



Blockchain is the technology that has underpinned cryptocurrencies – but its [application is much wider than that](#). Companies in financial services, medicine, energy, media, insurance, shipping and much more are now looking at ways to use blockchain to improve efficiency in business processes and to create new business opportunities.

Why? Because hacking, security issues and privacy breaches have eroded trust in existing on line systems. Blockchain creates real-time transparency and a permanent audit trail of every transaction across every network distributed over thousands of computers. This makes it almost impossible to hack. It also time-stamps and geo-stamps every transaction creating an audit trail regulators and everyone else can love (and can't dispute).

In November 2017, Reform – an independent UK think tank - published [The future of public service identity: blockchain](#), a paper which suggest blockchain has the potential to enable radical public services transformation by giving citizens control over how their information is shared with public services. The report says that blockchain has the potential to enable radical public services transformation in a more profound way than previous technologies; and calls on the UK government to adopt blockchain to provide a secure and efficient mechanism that puts the individual in control of their own identity management.

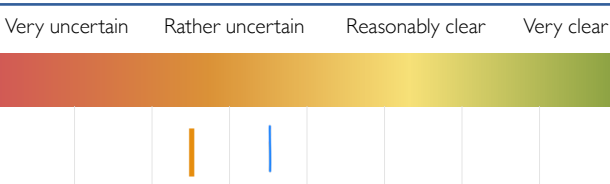
In this model, citizens access their public service identity via an app on their smartphone, and control what data they share with government to access public services.

Implications for Gwent

A handful of countries around the world are running blockchain trials for service provision. The Ministry of Citizens' Services in Canada is testing blockchain for business registration. In Estonia, the government is piloting a blockchain-based solution for voting, the United Arab Emirates is studying its use in central bank operations and the state of Delaware is piloting a blockchain-based corporate registry. The government in British Columbia is using blockchain to track marijuana sales through the supply chain. Arizona is considering letting people pay taxes via bitcoin. Sweden's government is planning to place all real-estate transactions on a blockchain so all parties involved can track dealings.

Why bother? [Smart councils: the evolution of technology in local government](#), an article published in the LSE's British Politics and Policy blog in January 2018, offers a simple explanation. Blockchain allows local councils to significantly reduce transaction costs in the delivery of local services, while also providing greater transparency and participation for citizens. And, along the way, liberating staff time for other things.

How might the issue impact on Gwent in the future



How might Gwent public services respond?

