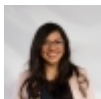
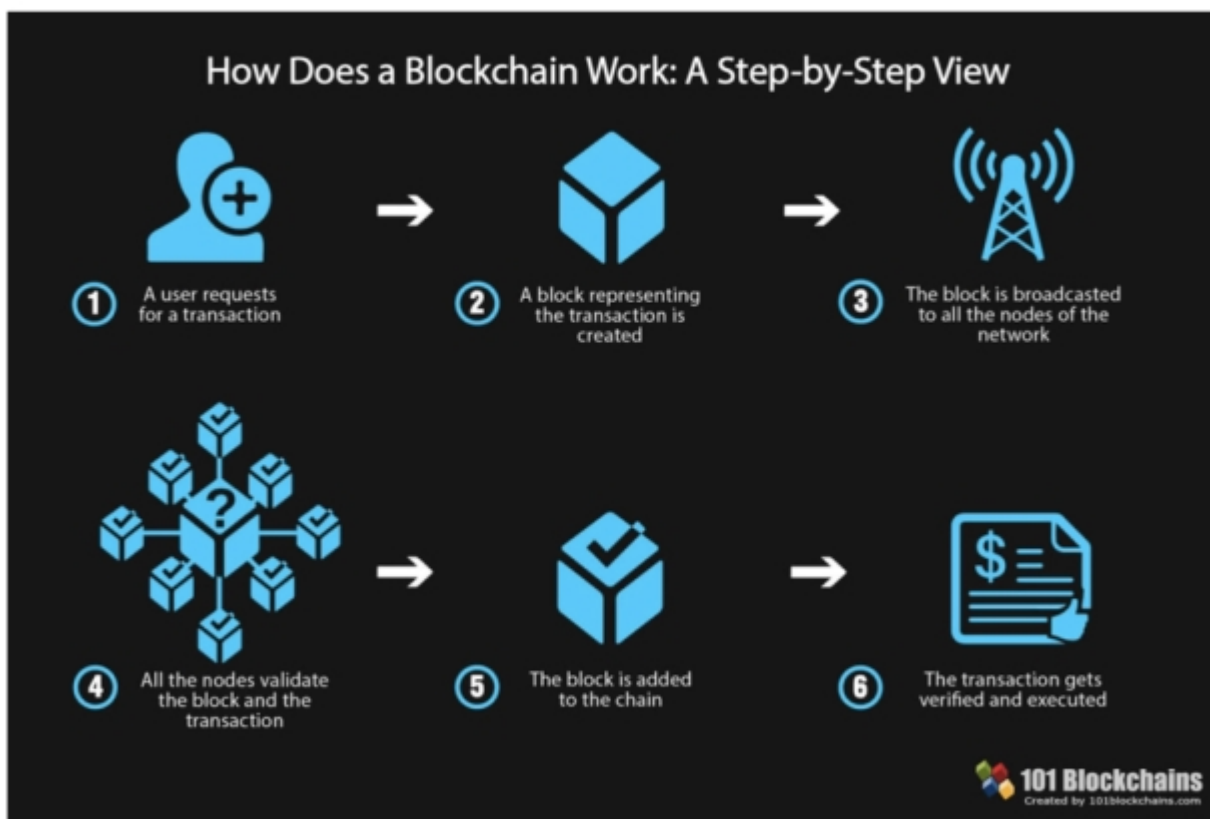


Can technology change a government? ^[1]

Submitted by [Simara Laboy Lopez](#) ^[2] on 11 October 2019 - 12:25am



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When we ask the general population what it is that they believe is wrong with the government, independent upon their level of knowledge on the subject the responses are similar: the system is flawed, elected officials are not the right ones, there is a lack of values in our society, people are

ignorant and indifferent because they don't feel they can do anything and there is a lack of transparency. -And these are the responses from questioning people in my workplace around a period of 5 minutes.-

In Puerto Rico, corruption has been a problem existing for many decades. Yet, people feel powerless to do anything about it until recently, there was an awakening in our Country fueled by leaking 889 pages of a chat between the governor at the time, Ricardo Rosello, and 9 of his fellow colleagues. In this chat there was evidence about the lack of seriousness associated with governing a country and taking care of its people as well as comments relating to corruption and even threats to some public figures. The governor also made sexist comments, made fun of people for being poor, overweight, some belonging to the LGBTQ community, criticized the mayor of the capital, among others. This event led to an outrage of our citizens and we decided to take matters into our hands. Somehow through social media we convened different marches requesting the governor's resignation and on July 25th, made history when he publicly announced his resignation. The corruption is not fixed, it is still a long way to go but this was a start to return our feeling of democracy to our nation.

We were trained to believe the lie that government is bureaucratic, boring and bad; but this is to prevent us from getting involved.

Do we trust our government? Do we believe it is making policies and decisions for the real good of our country or for their convenience?

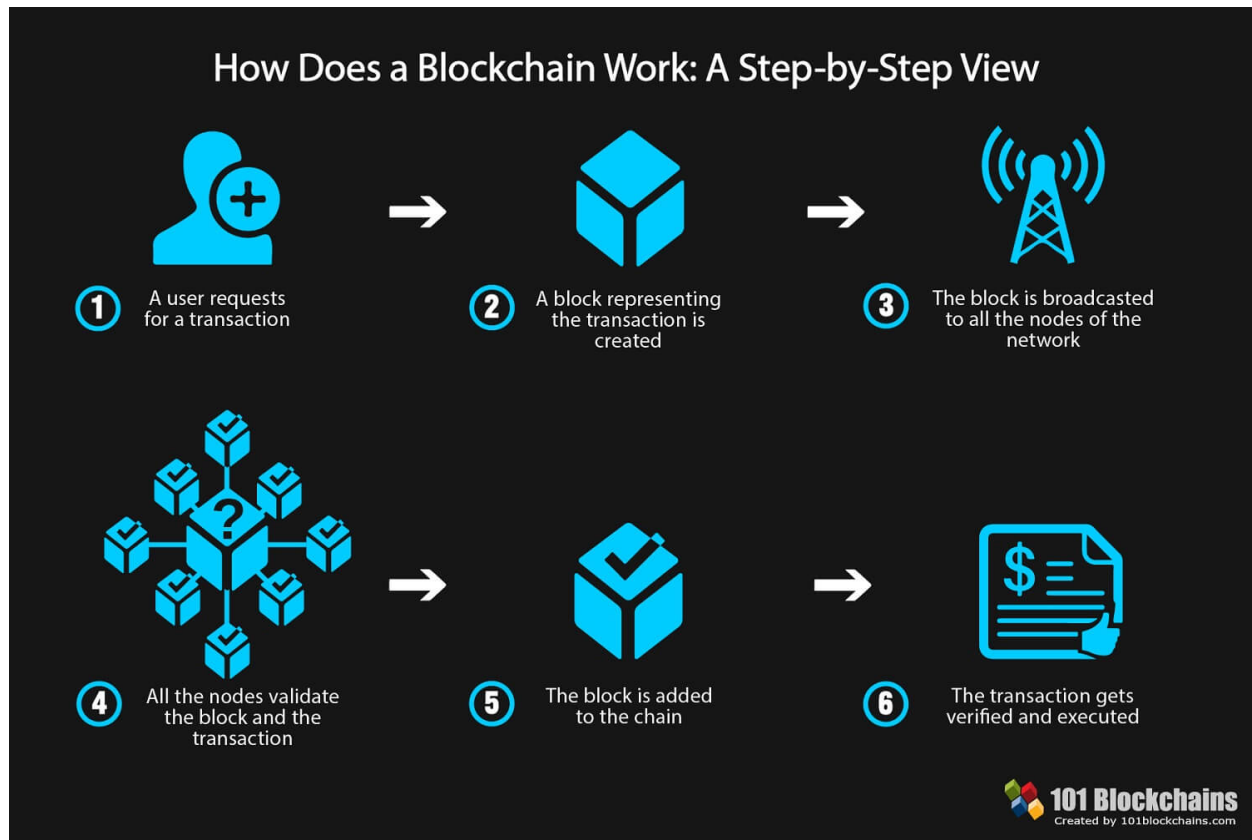
Each of us has the responsibility to improve our instructions and mechanisms of government. If we start to look at government as a hackable system, we can see the possibility of making change. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been in our language since the 1950's. It refers to the ability of a computer to act like a human being; this means, to reason, learn, communicate and be aware. Artificial intelligence uses Big Data to make decisions; and therefore, many people believe that authority is best placed on a robot rather than any human being. Robots would use AI to govern a country based on logic and reasoning and since using big data they carry the whole history of governance in every country of the world, they could search in a matter of seconds if any situation encountered has happened before and evaluate the pros and cons of any decision without biases or public opinion manipulation.

The true meaning of democracy involves people choosing their political authorities and have any sort of representation in the government. One of the reasons why the democracy we experience is failing is because it is a system designed to work with the society of centuries ago. Governance should evolve hand in hand with society. Note: Governance is the action of governing while government are the series of entities to which power is attributed to. There is a need for investment into building relationships between the government and the people they work for because people don't feel they are being heard.

I was fortunate enough to listen to a pitch for Democracy Earth (or OS) by Pia Mancini. In this pitch, Pia talked about the experience of trying to implement Democracy OS into the government of Argentina. Democracy OS is a tech non-profit that aims at creating platforms for decentralized and incorruptible online governance by using blockchain technology. For all readers non familiar

with blockchain, it is a technology where every transaction is linked to another and another. If you consider each transaction to be a block, then each block is united to the 2nd and 3rd block, hence the suffix -chain. Each transaction is permanently recorded in a big library whose information is public while keeping private the identity of each user. Democracy OS was developed considering the following three elements:

- A) Identity - instead of passports and social security numbers, this can be changed to our smartphones.
- B) Voting – instead of using voting ballots that can be stolen, lost, replaced or burned and voting machines can be hacked, votes would be recorded by Blockchain. In this way using an incorruptible system that is both decentralized and democratized meaning that everyone connected to the blockchain network shares the same information and is able to count the votes.
- C) Representation - instead of outsourcing your decision making (in all topics) to a certain people for a temporary period, who are also based on the territory you live in. We can say I trust “x” person on all decisions regarding healthcare, and “y” on all decisions regarding environmental policy making.



These ideas are mind-blowing, and when we think about them, they might seem too good to be true, or even, too far away for us to see it happen in our lifetimes but we must keep in mind that we don't necessarily need to change the government; we can use trojan horses such as Dem OS as a starting point. In her talk, Pia talked about their experience running for congress by adding to an existing political party this new element of Dem OS to change the way decisions were made. If

they were chosen, this would've meant that elected officials would be voting according to what citizens desired in the open source online platform independently of what they thought was a good idea.

You never change things by fighting against them but by creating something new that makes the existing model obsolete. It is thanks to technology, that the Puerto Rican people had access to the contents of the famous governor's chat that fueled the fury and strength to start a revolution against corruption and it was also technology the mastermind behind the Panama Papers, WikiLeaks, among others. The use of technology in our society has proven to be beneficial to facilitate transparency, communication and the spread of ideas and movements and it is also a fantastic entry point to modifying the current political systems, but it will only get us so far. We must always recognize the role of history, culture and politics given that some of the fundamental remaining challenges are not necessarily technical but political. But, after reading this blog I'm certain you can believe in the potential of efficient governance with the inclusion of technology for policy making.

Tags:

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