Decentralized Society

Architecting the new internet for the good of the people

The Challenge

Our world faces a range of complex challenges across multiple sectors, including health, climate, supply chain, and transportation. These challenges require solutions that foster cooperation, promote shared prosperity, and align the interests of multiple entities. However, achieving these solutions is difficult because they require incentivization without relying on trust, knowledge sharing without centralization, and decentralized AI across data partitions.

Digital fragmentation also poses a challenge to achieving these solutions, creating inefficiencies, inequality, and insecurity in our society. Our centralized tech platforms and financial systems face problems and inequities that must be addressed. The challenge lies in creating a more resilient, equitable, secure, participatory, and open future.
The Media Lab’s View

We believe that decentralized technologies offer a promising solution to the challenges we face in various sectors.

In the health sector, decentralized technologies can improve access to healthcare and medical records, data sharing, and tracking of healthcare supplies. In the finance sector, they can reduce transaction costs, increase financial inclusion, automate market making, and provide greater transparency and accountability. In the climate sector, they can track and manage carbon emissions, facilitate carbon credits, and support the development of sustainable energy solutions. In the supply chain sector, they can improve transparency and accountability, reduce fraud and corruption, and promote fair labor practices. In the transportation sector, they can improve safety, reduce congestion, and enable more efficient use of resources.

Our program for Decentralized Society and Web3 aims to create solutions that address these challenges. We conduct research on decentralized technologies and digital public infrastructure while providing a neutral space for public and private sector leaders to engage with academics on complex questions, choices, and trade-offs. Our goal is to achieve planetary-scale decentralized AI, identify the best use cases for decentralized technologies, and create new models of cooperation and collaboration. We also focus on integrating decentralized technologies with other technologies to create a more resilient, equitable, secure, and open future. Join us on this exciting journey to create a decentralized society and Web3 that positively impacts various sectors.

The Work We’re Doing

We’re building a program to bring together leaders from across the globe, including open source communities, technology companies, nonprofits, local, state, and federal governments, as well as researchers in academia and industry.

The program currently focuses on three emerging areas:

• Digital Currencies
• Decentralized AI
• Computational Privacy and Security

The program will support several scientists and students at MIT. The activities of the program span five areas:

• Research in the three pillars with an emphasis on responsible innovation and shared prosperity
• Shared open source code bases and data sets
• APIs, standards, and case studies in the emerging areas
• Roundtable meetings with stakeholders and special events
• Fostering an entrepreneurial ecosystem including researchers, startups, foundations, and corporate ventures