HPI Hasso Plattner Institut
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Aktuelle Meldung

Bitcoin, Ethereum & Co: Online course aims to debunk blockchain myth

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To free blockchain technology— on which cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin or Ethereum are based—from its myth is the declared goal of a new online course from Hasso Plattner Institute (HPI), titled "Blockchain - Revealing the Myth,". This course will launch March 17 on HPI's IT learning platform, openHPI. To register for the free two-week course, to be held in English, visit https://open.hpi.de/courses/blockchain2021.

"In the past twelve months, cryptocurrencies have become the big Corona winner in the financial investment sector alongside gold," says Institute Director Prof. Christoph Meinel. Together with research assistant Tatiana Gayvoronskaya, Meinel will guide attendees through the current blockchain course. In view of the hype surrounding Bitcoin and Ethereum, the gap between crypto enthusiasts and skeptics is growing, according to the scientist.

"While the majority of Germans remain skeptical about Bitcoin and other cryptocurrency technologies, more and more young people see cryptocurrencies as an alternative to established financial products and long-term investments," Gayvoronskaya adds. Together, the two computer scientists seek to reasonably and objectively educate people about the technology for decentralized solutions, which no longer requires a trustworthy authority between the parties involved. The actual ideas and goals behind the system, which operates with cryptography, are to be particularly illuminated and legends debunked.

Reflecting experiences, debunking legends

The target group includes everyone who has already dealt with the topic of blockchain to some extent. "Together with them, we want to reflect on experiences made together," Meinel says. He estimates the time required to master the instructional videos, self-tests, homework and the final exam at around eight hours per week. Intensive discussions can be held in the course forum.

"Instead of overloading participants with technology details, we would rather first familiarize them with the original ideas that moved the developers of Bitcoin when they created the first cryptocurrency system," says Gayvoronskaya. Learners do not need to memorize ready-made definitions

during the Massive Open Online Course (MOOC), but are guided step by step from one problem area to the next.
Based on the information provided, everyone will then be able to develop their own view of the technology, according to the HPI expert. Together with the institute director, Gayvoronskaya also wants to present blockchain alternatives, which have been developed in the meantime, and their challenges. A further focus will be on the resulting useful applications and examples of sensible implementations in projects.

Meinel and Gayvronskaya are authors of the reference book "Blockchain - Hype or Innovation?" published by [Springer-Wissenschaftsverlag](#). (softcover, ISBN 978-3-030-61558-1, eBook ISBN 978-3-030-61559-8), which was published in English in late 2020. Both authors presented two German-language online courses on the topic in 2019 and the year before on openHPI.

Background to the openHPI interactive education platform

The Hasso Plattner Institute launched its interactive Internet offerings as a pioneer among European scientific institutions on September 5, 2012 - on the platform https://open.hpi.de. Since then, it has offered free access to current university knowledge from the rapidly changing fields of information technology and innovation. So far, this has mainly been done in German, English and Chinese. In the fall of 2017, however, openHPI also offered online translation and subtitling of a course in eleven world languages for the first time. Meanwhile, more than 867,000 course enrollments have been registered on openHPI. More than 255,000 people from 180 countries belong to the platform's permanent user base. The platform continues to enjoy rapid growth. For particularly successful participants in its "Massive Open Online Courses," or MOOCs for short, the institute has issued around 95,000 certificates to date. The openHPI annual program for 2021 includes numerous offerings for IT beginners and experts. The 70 courses offered in the past can also still be used in self-study - also free of charge. In addition, students can now receive credit points at their university for completing openHPI courses. Those who want to watch video lessons from the courses while on the go , even if no Internet connection is guaranteed (for example, on an airplane), can also use the openHPI app for Android mobile devices, iPhones or iPads.