



Welcome to the May 2025 edition of the BRI Newsletter. We hope you find this content useful. You can find the archive of our past newsletters [here](#). As always, if you have any comments, announcements, or recommendations for content in future editions, or would like to contribute content, please let me know: [douglas@blockchainresearchinstitute.org](mailto:douglas@blockchainresearchinstitute.org)



## From the Editor's Desk

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### Laying the Digital Rails: Why Nations and Economic Regions Need a New Kind of Infrastructure

Doug Heintzman  
Chief Catalyst, BRI

Many countries and economic regions around world have a productivity problem. Across advanced economies, growth is slowing, populations are aging, and geopolitical instability is deepening. Global supply chains remain fragile. Tariff regimes shift without warning. AI advances threaten to concentrate power, not spread it. It's increasingly clear that the old economic playbook—tweak interest rates, subsidize legacy industries, wait for a rebound—is no longer enough.

To thrive in the 21st century, nations and economic regions must build economies that are resilient, inclusive, and intelligent. That starts not with more industrial policy or tax tweaks—but with a bold new approach to infrastructure.

For over a century, prosperity was built on physical infrastructure—roads, bridges, railways, power grids. These enabled the flow of goods, people, and energy. But today, the most valuable flows are digital. Data, knowledge, and intelligence are the lifeblood of modern economies. And the systems that move them—safely, efficiently, and equitably—are no longer optional. They are the new public utilities.

We need to radically expand our definition of infrastructure. We need to build digital public infrastructure: invisible but essential systems that move ideas, secure identity, enable innovation, and build trust.

At its core, digital infrastructure rests on four pillars:

1. **Self-sovereign digital identity**
2. **Trusted and accessible data**
3. **Frictionless payment rails**
4. **Universal access to artificial intelligence**

Together, these form the foundation of a secure, inclusive, and intelligent digital economy.

### Identity as Infrastructure

The foundation of a digital society is identity—not a card in your wallet or a number in a registry, but a dynamic, sovereign asset that you control. A self-sovereign digital identity gives people seamless access to services while preserving privacy and agency. It's not just about proving who you are; it's about owning what makes you you—your education, credentials, health records, employment history, licenses, and affiliations.

Today, these attributes live in siloed databases, often controlled by governments or platforms. In a digitally mature society, they should be portable, verifiable, and user-governed. When identity becomes a tool for empowerment rather than surveillance, a new era of agency and trust can begin.

## **A Commons of Verifiable Data**

But identity alone isn't enough. To navigate the world with confidence, people and organizations need access to shared facts—a trustworthy layer of verifiable, real-time data about the world.

From weather patterns and land ownership to product safety and carbon emissions, this data must be accurate, auditable, and anchored in open systems. In the analog era, we had public registries and notaries. In the digital era, we need a blockchain based data commons—validated by cryptography, secured by design, and open by principle.

## **Digital Payments as Public Railways**

Money, too, must move at the speed of the internet. Most payment systems today are expensive, slow, and gated by powerful intermediaries. In the same way public highways once transformed economies, we now need public payment rails that move value instantly, securely, and without unnecessary friction.

Whether through central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) or regulated stablecoins, countries must modernize their monetary infrastructure—not just to reduce transaction costs, but to foster inclusion, enable peer-to-peer commerce, and support programmable trust.

## **Universal Basic AI**

The last pillar is intelligence. For centuries, intelligence—human and institutional—has driven progress. In the digital era, it is being transformed into software. Artificial intelligence will shape how we work, learn, govern, and care for ourselves.

But today's AI is being built by a handful of firms and trained on opaque, unrepresentative datasets. The result? Systems that often reflect the biases, interests, and cultures of their creators—not their users.

To ensure sovereignty, productivity, and equity, every country must have access to AI that reflects its own values, laws, and realities. Just as many countries built public broadcasters to tell their own stories, we must now build AI infrastructure that reflects our identities and priorities.

This intelligence won't live in distant servers. It will appear as "identical" agents—personalized, trustworthy AI companions trained on our data and acting as assistants, advisors, and advocates.

Without intervention, these agents will be available only to the wealthy, the powerful, and the digitally fluent. The new digital divide won't be about internet access—it will be about access to intelligence. Those with it will be augmented; those without will be left behind.

That's why nations and economic regions will push for Universal Basic AI—a civic and commercial coalition to ensure everyone has access to trusted, transparent AI agents and the skills to use them.

## **Digitally Empowered Physical Systems**

The digital economy doesn't float above the physical world—it transforms it. With digital infrastructure in place, our energy grids become self-balancing networks of solar panels, EVs, and home batteries. Our roads become platforms for autonomous and electric transportation. Our food systems gain traceability, safety, and sustainability. Our voting systems become participatory, not just representative. And our tax systems become automatic, not bureaucratic.

Smart contracts can enable "smart governance." Credentials can evolve continuously over a lifetime. Carbon can be tracked and audited at the source and across its lifecycle.

## **Moonshots**

These ideas are no longer speculative. The tools exist. The challenge now is not technical—it's political. It's about vision and urgency.

Every country or economic region needs its own digital moonshot: a bold, coordinated effort to build the invisible infrastructure of the next economy—one that empowers individuals, secures societies, and lays the rails for innovation in the decades ahead.

Let's not sleepwalk into a world where intelligence is gated, data is hoarded, and trust is eroded. Let's build a future where digital systems serve the public good—and every person has the tools to thrive.

## Announcements and News

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**TOASTS FROM  
THE CN TOWER**

@ CONSENSUS 2025, TORONTO  
MAY 14, 2025, 5:00-7:30 PM

Co-hosted by: **THE DIGITAL CHAMBER** **BRI** **Baker McKenzie.**

Thank you to all of you who joined us atop the CN tower for our reception at Consensus. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. We would also like to thank everyone who helped organize and host the event as well as our event sponsors:



### Consensus 2025

Consensus 2025 in Toronto Canada has come and gone. You can still see recordings of all the sessions [here](#). Specifically, you can see Don Tapscott's presentation of Identic AI [here](#). and Alex Tapscott and Doug Heintzman's panel on decentralized AI [here](#).



### Global Digital Collaboration: Inaugural Conference

The Global Digital Collaboration inaugural conference will take place in Geneva Switzerland July 1st and 2nd 2025. You can request an invitation by emailing [ecosystem@lfdecentralizedtrust.org](mailto:ecosystem@lfdecentralizedtrust.org)



## WAIB Web3 and AI summit in Monaco

The WAIB Summit, the first and largest Web3 and AI-focused event in Monaco will be June 27th and 28th. You can find more information [here](#).



## New course on Gen AI and Blockchain on Coursera

BRI and INSEAD have partnered to produce a new course on AI and Blockchain. It explores how blockchain improves AI, how AI improves blockchain and how together they can create a lot of value and opportunity. You can earn an INSEAD certificate in as little as 12 hours.



## BRI's Pioneer Program

This initiative will provide pioneer companies with access to the BRI knowledge library, online educational tools, bespoke research done for each of our organizations, expert advisory services, community building and promoting your brands globally. For more information please contact [Andrew Facciolo](#), Director of Client Experience

# Featured Research

### BRI BIG IDEA WHITE PAPER

#### How Digital Asset Exchanges Are Redefining Global Finance

How digital asset exchanges have evolved, how they are confronting the challenges of security, user adoption and regulation, and what role they will play in the emerging web3 economy.

**Douglas Heintzman**  
Blockchain Research Institute

[Learn more](#)

### BRI BIG IDEA WHITE PAPER

#### Web3 in the Pharmaceutical Industry

How blockchain, artificial intelligence and other digital technologies will transform productivity and innovation in the pharmaceutical industry.

**Douglas Heintzman**  
Blockchain Research Institute

**NEW! Now in the Creative Commons.**

[Learn more](#)

### W3B Talks Presented by BRI

#### Big Tech Stories of 2025

Topics: AI, robotics, large language models, mixed reality, neural processing units, quantum computing, reasoning systems, the state engine and digital markets for energy, and synthetic data.

### BRI BIG IDEA WHITE PAPER

#### Coopetition in Global Commerce

Why it will take a pro-competitive Global Village to scale Blockchain

**Dale Crystie**  
FedEx Corporation

Douglas Heintzman, BRI  
Brian Jackson, Info-Tech Research  
Group

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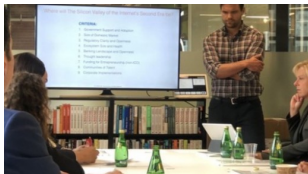
## Headlines

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[Big Banks Explore Venturing Into Crypto World Together With Joint Stablecoin](#) - WSJ  
[Navigating the Global Web3 Landscape: Key Takeaways from the Blockchain Futurist Conference](#) - INN  
[Hong Kong Approves Stablecoin Licensing Law to Strengthen Web3](#) - The Crypto Times  
[Decentralized AI and the future of Web3: Exclusive Interview with DFINITY on the Internet Computer Vision](#) - The Cyptonomist  
[Here's how Bitcoin is transforming into Web3's backbone](#) - Cointelegraph  
[Medical errors are still harming patients. AI could help change that.](#) - NBC News  
[Xi Jinping's plan to beat America at AI](#) - The Economist  
[AI Is Turning Stock Market Volatility Into an Opportunity for New Investors](#) - Entrepreneur  
[Google's 'world-model' bet: building the AI operating layer before Microsoft captures the UI](#) - VentureBeat  
[The class of 2025 is not finding jobs. Some blame AI](#) - The Independent  
[What AI Thinks It Knows About You](#) - The Atlantic  
[R3 pivots to public blockchain with Solana partnership](#) - Ledger Insights  
[Guatemala's largest bank integrates blockchain for cross-border payments](#) - Cointelegraph  
[JP Morgan Settles First Tokenized Treasury Transaction on Public Blockchain, Using Chainlink, Ondo Finance](#) - Decrypt

## BRI Workshop Program

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[Contact us](#) about hosting a BRI workshop or roundtable. We help organizations and associations align stakeholder interests and accelerate high quality decision making. We conduct workshops on a wide variety of technology and industry topics. We provide bespoke context setting pre-reads, deliver a briefing, facilitate the workshop, and produce and output report summarizing key learnings and action plans.

## BRI Education

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### Explore our online courses

Certain technologies don't just coexist—they amplify each other's potential. Our latest course, [Generative AI and Blockchain](#), explores how artificial intelligence (AI) and blockchain intersect to solve problems and create opportunities that neither could tackle alone.

Whether you're a tech enthusiast, a business leader, or simply curious about the potential of AI and blockchain, this course is perfect for anyone looking to understand the future of technology and how to harness it for success. Earn a certificate in under 12 hours!

**NEW COURSE!**

# GENERATIVE AI AND BLOCKCHAIN

Developed by BRI and INSEAD on Coursera.  
Earn your certificate in under 12 hours.

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[coursera.org/learn/generative-ai-and-blockchain](https://coursera.org/learn/generative-ai-and-blockchain)



Join the 255,000 people that have already enrolled in one of our specialization courses credentialed by [INSEAD](#) and [hosted at Coursera](#).



The BRI team is always available to discuss the possibility of customizing our courses to meet the specific needs of your organization, audience, or customers.

[Learn more](#)

## Podcasts

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## W3B Talks

[Listen to our 2 part episode](#) on "Why Has Blockchain Not Transformed Supply Chains (Yet)?" and "What Could Accelerate Blockchain Adoption in Supply Chains?"

Subscribe to W3B Talks on your favourite podcast platform to get notification of future episodes.

You can find "W3B Talks," our podcast series on Web3 and its impact on business and society [here](#).

You can also find it on your favourite podcasting platforms such as [Spotify](#), [Amazon Music](#), [YouTube Music](#), [iHeartRadio](#), [Castbox](#), and [Apple Podcast](#).



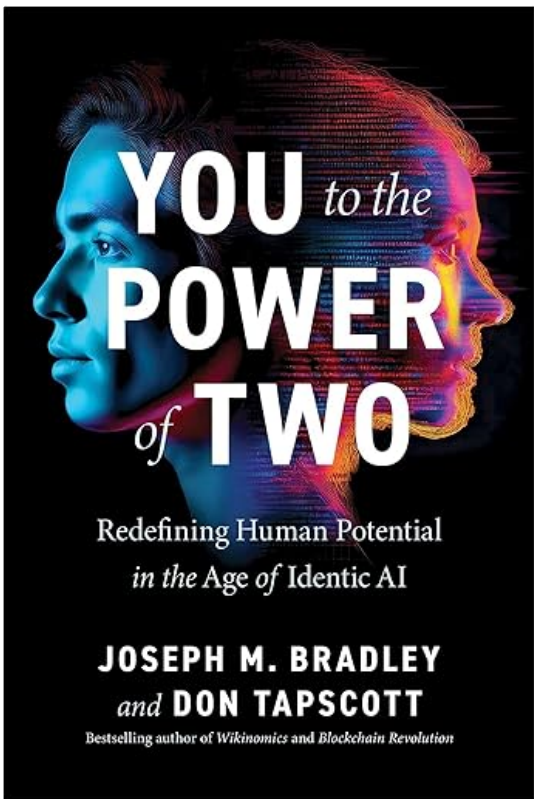
## DeFi Decoded

Join Alex Tapscott and Andrew Young as they decode the world of Web3. Watch their latest episode [Bitcoin Hits New Record in "Most Ignored Rally" Ever!](#).

You can see other episodes on YouTube [here](#).

## Books

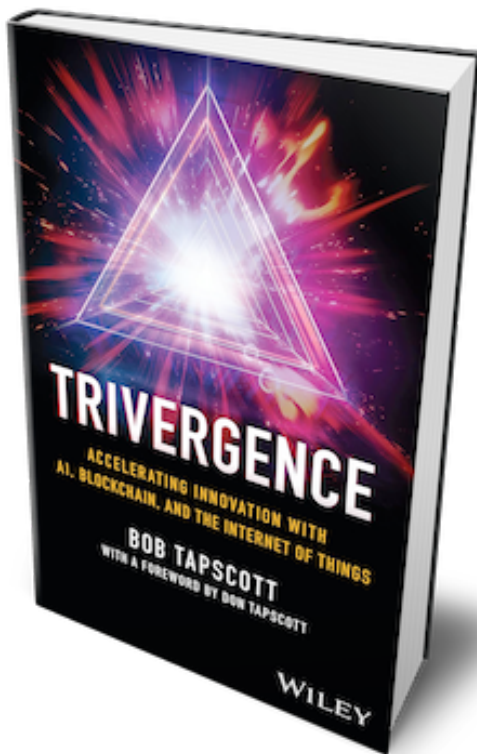
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## You to the Power of Two: Redefining Human Potential in the Age of Identic AI

Joseph M. Bradley and Don Tapscott explore how our new personal identic agents will transform our careers, healthcare, education, and relationships.

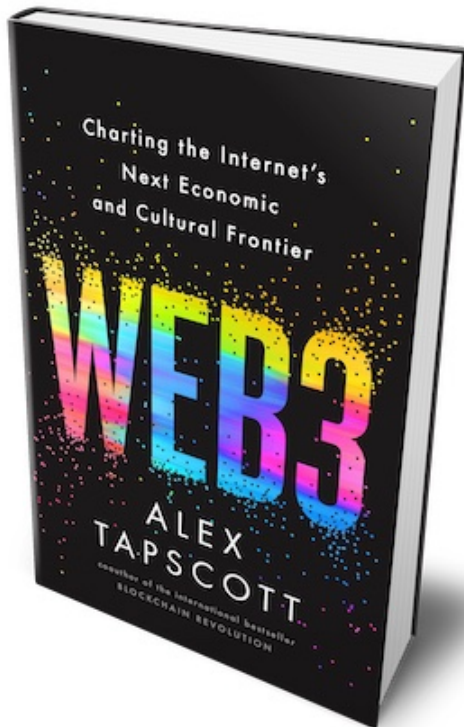
This book will be release on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> 2025. You can preorder at [Amazon.com](#) or [Indigo](#).



## Trivergence: Accelerating Innovation with AI, Blockchain, and the Internet of Things

Bob Tapscott explores the synergies between AI, Blockchain and IoT and the disruptive potential that they will offer, as well as the challenges and risks to making it happens.

Order it today at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).



## Web3: Charting the Internet's Next Economic and Cultural Frontier

Authored by BRI co-founder, Alex Tapscott, this book serves as a cutting-edge guide to the Internet's next era, covering everything from the metaverse and NFTs to decentralized finance and self-sovereign identity.

Order today on [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

Get the audio version at [Audible.com](https://www.audible.com).

## BRI Book Series



[Learn more](#)

## About BRI

**BRI** is a global think-tank exploring the promise of blockchain technology for business, government, and society. We work with enterprises, governments, and technology start-ups from around the world.

We're always looking for new organizations to collaborate with, through a number of initiatives:

- [BRI Member Program](#)
- [BRI Global Partnership Program](#)
- [BRI Workshops](#)
- [BRI Education](#)
- [Web3 and Blockchain World Conference](#)

For all inquiries, please email [douglas@blockchainresearchinstitute.org](mailto:douglas@blockchainresearchinstitute.org)

### **Blockchain Research Institute**

1902-170 Avenue Road, M5R 0A4, Toronto

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