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Join us on this episode of law.MIT.edu's IdeaFlow to learn about governance of decentralized systems with guest Wassim Z. Alsindi and host Dazza Greenwood.

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law.MIT.edu's IdeaFlow Episode 14: Governance of Decentralized Systems

Short Description

In the 13 years since Satoshi Nakamoto's proposal for a peer-to-peer economic cash system named *Bitcoin* broke cover, there is a sprawling boomtown surrounding the *virtual jurisdiction* of the network. How does today's reality line up with the enduring narrative imaginary of Bitcoin as a tool for empowerment, inclusion, and fairness? How do decisions get made in a headless community, without any formal governance structures? Can Bitcoin still be thought of as an experiment, when nation-states are formally adopting and integrating it into their societies? Can such an alegal monetary asset endure under a hostile regulatory environment? To what extent can the law meaningfully impact Bitcoin? There are clear tensions between 'protocol ossification' and 'forward progress' ideals - which one wins out? As it turns out, machine consensus was the easy part.

The technolibertarian streak that runs through Bitcoin necessitates that everything has a price. In the apotheosis of neoliberal deterritorialisation, all that can be marketised, is marketised. Bitcoiners maintain this is an improvement over trusted parties and authorities. What is the price of anarchy in Bitcoin's agora?

- The current version of this episode: https://law.mit.edu/pub/ideaflow14
- For more episodes of IdeaFlow, see: https://law.mit.edu/media
- *To signup for future IdeaFlow episodes:* https://forms.gle/aZbxfsEHkM7egeyf8

Host: Dazza Greenwood, Executive Director, law.MIT.edu

Guest: Wassim Z. Alsindi, Ph.D.; S+T+ARTS Repairing The Present Fellow, Founder of 0x Salon, Philosophy of Cryptoeconomics at BlockScience, Technology Editor at the MIT Computational Law Report, co-founder of MIT Cryptoeconomic Systems journal, and conference series, PhD ultrafast supramolecular photophysics.

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J. K. Brekke and W. Z. Alsindi, *Cryptoeconomics Glossary Definition*, Internet Policy Review, Apr'21

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About Wassim Z. Alsindi, Ph.D.



Photo taken by Lisa Blanning, 2021

Wassim Alsindi is the host and creative director of the 0x Salon, a collective which critically interrogates digital culture through discourse events and residencies, producing lore, theory, games, and visual art. Wassim and the 0x Salon are current S+T+ARTS Repairing The Present Fellows. A veteran of the timechain, Wassim specialises in conceptual design and philosophy of peer-to-peer systems, on which he writes, speaks, and teaches. He is Technology Editor and governance columnist at the MIT Computational Law Report, and co-founded MIT's Cryptoeconomic Systems journal and conference series. Wassim has curated arts festivals, led a sculptural engineering laboratory, and published experimental music, improvisatory theatre, poetry, and speculative scripture. Building upon research specialisations in the natural sciences, Wassim holds a Ph.D. in ultrafast photophysics from the University of Nottingham, alongside degrees in chemistry, astrophysics, and finance.