

## State of Crypto today

**Progress.** New builders are entering web3 at record pace. Academic research is accelerating. Ambitious products are launching regularly. Key infrastructure is improving. A recent example: Ethereum's successful transition to energy-saving "proof-of-stake", one of the most significant upgrades in the history of open source software development.

**Setbacks.** Noise drowned out signal with negative events dominating headlines. High-profile projects collapsed. Highly visible investors went bankrupt. Major smart contracts were exploited. Global cryptocurrency market cap fell. DeFi and NFT activity declined.

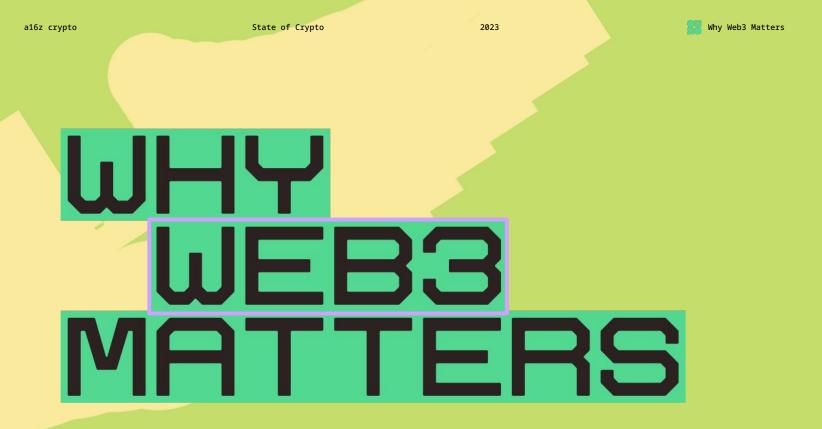
**Market cycles.** The "price-innovation" cycle we previously observed continues today. Apparently chaotic cycles in the crypto market are driven by an underlying logic: Rising prices are a leading indicator for innovation. Numbers generate interest, which spurs ideas and activity, which leads to innovation. This positive feedback loop has held true since Bitcoin's creation in 2009.

**Regulation.** Crypto faces a shifting regulatory environment. Policymakers are proposing bipartisan bills. Courts are deliberating over significant cases. Agencies are issuing enforcement actions. These are precedent-setting times.

**Opportunity.** We believe recent setbacks underscore the failure of opaque, centralized systems in contrast to the resilience of decentralized infrastructure. We believe decentralized computing platforms can also counter the trend of power consolidating into the hands of a few giant tech corporations. The internet needs web3. Those who understand this will fight for the future of these technologies.

## Our view

- Web3 is more than a *financial movement*, it's an *evolution of the internet*.
- Blockchains are more than *ledgers*, they are *computers*.
- Crypto isn't just a new *financial system*, it's a new *computing platform*.





### Web3 is the next evolution of the internet, combining the best features of earlier eras



- Open decentralized protocols: email (SMTP), web (HTTP)
- Community-governed
- Limited functionality
- No value accrual to the network



- Siloed centralized services: Google, Facebook, Twitter
- Corporation-governed
- Advanced functionality
- Value accrues to Big Tech companies



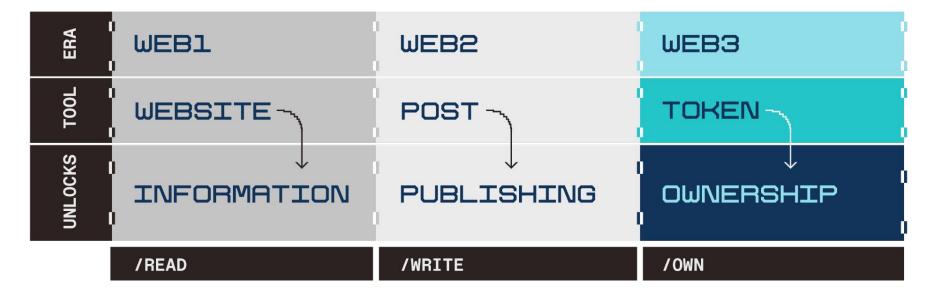
- Decentralized blockchain networks: Bitcoin, Ethereum
- Community-governed
- Advanced functionality
- Value accrues to network participants

1990→

2005→

2020→

## Web1 and web2 democratized information and publishing. Web3 democratizes *ownership*.



## Users have more power, and earn a greater share of revenue, on web3 versus web2 platforms

Comparison of take rates (% of revenue network owners take from users)



web3

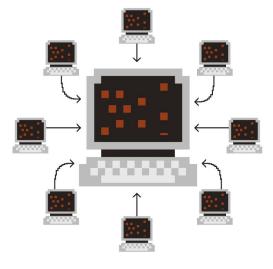
### The network design has economic consequences.

- Users can easily exit
- Code is open source
- Data is public
- Products are extensible
- Platforms can commit to rules



## Web3 counterbalances the trend toward internet consolidation

### Big Tech



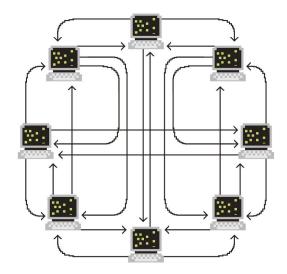
### G 🕻 Ƴ

3 companies now generate a third of all global web traffic.



5 companies represent 50% of the Nasdaq 100's total market cap, up from 25% a decade ago.





Blockchains transfer control from *centralized* entities to *decentralized* communities.

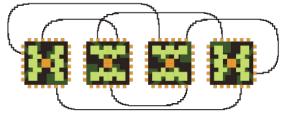
VS

## Web3 advances the internet through crypto computers, not crypto casinos



CASINOS ×

- Financial speculation
- Trust in management
- Opaque operations
- Fragile

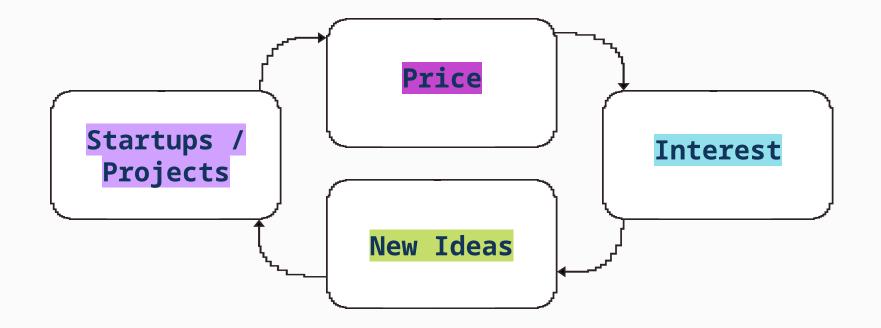


COMPUTERS V

- Tech innovation
- Code-enforced rules
- Transparent operations
- Resilient



## A positive feedback loop drives crypto market cycles



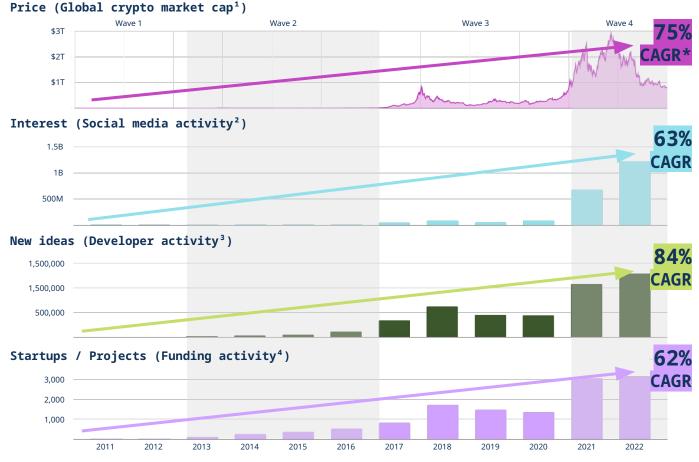
Apparent chaos has underlying order

The market has undergone <u>four</u> <u>cycles</u>, each bigger than the last.

#### Sources:

1/ CoinMarketCap
2/ Twitter; crypto-related
mentions
3/ GitHub and Electric Capital;
stars on public crypto
repositories
4/ Pitchbook; crypto company
funding rounds

Data is through 12/31/2022.



\*Compound Annual Growth Rate

## Great products get built regardless of financial upswings and downswings

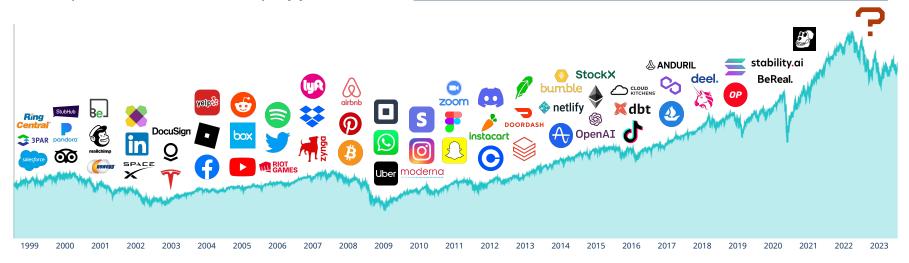


<u>Financial cycles</u> fluctuate unpredictably, often based on macroeconomic conditions.



<u>**Product cycles**</u> are more predictable, often based on consumer behavior and broader tech trends.

### S&P 500 performance and tech company year founded



Source: Pitchbook, Yahoo Finance. Data is as of 3/31/2023.



# TRENDS TO CH

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14

## Blockchains are scaling through multiple promising paths

### New Layer 1s

New "Layer 1" blockchains are expanding the set of possible infrastructure choices for builders, improving on scalability, programmability, security, and decentralization. App ecosystems can be built on multiple blockchains communicating seamlessly.

A sui

SOLANF

APT출S

Avalanche

### Application-specific

Blockchains can be exclusively designed to operate one specific application. Computation and storage resources are not shared with other apps.

CØSMOS **zkSync** Hyperchains

Zones

**OPTIMISM** Superchain

Copolygon Supernets

C Polkadot Parachains

### **Optimistic rollups**

Separate "Layer 2" blockchains that extend the base layer and inherit its security guarantees. Transactions are assumed to be valid, but can be challenged if necessary.

#### **OPTIMISM**



ARBITRU

### Zero knowledge rollups

Separate "Layer 2" blockchains that extend the base layer and inherit its security guarantees. State transitions are computationally verified by generating off-chain validity proofs.

STARKNET  $\leftrightarrow$  zkSync  $\diamond$  AZTEC  $\diamond$  polygon

### Data availability

Solutions to augment a blockchain's capacity to store and access data. This will help reduce transaction costs on "Layer 2" rollups, which are critical to making blockchains more scalable.



EigenDA Danksharding

15

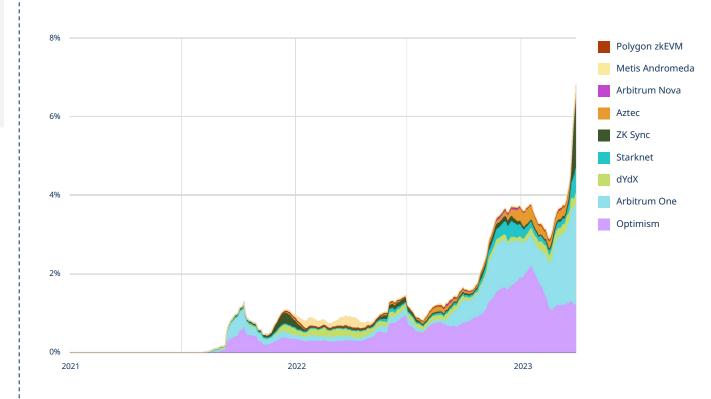
Fees paid by L2 rollups on Ethereum (% of all L1 fees, rolling 30D avg)

16

Blockchainextending rollups are scaling Ethereum

~7%

of all Ethereum fees are paid by L2 rollups.\*

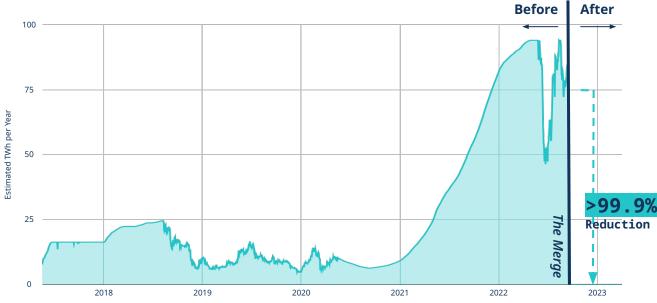


Source: L2BEAT and Dune Analytics. Data is as of 3/31/2023.

\*Layer 2 (L2) rollups are separate blockchains that extend the base layer and inherit its security guarantees.

### A major Ethereum upgrade years in the making eliminates environmental objections

#### Energy consumption of Ethereum



Ethereum transitioned to a new, energy-saving consensus mechanism\* through a series of activities culminating in **"The Merge"** on September 15, 2022.

Source: <u>https://digiconomist.net/ethereum-energy-consumption</u>. Data is as of 3/31/2023. \*A consensus mechanism is a blockchain's method for securely validating transactions.

## Ethereum now consumes 0.001% of the energy that YouTube consumes annually

Ethereum switched to energy-saving Proof of Stake (PoS) from energy-intensive Proof of Work (PoW)\*

### Estimated energy consumption

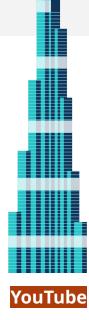
	Annualized energy consumption (TWh)	Comparison to PoS Ethereum		
YouTube	244	94,000x		
Gold mining	130 - 240	50,000 - 92,000x		
Global data centers	200	78,000x		
Bitcoin	100 - 130	38,000 - 50,000x		
PoW Ethereum*	78	30,000x		
Gaming in USA	34	13,000x		
PayPal	0.26	100x		
PoS Ethereum*	0.0026	1x		

Note: Ranges represent the lower and upper bounds from different sources. Estimates can vary dramatically. For the full list of sources, visit <u>https://ethereum.org/en/energy-consumption/</u>.

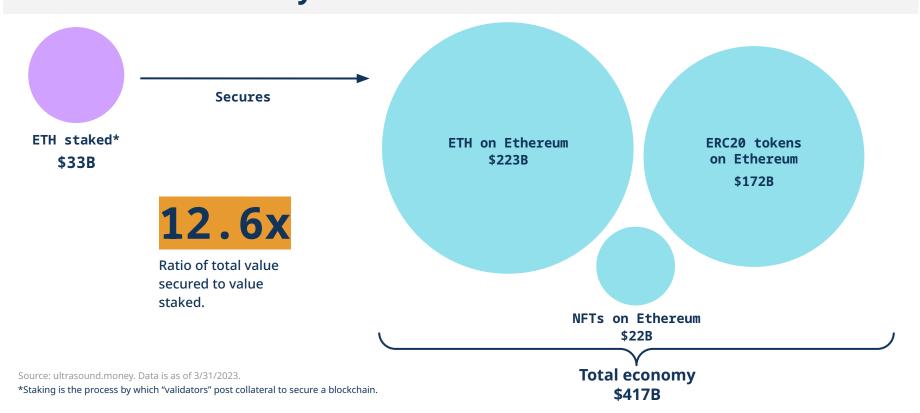
Source: https://ethereum.org/en/energy-consumption/. \*PoW and PoS are consensus mechanisms for securing blockchains. Height comparison for scale







## Staking transforms collateral into outsized economic security



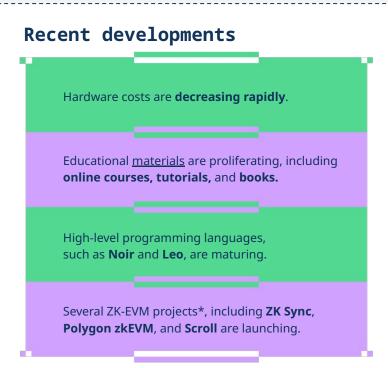
## Uses for zero knowledge (ZK) proofs are becoming tangible

### What is a ZK proof?

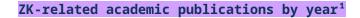
A cryptographic method for proving a statement is true *without revealing any information* about the statement – other than that it is true.

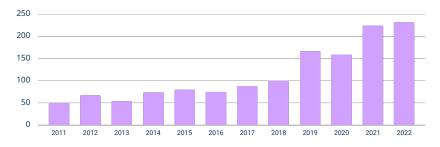
### How can blockchains use ZK proofs?

- 1. Scaling
- 2. Privacy

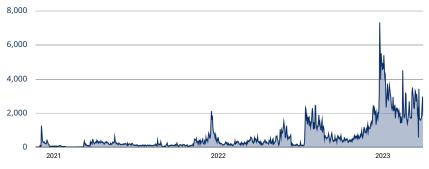


## The zero knowledge field is gaining momentum

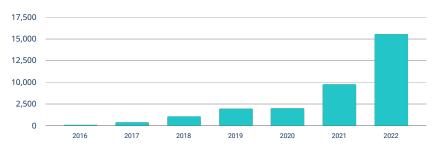




#### Daily transactions verifying ZK proofs on Ethereum<sup>3</sup>



#### Github stars for key ZK repositories<sup>2</sup>



### R1CS benchmarks at N=2<sup>20</sup> constraints<sup>4</sup>

#### # ZK tech is improving at "Moore's Law"-like pace

Scheme	Prover Time		Proof Size		Verifier Time	
Ligero (2017)	~69 sec		~20 MB	.	~31 sec	
Aurora (2019)		22x fa	~1.5 MB	13x sr	~108 sec	30x fa
Brakedown (2021)	~3.1 sec	aster	~10 MB	maller	<1 sec	faster
Orion (2022)	~3.09 sec		~1.5 MB	,	<1 sec	,

1/ Based on a keyword search of publication titles | Source: dblp

2/ Based on a curated list of notable ZK repositories | Source: GitHub

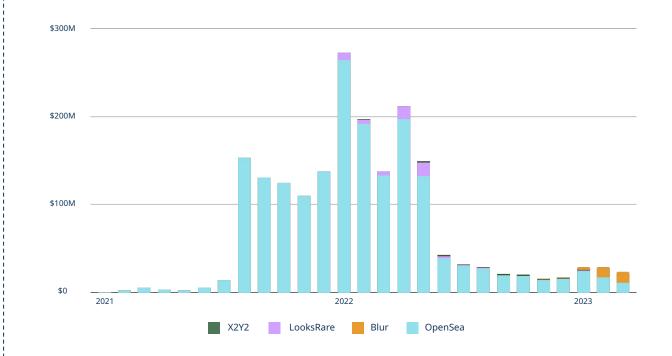
3/ Based on a keyword search of verified contracts on Ethereum | Source: https://github.com/tintinweb/smart-contract-sanctuary-ethereum and Dune Analytics

4/ Includes schemes that work on R1CS and have transparent setup and plausible post-quantum systems generate much shorter proofs. | Sources: https://eprint.iacr.org/2022/1010.pdf, https://eprint.iacr.org/2021/1043.pdf

NFT creators have earned more than \$1.9 billion in royalty revenues

Transfer-based royalties are under fire due to a lack of viable on-chain enforcement. The industry is exploring alternative solutions.

### NFT creator royalties paid by marketplace (on Ethereum)



Source: Flipside Crypto. Data is as of 3/31/2023.

## The world's biggest brands are exploring web3, beginning with NFTs



**Starbucks** starts NFT-based loyalty program.



**Tiffany & Co.** crafts jewel-encrusted pendants for CryptoPunks NFT owners.



**Budweiser** purchases beer.eth ENS name and debuts multiple NFT collections.



**DraftKings** opens marketplace focused on mainstream NFT accessibility.



**Reddit** mints 5 million collectible avatar NFTs.



Adidas Originals creates NFT collection Into the Metaverse.



**Nike** makes NFT platform .Swoosh for digital sneakers.



**Nickelodeon** bases NFT collectibles on *Rugrats* and *Hey Arnold*! characters.



**TIME** introduces NFT initiative TIMEPieces.



**Porsche** launches NFT collection and virtual experiences centered around the iconic Porsche 911.



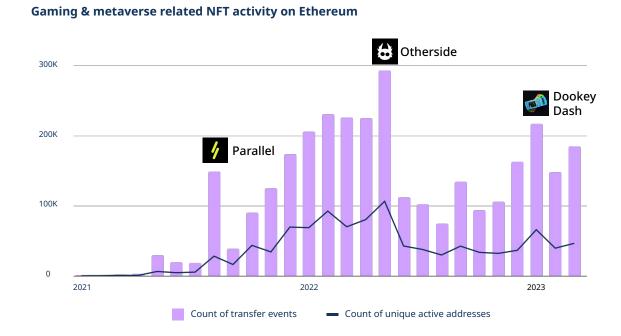
**Gucci** showcases collectible NFTs in art exhibit called *The Next 100 Years of Gucci* and partners with Yuga Labs' metaverse project.



**Louis Vuitton** lets players collect NFTs in a self-branded mobile game.

LOUIS VUITTON

## Web3 games are a huge opportunity to welcome new users to crypto



Consumers spent an estimated **\$67.9 billion** on digital in-game purchases in 2022. 717 new web3 games launched last year. Web3 games generate 23x more on-chain transactions than DeFi.

Source: Business Research, Footprint Analytics, DappRadar.

## Web3 is experimenting with novel forms of community governance

Communities are driving public-goods funding for new projects

Decentralized Autonomous Organizations (DAOs) funded more than **\$60 million** in grants.

DAOs hold roughly **\$10 billion** in liquid treasury assets.

Governance is moving beyond simple token voting

**Delegation** and **councils** are becoming more common.

DAOs are exploring new checks and balances to prevent governance attacks.

## DAOs are becoming formal legal entities

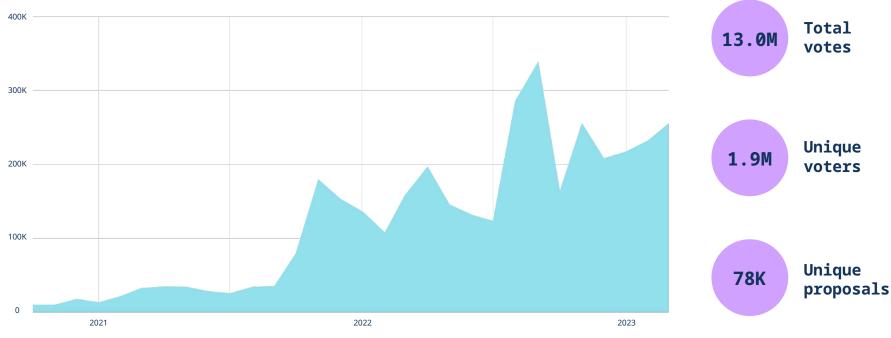
Projects are using legal entities such as LLCs, LCAs, UNAs, and Foreign Foundations.

Legal entities enable DAOs to fulfill tax obligations and regulatory reporting requirements.

All time stats (Snapshot)

## Participation in DAO governance is growing

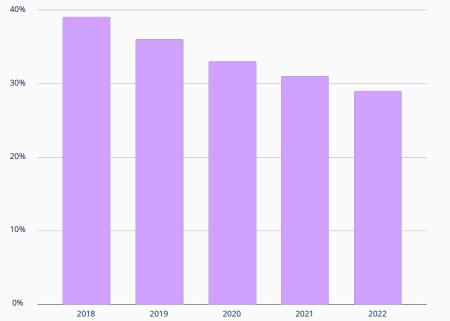
#### DAO governance proposals - Monthly active voters (via Snapshot\*)



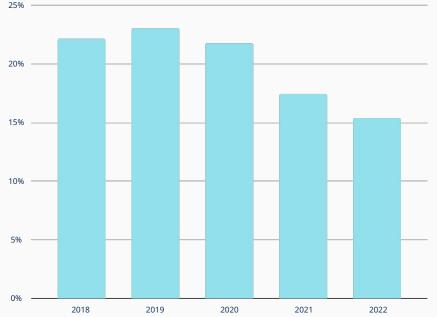
Source: Snapshot (via Flipside Crypto). Data is as of 3/31/2023. \*Snapshot is a popular platform used for DAO governance proposals and voting.

### The U.S. is losing its lead in web3

#### % of crypto developers in the United States



#### Top crypto websites\* - % of traffic from the United States



Source: Electric Capital, SimilarWeb | \*Includes Coinbase.com, Binance.com, Coinmarketcap.com, Coingecko.com, Etherscan.io.

## How policy and regulation impacts U.S. crypto, our views:

**1/ Banning new business models or technologies undermines American values** and drives innovation and jobs elsewhere.

2/ Agency guidance or new legislation that establishes **appropriate, clear rules will protect consumers** and help the web3 industry flourish.

3/ Legal businesses and their customers **deserve access to financial services and lawful protections**, from banking relationships to data privacy.

**4/ Businesses should be the focus of regulation**, whereas decentralized, autonomous software should not. See: "<u>Regulate Web3 Apps, Not Protocols</u>."

See more on our policy principles at <u>a16zcrypto.com/policy</u>.

## **Regulation is being debated**

Proposed market legislation could provide needed clarity

Responsible Financial Innovation Act / Sens. Lummis R-WY & Gillibrand D-NY

Digital Commodities Consumer Protection Act / Reps. Stabenow D-MI & Boozman R-AR

Digital Commodity Exchange Act / Reps. Thompson R-PA, Khanna D-CA, Soto D-FL, & Emmer R-MN Courts are set to decide many impactful cases

SEC Ripple Enforcement Action

Treasury **Tornado Cash** Civil Actions

CFTC **Ooki DAO** Enforcement Action

CeFi Bankruptcy Actions (e.g. Voyager, Celsius, FTX)

SEC Wahi Enforcement Action (Coinbase insider trading)

CFTC/SEC Eisenberg Enforcement Action (Mango Markets fraud)

SEC Terraform Labs/Do Kwan Enforcement Action

Government and industry are actively engaging

Comment Letters & Reports

White House Executive Order

Pending rulemakings:

- Proposed SEC Custody Rule
- FinCEN Unhosted Wallet & Travel Rules
- IRS Tax Rules and Form Changes

+ Ongoing interactions between industry and government agencies

### Bipartisan momentum is building

Digital assets, blockchain technology and cryptocurrencies have experienced tremendous growth in the past few years and offer substantial potential benefits if harnessed correctly. It is critical that the United States play a leading role in developing policy to regulate new financial products, while also encouraging innovation and protecting consumers.

#### Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY)

America is at a once-in-a- generation inflection point: we have the opportunity to be the leader in the digital currency space and reap the benefits this leadership enshrines, or we can concede our leadership role to geopolitical adversaries who are eager to take the mantle as the 21st century's global heavyweight.

#### Coinbase Founder & CEO Brian Armstrong

The future is here and crypto has the ability to decentralize control and empower each and every one of us.

House Majority Whip Tom Emmer (R-MN) Crypto is the future. It could enable the poor to make payments & remittances without long delays and high fees. It could enable artists & musicians to earn a living. It could challenge the concentrated power of Big Tech & Wall Street.

Representative <u>Ritchie Torres</u> (D-NY) [W]e must: support technological innovation that promotes the responsible development and use of digital assets...and reinforce our leadership in the global financial system in order to maintain U.S. competitiveness.

Representative <u>French Hill</u> (R-AK)

[V]erv interesting developments are happening in the digital asset space. In many emerging markets – like India, Brazil and parts of Africa – we are witnessing dramatic advances in digital payments, bringing down costs and advancing financial inclusion. By contrast, many developed markets, including the U.S., are lagging behind in innovation, leaving the cost of payments much higher.

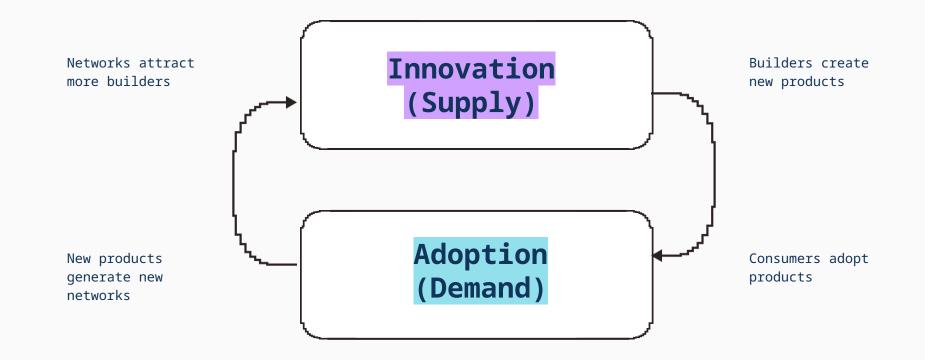
BlackRock Chairman & CEO Larry Fink



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## Tech markets are a function of supply and demand, or *innovation* and *adoption*



## INNOVATION INDICATORS

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## Developers, products, and research drive innovation

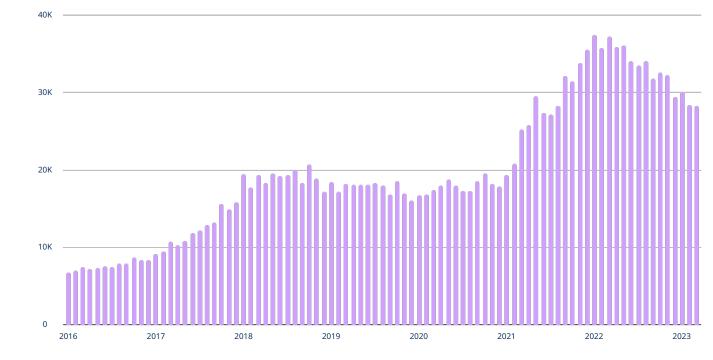
Supply-side KPIs — — —

1	ACTIVE DEVELOPERS
2	INTERESTED DEVELOPERS
3	CONTRACT DEPLOYERS
Ч	VERIFIED SMART CONTRACTS
5	DEVELOPER LIBRARY DOWNLOADS
	(WEB3+ETHERS)
6	ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS
7	JOB SEARCH INTEREST

## Bull markets attract new developers who tend to stick around

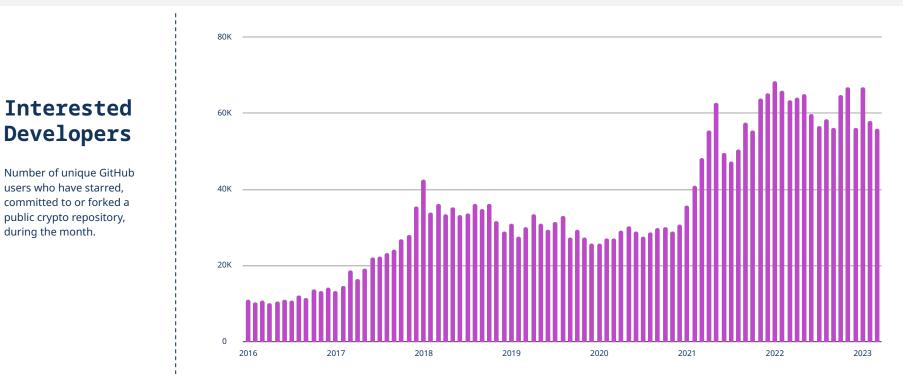


Number of unique GitHub users who have committed to or forked a public crypto repository during the month.



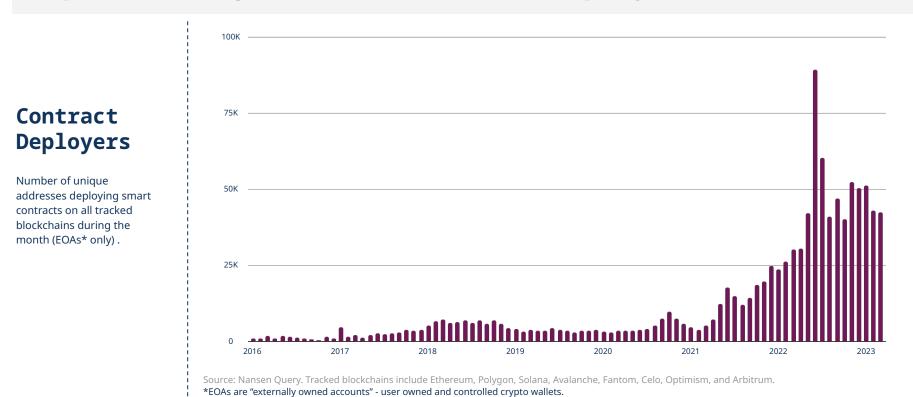
Source: Github and Electric Capital (https://github.com/electric-capital/crypto-ecosystems).

## More than 50K developers interact with crypto-related Github repositories monthly

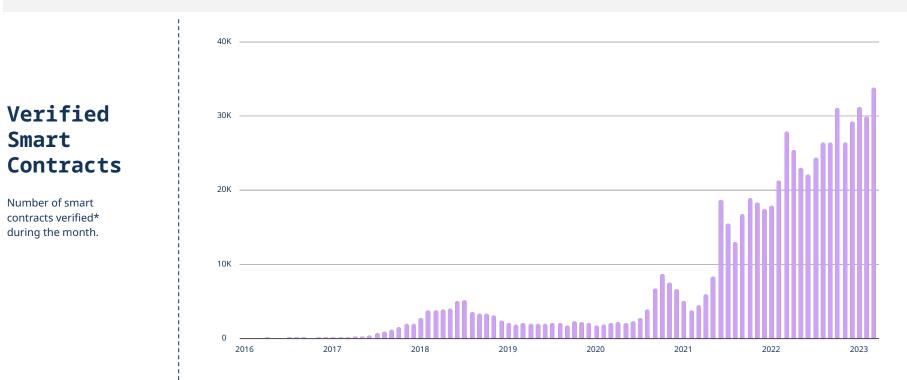


Source: Github and Electric Capital (https://github.com/electric-capital/crypto-ecosystems).

#### NFT activity and better tooling have driven exponential growth in contract deployers



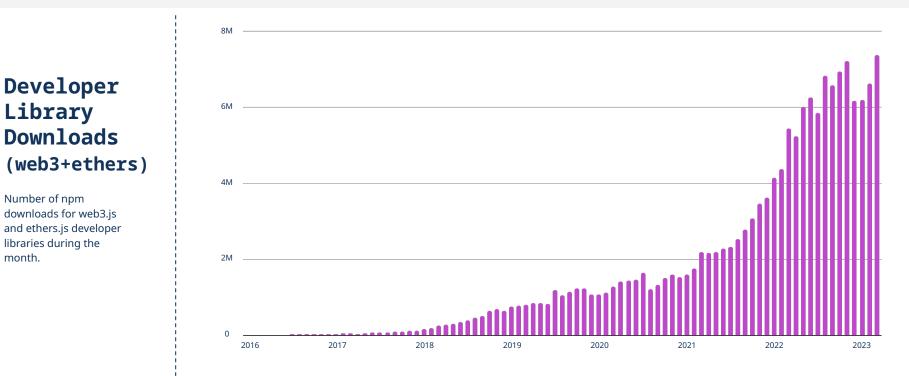
#### Verified smart contracts are at an all-time high, indicating a robust pipeline of product launches



Source: Etherscan and other block explorers from Polygon, Fantom, Celo, Arbitrum, and Optimism.

\*Contract verification assures that the published contract code is the same code running at the contract address.

#### Core crypto developer library usage is increasing, highlighting steady growth in the dev community

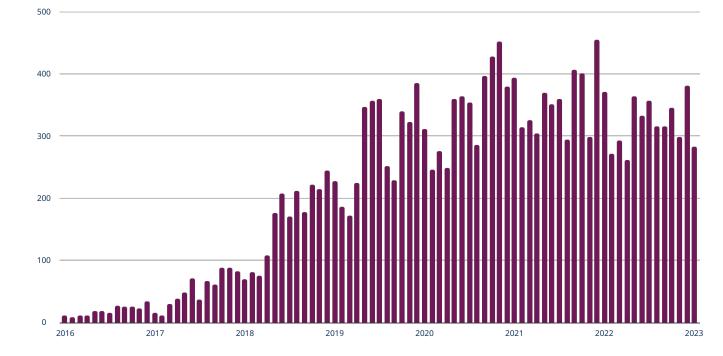


Source: npm.

# Crypto has become a significant area of academic research

#### Academic Publications

Number of crypto-related academic publications released during the month. Based on a keyword search for "Cryptocurrency", "Blockchain", "Bitcoin", and "Ethereum".

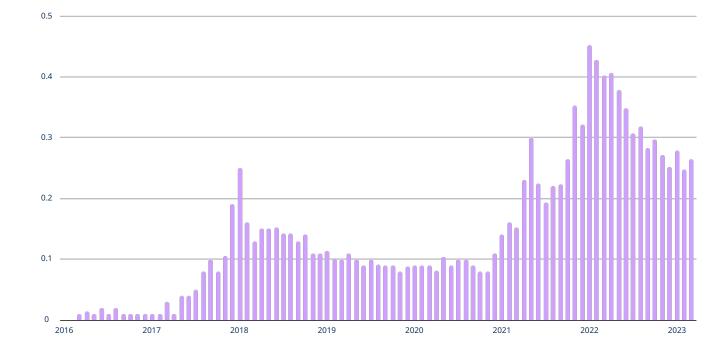


Source: dblp. Chart includes data through Jan 2023 due to 2-month lag in reporting source data.

# Rising crypto prices generate interest in crypto-related jobs



Aggregate interest over time score of worldwide searches for "blockchain jobs", "crypto jobs", "cryptocurrency jobs", and "web3 jobs".



Source: Google Trends. Interest Over Time scores are denormalized (and thus unbounded) using a method called Google Trends Anchor Bank.

al6z crypto

State of Crypto

Adoption Indicators: Demand Side

42

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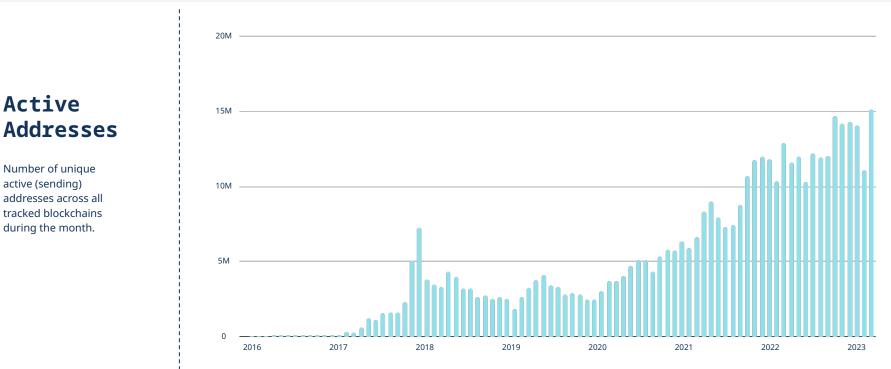


#### Consumer uptake drives adoption

Demand-side KPIs —

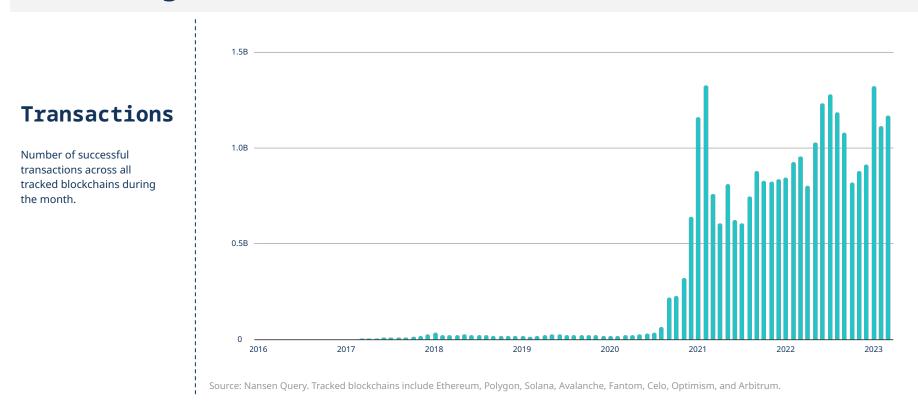
1	ACTIVE ADDRESSES
2	TRANSACTIONS
3	TRANSACTION FEES PAID
Ч	MOBILE WALLET USERS
5	DEX VOLUME
6	NFT BUYERS
۲	STABLECOIN VOLUME

# Active addresses are growing steadily as web3 adoption increases



Source: Nansen Query. Tracked blockchains include Ethereum, Polygon, Solana, Avalanche, Fantom, Celo, Optimism, and Arbitrum.

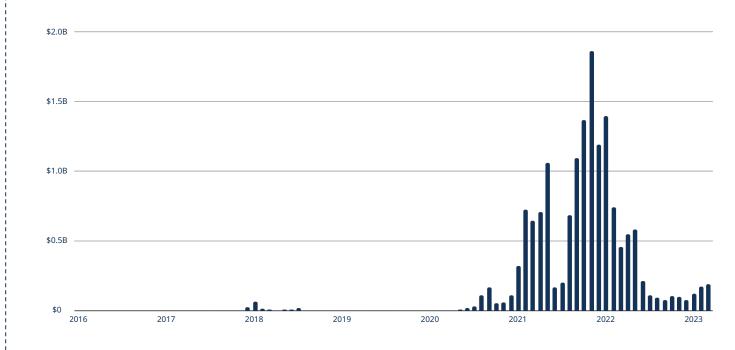
# Blockchain transactions exploded as scaling technologies reduced transaction fees



# Fees increase as demand rises, but decrease as scaling tech supplies more blockspace



Total transaction fees (denominated in USD) paid by users across all tracked blockchains during the month.

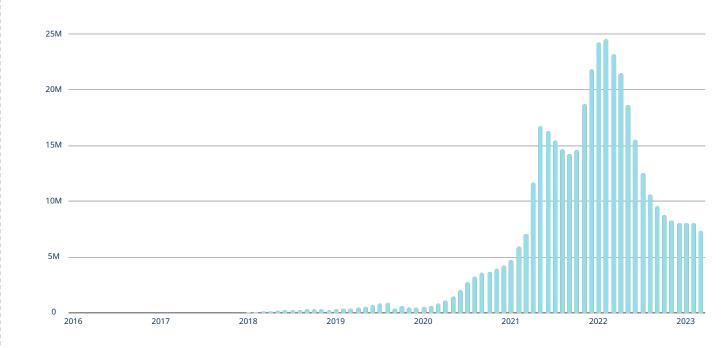


Source: Nansen Query. Tracked blockchains include Ethereum, Polygon, Solana, Avalanche, Fantom, Celo, Optimism, and Arbitrum.

# The number of mobile wallet users has declined since early 2022

#### Mobile Wallet Users

Number of estimated mobile wallet users across all tracked mobile wallets during the month.

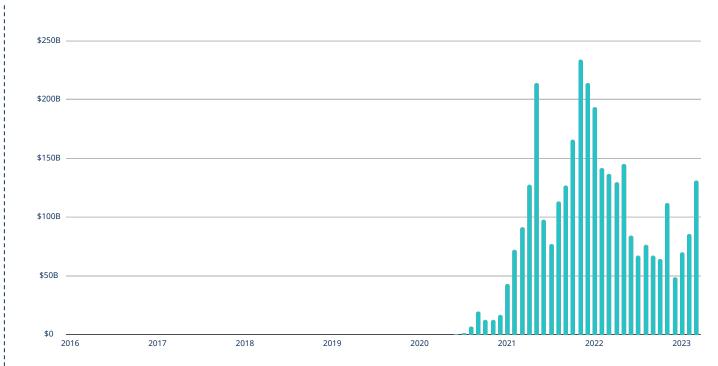


Source: Apptopia. Tracked mobile wallets include Argent, Coinbase Wallet, Crypto.com DeFi Wallet, Exodus, Glow, Ledger Live, MetaMask, MEW Wallet, Phantom, Rainbow, Ronin Wallet, Trust Wallet, Valora, and Zerion.

# Decentralized exchanges are trading over \$100B monthly amid market volatility

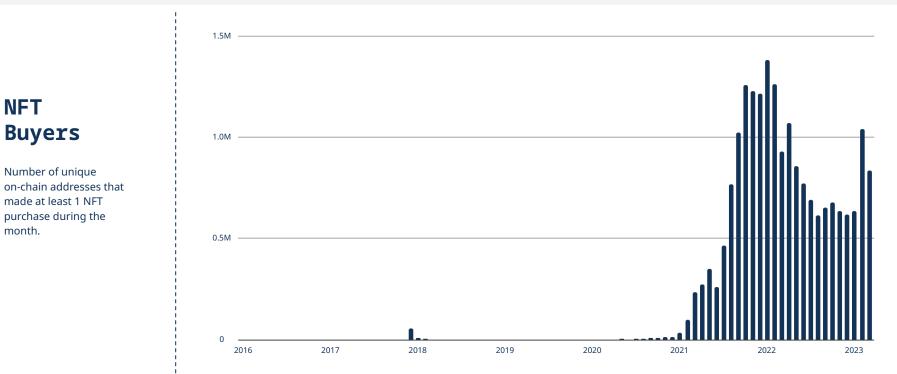


Total on-chain volume on decentralized exchanges (denominated in USD) during the month.



Source: Defi Llama.

# After a speculative period, the number of NFT buyers appears to be rising again

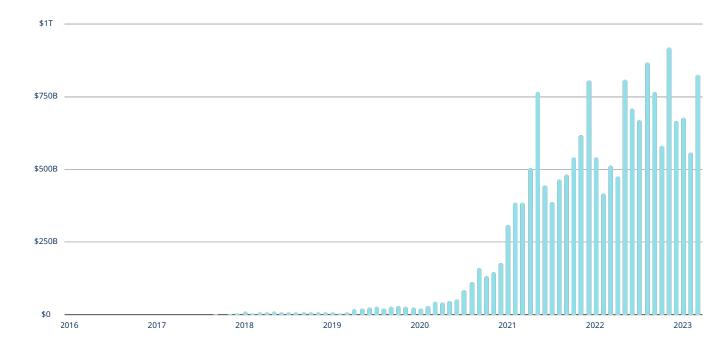


Source: CryptoSlam.

# Despite market fluctuations, the demand for stablecoins remains high



Total on-chain stablecoin transaction volume during the month.



Source: Coin Metrics.



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### **Introducing the State of Crypto Index**

An interactive tool to track the innovation and adoption of the next internet



### The State of Crypto Index measures market growth

The underlying metrics track the market's supply (innovation) and demand (adoption)

Active Developers Interested Developers Contract Deployers Verified Smart Contracts Developer Library Downloads Academic Publications Job Search Interest

Active Addresses Transactions Transaction Fees Paid Mobile Wallet Users DEX Volume NFT Buyers Stablecoin Volume Innovation Indicators

Adoption

Indicators

The State of Crypto Index is calculated based on the weighted average monthly growth of all included metrics.

The index is expressed as a percentage change since January 2016 under certain assumptions.

### The State of Crypto Index is interactive

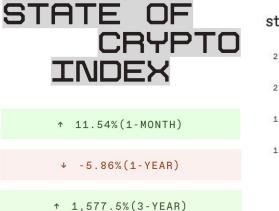
Our default values represent just one of many views of the market

■ INNOVATION INDICATORS (SUPPLY)				
Active developers	view data >			
WEIGHT	THRESHOLD			
15% 🗘	5,000			
Interested developers	view data >			
WEIGHT	THRESHOLD			
10% 🗘	10,000			
Contract deployers	view data >			
WEIGHT	THRESHOLD			
5% 🗘	1,000			
Verified smart contrac	ts view data >			
WEIGHT	THRESHOLD			
5%	10,000			

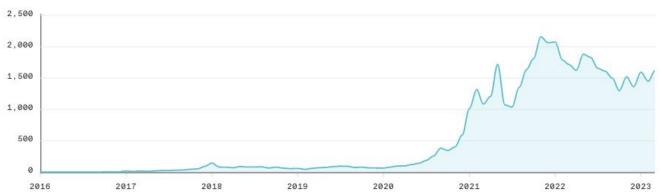
You can manipulate the *weights* and *thresholds* according to your preferences.

**Weights** determine how much impact each category has on the overall calculation.

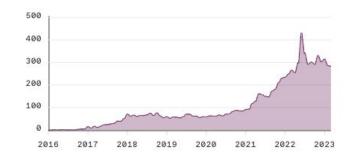
**Thresholds** determine the minimum value for a category to start contributing to the index.



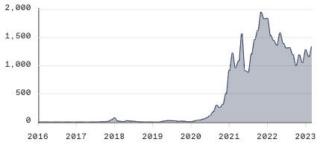
#### state of crypto index 🛈



innovation indicators (supply side) 🛈



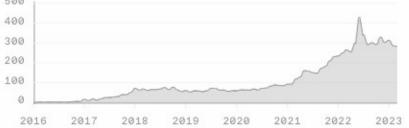
#### adoption indicators (demand side) ()

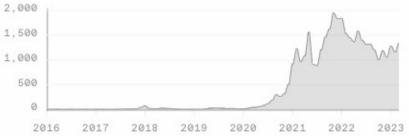


# The State of Crypto Index is updated monthly.

Includes the State of Crypto Index, Innovation Indicators, Adoption Indicators, and all underlying metrics.







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a16z crypto

State of Crypto

WHAT'S

2023

NEXT



57

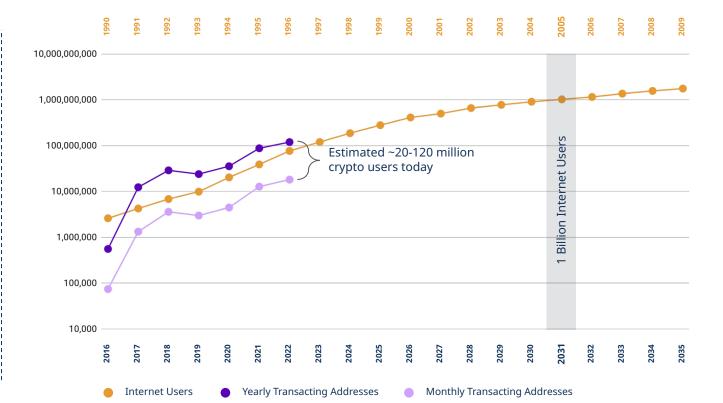
What's Next



### It is still early days

# Internet users vs. unique active addresses (log scale)

Source: World Bank, Dune Analytics. Includes the set of unique public keys with sending transactions across popular EVM chains, including L2s.



# What we're expecting

Some thoughts for 2023 and beyond...

Some of the most **iconic web3 products** will be built during financial downturns in crypto.

## ×

Smart contract security will improve as people adopt techniques like **formal verification and symbolic testing**.

6

Developer adoption of **zero knowledge tech** will accelerate.



The internet will continue consolidating into Big Tech, underscoring the importance of web3.



**"On-chain" games** will rise in popularity.



There will be further advancement in **hardware optimized for zero knowledge proofs**.



Concerns about social media giants will heighten, highlighting the **need for decentralized social networks.** 

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	-			
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			5	

"Light" clients will accelerate the adoption of **mobile web3** frontends.



DAOs will run more experiments with **new forms of community** governance.



Governments will pass **bipartisan** crypto regulation.



As blockspace becomes more affordable, **non-speculative uses of tokens** will proliferate.



**Hiring, treasury management, and sustainable funding** will become a major focus for DAOs.

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