Q: What exactly is a blockchain? Why do we need it?
Blockchain is a shared ledger that is managed by a large network of computers, rather than one central party. Your company needs it because it will let you share data with parties you work with, but blockchain is most useful for cases when you need to establish data provenance - who created what document when, who currently owns the data, what changes were made, etc.

Q: Why can’t we get by with a normal database? Why do we need a blockchain technology solution?
Because if your central database is compromised, you won’t know what was changed or taken. Blockchain is a great add-on solution to existing database technologies. Blockchain should be used if the data in your database needs to be preserved forever as evidence, or if you need to collaborate with a number of different parties who all need to work from the same set of data. The great thing about databases are how easy they make it to access the current state of a piece of data. But the not-so-great thing is that its history can be erased easily. Because databases are owned or managed by central parties, there is always a chance your data could be changed or overwritten without your notice or consent. Not with blockchain.

Q: How will blockchain help us save on our bottom line? Will it save the company money?
The impact to your company’s bottom line varies. Depending on how much you are affected by time and money lost, and resources wasted, blockchain can have tremendous value to save your company money.

What can Blockchain do for your Company?

Verify document integrity and originality
Documents and data stored within private data centers and secured by private networks can be registered without exposing the actual documents to the network.

Preserve digital assets (data, files, documents) for future disputes
Provide third-party assurance that a digital asset existed in a specific form at a specific point in time.

Record keeping model
Ensure data can be both accessed quickly and immediately for new transactions as well as easily located and retrieved, years and billions of transactions later.
Why is the Factom Blockchain different than other blockchains?

- Designed for Complex Data
- Predictable Cost Model
- Supports Multiple Identities
- Scalable, High Transaction Volume Solutions

Q: Are our competitors using blockchain? Who else is using it?

Yes they are, even if they aren’t talking about it. Some of the leading companies advocating for and working on blockchain projects are IBM, Microsoft, JPMorgan Chase, Bank of America, Wells Fargo, and Intel. Blockchain has been hailed as the “fifth evolution of computing”, so you can assume everyone will be using blockchain in some way in the future, whether or not they know it yet. All across the board, the world’s largest enterprise companies are experimenting with blockchain, determining the most efficient way to leverage its power, and preparing for blockchain’s integration across various industries. 2018 is the year of blockchain. It won’t be long before we see effects.

Q: How much does blockchain cost?

Every blockchain is different. Some like Bitcoin and Ethereum are open source, but have very high transaction fees. Others like Factom are enterprise blockchain tools where you should expect to pay no less than $5,000 minimum to play in the Factom Sandbox. This is great for teams still building their product or just wishing to explore how their existing product might benefit from blockchain.

Q: Don’t we need blockchain developers? Who even knows how to do this?

You do not need blockchain developers to do blockchain. There is a misconception that you will need to build your own blockchain, but that is just preposterous! The value of a blockchain is that it is decentralized and does not require a trusted third party. No reason to reinvent a wheel that was already hard to invent! Using a blockchain service provider who provides services like any other software platform means you just need Javascript developers with the capacity for understanding simple API calls. If you are using Factom Harmony, for example, working with blockchain is as simple as making database calls.

Q: Why would I use blockchain software if I collaborate with people not using blockchain software?

You can use blockchain software that integrates directly with your existing software. It can be so seamless, in fact, that the outside observer wouldn’t even know you had a blockchain solution underpinning your process. You do not need other collaborators to your system to use the company’s blockchain. You can store data and documents privately behind your company’s firewalls, and store the proof on the blockchain. Having a blockchain would simply be for your company’s benefit, not necessarily a group of independent parties. This does not put you at a disadvantage over your collaborators, but gives you a bigger advantage because you can prove your decisions.

Ready to talk about your blockchain solution? Email us at hello@factom.com!

Learn more at factom.com or contact us at hello@factom.com