2019 Trends: DataArt Predicts that Blockchain will Go Far Beyond its Origins to Create Industries of the Future

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Over the past four years, DataArt's blockchain centre of excellence has delivered a variety of blockchain-driven business solutions to dozens of clients. Most of the early blockchain adopters have been mid-size businesses and technology startups. The majority of existing solutions support digital wallets, payments, and cryptocurrency exchanges, with a particularly strong growth in gaming and e-commerce.

During 2018, blockchain experts at global technology consultancy DataArt observed a shift in the approaches of larger businesses to blockchain, with many looking to invest in the technology's potential, and an uptick in enterprise clients' R&D and Proof of Concept (PoC) projects. These companies are attempting to apply the radical concepts inspired by blockchain to re-imagine complex, costly and inefficient business processes.

Businesses and IT are attracted to the potential offered by distributed ledger technologies (DLT) to combine multiple concepts and capabilities in a single solution. These technologies enable a fresh perspective on the accepted business processes, with a potential to make them simpler, more transparent, and less resource consuming, resulting in a greater business agility.

These concepts include immutable transactions, the ability to prevent data loss, traceability of digital assets or resources, cryptographic security, consensus mechanisms, joint transaction validation by untrusted participants, and other core concepts – all enabled in the cloud and in a distributed, shared fashion.

Leading platforms and consortia such as Corda, Hyperledger or Ethereum have made great progress this year in addressing the issues of privacy, performance, and other early stage challenges. These platforms now combine legal prose along with code.

Looking toward 2019, DataArt's blockchain experts see the leaders across industries taking the technology more seriously, and predict the following:

An increase in innovative solutions beyond blockchain's humble origins:

We will see more projects apply blockchain to processes that are not directly related to payments or cryptocurrencies. For example, in the insurance industry, we expect to see a surge in R&D and implementations focused on the exploration of permissioned blockchains and applications of smart contracts that target inefficiencies and delays in business flows related to checks, controls, and reconciliation.

A strong focus on machine learning and blockchain synergies:

Blockchain technology will be combined with machine learning capabilities, making it possible to develop sophisticated decisions (e.g. insurance approvals) automatically. Use cases that lend

themselves well to this blockchain-driven innovation include contract placements, claims assessments, trigger-based invoicing, technical accounting, and settlements.

Data-management will attract attention:

We expect to see new solutions in financial services that adopt smart contract principles for data management and sharing, especially in areas where the data has been previously locked in PDF documents, such as financial statements or loan contracts.

Bigger players will drive impact:

We expect to see platform solutions from the bigger players and communities such as B3i (Business Insurance Industry Initiative). Their activity could have a long-lasting effect on the industry standards and the ways businesses operate going forward.

A new era will form for identity management:

Blockchain-based identity management will be on the rise in 2019. Open source communities will increasingly play an important role in helping enterprises build new technical components and solutions applicable across entire industries, such as Identity Management, smart contracts libraries, and data sharing.
Blockchain implementation across industries still has a way to go but 2019 is set to be the turning point. No longer is blockchain a mysterious and overhyped technology trialled only by the few. It is a technology embraced by industry leaders who are committed to its potential to transform businesses and industries far beyond its modest cryptocurrency and bitcoin origins.

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