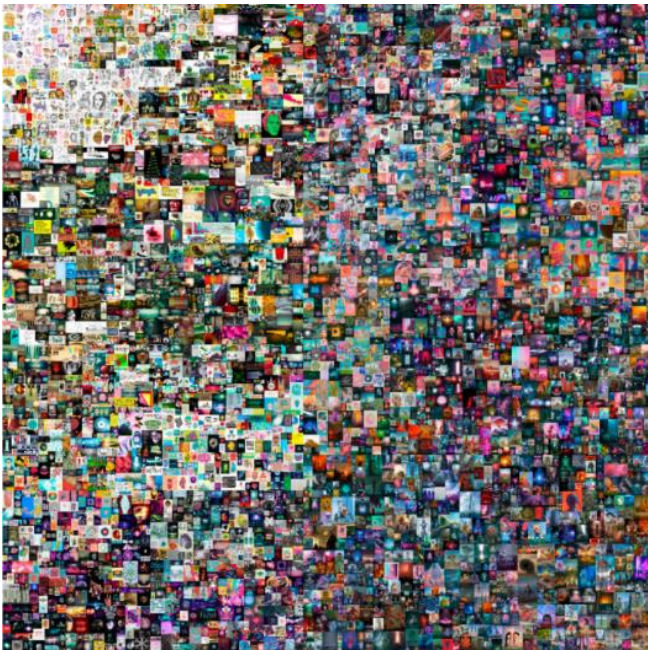


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Cryptocurrency, Non-fungible Token and China's Digital Yuan
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The birth of Bitcoin dates back to 2008, during the Great Financial Crisis, when Satoshi Nakamoto published a white paper titled “Bitcoin: A Peer-to-Peer Electronic Cash System.” The idea of Bitcoin was to bypass traditional financial intermediaries, therefore minimizing costs when expediting transactions. The encryption technology used to support Bitcoin is known as blockchain, a network of computers around the world that provides verification of each transaction. The intent of this process is to democratize finance, just as the internet democratized content and opportunity.

Based on the Coinbase database, there are approximately 43 million verified users, in over 100 countries, who invest, spend, save, earn, and use cryptocurrencies. It should also be noted that there are currently over 8,600 cryptocurrencies registered with Coinbase, a number that is four times higher than last year.

Today, the market cap of Bitcoin is over \$1 trillion, and digital currency continues to evolve. In February, a digital art (see below) created by Michael Winkelmann was recorded on a blockchain, then minted as a non-fungible token (NFT) and sold for \$69 million by Christie's.



"Everydays — The First 5000 Days" is a collage of all the images that the artist known as Beeple has been posting online each day since 2007. via Christie's

Central banks around the world are beginning to recognize the possibility of a cashless societies, and the concept of digital currencies is being evaluated by leaders from around the world. China has emerged as the front runner in this race to digitize the Yuan, and the China Central Bank began testing its cross-border use in April 2021.

While challenges to the U.S. global reserve currency status are a major concern, it should be noted that Chinese Yuan accounts for less than 2% of the global reserves, and the threat is minimal at this point. The U.S dollar represents 85%.

There is a clashing force between decentralized cryptocurrencies and regulated central bank digital currencies, both aiming to provide a digital transformation. This contest will likely create more volatility for investors.

Until digital currencies reach a wider acceptance among central banks, institutional investors and retail consumers, Bitcoin and alike, NFTs, and central bank digital currencies will remain a speculative investment, and each should be carefully evaluated.