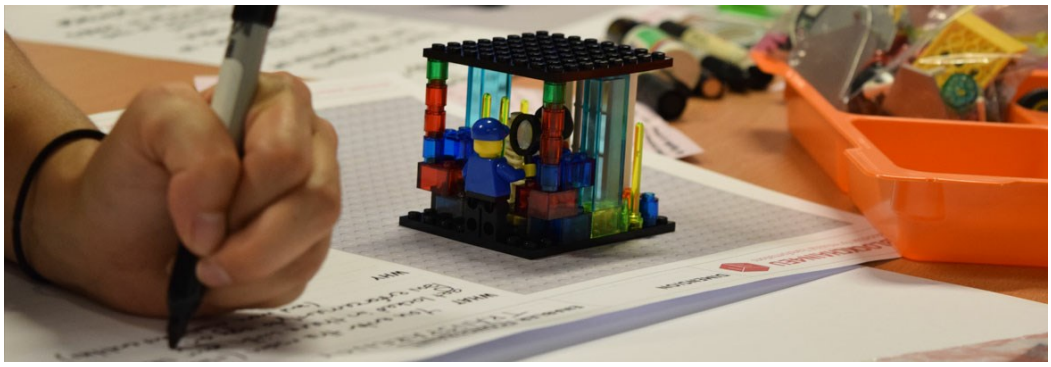
First Workshop of #Blockchain4EU: Blockchain for Industrial Transformations



On July 4th we organised the first workshop related to the project ***#Blockchain4EU: Blockchain for Industrial Transformations*** in Brussels. This was the first of a series of participatory and stakeholder engagement activities taking place until February 2018.

#Blockchain4EU

This project is a forward looking sociotechnical exploration of existing, emerging and potential applications based on Blockchain and other Distributed Ledger Technologies (DLTs) for industrial / non-fintech sectors. It is led by the EU Policy Lab of the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in cooperation with the Directorate General for Internal Market, Industry, Entrepreneurship & SMEs (DG GROW). You can find more information about the project in the EU Policy Lab blog.

Workshop Overview

The workshop was a shared initial exploration of Blockchain contexts and use cases and their relation to the broader European landscape of industrial transformations. At the intersection of Science and Technology Studies with Foresight and Collaborative and Generative Design, our main goal was to create collective visions that could inform EU policy actors on the present and future possibilities of Blockchain and other DLT general and specific applications, as well as on key factors that could support or hamper their development and uptake.

Based on a purposive sampling technique, 34 participants were selected from a pool of stakeholders to be a snapshot of the current Blockchain ecosystem in industrial / non-fintech sectors. The group included technical experts, developers and scientists, social, economic and legal researchers, entrepreneurs and investors, business and labour representatives, and policy actors at local, national and EU levels, highly interested or already engaged with Blockchain and other DLT applications.

No presentations from specific organisations or use cases took place during the workshop. Our efforts at this stage were focused instead on assembling diverse individual and collective stakeholders to explore how they would interact with each other with no special prominence given to any, and how would they build, combine or confront their respective standpoints and agendas with minimal interference from our side. We will now follow this initial stakeholder gathering with targeted interviews to workshop participants for in-depth exploration of specific points.

We wish to express our sincere gratitude to all participants for their availability to engage in such an open and participatory process, and for the key insights they generated and shared during the day: Carlos Alvarez Lopez (Endesa Servicios), Milica Begovic (UNDP / United Nations Development Programme), Thom Bergman (Municipality of Amsterdam), Benjamin Bollen (Monax), Magdalena Borowik (Advisor to the Polish Minister of Digital Affairs), Philip Boucher (EPRS / European Parliamentary Research Service), Michael Bradley (IBM UK), Jamie Burke (Outlier Ventures), Sylvain Cariou (Crystalchain), Christina Colclough (UNI Global Union), Primavera De Filippi (CERSA / Centre d'Études et de Recherches de Science Administrative, CNRS / Centre Nationnal de la Recherche Scientifique, Université Paris II), Timo Gessmann (Bosch), Steffen Holly (IDMT / Fraunhofer Institute for Digital Media Technology), Charles Kremer (SystemX, IRT / Institut de Recherche Technologique), Arno Laeven (Shell International BV), Paulo Malta (Cabinet of the Portuguese Minister of the Presidency and Administrative Modernisation), Masha McConaghy (BigchainDB), Sarah Meiklejohn (University College London), Athanasios (Thanos) Moysiadis (Policy Adviser on Digital Affairs to MEP Eva Kaili), Catherine Mulligan (Imperial College Centre for Cryptocurrency Research and Engineering), Igor Nai Fovino (European Commission, JRC / Joint Research Centre), Rossen Naydenov (ENISA / European Union Agency for Network and

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Information Security), Alain Roset (La Poste), Fidel Santiago (EDPS / European Data Protection Supervisor), Calogero Scibetta (Everledger), Martijn Siebrand (Dinalog / Dutch Institute for Advanced Logistics), Carsten Stöcker (innogy Innovation Hub), Vasily Suvorov (Luxoft & CryptoValley Association), Benjamin Tincq (Good Tech Lab & OuiShare), Thibault Verbiest (DGFLA / De Gaulle Fleurance and Associés), Erling Vestergaard (EUIPO / European Union Intellectual Property Office), Stefan Weber (modum.io), Vlad Zamfir (Ethereum) and Laurent Zibell (industriAll European Trade Union).

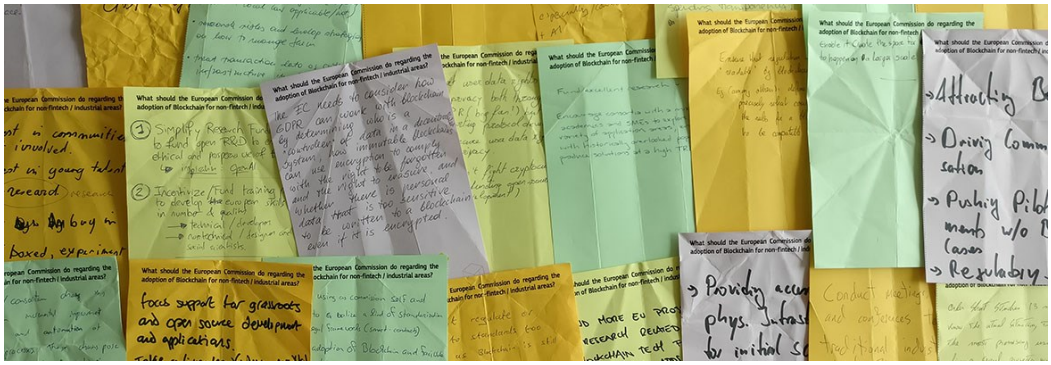
Starting the Day

The EU Policy Lab team started off the workshop by introducing the general context of the #Blockchain4EU project and its main goals for both JRC and DG GROW. This was done by placing both our research and policy agendas within a broader framework related to the digitization of European industry, and especially to innovation and competitiveness frameworks for SMEs.

The methodological approach for the overall project was presented afterwards, with particular focus on a transdisciplinary policy lab toolbox ranging from horizon scanning and behavioural insights to collaborative creation and speculative design. Our research developments within #Blockchain4EU were then briefly introduced, including desk reviews on Blockchain general properties and specific use cases, qualitative data collection through interviews and multi-sited ethnographic field work, and the series of participatory and stakeholder engagement activities initiated with this event.

We positioned the workshop at the intersection of Science and Technology Studies with Foresight and Collaborative and Generative Design, aiming for a transdisciplinary understanding of what's happening, what's possible, and what could happen with Blockchain in industrial / non-fintech sectors. Emphasis was put on a research process for evidence based policy advice that goes from the actual making of things to the realms of policy making. The collaborative creation of present and future tangible visions was placed here at the forefront through the use of 2D and 3D elements such as collective collages and LEGO models.

After an initial moment of short personal introductions, and in order to "break the ice" and ease the transition into our first exercise rounds, all participants were asked to write on a coloured paper sheet their answer to a question we sent them previously: "*What should the European Commission do regarding the adoption of Blockchain for industrial / non-fintech areas?*" We asked them to build a paper plane with that sheet and threw it across the room. Everyone picked up a plane apart from theirs and got the assignment to comment on what was written. Planes were later collected and will be used for our follow-up research and stakeholder engagement activities.



Morning Rounds

The morning was composed of two exercise rounds. Participants were previously divided into 7 groups to assure diversity of backgrounds and affiliations. This guaranteed that all groups had participants with mixed levels of knowledge on Blockchain and related applications and impacts.

The first round consisted of a 50 minute exercise with each group discussing and materializing a collective vision with 2D collages of *"How do you see Blockchain changing the current industrial European landscape?"* In the end, all groups placed their collages on pin boards, and presented the visions as mapped out in the collages in a plenary mode and in sequential 2 minute pitches.

Each group had to reference in their vision at least 3 specific industrial / non-fintech Blockchain use cases, such as supply chains, energy management, property registration, digital identity, authentication and certification, etc., as well as what we framed as general Blockchain properties, such as decentralization, immutability, resiliency, transparency, near real-time, peer-to-peer, etc.

We provided each group with a coloured A1 canvas, pens, markers, scissors, glue, multi shaped post-its, together with a generative toolkit that was common for all. This last element was composed of 80 images, 72 icons, and 70 keywords related to Blockchain, digitization of industry and other relevant fields from policy to environment, together with assorted graphical components such as arrows, stars or cloud shapes. It was used to help trigger the group discussions and ease their final collage processes.

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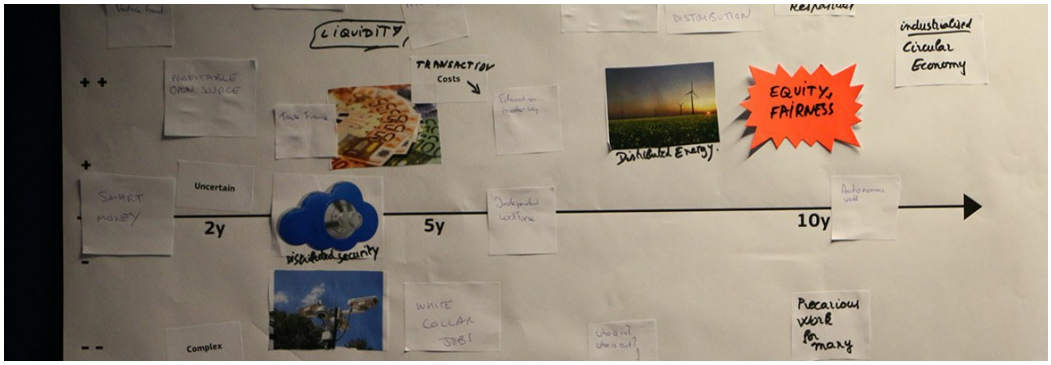
In the second round, we proposed a 30 minute exercise asking the same groups to consider their previous collages and *"Map positive and negative consequences Blockchain may have on the EU industrial landscapes on a short-term (2 years), medium-term (5 years) and long-term (10 years or more)."*

We gave each group an A1 pre-printed timeline template and asked them to consider again the Blockchain use cases and general properties employed in the first round, allowing nonetheless the inclusion of additional references. The materials and toolkits provided in the first round were reused for this one, to which we added duplicate elements for any group that might need them.

In the end all groups had 2 minutes to present their timeline in a plenary mode, referencing both positive and negative mapped consequences. Moreover, they had now to imagine being in a meeting with policy makers, and ultimately build their pitch around the question of "*Why should European industry and business adopt Blockchain for industrial / non-fintech sectors?"*



Afternoon Rounds

The afternoon was also composed of two exercise rounds. Participants were rearranged into 6 groups based on different dimensions: Policy, Economic, Social, Technological, Legal and Environmental (PESTLE). Diversity in terms of backgrounds and affiliations, as well as different levels of knowledge on Blockchain, were also guaranteed at this stage. However, participants were now grouped accordingly to their own individual profiles or organisational stake in each of the dimensions to promote the development of more focused discussions.

The first round was a multi task exercise focused on enablers and constraints to the development and uptake of Blockchain in industrial / non-fintech sectors. Considering their new group dimensions, participants had to think about what are *"key enablers and constraints for the adoption of Blockchain, i.e., what could help the uptake of Blockchain and what could block it?"*

Participants were first invited to pick either an orange or a blue LEGO brick from the centre of their table. Afterwards they were asked to think individually of an enabler if they picked a blue brick or a constraint if they chose an orange brick. This task lasted 10 minutes with a call for specific use cases and general properties to be taken again into consideration. To facilitate the reflective process, we provided a few examples of enablers, such as easy access to energy sources for instance on the environmental dimension, and of constraints, such as replacement costs for legacy IT systems on the economic dimension.

After checking within the groups if there were no duplicate constraints or enablers, all participants received an individual A3 template with 3 distinct sections. Each group also received 5 LEGO bags, which contained an equal amount of multi shaped solid bricks, assorted mini figures, and an extended set of connecting and decorative elements.

The next task of this round lasted for 40 minutes. On the top section of the template participants had to write their group dimension, if they were addressing an enabler or constraint, and the name of their enabler or constraint. On the left section they had an A5 size image of a LEGO plate, on top of which they were asked to build a LEGO model that would represent their enabler or constraint using any elements they wanted from their group bags. And on the right section they had 6 different fields to fill out considering their choice of enabler or constraint: What (what have they built), Why (why was it an enabler or a constraint), How (how would it happen), Where (where would it have impact), When (when would it take place), and Who (who would be involved).

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After each participant individually completed their model and template, this round ended with final 20 minutes where participants quickly presented their models and templates within their group and commented on each other's outputs. The group had the possibility of deciding collectively if they wanted to tweak or perfect any of the models, or even build extra models for their dimension, as long as they respected a balance between enablers and constrains at the end of the task.

The second round of the afternoon was dedicated to further exploring the enablers and constraints previously built and discussed within each group. Our approach was to pair groups to challenge one another in order to facilitate wrapping up several discussions among participants. These group pairings were established randomly with Technological facing Policy, Economic facing Social, and Legal facing Environmental.

The first group of each pair started off by presenting in 10 minutes their final individual LEGO models of enablers and constraints and their collective vision of what they meant. The other group was then asked to be the challenger for 15 minutes, identifying strong and weak points in the other group's dimension, discussing what may be absent or should be better explained, suggesting other enablers and constraints, etc. After finishing, groups were then asked to reverse their roles, repeating the presentation and discussion processes for the same 10 and 15 minutes respectively.

Discussions in each of the pairs differed in length, depth and number of topics considered in both turns, with one pair even extending their debate long after the predefined time and eventually opening their space to participants and discussions coming from other groups. This ended up replacing the final open plenary the EU Policy Lab team had originally previewed to end the day.

Next steps

Throughout the day we fully documented the workshop by taking comprehensive notes and with consent of the participants, photographing all outputs and filming all presentations and major discussions.

We will now begin a process of harvesting and organizing information from these sources, with major focus on the built 2D and 3D outputs and their group and individual presentations. This will be combined with both our notes on each round and our observations of participant interactions during the workshop, namely on how they built, combined or confronted respective standpoints and agendas.

Our examination will be conducted via qualitative data analysis techniques, searching for underlying patterns through the triangulation of outputs and observations. Furthermore, as mentioned above we will also follow this workshop with targeted interviews to participants for in-depth exploration of specific points noted, raised or discussed during the day.

The results will inform the future directions of the project considering not only which industrial / non-fintech Blockchain spaces and uses

cases to further explore in our research, but also the contents, methodologies and goals of the next #Blockchain4EU participatory and stakeholder engagement activities previewed for next fall. Moreover, all results from the workshop will also be coupled with our current and future desk and field research to generate the broader picture required to translate them into our research framework for evidence based policy advice.

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BY ALEXANDRE PÓLVORA | JULY 13, 2017 | IN LAB SESSIONS | LEAVE A COMMENT

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