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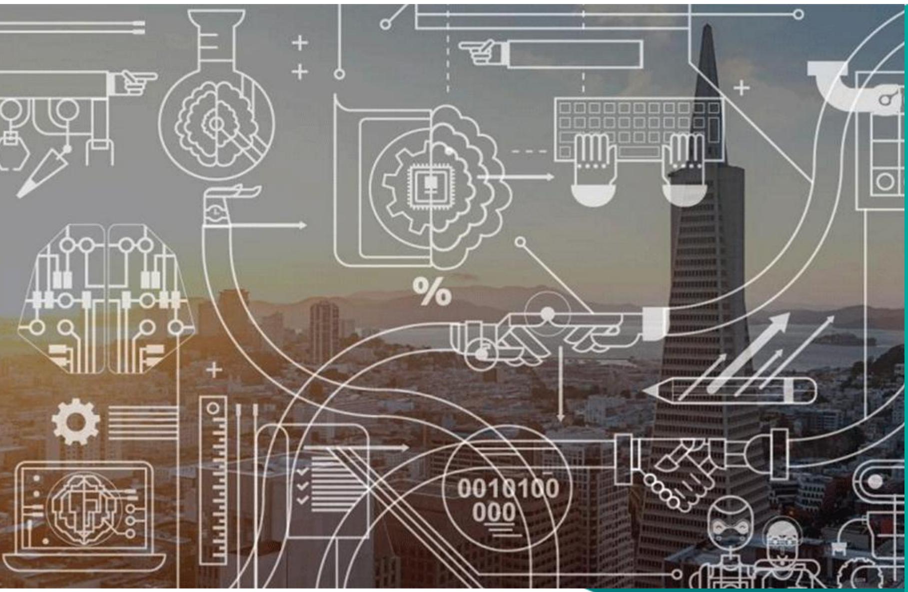

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

NBFC liquidity crunch is putting the squeeze on Fintech

Amazon plans imminent launch of online food delivery service in India

Banks raising funds to grab NBFC share

BigBasket raises Rs 100 crore debt from Trifecta Capital

Today's View

Blockchain in Education (Contd.)

In our previous article (link here), we have seen how educational institutes are leveraging Blockchain. Apart from educational institutes, multitude of professional organisations are also banking on innovative technology to develop blockchain-based products for ed-tech sector.

Education organization **KnowledgeWorks** recently released a report of how blockchain could work in primary schools. As per the report, the technology can be used to simplify administrative tasks, decentralize learning materials to make them more accessible, create a network for parents to share experiences, and store learning-related data.

By nature, academic credentials must be universally recognized and verifiable. In both the schooling and university environments, verifying academic credentials remains largely a manual process, heavily dependent on paper documentation and case-by-case checking.

In this context, **Sony Global Education** has developed a new educational platform in partnership with **IBM** that uses blockchain to secure and share student records. The platform would contain the verified school records as well as the degrees obtained.

With the proliferation of learning apps and services, identity management is a big problem in education. Platforms like **Blockstack** and **uPort** help users

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MindTickle secures $40M funding led by Norwest Venture Partners

Sales enablement platform MindTickle has secured $40 million in fresh funding, led by US-based venture capital fund Norwest Venture Partners. This comes at a time when Indian software-as-a-service (SaaS) companies are gaining prominence in global markets, drawing increased investor interest.

Source – The Economic Times

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Date – 30th Jul 19

carry their identity with around the internet. On Blockstack, users can access apps on decentralized networks and have data portability.

As schools add more security cameras and sensors, they need to protect their networks from hackers. Companies like **Xage** are using blockchain's tamper-proof ledgers to sharing security data across device networks.

The core competency of blockchain is eliminating the middleman. It will be deployed to create various learning marketplaces from test prep to surfing school. **TeachMePlease** i helps students find and pay for courses, registered by educational organizations or teachers. It is one of the first platforms to harness the power of blockchain technology solely for education and recruiting.

Another blockchain platform that's emerging in this space is **Opet Foundation's** chatbot app to help students with test prep. It answers questions and recommends resources while keeping track of student progress in the blockchain.

The real difference that the blockchain can bring to higher education is to allow us to go beyond the current structure of universities. With recent advancements along with regulatory support, we believe that deploying blockchain solutions in education could streamline verification procedures, thereby reducing fraudulent claims of un-earned educational credits.

Today's News

NBFC liquidity crunch is putting the squeeze on Fintech

A liquidity crunch in the non-banking finance space has started to spill over into the new age Fintech sector, which relies on banks and NBFCs for capital to use for onward lending. Multiple industry insiders said that many Fintech players have seen credit turn expensive, with rates going up 75-150 basis points across categories. "We need to raise debt from banks and larger NBFCs for onward lending; now if we cannot borrow funds at lower rates, then our lending rates also tend to go up and eventually the consumer ends up paying more," said the founder of a Fintech lending start-up on the condition of anonymity.

Source – The Economic Times

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Banks raising funds to grab NBFC share

Top public and private sector banks are going on a fundraising spree as they seek to wrest market share from nonbanking finance companies (NBFCs) facing a credit crisis and smaller state-run banks weighed down by bad loans. At least three top public sector banks — State Bank of India, Bank of Baroda and Canara Bank — and two private lenders — Axis and RBL Bank— are planning to raise an aggregate of up to Rs 62,000 crore this year in a bid to accumulate growth capital.

Source – The Economic Times

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This News Letter has been prepared with the assistance of G Balakrishna and Manish Kulkarni

Amazon plans imminent launch of online food delivery service in India

Amazon is planning a foray into the burgeoning online food delivery business in India this year, two sources aware of the development said, in a move that could raise competition in an increasingly crowded market.

The Seattle-based company is working with local partner Catamaran, founded by IT industrialist Narayana Murthy, and has begun hiring staff for the new operation, the sources said, declining to be named because the plans had yet to be made public. Amazon is aiming to launch the new service delivering from restaurants ahead of India's month-long festive season, which starts in September, one of the sources said.

Source – The Economic Times

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BigBasket raises Rs 100 crore debt from Trifecta Capital

Grocery e-tailer BigBasket has raised Rs 100 crore in venture debt from Trifecta Capital to fund working capital needs, and invest in supply chain and warehousing.

The investment comes a few months after Supermarket Grocery Supplies, which owns and runs BigBasket, closed $150 million in funding from Mirae Asset-Naver Asia Growth Fund, Alibaba and CDC Group at a valuation of more than $1 billion.

Source – The Economic Times

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PhonePe receives fresh infusion of Rs 698 crore from parent entity

Digital payments major PhonePe has received another tranche of funding from its parent entity, according to documents accessed from the Registrar of Companies. The Rs 698 crore of fund infusion has come from Singapore-based PhonePe Private Limited, which was previously known as Flipkart Payments. The funding is a part of the $500 million capital commitment made by the e-commerce giant Flipkart for its payments business in 2017. The new tranche comes after Rs 743 crore was ploughed in by the parent entity in March this year.

While the UPI-based payments company continues to receive funding from its parent entity, PhonePe has held talks for raising independent funds. PhonePe had already received an in-principle nod from the Flipkart board to be hived off as a separate entity to enable it to raise $1 billion in external capital.

Source – The Economic Times

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Steadview in talks to join BharatPe's $75 million round

Hong Kong-based hedge fund Steadview Capital, which has backed companies like Ola and Flipkart, is set to join as a new investor in BharatPe, a QR-code based payments app for offline merchants, two people aware of the matter said. The US-based fin-tech-focused investor-Ribbit Capital has already emerged as the new investor - is likely to lead the $75 million (Rs 515 crore) financing round for BharatPe, which raised $15 million (Rs 103 crore) in series-A round just in April.

Steadview's interest in BharatPe comes at a time when merchant-focused fin-tech companies like Open, Razorpay have raised new capital from investors like Tiger Global and Ribbit Capital. BharatPe's existing investors like Sequoia Capital India, Insight Partners, and Beenext are also expected to participate in this financing round. According to the people mentioned above, this funding round may not eventually be going over $75 million in size even though it had explored raising as much as $100 million in this round.

Source – The Economic Times

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Club Factory to expand operations, onboard 10,000 sellers

Five-year-old Chinese e-commerce marketplace Club Factory aims to on-board 10,000+ sellers in India this year. Club Factory started operations in India in 2016 and has an office in Gurgaon. The company plans to open offices in Bengaluru and Mumbai as well. “Our seller base is growing rapidly and we are going to open seller registration to all from August onwards, where we will offer a marketing fee waiver,” said a spokesperson for Club Factory.

The company is competing in an already overcrowded market dominated by players like Amazon and Flipkart. “Global players like Amazon and Flipkart are great examples to learn and operate in the e-commerce space. Our strength is in selling unique, modern and trendy product at the best price. We will continue with our strategy of empowering local sellers to help us in meeting with increased demand,” the spokesperson added.

Source – The Economic Times

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India’s internet user growth decelerates

India’s internet story is losing some of its lustre, with implications for internet commerce companies. Growth in internet user base is slated to come down for the second consecutive financial year — 2018-19 growth rate will be even less than the 8% witnessed in 2017-18, which was a sharp drop from 2016-17’s 12%.

The final figure will be released by the Internet and Mobile Association of India (IAMAI) in mid-August. “I suspect new internet user growth will decelerate even further and will reach a plateau in the next four to five years,” said Subho Ray, president, IAMAI.

Source – The Economic Times

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Deal-hungry Takeaway.com delivers $10B Just Eat takeover

Amsterdam-based Takeaway.com has agreed to buy Just Eat in an 8.2 billion pound ($10.1 billion) deal to create one of the world's largest online food delivery firms, as rivals race to rule the $100 billion market. Just Eat, founded in Denmark in 2000, competes with Amazon-backed Deliveroo and Uber Eats which have taken a bite out of the fast-growing sector by offering their own delivery services to restaurants.

Takeaway and Just Eat, which revealed talks on Saturday, said they will have leadership positions in many of the world's largest food delivery markets, including the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands and Canada.

Source – The Economic Times

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