



Market Commentary: April 2019

“I think the role of the disruptors and anything that is using distributed ledger technology, whether you call it crypto, assets, currencies, or whatever ... that is clearly shaking the system.” - Christine Lagarde, Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund

April was a monumental month for developments in digital asset markets. To start the month the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank announced that they were planning to launch a cryptocurrency, dubbed '*Learning Coin*', which will be designed to help multinationals better understand blockchain technology.

On the other hand, the British Virgin Islands (BVI) has partnered up with LifeLabs, a digital currency and tokenized reward system, for the purposes of providing rapid cash response in the event of an emergency, such as a natural disaster, and implementing an alternative payment method for ongoing financial transactions across the islands. It is important to note that this is the first time that the digital asset space has witnessed a national government attempt to utilize cryptocurrencies for crisis situations.

In financial news, two of the largest financial services companies in the United States, E-trade and TD Ameritrade will soon begin to allow their clients to trade digital assets. We believe that this will increase adoption in the digital asset space as it will make it easier for retail investors to trade cryptocurrencies. By entering the digital asset industry, TD Ameritrade and E-Trade pose a direct threat to Coinbase, which has most recently, been the most popular cryptocurrency exchange for retail investors in the US. The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) has acquired the Digital Asset Custody Company (DACC), to gain regulatory approval for its financial products. The SEC had originally forced the NYSE to postpone its launch of its Arca ETF and Bakkt exchange due to a lack of an in-house custody services.

Interestingly, in the automotive industry, Jaguar and Land Rover have partnered up with the Internet of things (IoT) platform, Iota, to reward users for sharing their data. Jaguar and Land Rover join the widely popular cryptocurrency-driven internet browsing platform, Brave Browser, in the fight to allow users to take full control of and get compensated for their personal data.

Lastly, in one of the most groundbreaking digital asset developments of this year, Nike has filed a trademark application for '*Cryptokicks*', which involves Nike developing its own cryptocurrency, cryptocurrency wallet, cryptocurrency reward system, and cryptocurrency collectibles.