

Co-creating the next level of the EU anti-counterfeiting infrastructure on blockchain: the 2018 EU Blockathon Challenge

The European Union is rich in intellectual resources. Creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship are the source of its growth. Intellectual property rights (IPR) intensive industries contribute 42 % to the EU's GDP and directly or indirectly support 38 % of jobs. Infringements of intellectual property, such as counterfeiting and piracy, significantly harm EU growth, costing legitimate businesses EUR 90 billion and reducing employment by around 800 000 jobs every year.

Consumers are often confused about whether a product is authentic or not. In 2017, 10 % of EU consumers, or around 43 million citizens, were tricked into buying a fake product instead of a genuine one. This figure is equivalent to the combined populations of Belgium, Bulgaria, Ireland, Greece and Portugal. Over three times as many people — 35 % (around 150 million in total) — wondered whether a product purchased was real or fake.¹

Numerous technologies, procedures and tools already contribute to the fight against counterfeiting by verifying the authenticity of products and controlling the supply chain. These include track-and-trace systems, radio-frequency identification, customs controls and specialised databases, such as the EUIPO's Enforcement Database. However, systems are scattered, often working in silos, and criminal networks use this to their advantage.

The EUIPO, through the [European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights](#), in partnership with the European Commission, is today launching a worldwide competition, the first ever EU Blockathon, which will take place from **22 to 25 June 2018 in Brussels**.

The Blockathon aims to gather together the best coders and creative minds to unlock the potential of blockchain and co-create an integrated solution to combat counterfeiting.

Teams of coders, blockchain experts and stakeholders are invited to join the challenge, compete for a EUR 100 000 prize, and make the world a safer and better place by giving enforcement authorities the tools to rapidly identify fakes and criminal activity, by helping legitimate companies to protect their business assets and by providing the tools for consumers to make informed, genuine, choices.

EUIPO Executive Director António Campinos said:

The EUIPO, is determined to explore the potential of blockchain to interconnect systems and ensure security and immutability of shared data in order to add trust to our legitimate ecosystem for the benefits of citizens, enforcers and companies alike. We believe a strong networked alliance can be built to secure logistics, ensure authenticity of goods, protect consumers and combat criminal and illegal activities.

¹ EUIPO (2017). European Citizens and Intellectual Property: Perception, Awareness and Behaviour, survey commissioned to Deloitte by the EUIPO. <https://euiipo.europa.eu/ohimportal/en/web/observatory/ip-perception-2017>

NOTE TO EDITORS

The **European Commission** works to harmonise laws relating to industrial property rights in EU countries in order to avoid barriers to trade and to create efficient EU-wide systems for the protection of such rights. It fights against piracy and counterfeiting and aims to help businesses, especially small businesses, access and use intellectual property rights more effectively.

The **European Union Intellectual Property Office** (EUIPO) is a decentralised agency of the EU, based in Alicante, Spain. It manages the registration of the European Union trade mark (EUTM) and the registered Community design (RCD), both of which provide intellectual property protection in all 28 EU Member States and carries out cooperation activities with the national and regional IP offices of the EU. Since 2012, the EUIPO has also been entrusted with the European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights.

Further information: blockathon.eu

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