OVHcloud

Promise and Problems: AI, Blockchain and the Enterprise

An executive briefing on how Web3 can enhance trust and transparency in tomorrow's AI-driven business

Introduction

In 2025, OVHcloud commissioned Censuswide, an independent market research agency, to understand the views of 100 blockchain professionals in the UK. The study focused on how blockchain could empower AI and enterprise businesses, examining the benefits to be realised and the hurdles to be overcome.

The picture that emerged was clear: blockchain has transformational potential and the ability to make AI more secure, explicable, transparent and resilient – and in return, AI can complement or automate many part of blockchain systems, enhancing its operations.

But there are challenges. Blockchain's associations with cryptocurrencies and the darker side of the web still linger. Prior to 2020, many of the concepts attached to blockchain were linked to hype, scams and energy consumption. Today we have seen a shift as organisations realise the power that blockchain's transparency, traceability and trust architecture can bring.

It's important to understand these issues in order to overcome them; as the philosopher George Santayana said, those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

This paper is designed to provide an executive summary of these insights, showing how senior decision makers can better utilise blockchain technologies to drive the enterprise forwards, as well as how to use blockchain to enhance AI.

Omar Abi Issa, Global Head of Blockchain, Web3 and AI, OVHcloud
Christian Sharp, Community Operations, OVHcloud

About Censuswide

Censuswide abides by and employs members of the Market Research Society and follows the MRS code of conduct and ESOMAR principles. Censuswide is also a member of the British Polling Council.

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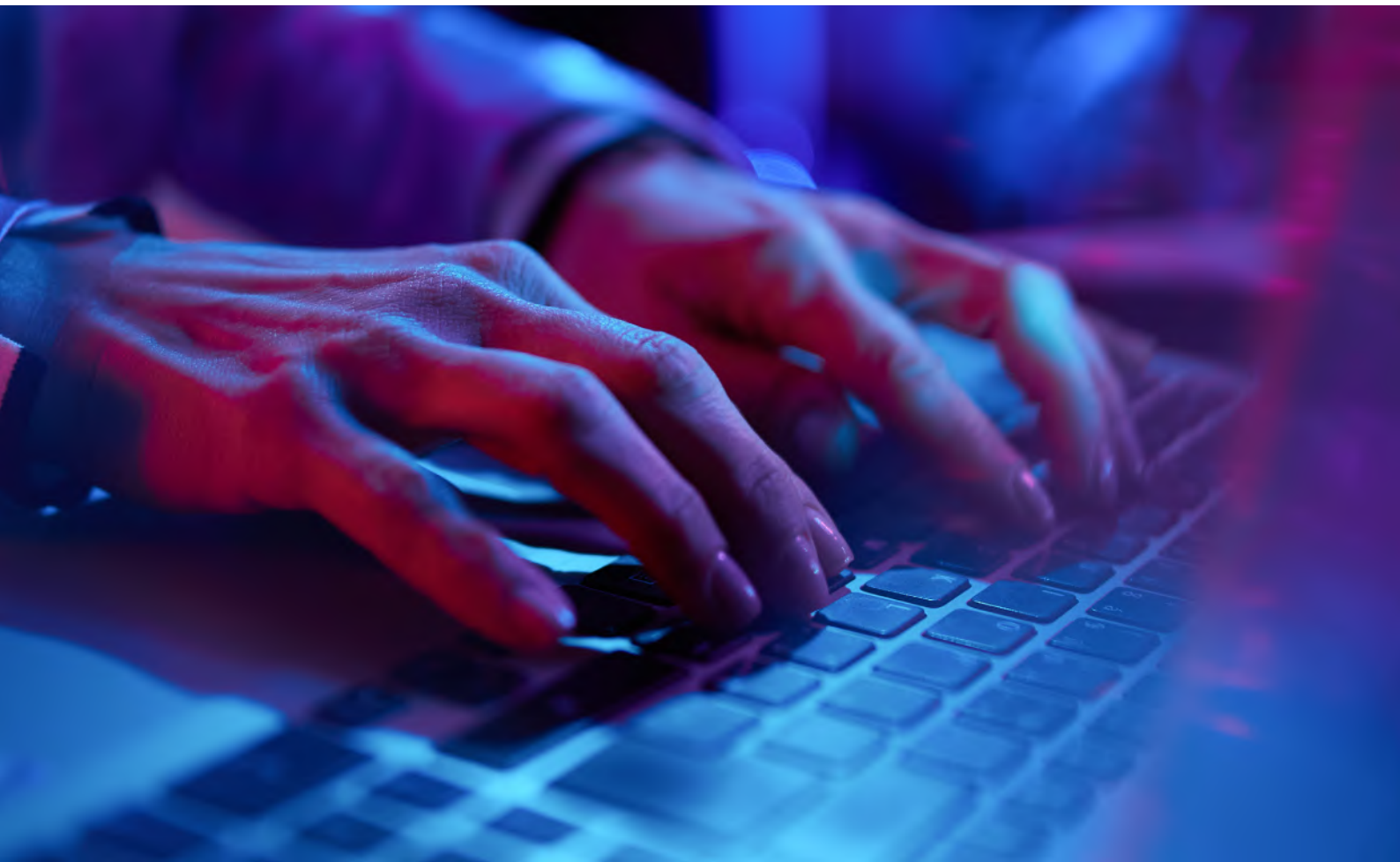
AI: Powering the New Generation

It's a little late to talk about AI's potential. It's been three years since ChatGPT was released, and we're already starting to see concrete benefits in the enterprise following experimentation with both generative and non-generative AI and machine-learning technologies.

But AI still has further to go. A study by McKinsey found that although almost two thirds (64%) of decision-makers believe that AI is enabling innovation, barely over a third (39%) reported actual financial (EBIT) impact on the business.

Some of this is due to AI's place in the enterprise lifecycle – experimentation and pilots rather than rollouts and scaling – but some is due to AI's intrinsic challenges.



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AI's Promise and Problems

AI has enormous potential to support most areas of technology, including blockchain. For example, AI agents can automate parts of the public blockchain, accelerating processes and removing some of the manual work. More concretely, agents can issue transactions automatically, or AI-based automations can provide data analytics on indexed information from RPC solutions.

However, AI has been plagued with problems from hallucinations to deepfakes. According to our research, the number one issue for AI today is still privacy. 32% of our sample said that this AI's main challenge, with data within systems occasionally being used for model training without permission. Furthermore, there have been issues with bias found in major AI systems, and in some cases, data has been collected covertly by AI systems without clear and explicit user permission.

In fact, 24% of the study said that AI faced issues with a lack of trust overall, whether that was from bias, hallucinations or issues with how it uses copyrighted content. One in seven (14%) blockchain professionals mentioned that AI had issues with a lack of transparency. Afterall, many AI models need fine-tuning when deployed to production environments, and if their processes are unclear then both customer satisfaction and trust will be eroded.

Thankfully, establishing trust is an area where blockchain excels.

3 Blockchain's Potential in the AI Domain

Blockchain was established as a way of creating linkages between data without the need for a governing body. It creates trust by both automatically checking the validity of transactions but also by linking all transactions together in an immutable chain. The chain is distributed across many different servers. Changing the details of one transaction is very difficult unless a user has significant control over the entire blockchain.

We asked our blockchain professionals how they thought blockchain could bring greater trust to AI. 70% of them said that blockchain can help to establish data validity within AI systems – for example, using Oracles. Oracles are an essential part of more complex smart contracts. A smart contract often needs off-chain information, but this is usually unavailable to the contracts themselves. Oracles obtain and verify this information, which could – for example – form an integral part of agentic AI processes.

Alternatively, zero-knowledge identity mechanisms can provide proof of identity without exposing user data. Many AI systems or sub-systems require an understanding of identity – for example, is this user authorised to run this process? Blockchain can keep user privacy intact while still integrating with third parties and verifying identity, enabling systems to remove risk and preserve functionality simultaneously

What is a Smart Contract?

A smart contract is an agreement which is automatically fulfilled when conditions are met; essentially an 'if … then' statement. Smart Contracts require no third parties and are executed immediately upon fulfilment.

Just over two-thirds of respondents also indicated that trust in AI could also greatly benefit from the transparency of public blockchains, providing greater traceability and transparency.

To give a few examples, we have already seen blockchain complementing AI systems for optimising crop harvests or for supply chain route optimisation.

Blockchain can reliably provide food or product traceability without depending on a third party, ensuring product quality, provenance or its ethical status.

Furthermore, a number of respondents (64%) also believed that blockchain could bring superior functionality to AI. For example, in federated learning systems, data is shared between machine learning platforms. It can be very difficult to verify data validity without inspecting the data itself, but this is something that – as we've already seen –blockchain systems have a great deal of experience in! As a result, data from other – or external – systems can be verified, whilst maintaining privacy and security, ensuring that the training datasets are consistent and robust, establishing a solid foundation for other applications.

These benefits extend to the broader ecosystem. The blockchain professionals we surveyed told us that blockchain technology also had the potential to improve trust and transparency across the enterprise as a whole, as well as supercharging security and providing better resiliency through blockchain's ethos of distribution and decentralisation. In fact, only 3% of our study said that they didn't believe blockchain could bring greater trust to AI.

Many of the benefits that AI systems will gain from integration with blockchain's philosophy and processes can be utilised by non-AI parts of enterprise as well. Furthermore, recent advancements in blockchain technologies like chain abstraction also make enterprise usage generally easier.

Chain abstraction essentially makes blockchain easier to use. There's no denying that blockchain can be complex for inexperienced users, with all of its different ecosystems and chains. Chain abstraction removes some of this complexity, handling it 'behind the scenes' and allowing superior interoperability between chains like Solana and Ethereum without the need for complex bridging processes. Chain abstraction is a little like the move from DOS to Windows, providing users with a clearer, simpler way to use blockchain without needing to know the fine details or how to use the command prompt!

However, although blockchain's impact in the AI domain cannot be denied, it does face a number of challenges.

4 What's Blocking Blockchain?

If you talk to someone outside of the blockchain ecosystem about blockchain, most of them will usually assume that you're talking about cryptocurrency. This has been a surprisingly difficult blocker for many enterprise organisations to overcome, with almost two-thirds (61%) of blockchain experts admitting that they think credibility concerns are preventing blockchain from being more deeply integrated within AI.

It may sound strange, but although enterprise teams select technologies on a functional level, these processes are still influenced by human emotion and beliefs more often than their owners would care to admit. Furthermore, 54% of the research study also told us that a lack of industry understanding and knowledge of blockchain was also holding back its integration into AI.

These two factors clearly work together, but interestingly there was a third challenge, mentioned by a third of our sample: too much AI hype and not enough due diligence. Again, when stakeholders don't have enough knowledge about a topic – whether this is blockchain or AI – they can either pre-emptively discount it, or over-hype its capabilities. Neither of these reactions results in a thorough exploration of a topic or a robust and resilient deployment.

This is in keeping with what our own experts have found. Many organisations are struggling to advance AI from a proof of concept or pilot test to successful production environments. When we look at the most common causes of failure, it's often because there hasn't been enough research into how to scale the technology or that success criteria have been poorly defined – both of which result from lack of knowledge and understanding. Technology decision-makers should know by now that there are no 'silver bullets' that can solve all of our problems.

Unsurprisingly, 64% of our study told us that greater understanding and knowledge of blockchain would help its acceptance into the enterprise, in the AI domain and more broadly.

This lack of understanding also spills across other areas. For example, power consumption has historically been a 'black mark' on blockchain reputationally; at one stage, Bitcoin used as much power as all of Norway, for example. However, recent changes in blockchain technology – not to mention more power-efficient systems such as proof of stake – mean that blockchain can be an intrinsically efficient technology. Over half (59%) of the study said that an improved sustainability footprint would definitely help to make blockchain more accepted within the enterprise.

Finally, many blockchain professionals believed that the unification of AI and blockchain could help to make blockchain more accepted in the enterprise. This is quite a common pattern: many decision-makers will reject something they're not familiar with, preferring a tried-and-tested technology (or vendor, in the case of the saying 'you'll never be fired for buying IBM'!) However, exposure to a new technology, learning about its capabilities and seeing them for yourself can often provide a powerful incentive to change your views and consider what the technology can do for the broader business.

With all this in mind, what does the future hold for blockchain and AI in the enterprise?

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Blockchain's Promise and Potential in the AI Industry

It's clear that blockchain has great potential to transform and support the AI industry – if blockchain's own challenges can be solved. However, where there is concrete advantage to be realised, smart technology practitioners have always been quick to move.

But like any system, large organisations are not transformed overnight. Although we do see some 'first movers' realising the early benefits, not all professionals are so forward-thinking. Although one in six (16%) blockchain experts told us that blockchain was being adopted and integrated across the enterprise today, over two-thirds (67%) believed that it would take between one and four years, with one in twelve (8%) admitting that they thought it'd take five to six years.

The encouraging statistic is that no-one in the study believed that it would take longer than this, or that it wouldn't happen at all.

From our view, a blockchain future is both beneficial and inevitable. The technology has clear, proven benefits, and answers many of the challenges that AI faces. Furthermore, we already have a committed, motivated ecosystem driven by industry experts who frequently share their knowledge and help to drive the industry forwards.

In short: the future is there for the taking. We just need to make it happen.

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OVHcloud: A cloud built for blockchain

OVHcloud is a different kind of cloud provider, built on the principles of sovereignty, sustainability, openness and innovation. We offer secure, sovereign, transparent infrastructure which is already being used by leading organisations around the world. We support all sizes of companies, from small, founder-led businesses to mid-size consultancies and builders, as well as enterprise deployments.

OVHcloud has over 500,000 servers in 46 datacentres on 4 continents. We are committed to open-source technologies, championing initiatives like OpenStack. We offer a wide range of cloud infrastructure options across different territories, including a separate business in the US, giving us the ability to ensure true data sovereignty for the companies we work with.

Our billing is transparent and easy to understand, and we do not charge ingress or egress fees. We're committed to sustainability, using water-cooled servers in every datacentre we own, making us more efficient than most other companies.

We have a unique industrial model, where all of our servers are assembled and disassembled in two factories in France and Canada. This gives us the power to re-use and recycle components into our affordable, lower spec server ranges including KimSufi and SoYouStart.

We make sustainability easy for you too. For most of our offerings, you can download a carbon calculator at the end of the month or year, which tells you the exact impact of your cloud usage, including the 'share' of its operational impact, like running our office locations. This transparency and fairness is an integral part of our business.

We're committed to innovation. In addition to our commitment to blockchain, we offer a number of AI-specific IaaS and PaaS solutions, as well as offering quantum solutions so that whatever your future plans, we can support you.

The OVHcloud Partner Program

The OVHcloud Partner Program is an ecosystem of over 1900 partners worldwide. It was created to empower organisations to leverage OVHcloud infrastructure to build solutions and services for their customers. It gives you the opportunity to expand your cloud offering, providing choice for your

customers, and differentiating you from competitive alternatives.

We take a personalised approach to communicating with our Partners. Partners get direct access to our sales and technical teams to support them in any way that they need.

We promote our partners in our Partner Directory, provide training, dedicated Partner Account Managers, access to OVHcloud's R&D and Partner Advisory Boards, as well as market development funds. Being an OVHcloud partner is a two-way street, and we hold regular events to learn more about your experiences and how we can support you better.

The OVHcloud Marketplace

The OVHcloud Marketplace is a one-stop shop for our community's SaaS and PaaS businesses. Built on our ethical and transparent cloud, it helps organisations find ways to digitise their entire business or subscribe to solutions for personal use. It allows builders to find solutions across collaboration, cybersecurity, business administration as well as specialised vertical software, while simultaneously promoting our SaaS and PaaS partners.

The OVHcloud Startup Program

The OVHcloud startup program is focused on giving startups and scale-ups the boost they need to thrive.

Free cloud credits and hands-on technical support help our program participants to accelerate what they do by using our secure, reliable, and cost-efficient cloud, whether they're in the early stages of building an MVP or scaling up to sell more products later down the line. Think of the program as a supportive path from ideation to growth. We want to make sure startups and scale-ups have everything they need at every step. On joining the OVHcloud Startup Program, businesses choose between two tiers based on their growth stage: Start and Scale.

Start: Ideal for early-stage startups developing a proof of concept and beginning their journey. Support includes €10,000 worth of free cloud credits and 6 hours of one-on-one consultations with an engineer to build on our cloud.

Scale: Designed for scale-ups looking to refine their offering, grow their user base, and expand. Support includes up to €100,000 worth of additional cloud credits and up to 20 hours of strategic support.