

Did Australian invent bitcoin? UK court examines claim

February 2 2024, by Lucie LEQUIER



More than 15 years after its launch the creator of bitcoin is still unknown.

A court case starting in London on Monday will seek to determine whether Australian computer scientist Craig Wright invented bitcoin, the world's first and biggest cryptocurrency.

Wright says he is Satoshi Nakamoto, the pseudonym of [bitcoin](#)'s creator and author of a white paper that introduced the cryptocurrency to the world in 2008.

Crypto Open Patent Alliance (COPA), a non-profit organization set up to keep cryptocurrency technology free from patents, is suing Wright over his claims first made in 2016—resulting in the trial at London's High Court set to last six weeks.

The enigmatic programmer describes himself on X as "Creator of Bitcoin".

"I conceived bitcoin, and I unveiled it to the world," he last month wrote in a posting on the platform, formerly known as Twitter.

Wright, who on his website describes himself also as a businessman, has been involved in a number of lawsuits brought by himself but this time around is being asked to defend himself.

"The very concept of bitcoin from the beginning was [open source](#)," a COPA spokesperson told AFP.

It "raises a reasonable question: is Satoshi Nakamoto the kind of person who would sue people for (re)publishing the white paper? We think obviously not".

'Faketoshi'

COPA brings together heavyweights in the industry, including cryptocurrency platform Coinbase and Block, which specializes in digital payments.

It accuses Wright, nicknamed 'Faketoshi' by his detractors, of lying

about his identity and of forging and manipulating documents presented to try and prove his claims.

"Craig Wright claims to be the mysterious creator of bitcoin, Satoshi Nakamoto. He isn't," Coinbase chief legal officer Paul Grewal insisted before the start of the London hearing.

"But, undaunted by this basic truth, Wright has used his substantial financial backing to bring an endless stream of baseless litigations against crypto developers based on this lie, many of whom cannot even afford to present the most basic defense."

The outcome of the upcoming case could determine that of another pitting Wright against 26 developers—including Coinbase—for allegedly infringing upon his intellectual property rights.

Other bitcoin 'inventors'?

Should it be judged that Wright is not the inventor of bitcoin, ascertaining who is would prove another major challenge.

Dorian Nakamoto was one of the first to be suspected of shaking up the world of currency, following a report by Newsweek magazine that he was behind the digital token.

The Japanese-American engineer denies being Satoshi Nakamoto.

Others argue that work of such magnitude would more likely have been carried out by a collective rather than a single developer.

The court case comes as bitcoin becomes more widely accessible.

US regulators last month gave the green light to a group of bitcoin

exchange-traded funds, which grant investors exposure to movements in asset prices without taking direct ownership of the underlying assets.

Bitcoin on Friday traded at around \$42,500, far from a record-peak of almost \$69,000 in 2021.

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