Meet OmniIndex, a Web3 Data Platform committed to protecting your data

As part of our quick fire questions series – or QFQs – we spoke to Simon Bain, CEO of OmniIndex about the need to change how we work with our data, working remotely and playing with timezones.

Temps de lecture : minute

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I believe that your data is yours. It's that simple. And after years of working with some of the biggest data controllers in the world — from governments to global corporations — I became more and more convinced that we need to change how we are all working with our data.

Tell me about the business - what it is, what problems are you solving, and who you work with?

OmniIndex is an encrypted Web3 Data Platform that is fully committed to the mantra that your data is yours. This means we can't see it, access it, or use it in any way. And because we can't, it means no other unwanted people can either!

Our goal is to make our platform and tools as simple to use as traditional cloud storage but with the added advantage of technology such as blockchain, AI, and fully homomorphic encryption (FHE). To do this, we have filled our team with experts from some of the biggest cloud and data storage companies. For example our Head of Product was General

Manager at Microsoft, while our CTO led Amazon Marketplace development. This experience has been essential in enabling us to take the best of Cloud's accessibility and productivity, while upgrading it with the much needed security and privacy of Web3.

This upgrade is incredibly important because quite simply traditional data storage systems are failing users. Either they protect data so well that it cannot actually be used for daily tasks and analytics, or it's too accessible and too easily breached by ransomware and other attacks.

By storing data in a hybrid-blockchain and encrypting it with our patented FHE, our customers can be sure their most confidential and sensitive data is protected, while still being able to subject it to analytics and share it with their colleagues.

How has the business evolved since its launch and how have you reached your customers?

When OmniIndex launched in 2020 it was just myself, our CTO Ken Hawkins, and my dozen or so international patents on managing and using encrypted data. We knew that we wanted to package this technology in a way that worked for users and made sense as an upgrade on their existing workflows, but it took time to work out exactly what that would look like.

The three biggest jumps forward in the OmniIndex journey came when we added new people to the team, developed our unique hybrid-blockchain storage architecture, and talked our way through the door with our very first customer. I honestly don't know how any team, however talented, can try and develop a new product without always keeping the customer's needs in mind – and actually having one work closely with us

to talk through their data needs was crucial for us.

And like I say, it really was me and the team talking the ear off anyone who would listen that got us our first customer. You hear it time and time again and everyone already knows this, but networking is incredibly important. Not just organised events where you're all cooped together for that very purpose, but also the more organic networking that happens from just talking to random people about what you've been working on. After all, if you've developed a product that actually solves a problem, then sooner or later you'll talk to someone who needs you!

Tell us about the working culture at OmniIndex

Generally speaking we work remotely as our team is spread across a number of international borders and time zones. While this can create some difficulties, it has suited what we are trying to achieve really well as we are continually using and testing our own products to collaborate and share data securely between us. For example, the very first documents shared through Dropblock (our Web3 mobile storage and sharing app) were the working drafts of the user guide for the app ready for review. (Though on reflection this was maybe not the best choice as the only way to access the manual was through the steps outlined in that same manual.)

What has been your biggest challenge so far and how have you overcome this?

This is a tricky one, but I think the biggest challenge is an old one: trying to find ways to simply and clearly talk about new technology in a way that people engage with and understand. This isn't because people are stupid – far from it! But because real people and real users ask practical

questions that immediately cut through the technical details that I personally love. For example I can talk all day about the development and benefits of our hybrid-blockchain and our patented parallel processing and Narrow AI engine, but most people's eyes glaze over and they quickly back away with regret.

This is why I have surrounded myself with people like James Stanbridge (our Head of Product) and Bhavuk Kaul (Business Development) who have spent their careers in this space of bringing new ideas and technology to market. We also have dedicated content and business development teams to help communicate these ideas and reach out to potential customers.

As well as helping us with our messaging and in connecting with people, it also frees up more of my own time to do what I love to do: Inventing and developing.

What's in store for the future?

Our Data Platform has been live for a while already and we are delighted to have gained a fantastic number of active users in a short space of time. We are currently onboarding an ethical AI company, and we are expanding our user base in Nigeria thanks to our customer Future-X and their education data management solutions.

Thanks to this success, we have now started to expand our suite of connections and tools that work alongside our platform so it can be seamlessly integrated into more businesses' existing workflows. For example, we are currently working on a Web3 connector to Slack for a customer because they, like many, use this for much of their internal and external communication and want a direct way to share encrypted files securely and easily. Other recent connectors have included MongoDB and Tableau.

Our next biggest release however will be Dropblock for Google Workspace. This will sync directly with our existing Web3 mobile storage app, Dropblock, and work within Google's suite of productivity tools to upgrade it with Web3 file storage, automatic encryption and redaction of personally identifiable information (PII), and the same secure sharing our Dropblock app offers already.

What one piece of advice would you give other founders or future founders?

It can be incredibly hard and lonely as a founder and as such it's very important to have the right team around you. In fact, it's crucial. I have been incredibly fortunate in past ventures and work to have met and forged relationships with nearly all of the team I work with today, and then the rest of the team was then invited to join us on their recommendations. By building the company in this way, I know that we are all pulling in the right direction and have a vested interest in the project — because we all have reasons to be here that go beyond the pay cheque alone.

This need for good people around you doesn't stop at your immediate colleagues, however. It also includes your friends and family as they will be pushed and pulled along with you too so it's incredibly important to get their support before you begin.

After all, if you can't sell your dream and passion to your nearest and dearest, then it is going to be a massive struggle trying to persuade your potential investors and customers.

And finally, a more personal question! What's

your daily routine and the rules you're living by at the moment?

I've actually recently moved back to the Scottish coast after a number of years moving around North America. While I loved my time over there, first in California on the beach and then in Canada watching the lake freeze over as I drank my morning coffee, it just felt as though it was the right time to come back home. And I guess that once again this comes back to how important it is to have the right people around you, because one of the key forces pulling me back to the UK was to be able to see family more easily.

Returning things to OmniIndex, this is also useful as while our CTO the COO and their teams are not over here, we do have a good UK infrastructure. And so this means that when I come home after my morning walk along the harbour to watch the seals, I can check in with colleagues at the end of their work days, then log in with my UK colleagues, and then at the close of play check in again with my North American colleagues as they start their day. This means that as a company we can play with the timezones and capture a day and a half with each single day!

And as any founder will tell you, stretching the day without stretching yourself can be a very good skill to learn!

Simon Bain is CEO of _OmniIndex_.

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