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2020 OUTSTANDING MEMBERSHIP RETENTION PERFORMANCE LONG ISLAND SECTION



March has arrived along with the supply-limited distribution of vaccines to combat a once-in-a-century pandemic. As we look forward to a demand-limited supply sometime in April, to be hoped, the Section has gotten used to planning virtual events for the membership and March has three of them. In the future, we expect many meetings will be hybrid

events, with breakout sessions and some presentations online and others in person. But for now, we are all still stuck in front of our screens.

Events occurring this month include: March 12, 3-5pm & March 19, 2-6pm **EMPLOY ME DAY 1**: Resume and interview skills presentations for professionals by professionals

March 18 and 19

2021 INTERNATIONAL ENERGY & SUSTAINABILITY CONFERENCE:

This is a virtual venue for one of the Section's most popular and influential conferences. Normally very well-attended, the online event this year is sure to attract a large audience.

New this year is a proposal sponsored by the Circuits and Systems Chapter to host a student design contest. The plan is to have the winning design(s) be given some form of recognition at the awards banquet in September, most likely a plaque naming the Student Chapter and the winning entrant. As I've often mentioned, we still look forward to the in-person **Power Electronics & Microwave Symposium** in the fall.

The Executive Committee is holding a full slate of meetings this year, preparing for a return to face-to-face social events among other things. I do not expect much change in the online calendar before late August at the earliest. Many models of herd immunity predict its onset somewhere between April and September. These models contain a tradeoff between deaths due to Covid and the time to herd immunity. As more people become infected, herd immunity propagates but more people die. Vaccination programs and social distancing remain the best tools we have, but people are getting stir-crazy with spring approaching after so long a period of isolation.

As usual, my final word is to stay safe, get a vaccine when you are able (I was finally able to get my first of two last week), wear masks and stay socially distant. But also, join us online for the scheduled meetings.

Stay healthy,

Arnold Stillman IEEE Long Island Section Chair, 2021









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THE IEEE LONG ISLAND SECTION WEBSITE

The IEEE LI Section website is regularly updated to reflect recent section activity and upcoming events. Each Society and Affinity Group has a dedicated page that describes their function and includes contact information.

www.licn.org

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The Consultant's Network of Long Island maintains a referral service of engineering, computer, managerial and technical professionals.

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For more information on membership with the LI Section of the IEEE, e-mail Carl Meshenberg at: membership@ieee.li



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The Long Island Section of IEEE has 18 Chapters. Each Chapter is a technical subunit of the Long Island Section, associated with an IEEE Society. The Chapters, as well as the Section, are always welcoming volunteers. If you would like to help with any of the Long Island Chapter's steering groups, please do contact the relevant Chapter Chair, Vice Chair, or one of the Section officers.

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TOTALLY ONLINE

3:00 - 5:00 pm FRIDAY, MARCH 12, 2021

2:00 - 5:00 pm FRIDAY, MARCH 19, 2021

FREE TO ALL

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SUBMISSIONS: Jan 25 – Mar 17, 2021

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PRE-REGISTER: c.pleckaitis@ieee.org

4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

INTERVIEW TIPS & **TECHNIQUES** WEBINAR

Learn winning interview tips, techniques, and strategies by a Professional Career Consultant

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FRIDAY, MARCH 19

2:00 PM - 2:20 PM ABOUT ME WEBINAR (20 Minutes)

Learn Winning Tips & Techniques for a Better About Me Speech

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2:20 PM - 3:00 PM **ABOUT ME** WORKSHOP

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PRE-REGISTER: c.pleckaitis@ieee.org

MARCH 19, 2021, 2 - 5 PM IEEE SPONSORED BREAKOUT SESSIONS

For up-to-date information on date/other changes, look in next month's *Pulse* or visit the EAC Website: ieee.li/committees/employment-assistance-committee. If interested in participating in the Job Fair, which is **FREE** and totally **ONLINE** to all companies, please respond

to the contact information below. Many capable technical candidates on Long Island are available for employment and are waiting to be reached.

CONTACT: Charles Pleckaitis **E-MAIL**: c.pleckaitis@ieee.org

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Send the following information:

- 1. Your Name
- 2. Which Webinar wish to attend:
 - WINNING RESUME
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ATTTENTION LI COMPANIES

The Employment Assistance Committee (EAC) wishes to coordinate with representatives of LI companies for a free Online IEEE sponsored Job Fair. Internships are welcomed. Present Job needs & interview via Side sessions with Zoom.

For information about EAC, the IEEE EAC Website visit: https://ieee.li/committees/employment-assistance-committee





A couple of years ago, I gave a talk to the IEEE Life Members entitled Blockchains and Bitcoin, and Introduction. It was a gentle entrée to an emerging technology that has continued to captivate people with possibilities. In this short article, I will reprise the blockchain elements of the talk. Bitcoin and its cryptocurrency cousins are pretty much well-covered in the news and the details of their implementation are beyond the scope of this article. Furthermore, the survival of cryptocurrencies is dependent on the survival of blockchain technology, but the reverse is not true. The long-term potential of Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies is not as assured as the underlying blockchain foundation.

WHAT IS A BLOCKCHAIN AND HOW DID IT COME TO BE?

The blockchain algorithm made its public debut October 31, 2008. On that date, Halloween interestingly, the almost assur-edly pseudonymous developer Satoshi Nakamoto published "Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System" to the gmane.-comp.encryption.general newsgroup. In that message, Naka-moto refers to a paper on creating a digital cash system. The paper outlines the underlying mechanism for ensuring that a digital "coin" that has been spent in a transaction and thus no longer owned by the spender is not available to the spender to reuse. In the world of physical currency, a dollar that has been spent has a serial number that no longer belongs to the spend-er, but a counterfeit of that dollar has the same serial number and can be spent again. In fact, numerous counterfeits, all identical, can represent the same underlying one-dollar value. The blockchain algorithm that Nakamoto developed tries to guarantee that a transaction of value, the passing of a coin from buyer to seller, transfers that value once and only once. The method involves a ledger system that encrypts the previous history of transactions with the current transaction into a block of data. This block of data contains within it a link to all previous transactions as well as a representation of the current transaction. Hence, stringing these links together into a chain of discrete blocks yields a "blockchain."

BUILDING A BLOCKCHAIN

In this section, I will rely quite a bit on work by <u>Eric Munsing</u>. However, before we start making our own blockchains, it is important to understand trapdoor functions and hashes. These are the essential mathematical tools that enable the blockchain algorithm.

TRAPDOOR FUNCTIONS

Trapdoor functions are functions that are easy to calculate but extremely difficult to invert. One of the first examples is¹

 $Y = \alpha^X \mod q$, for X = 18,

where q is a prime number. I can now rewrite this as

 $Y = ((((\alpha^2)^2)^2)^2 \times \alpha^2.$

Choosing α =1.5, gives *Y*=1477.89. Now, can we invert the calculation to get back *X*=18, where the value is strictly an integer? To do so, it is necessary to solve

$$X = \frac{\log 1477.89}{\log 1.5}.$$

But this gives

X = 7.29836/0.405465 = 17.999975336958798, Not an integer. When X and α are 64-digit numbers, the inversion is practically impossible.

HASHES

A hash is a type of trapdoor function that maps a number to another number, where number here is what we understand as a file, since a digital file is essentially one long number. Hashes are not unique; a four-bit number has 16 different combinations. A two-bit hash of the input could only have four possibilities. There must be a collision; every hash would have four distinct possible inputs. In the real world of hashes, the numbers are so big that collisions are rare. These properties make them a basic encryption tool. Some relevant other properties are:

- Small changes in input create large changes in output.
- Inputs are padded to uniform block sizes.
- NIST governs hash standards (FIPS PUB 180-4).

ONG ISLAND SECTION



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FEATURE ARTICLE

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H(25)= Hash["Arnold Stillman"]			11 *
Out[25]+ 661 076 578 646 277 033			-i
<pre>h(20):# Hash["arnold Stillman"]</pre>			π
Out[25]= 2124 531 413 847 548 234			
in[27]* Hash[1]			- 31
Oui(27)* 6 568 131 406 215 528 669			
(n[23]) # Hash [001]			-11
Out[28]* 6 568 131 406 215 528 669			3
In[25] * Hash ["1"]			31
Out[29]* 8 213 284 795 067 247 352			01
(J)			

FIGURE 1

Shows four hashes- the first two inputs differ by a single letter; the next three by the change of input from two equivalent formats of a number to its text representation.



FIGURE 2

Demonstrates different inputs with the same hash. The different input bytes are in red.

Although hashes may look unique, as I mentioned, there must be collisions.



FIGURE 3

Two hashes of the first 1000 integers are shown. The **CRC32** hash is obviously not very random.

THE BLOCKCHAIN ALGORITHM

Hash in hand, I can now begin to construct the blockchain. The individual blocks of the chain all contain a body and a header. The algorithm will follow these steps:

- STEP 1. Create a transaction.
- STEP 2. Verify the transaction.
- **STEP 3.** Construct a block of transactions consisting of:
 - A. The current transaction
 - B. A hash of the previous block header (trapdoor easy calculation)

STEP 4.

Solve the proof of work.

- Present the proposed new block to the network of nodes.
- **B.** The first node to generate the correct hash wins (trapdoor **hard** calculation)
 - i. Network of nodes performs the calculation.
 - ii. The node successfully obtaining the hash signals the proof-of-work to the network
- **STEP 5.** Add the block to the chain.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8





1.4 x 10¹⁵⁴ 1.2 x 10¹⁵⁴ 1.0 x 10¹⁵³ 8.0 x 10¹⁵³ 5.0 x 10¹⁵³ 2.0 x 10¹⁵⁵ 2.0 x

SHA512 Hash

Why does NIST have a hash standard? Randomness is key to encryption and very difficult to obtain. Some hashes are not very random.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

At this point, it is important to note a few details of this algorithm. Step 4 forms the basis for Bitcoin mining, whereby the node generating the correct hash receives a reward of some fraction of a Bitcoin. Although it is beyond the scope of this article, it deserves mention that the fraction of a Bitcoin mined is not constant but declines over time. Step 4 also contains the blockchain fundamental calculation, that of the correct hash to add a block to the chain. This step deserves a full explanation.

STEP 4

Once I have what I think is a valid transaction, I look at the last block in the existing chain. It has within it the target hash. My new hash must be related to the old one somehow. Algorithms can vary at this point, but I will use the Bitcoin model. First, choose a number, any number. This, in blockchain parlance, is the nonce. The steps are:

- 1. Choose a nonce
- 2. Combine (i.e., string them end to end)
 - a. The proposed new block
 - b. The header of the previous block c. The nonce
- 3. Hash the combination.
- 4. If the hash <= target hash, proof of work is verified
- 5. If the hash > target hash, got back to Step 1.

So, at this point, what is the target hash? In practice, the blockchain starts with a genesis block, the first block in the chain, and an initial hash given by an accepted hash function. This initial hash is large enough that it will accommodate all possible future transactions up to some very large limit. It is not infinite, however. On advantage of this method is that counting leading zeroes serve to perform the checking of the proof of work. Figure 4 shows several attempts at guessing a hash by counting leading zeroes given a simple input string. It took twelve attempts to guess the correct MD5 hash. I do not recommend trying this on real input blocks with bigger hashes, unless you have years to waste.

Also key to verifying the proof of work is the distributed task of calculating the hash. This is the very central idea of the blockchain. The calculation is so difficult that only a distributed network of calculating nodes can accomplish the task in a reasonable amount of time. If there are fewer nodes, by assent among the nodes, the difficulty gets eased; if there are more nodes, the difficulty is increased. The determining factor is the average time it takes to perform the proof of work. The statistics of the calculation and the possibility of bad actors emerging, (i.e., counterfeits) are in the Nakamoto paper. This networked calculation makes the blockchain a distributed ledger system. This property is unique and is the reason for all the hype. There are many claims of blockchain techniques in use that abuse this definition by not employing a distributed calculation. In fact, the best definition of the blockchain is just that, a distributed ledger system that guarantees accuracy by encryption of all previous entries.

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<pre>mild = Table[Hash["the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog" <> IntegerString[i "MD5", "HexString"], {i, 12}]</pre>			
Cut[10]= 9b0b341173408791277e110d63defaf9, c93aa725e525f0d5c439a31b93a49250, 8a373112f1f31046c2ff3232212235fb, f23feef31d4fbf8be5a9ecdad63410e3, f68397573dfebca439347b26bea81530, 1d6a37d09cb0e2d9820011b80df5c852, 797a68f252a14108cb438c6ec70ccf19, a056e2da56a4cf601457c906d689d90c, 36c9e34be0bf91b2727b033281885332, 4023037751cd4dd7f871b2999b39f4d2, baa254673a320d6991062c8a9f3b4dfa, 01e50bcd17afacd72c0e0c15be0a25f4)			5
m[17]= Hash["the quick brown fox jumps over the lazy dog12", "MD5", "HexString"]			1
Outi17 016500cd1/atacd/2000c150e0a25t4	-	(mail	31
characters split at substring string length positions of substrings more	4	Ē	
」 は 「		1005	×

FIGURE 4

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ONG ISLAND SECTION



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CONSTRUCTION OF THE BLOCKCHAIN

A python pseudocode implementation of a sample blockchain starts with some basic functions.

With these functions, I can now create a toy blockchain. The first block is the genesis block; its contents are a sample transaction between Alice and Bob. A genesis block is necessary to generate the first hash." With the first block in place, make the next transaction and append it to the chain. The result is the new blockchain. What this toy example does not do is provide the proof-of-work , which would be intermediate between making a block of transactions and validating the block before adding it to the chain.

hashMe(post=""):

```
1.
    import hashlib
2.
    def hashMe(post=""):
з.
        if type(post)!= str:
4.
5.
            post = json.dumps(post,sort_keys=True)
6.
        if sys.version_info.major == 2:
            return unicode(hashlib.sha256(post).hexdigest(),'utf-8')
7.
        else:
8.
9.
            return hashlib.sha256(str(post).encode('utf-8')).hexdigest()
```

makeTransaction()

```
1. def makeTransaction():
2. tankId = "012345"
3. accountId = "Poemtech"
4. timestamp=strftime("%d %b %Y %H:%M:%S",gmtime())
5. payload = {u'serNum':serNum, u'ccid':ccid, u'tankId':tankId,\
6. u'accountId':accountId,u'previousLevel':previousLevel,u'tankLevel'\
7. :currentLevel, u'timestamp':timestamp}
8. return payload
```

makeBlock()

1. de	ef makeBlock(txns,chain):
2.	parentBlock = chain[-1]
3.	parentHash = parentBlock[u'hash']
4.	<pre>blockNumber = parentBlock[u'contents'][u'blockNumber'] + 1</pre>
5.	<pre>blockContents = {u'blockNumber':blockNumber,u'parentHash':parentHash,</pre>
6.	<pre>u'txnCount':len(txns),'txns':txns}</pre>
7.	<pre>blockHash = hashMe(blockContents)</pre>
8.	<pre>block = {u'hash':blockHash,u'contents':blockContents}</pre>
9.	
10.	return block

makeGenesisBlock()

- 1. state = {u'Alice':50, u'Bob':50} # Define the initial state
- genesisBlockTxns = [state]
- 3. genesisBlockContents = {u'blockNumber':0,u'parentHash':None,u'txnCount':1,u'txns':genes
 isBlockTxns}
- genesisHash = hashMe(genesisBlockContents)
- 5. genesisBlock = {u'hash':genesisHash,u'contents':genesisBlockContents}

```
FIGURE 5
```

APPEND THE BLOCK TO THE CHAIN

```
    state = makeTransaction()

2. chain = [makeGenesisBlock()]
3.
    inputBuffer = [makeTransaction() for i in range(20)]

 blockSizeLimit = 5

5.
while len(inputBuffer) > 0:
7.
        bufferStartSize = len(inputBuffer)
8.
        txnList = []
9.
        while (len(inputBuffer) > 0) & (len(txnList) < blockSizeLimit):</pre>
10.
            newTx = inputBuffer.pop()
11.
            validTx = checkTx(newTx, state)
12.
13.
            if validTx:
14.
                txnList.append(newTx)
15.
                state = updateState(newTx, state)
16.
            else:
17.
                print("transaction skipped")
18.
                sys.stdout.flush()
19.
                continue
        newBlock = makeBlock(txnList,chain)
20.
        chain.append(newBlock)
21.
```

Done! Many examples of blockchain implementations exist on the web. This is a very simple one and almost useless for real work, but it does illustrate the structure and assembly of a local blockchain. What is missing is the distributed element for proof of work and community access to the ledger.

 New Directions in Cryptography, IEEE Trans. on Inf. Theory, 11/6/1976
 ⁱⁱ Supposedly, the first Bitcoin transaction was for pizza.



LONG ISLAND SECTION

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LET YOUR VOICE)))) HEARD

WRITE TO THE PULSE

The Pulse of Long Island is a newsletter for the members of the IEEE Long Island Section. You can let your voice heard by writing to the Editor. How to bring more value to our members? Interesting new technology, or a project? An issue of interest to members of the IEEE Long Island, Long Island engineers and computer professionals, or Long Island technical community at large? Write to the **Pulse**. Let your letter be read, and your voice heard.

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THE PULSE OF LONG ISLAND



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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2021 POWER ELECTRONICS SYMPOSIUM 2021 Arrive Anytime, Leave Anytime, from Noon to 8 PM

The Long Island Power Electronics Symposium and Exhibits is the area's premier annual event that brings together the local power electronics community.

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IEEE LIFE MEMBERS, WRITE FOR THE **PULSE**!



The Section is inviting you to record your stories and histories in our monthly publication, the *Long Island Pulse*. An article of approximately 300 – 350 words is recommended.

> LET US HEAR FROM YOU. Send your article to: pulse@ieee.li Life Member Chair: life@ieee.li

The **IEEE Long Island Section** has held meetings with many of our Life Members and Senior Engineers, in recent months. Your stories and histories in engineering are interesting, inspiring and should be recorded for future generations. You have served your profession for many years, many have served our country in the military, many as engineers fighting the Cold War. The many contributions are the legacy to this new digital age, space age, environmental age and beyond.

WANTED: IEEE LIFE MEMBER NEEDED TO VOLUNTEER TO SUBMIT A MONTHLY HISTORY ARTICLE FOR THE *PULSE*

The **PULSE** is seeking a IEEE LI Life Member to write the *Long Island Electrical & Electronic History* monthly article for the **Pulse**. If interested contact **pulse@ieee.li**

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