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Bitcoin

January 6, 2015

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2014 Saw Bitcoin Go (Quietly) Mainstream as Blockchain Tech Unbundled from Bitcoin Currency Prices; 2015 Will be About Enterprise-Class Infrastructure

- We believe bitcoin and the associated technology have the potential to disrupt the legacy financial infrastructure over the next few years. We see the early signs of this disruption in the form of increasing merchant adoption, transaction volumes and innovative technology development built to leverage the bitcoin blockchain.
- We see 2014 as the year bitcoin (quietly) became a mainstream technology, with many incumbent payments industry
 participants embracing it and incorporating bitcoin into their businesses (pages 2-5). We believe the integration (not
 acceptance) of bitcoin by a range of companies from old guard NCR and First Data to Silicon Valley leaders PayPal and Intuit
 serves as the ultimate validation of the impact of the technology, not to mention the broad positive commentary from other
 industry participants. To be sure, there are still plenty of naysayers, especially among those that may ultimately be threatened
 by this technology.
- We believe 2014 has shown that bitcoin prices are only related to the success of underlying technology as gasoline prices are related to car sales (page 6). Although we have been arguing this unbundling for at least a year (link), we find investors continue to (mistakenly) view the price of the bitcoin currency as a forward indicator for the success and impact of bitcoin blockchain technology. We offer the substantial investment activity around bitcoin during a period of declining bitcoin prices as evidence that bitcoin should be regarded as a "fuel" for the blockchain technology and expect that innovation to continue to flourish irrespective of the bitcoin price. We see the relationship as analogous to the historical price of gasoline to the production of the internal combustion engine or the price of electricity to production of Teslas. That is to say higher car sales (blockchain tech applications) may drive higher gasoline prices long term, but the opposite does not hold lower gas prices (bitcoin currency) do not foreshadow lower car sales. In both these situations, the innovations (GPS, satellite radio, parking sensors) flourish even as the fuel they relied upon fluctuated in price.
- Which is to say we see value in the currency and a relationship between the value of the currency and the proliferation of applications of its underlying technologies, just not a 1-to-1 relationship. In fact, it is a matter of public record that Wedbush Securities has made nominal investments in both bitcoin technology businesses as well as the currency.
- Similarly, we liken the commentary around the lack of prospects for bitcoin based on the declining bitcoin currency prices as tantamount to dismissing "The Internet" in 2001, based on the price performance of CSCO. We believe that just as the investment in Internet infrastructure (i.e., CSCO routers) in the late 90's led to AMZN, GOOGL, and FB (page 7), the current investment in bitcoin infrastructure will lead to similar success for bitcoin companies, even if some disruption takes 10+ years (as it did for FB).
- We see the adoption of bitcoin technology as going beyond bitcoin's continued growth across many other metrics (pages 8-10). In fact, if merchant adoption is a metric for success, Bitpay/Coinbase have added significantly more merchants than Apple Pay (link). 2014 saw big increases in merchant adoption, wallets, usage and venture funding. Popular wallets Blockchain.info and Coinbase saw their number of wallets increase from ~900k to over 2.6 million and 728k to over 1.8 million, respectively. Merchant acquirer Bitpay and Coinbase have now signed up a combined 77k merchants globally, up from 26k collectively since the start of the year. These two forces have contributed to driving a near-doubling of key usage metrics. 2014 saw more than \$300 million in venture funds raised for the crypto-currency startups, representing nearly 3x the amount of funding raised for the space in all previous years combined.
- Weakness in unregulated foreign-domiciled third-party providers such as Bitstamp should be viewed as such, not as a weakness in bitcoin or the underlying technology, in our opinion. Similarly, we do not see the recent losses at Xoom as a sign of weakness in the payment networks they use i.e. Automatic Clearing House and wire transfer. We continue to believe the bitcoin infrastructure will be enhanced when bitcoin transaction volumes migrate to regulated, robust, liquid and secure venues.
- We expect bitcoin and other blockchain infrastructure to take the biggest step forward in 2015. Although we expect some early applications such as micro transactions (e.g., ChangeTip) and remittance to gain traction, we expect 2015 to mostly continue the hard work of building venues, settling regulation, and integrating into the existing financial services environment.

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Additional Analysis

Figure 1: Companies Accepting or Integrating Bitcoin Payments

Companies incorporating Bitcoin payment options

PayPal/Braintree Stripe NCR Square Intuit First Data Global Payments Toshiba, VisualTouch

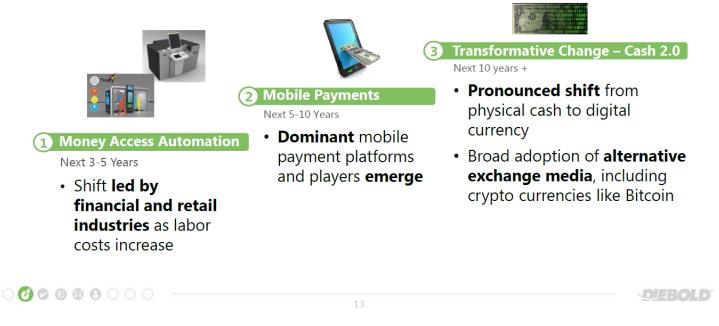
Companies accepting Bitcoin payments

Microsoft Dell United Way Wikipedia Wordpress Expedia Dish Overstock American Red Cross Time Magazine Mozilla Newegg Reddit Soundcloud Zynga Subway (very few) Virgin Galactic Sacramento Kings Gyft TigerDirect Chicago Sun-Times OKCupid Rakuten (via subsidiary Rakuten Super Logistics) OpenSSL Khan Academy

Source: Wedbush Securities, Inc.

Figure 2: Chart in Diebold's Investor Day Presentation (December 10, 2014)

Three main phases characterize the transformation in the way people connect with their money



Source: Diebold, Wedbush Securities, Inc.

Figure 3: Bitcoin Sentiment Shifting Among Business Leaders...

PDAV.	
EBAY CEO, John Donahue "I think there's no doubt that digital currency is going to play an important role going forward, ar "I think you'll begin to see Bitcoin used in different use cases, whether it's a peer-to-peer use ca you'll begin to see it with some merchants accepting Bitcoin." "And I don't know how big it will get, how quickly, but I do think that the underlying theme of dig	ase, a cross-border transaction, someone sending currency to someone else, and over time,
"I think there are two sides of it, the investment side and the digital currency side. I'm more inte technology."	rested in the digital currency side about how you and I can exchange value seamlessly using
EBAY	November, 2014
President, eBay Marketplaces, Devin Wenig	Interview, Wall Street Journal.
"Both eBay and PayPal are open to (Bitcoin)-PayPal is experimenting with it-through our relation	nship we're likely to do the same. I am very open to it."
INTU	February, 2014
CEO, Brad Smith	Interview, Daily Ticker at Yahoo Finance.
"(Bitcoin is) an increasingly growing alternative currency and our customers were asking for it. I	
INTU	July, 2014
PayBycoin Engineer, Clinton Neilsen	Interview, Daily Ticker at Yahoo Finance.
"The only thing I heard was one customer said they'd rather having us focus on things that are the media in general and our customers has drowned that out. We've seen more sign-ups than	
NCR	November, 2014
Small Business Director of Business Development, Reggie Kimble	Press-release, company issued.
"Gone are the days when cash and cards were the only payment options available to customer businesses the flexibility they need to better serve their growing number of customers who pref	
ACIW	November, 2014
CEO, Philip Heasley	ACI Worldwide Inc Investor Day.
"Bitcoin, something totally different (than debit/ACH). I totally don't understand this concept of a support of Bitcoin as it relates to that. Bitcoin as software and its implications to potential real-ti	
Bitcoin potentially- or the concept, the construct behind it, because it has a lot of the same toke	
how you thought about real-time reconciliation, the way we're thinking about real-time payment	
	·
AXP	December, 2014
CEO, Kenneth Chenault	Interview, DealBook Conference.
	of Bitcoin and the credit card industry. There's a reason why credit cards were invented. People
wanted to defer payment. They wanted to borrow."	
	o be important. The analogy that I would give is I think about bitcoin and alternative currencies is
really Napster and iTunes. I don't know how this is going to evolve. We're following it closely, bu opportunity out there. \$6 trillion in credit charge cards, so I think there's room for a lot of players	
DISH	May, 2014
COO, Bernie Han "Bitcoin is becoming the preferred way for some people to transact and we want to accommoda	Press release, company-issued.
"(Dish's decision to accept Bitcoin) is a large step forward in the growing momentum of custom	
IBM	September, 2014
VP & North America Leader of Mobile & Internet of things, Paul Brody	Interview, GigaOM.
	ributed systems is going to be colossal. As devices become smarter and smarter, why shouldn't
	form. And by our calculation, if you use the blockchain, you can cut the cost of managing a high
volume device network by 99%."	
"My smartwatch has to have a transaction contract with my door to unlock it. That transaction h	as to be broadcast in the blockchain so that all the devices in my block chain, that I own,
recognize me and allow my watch to unlock any doors."	irline reservations, utility bills they're all transactions. On the block foundation level, we can do
more than just infrastructure, we can write applications."	
MSFT	December 2014
MSFT Corporate Vice President of Universal Store, Eric Lockard	December, 2014 Press release, company-issued.
(After announcement of Bitcoin to be accepted by Microsoft as "a payment option to buy apps,	
Xbox Video Stores".)	
"For us, this is about giving people options and helping them do more on their devices and in the beyong the early enthusiasts. We expect this growth to continue and allowing people to use bit	

Figure 4: ...But Some Scepticism Still Remains

	August, 2014
CEO, Charlie Scharf "Visa is not a currency, it's a network. We can process real or virtual currencies to the ex today."	Interview, The Australian Financial Review. xtent that it makes sense. So, [facilitating bitcoin payments] is possible but we are not thinking about it
answer is we will think about it when our clients actually want to use it. The way I would t	wo today are not disassociated. They are one. People say, well are you going to accept Bitcoin. And the think about that is, again, we are a network already. The question is, for us, is there a more efficient oday. But the idea of just taking Bitcoin's network, it doesn't do what we need to do for our clients. It
MA	December, 2014
President South East Asia, Matthew Driver	Company-published video, "Trust is a Critical Component".
bitcoin, is that they're unstable in terms of their instrinsic value." "(MasterCard is working towards) moving to a world beyond cash and ensuring greater to "(Cryptocurrencies) don't offer, perhaps, the recourse that consumers are naturally expe "(Cryptocurrencies) serve a purpose that's not necessarily completely clear."	ecting that come from using cash in the day-to-day." It, all of a sudden you have cryptocurrencies being manufactured, if you like, on an anonymous concerns about how it's working."
AXP	February, 2014
President of Enterprise Growth & Incoming PayPal CEO, Dan Schulman	Interview, Bloomberg News.
"Protection and trust are crucial to us and our card members and merchants. We don't b	believe that is offered by crypto-currencies today".
MGI	May, 2013
CEO, Pam Patsley "(Bitcoin) is coming under some interesting regulatory scrutiny. I don't see it displacing ci	Interview, Business-Standard. surrency as we know it today."
MGI Executive Vice President of Global Product Management, Alex Hoffman "It's a volatile currency, and that makes it very difficult for consumers and merchants to k people speculate on the potential, but today you do not have it."	February, 2014 Interview, Bloomberg News. know the value of what they have when using Bitcoin to purchase or receive goods and services. Today
MGI CEO, Pam Patsley "I would say if bitcoin becomes or ever is established or recognized as a valid currency, movement, then I think it's just another currency like all those others that we do around t	March, 2014 Credit Suisse Global Services Conference. and by that I mean like you can't get in trouble for touching it or processing it or facilitating its the world."
DFS	February, 2014
CEO, David Nelms	Interview, Bloomberg News.
"I'm a bit skeptical(other things pose) a lot more potential threats or opportunities than) Bitcoin".
WU	March, 2014
CEO, Hikmet Ersek	Self-published, Fortune Magazine.
remittances, a need will arise to transfer digital currency across borders, and pay out in or part of the digital currency story. Regulation and compliance issues also need to be addu	irst in the developed world as a business payments vehicle. If and when it is regulated and used for case, or into accounts maintained in regulated currency by the receiver. Consumer adoption is just one ressed, and much work remains to be done in this regard. The conversation continues to evolve on a mal regulation in place. But in the end, this is a path digital currencies must walk, before they can
WU	June, 2014
	Interview, Bloomberg TV. not also use bitcoin? That's the issue with bitcoin. We are a very regulated industry. If bitcoin is ency. Bitcoin is a system. It is not used as a currency, it is defined as an asset. When the reserve bank
wu	November, 2014
compliance needs in that country? So, I don't really need it for the minimum. Moving a bi	Dur challenge is the last mile. How do I get that money in the person's hand, and meet all the regulatory it from Point A to Point B isn't hard. The last mile is really hard. " al money transfer, does it add value? Does it really solve that last-mile problem? Does it solve

Source: Wedbush Securities, Inc.

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Figure 5: Price of Gasoline Relative to U.S. Vehicle Sales \$4.00 20 18 \$3.50 16 14 U.S Vehicle sales (millions) U.S. vehicle sales 12 10 Retail Gasoline 8 Price (Constant 2013 \$/gal) 6 4 \$0.50 2 \$0.00 0 1931 1935

Source: Energy.gov, Wards Auto, Wedbush Securities, Inc.

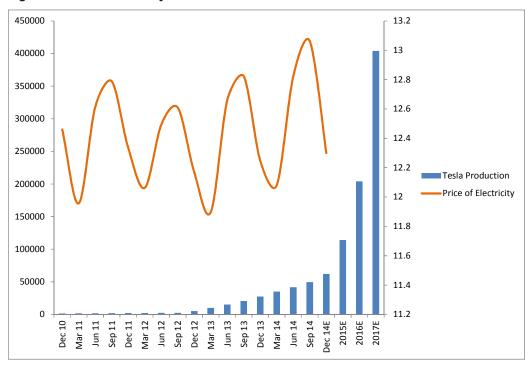
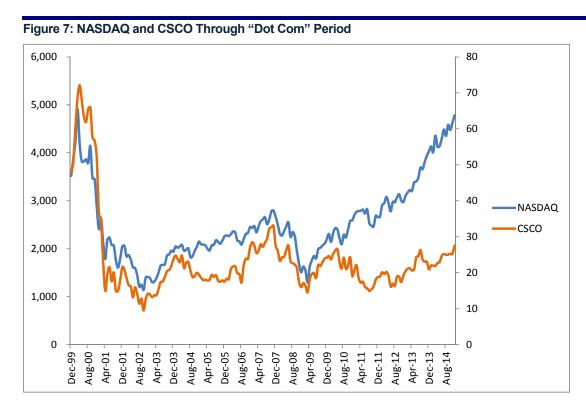


Figure 6: Price of Electricity to Tesla Production

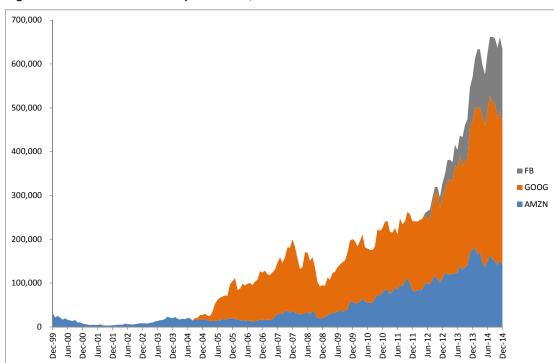
Source: EIA, Tesla, Wedbush Securities, Inc.





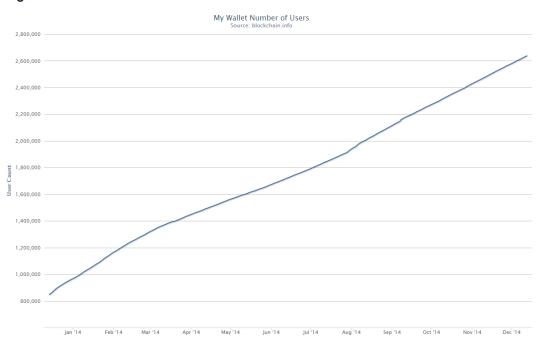
Source: Thomson Reuters, Wedbush Securities, Inc.



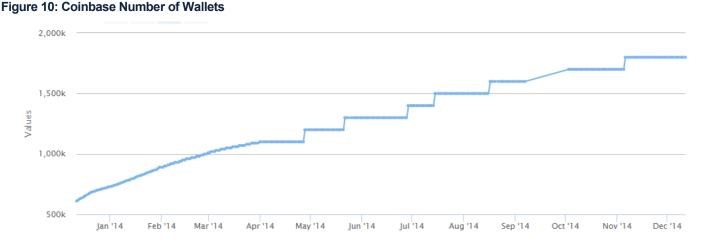


Source: Thomson Reuters, Wedbush Securities, Inc.





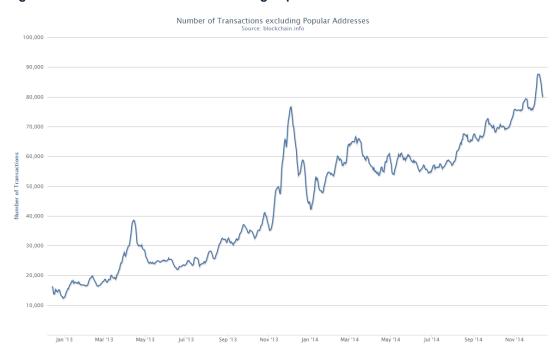
Source: Blockchain.info, Wedbush Securities, Inc.





Source: Bitcoin Pulse, Wedbush Securities, Inc.





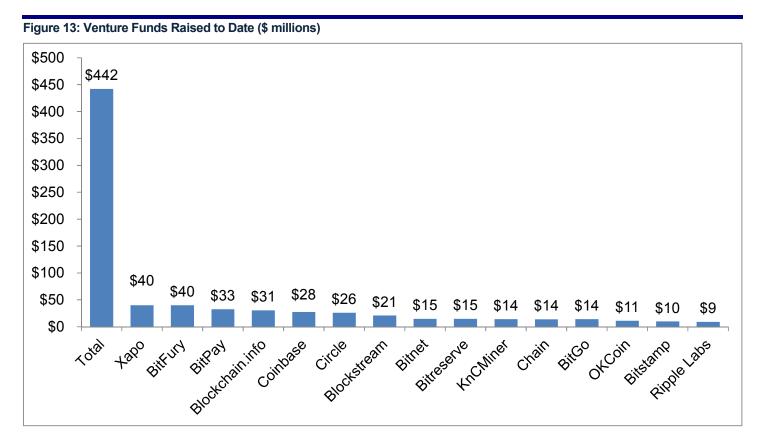
Source: Blockchain.info, Wedbush Securities, Inc.



Figure 12: My Wallet Number of Transactions per Day

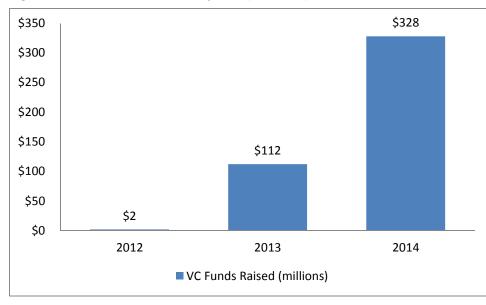
Source: Blockchain.info, Wedbush Securities, Inc.





Source: Venture Scanner, Coindesk, Wedbush Securities, Inc.





Source: Venture Scanner, Coindesk, Wedbush Securities, Inc.



Public companies mentioned in this report (closing prices on 1/5/15)

COMPANY	TICKER	RATING	PRICE	PRICE TARGET
Amazon.com	AMZN	NEUTRAL	\$302.19	\$330
Google	GOOGL	NEUTRAL	\$519.46	\$530
Facebook	FB	OUTPERFORM	\$77.19	\$90
eBay	EBAY	NEUTRAL	\$55.74	\$55
Intuit	INTU	NEUTRAL	\$90.85	\$92
NCR	NCR	NEUTRAL	\$28.15	\$18
Cisco Systems	CSCO	OUTPERFORM	\$27.06	\$31.50

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