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Got a Blockchain Idea? Come to This Weekend's Blockhack Event at Duke

By Jon Mareane [in https://www.linkedin.com/in/jonathan-mareane-141b3188/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jonathan-mareane-141b3188/)
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Politicians, blockchain enthusiasts and hackers will come together this weekend for brainstorming and creating using blockchain technology

What is blockchain?

Well, that can be a tough one to answer in full.

One of the better explanations I've heard was from **John Fallone**—lawyer, startup founder, blockchain enthusiast, and one of the hosts of this weekend's Blockhack (<http://joinlincoln.org/events/2017/blockhack>) conference and hackathon put on by the Lincoln Network (<http://joinlincoln.org/>) at Duke I&E's Bullpen in downtown Durham.

"Imagine we give everyone in this bar a notebook," he said, pointing around a crowded Motorco and shouting over the thrash metal concert going on next door. The notebook is constantly updated with lines of information and data, he explains. Everyone can see it, but no one can go in themselves and alter it. It's an immutable ledger, with no controlling party and no way to "cheat" and insert false information into the pages. It's blocks of information that are verifiably true, continuously updated and have no ownership.

That's about as basic as we can get, diving further brings us to some moderately meaty computer science and math (<https://www.coindesk.com/math-behind-bitcoin/>), and that's a discussion for another day.

The killer app for the technology so far has been cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, but Fallone is bringing together political figures, investors, academics, businesses and students this weekend to see what else blockchain can do.

It's the largest scale effort in the Triangle since the Cryptolina bitcoin and blockchain conference happened in 2014. According to organizers, the event will include panels and discussions on the impact of blockchain technology on a variety of industries, including both private and public sector applications.

Congressman Patrick McHenry (<https://mchenry.house.gov/biography/>) of Asheville will be in attendance to kick off Blockhack with a fireside chat on crypto and blockchain legislation. He's been an advocate for the financial tech industries and serves as the VP of the House Financial Services Committee and head of its Oversight and Investigations Subcommittee.

Other notable figures committed to attend are **Mark Parzygnat**, program director of blockchain at IBM, Latham and Watkins CIO **Ken Heaps**, globally recognized expert and Duke Professor **Cam Harvey** and crypto-evangelist **Jameson Lopp** of BitGo.

After Friday night panels and festivities end, interested attendees will split into groups and brainstorm projects for the hackathon. The competition begins at 10 PM that night and will continue into Sunday morning, Startup Weekend style.

Sponsors Latham and Watkins, Wells Fargo and Shanahan McDougal are there to provide refreshments, networking and prizes for the hackathon winners. First place will take home \$3000, second \$1500 and third \$500.

Registration begins at at 4 PM tomorrow afternoon at the Bullpen at Duke I&E, and the event wraps at 3 on Sunday. We'll report back, too, next week.



Jon Mareane (/s=+&author_name=jon mareane&post_type=post&author_id=7)

Jon is a young data scientist exploring the food, drink and startup scene of the South. Interests include talking about why True Detective season 1 is the best TV series ever, happy hours and double cheese pizza.

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