BLOCKCHAIN: A GAME-CHANGER FOR ELECTION INTEGRITY IN 2024 AND BEYOND.

Introduction

As 2024 unfolds, nations around the globe are gearing up for what is expected to be one of the most significant election years in recent history. With over 60 countries slated to hold elections this year, including 8 of the world's 10 most populous nations and home to nearly half of the world's population, the spotlight is on ensuring transparent, secure, and accessible voting processes.

This week, we consider how blockchain technology can provide solutions to the myriad challenges faced by traditional voting systems.

Traditional Voting Systems

Traditional voting systems are often characterized by manual processes, paper-based ballots, and centralized administration. While these systems have served as the cornerstone of democratic elections for decades, they are not without their shortcomings.

Developed countries such as the United States employ a variety of voting methods, including paper ballots, electronic voting machines, and mail-in voting. However, each state has its own set of rules and procedures, leading to inconsistencies and vulnerabilities in the electoral process. Issues such as voter suppression, long lines at polling stations, and allegations of fraud have raised concerns about the integrity of US elections.

Meanwhile, developing countries such as Botswana and neighbouring South Africa still employ the traditional paper ballot method. The long waiting lines, limited accessibility and general inconvenience occasioned by traditional voting methods could potentially explain the low voter registration rates observed in Botswana this year, especially among the younger demographic.

Blockchain Voting Potential

Blockchain technology presents a promising alternative to traditional voting systems, offering numerous advantages that address the shortcomings of conventional methods. One key advantage is transparency, as every vote cast using blockchain technology is recorded on an immutable ledger, which we explained in part 1 of this series. This feature ensures a trail of election results which every voter can audit, enhancing the integrity and

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Furthermore, blockchain-based voting systems offer increased accessibility, particularly for marginalized communities. Through remote and mobile voting options facilitated by blockchain technology, individuals who may face barriers to traditional voting methods, such as geographical constraints or mobility issues, can participate more easily in the electoral process.

Lastly, the automation of the voting process facilitated by blockchain technology improves efficiency by removing the requirement for manual vote counting. This simplifies the electoral procedure, lessens administrative workload, and ultimately decreases the expenses associated with organizing elections.

Conclusion

As the global community contemplates modernizing its electoral processes, the adoption of blockchain voting warrants careful consideration. While blockchain offers compelling advantages in terms of transparency, security, and efficiency, it also poses challenges related to technology readiness, privacy, and regulatory compliance. Given these factors, widespread adoption of blockchain voting may still be decades away. Nonetheless, we remain hopeful for its eventual integration into electoral practices.

If you have interest in an in-depth discussion on this subject matter or any Technology law issues, feel free to contact us at **info@gobhozalegalpractice.co.bw Tel: 3116371**

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