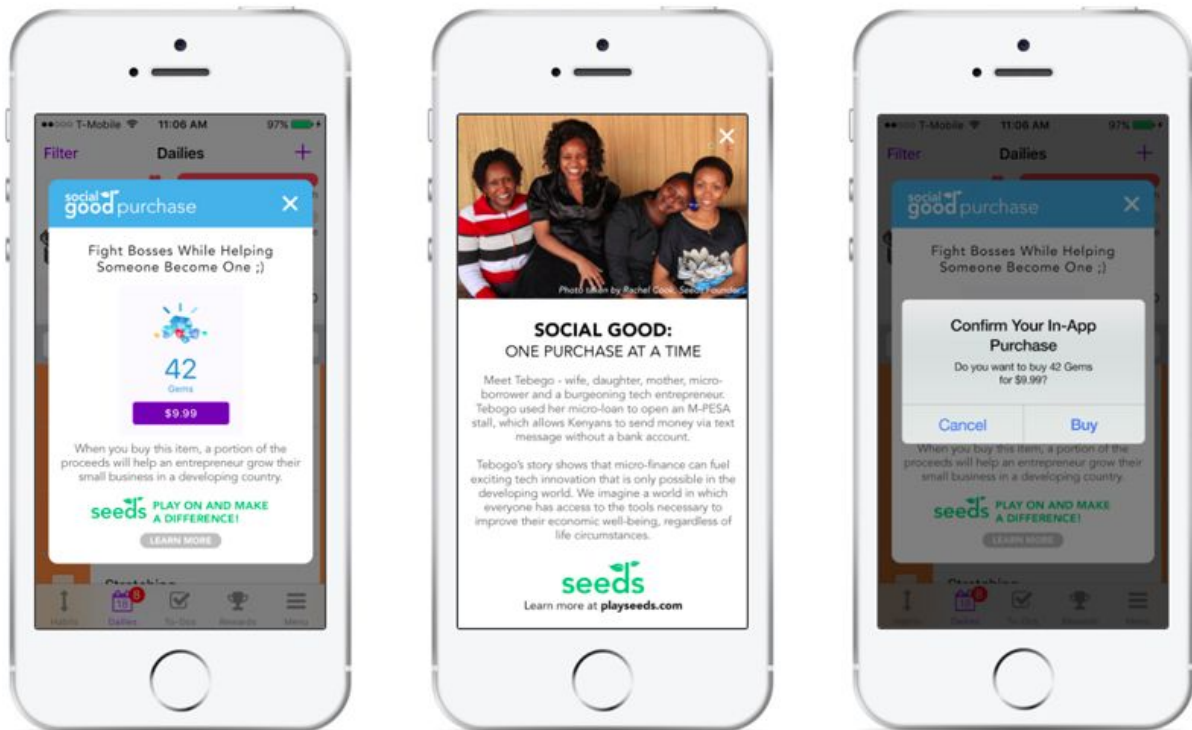
The user can then make the purchase, receive the in-app item, and simultaneously help someone. This makes the user nearly 60% more likely to spend, boosting revenue for the app developer while benefitting others at the same time.

Seeds can work in any web or mobile app that is enabling purchases. The below is a mockup of possible Seeds UX on a retail website:
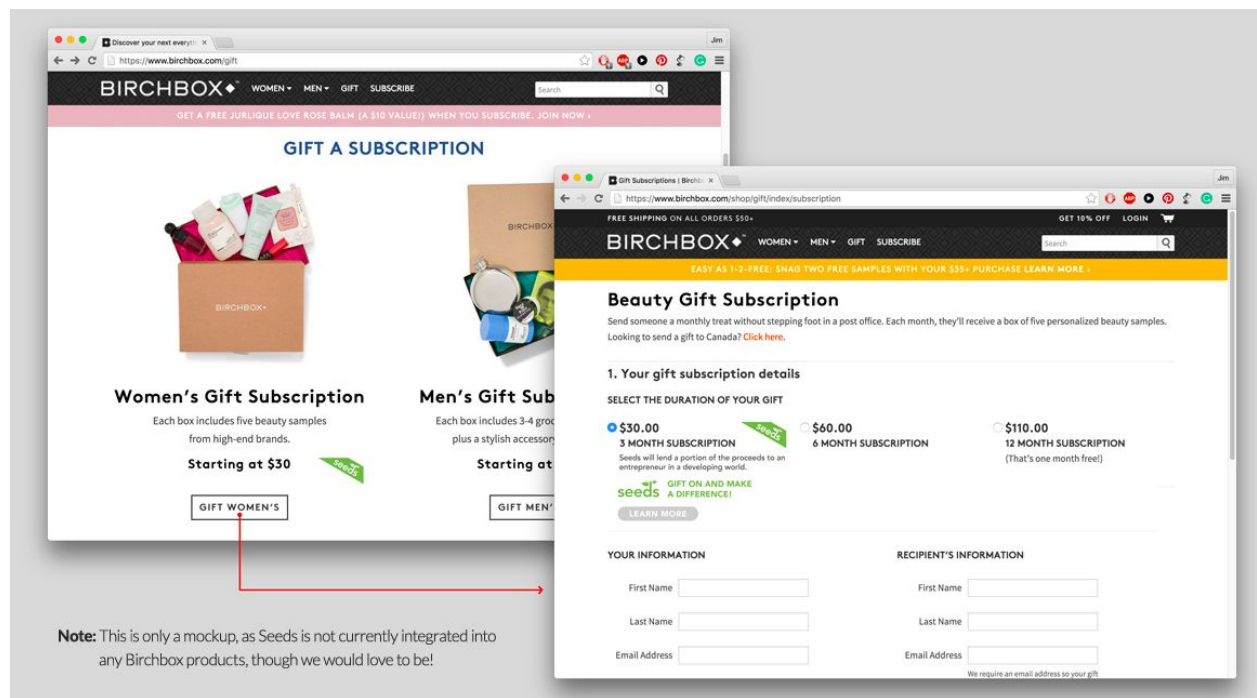
In enabling end-users to help others while making a purchase in any digital product, we have found that products using Seeds have improved their revenues by up to 30%, for periods as long as several months, for free. We can also inform the Seeds community when Seeds is integrated in a new web or mobile app, thereby sending them new users.

In such a way, Seeds creates a new type of transaction that transcends the old zero-sum model, creating value for every member of the Seeds ecosystem: the end-user, the developer integrating the Seeds product, Seeds itself, and the recipient. Everyone wins.

Future Product Development

Near-term product additions and improvements will include the following, though this list is not necessarily comprehensive:

- A more fully fleshed-out suite of **front-end tools** tailored for platforms like Shopify, Etsy, upcoming platforms that will enable non-developers to build apps without having to know how to code, a robust web-based product, etc.
- Various interfaces that allows users to redeem their tokens and make Needs Requests of the Seeds system. Initially, the interface will be web-based. Longer term we may want to build Facebook chat, text, and WeChat interfaces to allow users around the world to make Needs Requests from feature phones.
- The **Seeds recommendation algorithm.** We will invite users to share data about themselves and their preferences when redeeming a token via a Seeds interface, which will provide us the foundation to build a robust algorithm that will grow progressively smarter over time. This will allow us to ethically garner the information we need to know who a user is when s/he makes a later Seeds contribution for a website or app using one of our front-end product.
- The **Seeds end-user community**. We have already reached about 15 million end-users through the course of the life of the business, but having the ability to engage and grow this community by virtue of the issuance of Seeds tokens will provide us with the opportunity to invite the community to encourage more apps to use Seeds more quickly. As the community grows, we will also have an increasing ability to send larger numbers of users to new apps that have integrated Seeds, driving greater value for our app customers as through this mechanism as well.

You get a SEEDS token.

You submit a need into the Seeds system.

Seeds uses our recommendation algorithm to show your need to the people who will most want to help.

Your need is fulfilled! The Seeds system automatically transfers you the funds.

All contributors are automatically entered into a lottery for tokens.

One of your contributors wins a token! S/he can now submit their own need.

Applications

- Not having to work a job you hate to support yourself before you're able to make a living doing what you love
- Working capital for your business
- Emergency funding when tragedy strikes
- Funding for a creative project like a play, film, handmade works, etc.
- Money for education
- Childcare needs
- Taking a trip or trying an activity that brings you joy

Miscellanea and Concerns

1. Because we're working on the honor system, it's possible that a user who adds a Need Request to the Seeds platform could be lying about what the money will go toward. Because the system is based on a 'Give First' foundation that will generate goodwill, the hope is that the community will be imbued with a sense of integrity, and that incidences in which this happens will be few and far between.
2. The app or website that has integrated Seeds takes a transaction fee, as does the App Store and Seeds. We will have to clearly communicate this to all parties involved, as it's possible that the App Store's particularly egregious fees could temper their generosity.

Conclusion

Seeds has been conceived to help us move to a New World Order - one that which transcends the perceived need for centralized capital control and institutionalized finance, as well as the scarcity mindset baked into a way of transacting that is purely self-interested. Because Seeds creates a Give First mentality by its very existence, we hope to create an energy of abundance in every member of our community, and thereby in a dream scenario, to upgrade the global economic system at large.