

Call for Papers, AAG 2018 Meeting

The Emergent Geographies of FinTech: Blockchain and Beyond

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FinTech is a relatively new term for Geography and characterizes the application of information technologies to financial transactions and industries. The range of topics and use cases are broad including algorithmic and high frequency trading, mobile-based currencies, artificial intelligence advising, virtual world currencies, darknet and other anonymized transactions, micro-payments, and crowd-sourced financing.

We are particularly interested in the technology of cryptographically-secured blockchains first appearing in late 2008 in the form of Bitcoin. Almost a decade later, blockchain still elicits great interest within the financial industry seeking new methods and technologies to increase operational efficiencies. Several consortia, supported by big businesses, are developing a range of blockchain platforms with unique protocols and regulations. Expanding from the initial use as cryptocurrencies, use cases for blockchain technologies include data storage, identity management, and decentralized autonomous corporations. These financial technologies have the potential to shift long standing paradigms within globalization, digital divide, and numerous lived spaces and places.

With this call we seek papers focused on FinTech (broadly defined) and its implications for space, place, and scale within the financial industries, long standing labor practices and organizations, as well as everyday life.

Possible Questions/Topics

- In what economic spaces are blockchains and FinTech currently being used? What is the intended/expected goal of these implementations? (e.g., banking, trading, securities, differentials, insurance, stocks, bonds, etc.)
- How are people enrolled in the use of these technologies? Has it changed their practices in work and everyday life? (e.g., social networks, media and communications, Internet of Things, payment, investment)
- Where are blockchains and/or cryptocurrencies being used or developed outside of financial applications? What are the implications of non-financial blockchain technologies? (e.g., data storage, cryptography, ID, education, health care, labor/employment, distributed computation, Merkle Web, DarkNets, hacker spaces)
- How is FinTech interacting with broad interests within economic geography on digital divides, neoliberal globalization, gendered work and economic practices, data ownership, privacy, security, and the internet writ-large?
- How do these technologies fit into existing theoretical frameworks such as code/space, network society, actor-network theory, game theory, etc? Do the current conditions of these technologies bolster and/or challenge these and other geographic concepts?
- How might current and future geographies be shaped or produced given the current state of FinTech, blockchain's current implementations, and planned FinTech/blockchain projects?

Those with interest in joining these sessions should send an abstract (200-250 words) to Joe Blankenship (jrb1235@uky.edu) and Matthew Zook (zook@uky.edu) by September 30, 2017. We plan to review and finalize session(s) by early October.