

# THE MANY FACES OF DIGITAL ASSETS

*By Debbie Guillou, CEO, Artemis Fiduciaries*



## Introduction

When most people hear the term digital assets, their first thought is usually Bitcoin. That is hardly surprising: Bitcoin was the first, and it has dominated headlines for over a decade. But focusing on Bitcoin alone is a little like judging the entire internet by email. It captures something important, yet misses the extraordinary variety that has developed since.

Today, the world of digital assets is far broader and more interesting than many realise. They come in different forms, serve different purposes, and are finding their way into our lives in ways that go well beyond speculative trading. If we are to have an informed conversation about how digital assets might shape our future, it is worth pausing to take stock of the many types that exist.



*“These “smart contracts” make it possible to borrow, lend, insure, or trade without a bank, a broker, or even (in theory at least) a lawyer.”*

## Digital Currencies: Different Shades of Money

Let us begin with the obvious place: money. Bitcoin is often described as “digital gold”: valuable, scarce, and decentralised. It was designed to allow people to transact directly with one another, without banks in the middle. Other early cryptocurrencies, such as Litecoin, followed a similar path. Their sole purpose is to be money, stored and exchanged digitally.

Yet not all digital currencies are built this way. Stablecoins, for instance, look rather different. These are tokens designed to be tied to a real-world currency such as the US dollar. The idea is simple: if one token is always worth one dollar, it becomes far easier to use in everyday transactions. Businesses are increasingly adopting stablecoins for cross-border payments, precisely because they combine the efficiency of blockchain with the stability of traditional money.

At the more official end of the spectrum sit central bank digital currencies, or CBDCs. These are not speculative start-ups or community projects, but digital versions of national currencies issued by governments. China is already trialling a digital yuan, and the Bank of England is studying what a “digital pound” could look like. CBDCs may feel abstract today, but if rolled out at scale, they could alter the way every citizen interacts with money.

And then there are the lighter, more playful forms of currency: meme coins. Dogecoin began as a parody, yet it gathered a community, attracted celebrity endorsements, and at its peak was worth billions. It is not about financial fundamentals so much as cultural expression. Love them or loathe them, meme coins remind us that digital assets are shaped by people and communities as much as by technology.



## Platforms and Programmable Money

Ethereum took things further by building not just a currency, but a platform. Think of it as a vast digital computer, accessible anywhere in the world, on which anyone can build applications. Instead of being limited to sending and receiving tokens, developers can create software that executes automatically when conditions are met. These “smart contracts” make it possible to borrow, lend, insure, or trade without a bank, a broker, or even (in theory at least) a lawyer.

This idea of programmable money is perhaps the most transformative aspect of blockchain technology. The Ethereum network alone now supports thousands of decentralised applications, and other blockchains (Solana, Avalanche, Polkadot, to name a few) are competing to offer faster, cheaper or more flexible alternatives. Collectively, they are building an ecosystem in which assets are not static objects but dynamic tools.

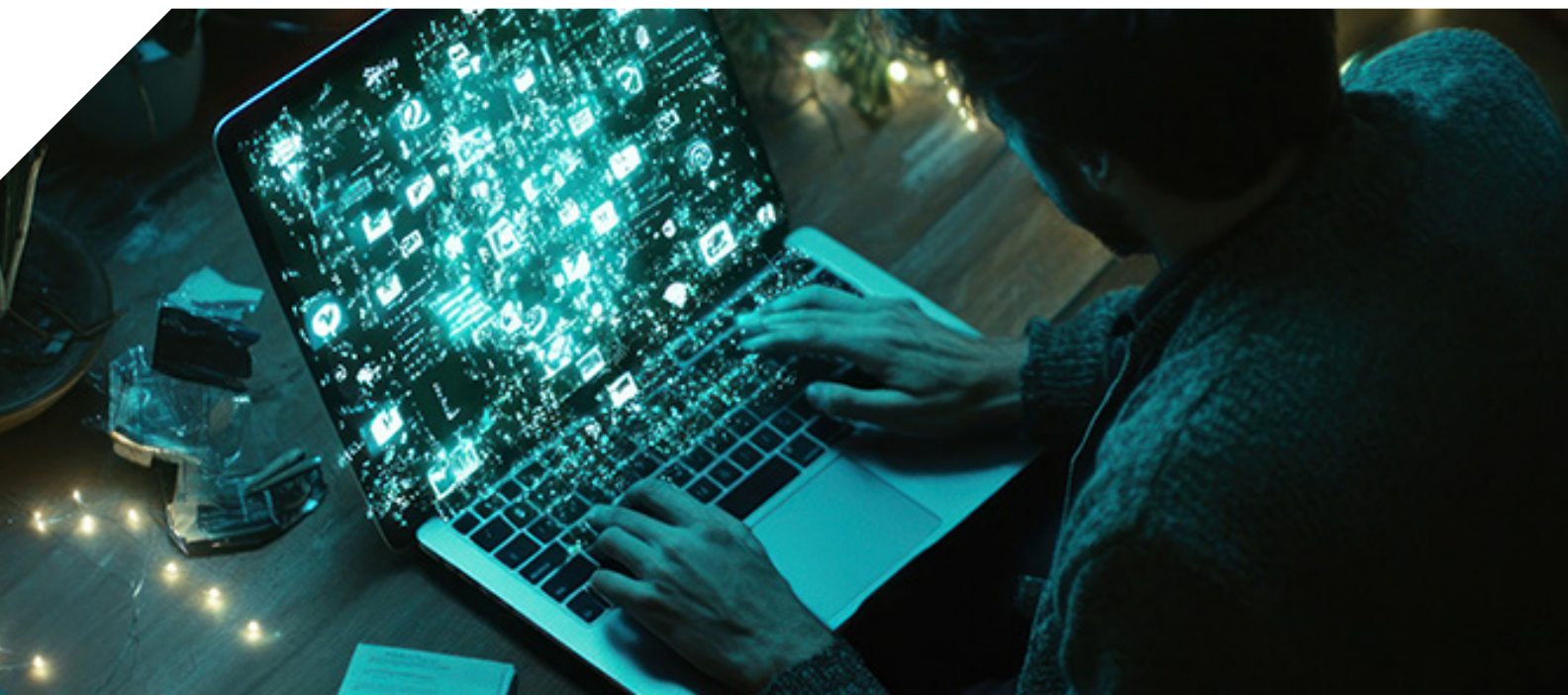


## NFTs: Beyond the Headlines

Few digital innovations have captured public imagination quite like NFTs, or non-fungible tokens. For some, they conjure images of pixelated art selling for millions. For others, they are little more than digital fads. The reality is more nuanced.

NFTs are simply a way to prove ownership of something unique in the digital world. That “something” could be a piece of art, but it could just as easily be a concert ticket, a property deed, or a digital identity credential. The point is that each NFT is unique, verifiable, and transferable.

It is worth stressing that NFTs are not just about speculative art markets. They hint at a world in which digital ownership can be trusted, portable, and embedded into daily life. Buying a ticket that you know cannot be forged, or proving ownership of an asset instantly across borders, are everyday examples that feel far closer to home.



## New Forms of Digital Assets

As the sector matures, entirely new categories of assets are emerging. Some tokens are designed to give you access to a service or platform; these are often called utility tokens. Others grant voting rights in a decentralised autonomous organisation (DAO), allowing communities to govern themselves without a central authority. These governance tokens represent a new form of corporate democracy, albeit one that is still very much in its infancy.

Alternatively, security tokens represent shares, bonds, or property, digitised and issued under regulation. These assets are bridging the gap between traditional finance and blockchain, bringing the efficiency of tokenisation to familiar markets. There is also a growing movement to tokenise real-world assets such as gold, real estate, or even fine wine. By making them digital, they become easier to trade and, crucially, easier to own in fractional amounts.

## Why This Matters

For those who do not follow the sector closely, it can be tempting to dismiss digital assets as little more than volatile tokens. Yet the reality is more complex and more interesting. Digital currencies are changing how value moves across borders. Programmable platforms are enabling entirely new forms of commerce. NFTs are redefining ownership in the digital world. Tokenisation is opening up markets that once seemed out of reach for ordinary investors.

You do not need to be a trader, a coder, or a policy-maker to be touched by these changes. In the near future, you may pay for goods with a digital pound, hold a digital certificate proving ownership of your car, or invest in fractional shares of an office block or community housing project through a regulated token. These possibilities are already being tested; it is only a question of when they become mainstream.

## Conclusion

The story of digital assets is not a single narrative but many. Some are about money, others about technology, others still about culture. Together, they illustrate a world in which value is created, stored, and exchanged in ways that were barely imaginable a generation ago.

Digital assets are not just “crypto”; they are building blocks of a new digital economy. And whether we embrace them as investors, regulators, or everyday users, they are likely to play an increasingly central role in our lives.

## For more information

please contact Debbie Guillou, CEO at Artemis:

**[info@artemisci.com](mailto:info@artemisci.com)**

Artemis Fiduciaries is the trading name for all companies within the Artemis Group, including Artemis Trustees Limited, PO Box 100, Plaza House, 5th Floor, Admiral Park, St Peter Port, Guernsey, GY1 3EL. Registered number: 38106. Artemis Trustees Limited is licensed by the Guernsey Financial Services Commission to conduct fiduciary business. GFSC reference: 134217.

This document is for informational purposes only and does not constitute financial, tax, legal, or investment advice. Artemis Fiduciaries accepts no liability for reliance on this content. Readers should seek professional advice before making any financial or legal decisions.