

Unlock The Block hackathon helps to improve everyday life

The Unlock The Block hackathon, hosted by Linum Labs and the African Institute of Financial Markets And Risk Management (AIFMRM), showed that blockchain technology isn't just about trading cryptocurrencies - it can make everyday life better.



The winners delivered solutions that can incentivise water saving, facilitate cattle trading, increase transparency in voting and corporate governance, and more. The event culminated in Cape Town's first ever Blockchain Symposium. Almost 80 participants from around the world attended.

The designers of a unique water saving solution that uses blockchain technology to incentivise users to use less water were the winners of a special prize. Project SudoTesla is designed to transfer water tokens via the Ethereum network to a smart meter. The tokens are allocated by the designated utility and users are compensated for water that they save.



Water-saving hackathon kicks off 9 February

5 Feb 2018



The special prize awarded the team, led by Michael Sanne of South Africa, included a month at Absa's Rise facilities at the Woodstock Exchange in order to further develop their project.

The overall first prize was split between two teams: BlockPoll and Proof of Steak by Yuna.

BlockPoll built a blockchain voting system facilitating better governance in companies, as well as transparency and security in elections.



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The team, consisting of WhenMoon?'s Brandon Kenley Verkerk, Christopher Maree, Iordan Tchaporov and Kavilan Nair, says the design's main advantages are that it's decentralised, immutable, and easily auditable. Moreover, they add, it's easy to use, secure, and open source.

The Proof of Steak team, consisting of Kungela Mzuku, Kyle Roos and Una Singo, allows farmers to use their cattle as collateral on a block-chain, enabling peer-to-peer lending. The team described this as a "uniquely African" and "contextual approach" which would "allow anyone in the world to invest in your cow". Farmers register their cattle on the blockchain, which functions as an immutable ledger, and investors provide funding to the farmer.

A further special prize for innovation was awarded to team EWAN from Berlin, who built a curation market application.

"The event has shown us two things, firstly that the applications of blockchain technology in improving people's lives in Africa are immense and second, it is much easier to build those applications than many people think - we just need to work together," said Paul Kohlhaas, founder of Linum Labs.

The Unlock the Block blockchain hackathon was a ten-day long event during which participants learned some of these scarce skills, including how to develop blockchain applications. The first five days were dedicated to a digital bootcamp, during which participants were exposed to overarching fintech trends and the blockchain tools needed to develop decentralised applications and protocols. Topics covered included Bitcoin, Ethereum and other cryptocurrencies, and sessions were led by industry experts.

At the end of the hackathon, participants were given three days to develop their own blockchain application.

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