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http://counterparty.io/docs/about_counterparty/

What is Counterparty?

Counterparty

is a peer-to-peer financial platform and a distributed, open-source Internet protocol built on top of the Bitcoin blockchain and network.

By encoding data in ordinary Bitcoin transactions, Counterparty extends Bitcoin's functionality in new and unprecedented ways, opening the door for innovation. The Bitcoin protocol stays exactly the same, while supporting the development and adoption of valuable new features, all secured by the full power of the Bitcoin network.

Besides providing users with the world's first functioning decentralized exchange, as well as the ability to create virtual assets, issue dividends, create price feeds and bets, Counterparty enables anyone to create smart contracts on the Bitcoin blockchain. Smart contracts are agreements whose terms and conditions are digitized, and do not require arbitration by a third-party to determine their outcome, but instead are executed automatically, with no intermediation. Counterparty's built-in Turing-complete scripting language allows anyone to create custom smart contracts and execute their code on the Bitcoin blockchain.

Along with the Counterparty protocol, the platform consists of the native XCP token, which is required for performing advanced operations on the Blockchain, and the secure, browser-based Counterwallet that provides a client-side graphical interface and login system.

With Counterparty, users can:

- Send assets (also known as tokens, coins, derivatives, or shares depending on the context) from any Bitcoin address to another
- Create assets (numeric or alphabetical)
- Issue additional units of their own assets (or lock them to prevent this)

- Pay distributions on assets using BTC, XCP, or other assets (e.g. dividends)
- Trade XCP and assets on Counterparty's distributed exchange
- Broadcast textual and numeric data onto the Bitcoin blockchain
- Make bets and derivatives on broadcasted data
- Provably distribute ownership of assets through multi-signature support.
- Take advantage of turing-complete scripting to craft smart contracts and financial instruments.

How can I learn more?

For example, you could start by reading our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) or taking a look at our [User Tutorials](#).

Here are some other ways to get involved:

Social Media

- Follow us on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [Google+](#) and [LinkedIn](#).
- Join our official chat: [End Users/General](#) & [Developers/Technical](#)
- Receive updates via email: Counterparty currently has two free, low-volume mailing lists (Community & Developer). [Subscribe now!](#)

External sites with information about Counterparty

- [Counterparty Foundation](#)
- [Coinmarketcap.com](#) - XCP price, volumes, 24h average, and a list of exchanges
- [Counterparty on Wikipedia](#)
- [Blockscan Block Explorer](#)

Repositories

- [Github](#)
 - [counterparty-lib](#) - Reference implementation of the Counterparty protocol
 - [counterparty-cli](#) - Command-line Interface for counterparty-lib
 - [counterparty-gui](#) - Counterparty GUI (OS X and Windows)

- [Counterwallet](#) - Web wallet
- [counterblock](#) - Provides extended API services to Counterwallet, as well as Counterparty 3rd-party applications
- [federatednode build](#) - Federated Node Build System