

Dogecoin miner barred from Harvard research computing facility access

February 23 2014, by Nancy Owano



Bitcoins

Harvard's college newspaper, *The Harvard Crimson*, had the story that someone used the university's supercomputing cluster Odyssey for the unofficial purpose of mining dogecoins. The discovery was by one of its community members using the Odyssey [cluster](#), who spotted an anomaly with a set of compute nodes.

A user-group message was sent out informing the members that the

person had used the Odyssey cluster to garner the coins. The FAS (Faculty of Arts and Sciences) Research Computing Users Group were told how the person, not named, had set up the mining operation on the Odyssey cluster, "consuming significant resources in order to participate in a mining contest." James Cuff, assistant dean for research computing, reminded the group that the Odyssey and Research Computing resources are off limits for use for personal or private gain or any non-research related activity.

He cautioned that "any participation in 'Klondike' style digital mining operations or contests for profit requiring Harvard-owned assets to examine digital currency key strength and length are strictly prohibited for fairly obvious reasons." As a result, he added, the individual involved was no longer to be allowed access to any and all research computing facilities.

Harvard's Odyssey has users that include collaborating researchers from all over the world. *The Harvard Crimson* report did not identify the person by name, referring instead to the individual as a member of the Harvard community. It would seem at least in hindsight to be a fairly easy assumption to make on any academic level that using the Odyssey for profit or personal gain would be against policy and unwise.

Bitcoin is the most well known virtual currency but Dogecoin too has emerged as a currency gaining traction. "Doge" is in reference to the Shiba Inu face on the currency. Why would the idea of using Odyssey have attracted the individual? *Ars Technica*'s Lee Hutchinson said that what one cares about when examining aptitude at [mining](#) is "how many cryptographic hashes it can calculate per second—more is better, because the more hashes per second you can throw at the currency, the higher your chance of matching the magic hash needed to correctly identify a valid block and score a reward (again, yes, I know it's more complicated than that, but that's the short version)."

The Harvard Crimson was told by a source that it was possible, if minings had gone on for days. that Odyssey may have generated hundreds or thousands of dollars, *The Harvard Crimson's* readers' comments included one reaction that suggested the abuser's efforts be transformed into positive research. Maybe, the reader said, the school could support innovation by helping the student organize a group "to study this fascinating new technology." Other readers disagreed, saying no creativity was involved in running software on an academic resource, the supercomputing cluster, for personal gain.

More information: www.thecrimson.com/article/201...rd-odyssey-dogecoin/

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