

Blockchain Could Be Used By At Least 50% Of All Companies Within 3 Years, Oracle Exec Says

Ten years after the idea of blockchain was conceived, the technology that underpins cryptocurrencies is starting to be used by [large enterprises as a secure way](#) to track goods. But mass utilization is still years away, and it won't be for every company, said a panel of blockchain executives.

"My projection is that between 50% and 60% of companies will use blockchain in the next few years," said Frank Xiong, Oracle's group vice president of blockchain product development at the Forbes CIO Summit in Half Moon Bay, California, Monday.

The enterprise software maker has more than 100 customers using its blockchain platform to track items for purposes such as ensuring the Italian olive oil you're buying was really made in Italy and that a manufacturer isn't buying minerals that support armed conflicts. But it's not a magic bullet. "We're past the stage that blockchain can cure everything, so people are becoming more realistic about what's good for their business model," he said.

Blockchain is a kind of shared database that allows users to share identical copies of information on many computers. In the past few years, it's gone from largely supporting virtual currencies like bitcoin to a tool used by companies to more closely and accurately track products or private information that pass through many hands.

Despite the buzz, it is still in the early stages of uptake. Large technology companies like IBM, shipping giant Maersk and Oracle, have formed consortia around their blockchains, and many efforts are still in the pilot stage. Others, such as [\\$3 billion logistics startup Flexport](#), say they're waiting for global standards before they jump in.

In deciding whether to use blockchain, companies should do a pain point assessment, two executives said. Like any venture, they should figure out if it's worth the cost.

"At the end of the day blockchain makes multipart collaboration more efficient, whether it's having a consortium to track data on counterfeit getting into supply chains, or how much inventory you need to create a better forecast," said Ted Kim, vice president in blockchain at Samsung SDS, a unit of the electronics manufacturer that provides IT services, including a pilot projects to track cargo from Korea to Europe using blockchain. He expects in three years, 20% of companies will be using blockchain. "There is tangible ROI in the blockchain."

Yet even in a world where blockchain is much more widespread, some aspects may resemble today's commerce system more than blockchain's evangelists forecast.

"People are predicting that the blockchain will allow people to be decentralized, that everyone will have distributed trusted networks," said Daniel Jones, CEO of Bext360, a [software startup that keeps track of commodities](#) by identifying and making an electronic

token. "I don't think that's possible—I think what we're going to see is companies vertically integrating, the Amazons of the world are going to continue to vertically integrate to the farm level."

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