

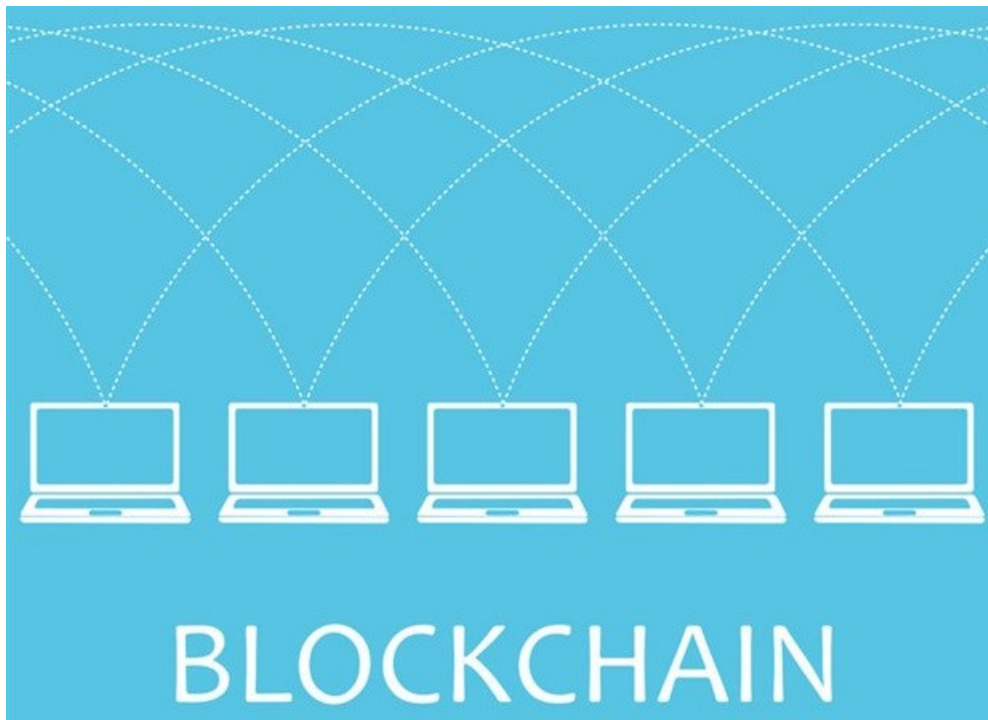
The value blockchain can bring to business



By [Saurabh Kumar](#)

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Heralded as “the next internet” due to its revolutionary nature, the blockchain seems set on changing the way we do everything online. The blockchain is commonly associated with the financial industry due – for the most part – to its history and association with Bitcoin, but there are many use cases for it which will highlight just how much the blockchain can – and will – change the world as we know it.



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What is it?

The blockchain is a trusted form of distributed ledger technology (DLT) which is publicly shared with everybody but not owned by anybody. The technology uses a series of ‘blocks’ that are linked together in a chain, and each block contains information about a transaction or event that has been recorded and validated. While similar to a database, it is far more secure and cannot be tampered with; each time a transaction takes place, the information is sent to a network of computers to validate the information and transaction.

Blockchain, as a technology concept or methodology, become acknowledged as a revolutionary means of secure payment when employed by Bitcoin. Due to the success of the blockchain with Bitcoin, financial institutions across the globe are exploring how they can leverage the technology for their own purposes, with many even already at the implementation stage.

However, because of the complex and heavily regulated nature of finance, it is quite likely that it will take some time before we see the true benefit of the blockchain in this industry, which begs the question: how can the blockchain be used in other industries?

Industry changer

While many other industries such as enterprise are also looking at the value proposition of blockchain technology as part of

their 'finance office', there are many other areas of business where the blockchain can be leveraged. In fact, there are several innovative organisations which are already capitalising on blockchain technology and breaking the mould in their respective industries.

Take music, for one. Off the back of the success of Imogen Heap's launch of her song *Tiny Dancer* using blockchain technology, several new music labels have emerged to do the same of other artists. By using the blockchain, artists are able to maintain the security and integrity of their music while having the freedom to choose their audience, release times, prices and more, all for a considerably lower cost than they would usually fork out to traditional record labels.

The unprecedented security of the blockchain makes it appealing to a host of industries, such as law, security and – in a truly disruptive fashion – data storage. Law firms can make use of smart contracts that are purely digital, cutting out third party validation and saving time. Security companies can place entire access systems on the blockchain, enabling secure validation and authentication.

Storage firms can leverage the encryption which the blockchain uses to create an 'Uber-style' data storage rental system, where people can securely lease out the spare space on their devices via the blockchain to others who need it, in such a way that they cannot access any data stored on their device and that their own data is equally protected.

These are just a few of the ways that organisations are already using the blockchain to completely disrupt and revolutionise their industries. And all this is already happening – it is not a thing of the future, it is now.

But what about me?

Much of the uptake of blockchain technology is happening in more developed countries. While we are seeing exploration take place in South Africa, it is more on a transactional level and, as we mentioned earlier, it will be some time before we see any real impact. Other industries, however, can already start looking at how the blockchain can work for their business.

In fact, blockchain is poised to completely transform every aspect of business, and organisations in South Africa should already be exploring the use cases for their own business before mainstream uptake makes it almost too late.

Organisations that wish to be at the forefront of this new technology should take a step by step approach, addressing one area at a time and identifying the best use for their business. There are cloud-based blockchain solutions already available for organisations to investigate creative solutions with minimal financial investment.

It is important to remember, though, that there is no one-size-fits-all solution yet and, therefore, organisations should enlist the assistance of systems integrators who can properly assess their needs and match it to or help them develop a new blockchain solution for it.

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