

Interview with Torsten Hoffmann, Writer/Director/Producer of the new award-winning Documentary “Bitcoin: The End of Money as we Know it”



Q: Briefly, what is your film about and who should watch it?

A: The 60-minute documentary Bitcoin: The End Of Money As We Know It reveals some surprising and little known facts about the money we use every day and introduces Bitcoin as a potential alternative. Our film is targeted at anyone who wants a crash course about this disruptive technology and has yet to find unbiased coverage that a layman can understand. We suspect that the film will be popular among young adults working in the technology, start-up and finance sectors as well as anyone interested in Libertarian ideas.

Q: How did you tackle the problem of explaining a complex topic such as Bitcoin?

A: Yes, this was the main challenge. I originally thought that we can just jump right into Bitcoin, but then there is no context for the audience to understand what makes Bitcoin so revolutionary. So we decided to start at the very beginning; with the history of money - before coins were even minted. Much later, Governments got involved in creating and controlling money as a central authority. In my research I was surprised, and shocked, to find out that most money today is actually created by private banks, which of course leads our story directly to the last financial crisis. In total we needed about 30 minutes of background information before Bitcoin enters into the picture. I also think we found the right mix of humor and creative storytelling to keep it entertaining.

Q: What is the problem of having a central authority that issues money?

A: There are several major problems. First, Governments have an incentive to inflate the money supply so that they can pay back their current debt with cheaper money in the future. This makes the currency that you own worth a little less each year. Maybe you don't notice it, but I am sure that our 100-year chart in the film will raise some eyebrows. Second, if there are central points that control your money, it's not really yours anymore. Just look at Greece where banks or PayPal ceased to function. The money the Greeks thought they 'own' is in fact frozen. Or look at countries like Tunisia or Russia and organizations like Wikileaks. Without a court order, just by the whims of the US Government they are cut off from the international finance flows. It is high time for a decentralized system.

Q: There is an interesting sequence about technological innovation in your documentary. Can you summarize the story about the automobile and draw parallels to Bitcoin?

A: Yes, sure. So, in the late 19th century the first cars were introduced: A technology that threatened the stage-coach and train industries. Guess what happened? Lobby groups pressured Governments to 'regulate' this dangerous thing they called 'road-trains'. In England, there was a law that compelled a flagman to walk in front of a car to warn pedestrians of the danger that was coming their way. The automobile was, quite literally, flagged and slowed down by regulation. Today, you see lobby groups and banks trying to regulate Bitcoin. New technologies are often met with criticism, ridicule, and hostility from

those who stand to lose most from its success. It is going to be interesting to watch in the coming years.

Q: This all sounds very one-sided. Where is the balance in your film?

A: Indeed, it was a major problem to find well informed critics. At first, everyone is very sceptic about this magic Internet money. I surely was. But the more people research about Bitcoin the harder it is to find flaws in its design. However, in the film we do not shy away from the dark side of Bitcoin: Its use in illegal online marketplaces for example. One interviewee rightly pointed out another issue. Most Bitcoin owners today, don't spend it. Instead they hold on to it as a form of speculative investment looking for a large profit. If you don't use a currency, it really isn't a currency. So at the moment one could make the case that Bitcoins are a digital asset rather than an Internet currency.

Q: Personally what do you think is the future of Bitcoin?

A: I actually agree that there isn't much adoption of Bitcoin at the moment. The volatility and low volume do not warrant the label "Internet Currency" yet. However, I am very bullish in the long-term. Maybe not as an ubiquitous new kind of money but as a fundamental building block of future Internet infrastructure. Bitcoin's decentralized ledger, the blockchain, is a revolution. We still have not fully grasped the disruptive nature of it. In the near future we'll see many new applications and various industries adopting it. Bitcoin is much more than just programmable money and hopefully our documentary is a good introduction to the topic.

Torsten Hoffmann is the writer, director and producer of the documentary "Bitcoin: The End Of Money As We Know It" (@TheEndOfMoney) which is released on iTunes, Amazon, Vimeo and BitTorrent. Viewers can also pay for the film using Bitcoins on TheProtocol.TV
Links:

<https://Vimeo.com/OnDemand/Bitcoin>

<http://TheEndOfMoneyAsWeKnowIt.com/>

<https://www.Facebook.com/BitcoinTheEndOfMoneyAsWeKnowIt>

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt4654844/>