

Explorers

Blockchain

Case B: Walmart's food safety solution built on the IBM Blockchain Platform



Transcript

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I purchased a pack of mangoes, I came into my staff meeting I put him on the table and I said your traceback exercise starts right now and we time how long it took them to get the information for each point in the food system all the way back to the farm and I'm not going to give you the results.

When a customer shops in our stores we know they expect great prices, we know they expect fast, clean and friendly service but an unspoken expectation is that they expect the products that they buy in our stores to be safe. You know when there's a food scare what you want to do is you want to be fast but you want to be right. That food product is guilty until proven innocent. We at Walmart will actually pull all the product until we know what is the implicated product and then you can put the safe product back out. So imagine if we could pinpoint with certainty within minutes, not days that this was the implicated product. Walmart and IBM are working to make that a reality.

If you think about the food system it's pretty complex it involves farmers, processors, distributors and the way traceability has done today, each segment of the food system does it their own way, most actually do it on paper or on systems that don't speak to each other and so you can never have a full view of what's happening in the food system.

What we hope to do with blockchain is bring all food safety system stakeholders and collaborate so that we do it one best way, and we can do it very quickly and efficiently. Blockchain is a digital ledger that allows different segments of the food system to capture information about the product, what they've done to it, where that product has been. If we're linking that data with other data points, the internet of things, all that information will allow us to see insights which allows us to have a safer more affordable to sustainable food system but we don't believe traceability is the goal we believe that transparency is the ultimate goal.

Blockchain will give us the ability to not only track where food came from but how was it produced. Was it produced safely, was it produced responsibly, is it sustainably grown, how many dates of shelf sites are left on that product. The food system is a shared responsibility and for blockchain and traceability and transparency to work we need a lot of people working together so we're excited to be working with IBM on this blockchain initiative but it's not just Walmart and IBM, we actually have some of our suppliers participating in this pilot, we've got the universities also participating in pilot and so we'll make sure that off stakeholders work together for a safer and better food system.