

25 Most Prominent Crypto Entrepreneurs, and Innovators ranked by net MarketCap



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Contents

Introduction.....	4
1. Changpeng Zhao (CZ)	5
Net MarketCap: \$37 billion	5
2. Brian Armstrong	5
Net MarketCap: \$3.5 billion	5
3. Chris Larsen.....	5
Net MarketCap: \$2.7 billion	5
4. Michael Saylor	6
Net MarketCap: \$2.5 billion	6
5. Jed McCaleb	6
Net MarketCap: \$2.4 billion	6
6. Peter Smith	7
Net MarketCap: \$2 billion	7
7. Jihan Wu	7
Net MarketCap: \$1.8 billion	7
8. Barry Silbert	8
Net MarketCap: \$1.6 billion	8
9. Tyler Winklevoss.....	8
Net MarketCap: \$1.4 billion	8
10. Cameron Winklevoss.....	9
Net MarketCap: \$1.4 billion	9
11. Tim Draper	9
Net MarketCap: \$1.2 billion	9
12. Justin Sun.....	10
Net MarketCap: \$1.1 billion	10
13. Vitalik Buterin.....	10
Net MarketCap: \$1 billion	10
14. Brad Garlinghouse.....	11
Net MarketCap: \$1 billion	11
15. Anthony Di Iorio.....	11
Net MarketCap: \$750 million.....	11
16. Brock Pierce	12
Net MarketCap: \$700 million.....	12
17. Dan Larimer	12
Net MarketCap: \$700 million.....	12

Date: Jan. 10th 2025

18.	Charles Hoskinson	13
	Net MarketCap: \$600 million.....	13
19.	Joseph Lubin	14
	Net MarketCap: \$500 million.....	14
20.	Arthur Hayes	14
	Net MarketCap: \$500 million.....	14
21.	Roger Ver	15
	Net MarketCap: \$500 million.....	15
22.	Sam Bankman-Fried	15
	Net MarketCap: \$250 million (down from \$26 billion pre-crash).....	15
23.	Erik Voorhees	16
	Net MarketCap: \$135 million.....	16
24.	Gavin Andresen	16
	Net MarketCap: \$100 million.....	16
25.	Andreas Antonopoulos	17
	Net MarketCap: \$50 million	17

Date: Jan. 10th 2025

Introduction

No industry has created such vast wealth, at least on paper, as the crypto industry, and in such a short timeframe.

However, the crypto industry has also caused a lot of controversy, including confrontations with authorities (e.g., the US SEC).

It is also highly unusual that the wealthiest person on this list, Changpeng Zhao (Net MarketCap ~\$37 billion), has actually served jail time, being found guilty of money laundering violations.

At the other end of the list, we find that Sam Bankman-Fried still holds a net market cap of ~\$250 million.

From ChatGPT:

“Sam Bankman-Fried, the founder of the cryptocurrency exchange FTX, was convicted on seven counts of fraud and conspiracy in November 2023. On March 28, 2024, he was sentenced to 25 years in federal prison. [AP News](#)

As of January 2025, Bankman-Fried is incarcerated at the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, New York. Reports indicate that he has been assigned to the same dormitory-style cell as rapper Sean Combs. [Wikipedia](#)

In addition to his prison sentence, Bankman-Fried was ordered to pay \$11.02 billion in forfeiture for his fraudulent activities. [Wikipedia](#)

Bankman-Fried has appealed his conviction and sentence, with the appeals process expected to take several years. [Wikipedia](#)”

The crypto industry still has a way to go to improve protection and counter money laundering and terror financing.

Another controversy is the power requirement needed for mining.

On the other hand, Bitcoin mining can also help fund renewable energy.

One company that has demonstrated this is the startup [Carnetic](#), which has made its wind turbine open-source/public domain and promotes the fact that “trapped” wind energy can be used for crypto mining, thereby helping fund renewable energy.

Bottom line: Crypto is still going strong, despite its high volatility. It still has some way to go before overtaking the gold marketcap (\$18T vs. Bitcoin \$1.85T, as of January 9, 2025).

Also, how Crypto and AI will play out is still to be seen.

Enjoy the list.

1. Changpeng Zhao (CZ)

Net MarketCap: \$37 billion

Age: 47 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Jiangsu, China

Background: Founder of Binance, the world's largest cryptocurrency exchange by trading volume.

Education: Studied Computer Science at McGill University.

Involvement in Startups: Previously worked at Blockchain.info and OKCoin. Founded Binance in 2017.

Controversies: Resigned in 2023 amid legal issues.

Issues with Authorities: Guilty of money laundering violations; served a four-month sentence.

WEB: <https://www.binance.com/en>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@cz_binance](#) 9.3M Followers

2. Brian Armstrong

Net MarketCap: \$3.5 billion

Age: 42 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: San Jose, California, USA

Background: Co-founder and CEO of Coinbase, a leading crypto exchange in the U.S.

Education: Bachelor's degree in Computer Science and Economics from Rice University.

Involvement in Startups: Former software engineer at Airbnb. Founded Coinbase in 2012.

Controversies: Criticized for discouraging political activism at work.

Issues with Authorities: Coinbase faces regulatory scrutiny from the SEC.

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@brian_armstrong](#) 1.4M Followers

3. Chris Larsen

Net MarketCap: \$2.7 billion

Age: 64 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: San Francisco, California, USA

Background: Co-founder of Ripple and a prominent figure in fintech.

Education: MBA from Stanford University.

Involvement in Startups: Co-founded Ripple Labs and E-Loan.

Controversies: Ripple faced SEC lawsuits over XRP token classification. Issues with

Authorities: Ongoing legal battles with the SEC.

WEB: <https://www.coinbase.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@chrislarsensf](#) 180.6K Followers

4. Michael Saylor

Net MarketCap: \$2.5 billion

Age: 60 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Lincoln, Nebraska, USA

Background: Co-founder and executive chairman of MicroStrategy, a business intelligence company. Known for his strong advocacy of Bitcoin.

Education: Degrees in Aeronautics and Astronautics as well as Science, Technology, and Society from MIT.

Involvement in Startups: Transformed MicroStrategy into a major Bitcoin-holding corporation.

Controversies: Faced allegations of misleading investors, leading to an SEC investigation in 2000.

Issues with Authorities: SEC settlement in the early 2000s over financial reporting.

WEB: <https://www.microstrategy.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@saylor](#) 3.9M Followers

5. Jed McCaleb

Net MarketCap: \$2.4 billion

Age: 50 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Fayetteville, Arkansas, USA

Background: Co-founder of Ripple and Stellar, and creator of the Mt. Gox Bitcoin exchange.

Education: Attended UC Berkeley but dropped out.

Involvement in Startups: Founded eDonkey, Mt. Gox, Ripple, and Stellar.

Controversies: Mt. Gox was hacked after McCaleb sold it; Ripple faced SEC lawsuits.

Issues with Authorities: No direct legal actions against McCaleb personally.

WEB: <https://stellar.org/foundation/team> <https://www.vastspace.com/> <https://astera.org/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@JedMcCaleb](#) 70.2K Followers

6. Peter Smith

Net MarketCap: \$2 billion

Age: 35 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Unknown

Background: CEO and co-founder of Blockchain.com, one of the most popular crypto wallet services.

Education: Studied International Political Economy at King's College London.

Involvement in Startups: Played a crucial role in the widespread adoption of crypto wallets.

Controversies: None reported.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://www.blockchain.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@OneMorePeter](#) **50.8K Followers**

7. Jihan Wu

Net MarketCap: \$1.8 billion

Age: 39 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Chongqing, China

Background: Co-founder of Bitmain, one of the largest manufacturers of Bitcoin mining equipment.

Education: Degree in Economics from Peking University.

Involvement in Startups: Helped make Bitcoin mining accessible and profitable for large-scale operations.

Controversies: Internal power struggles at Bitmain, leading to his eventual resignation.

Issues with Authorities: Faced regulatory challenges in China regarding cryptocurrency mining.

WEB: <https://m.bitmain.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: Not publicly active.

8. Barry Silbert

Net MarketCap: \$1.6 billion

Age: 48 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Gaithersburg, Maryland, USA

Background: Founder and CEO of Digital Currency Group (DCG), which invests in blockchain and cryptocurrency companies.

Education: Bachelor's degree in Finance from Emory University.

Involvement in Startups: Founded DCG in 2015, which owns Grayscale and CoinDesk.

Controversies: DCG faced scrutiny after the collapse of Genesis Global, a subsidiary.

Issues with Authorities: No direct legal issues reported.

WEB: <https://dcg.co/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@BarrySilbert](#) 769.6K Followers

9. Tyler Winklevoss

Net MarketCap: \$1.4 billion

Age: 43 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Southampton, New York, USA

Background: Co-founder of Gemini, a cryptocurrency exchange, and early Bitcoin investor.

Education: Economics degree from Harvard University and MBA from Oxford.

Involvement in Startups: Co-founded Gemini with his twin brother Cameron.

Controversies: Famous legal battle with Mark Zuckerberg over Facebook.

Issues with Authorities: No major legal issues.

WEB: <https://marssafarico.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@tyler](#) 1M Followers

10. Cameron Winklevoss

Net MarketCap: \$1.4 billion

Age: 43 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Southampton, New York, USA

Background: Co-founder of Gemini and early Bitcoin investor.

Education: Economics degree from Harvard University and MBA from Oxford.

Involvement in Startups: Co-founded Gemini with his twin brother Tyler.

Controversies: Legal battle with Mark Zuckerberg over Facebook.

Issues with Authorities: No major legal issues.

WEB: <https://www.gemini.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@cameron](#) 738.8K Followers

11. Tim Draper

Net MarketCap: \$1.2 billion

Age: 66 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: San Francisco, California, USA

Background: Prominent venture capitalist and early investor in Bitcoin and blockchain startups.

Education: MBA from Harvard Business School.

Involvement in Startups: Early investor in companies like Skype, Tesla, and Coinbase.

Controversies: Known for bold Bitcoin price predictions and outspoken personality.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://www.draper.vc/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@TimDraper](#) 260.5K Followers

12. Justin Sun

Net MarketCap: \$1.1 billion

Age: 34 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Xining, China

Background: Founder of TRON, a blockchain-based platform, and CEO of BitTorrent.

Education: Master's degree in Political Economy from the University of Pennsylvania.

Involvement in Startups: Played a major role in TRON's growth and its acquisition of BitTorrent.

Controversies: Justin Sun has faced criticism for aggressive marketing tactics and exaggerating partnerships.

Extravagant Spending: Sun's high-profile expenditures have also drawn attention:

- \$6.2 million for Maurizio Cattelan's banana artwork, "Comedian," which he later ate.
- \$4.6 million for a charity lunch with Warren Buffett to promote cryptocurrency.
- \$28 million for a Blue Origin spaceflight ticket, although he did not fly.
- \$30 million invested in World Liberty Financial, associated with Donald Trump.

These instances of lavish spending may be part of his broader marketing strategy to boost visibility for himself and his ventures.

Issues with Authorities: Faced scrutiny from Chinese authorities for financial activities.

WEB: <https://sunpump.meme/> <https://www.htx.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@justinsuntron](#) 3.7M Followers

13. Vitalik Buterin

Net MarketCap: \$1 billion

Age: 30 (as of 2024)

Place of Birth: Kolomna, Russia

Background: Co-founder of Ethereum, a decentralized platform for smart contracts.

Education: Dropped out of the University of Waterloo after receiving the Thiel Fellowship.

Involvement in Startups: Co-founded Ethereum in 2013. Also co-founded Bitcoin Magazine.

Controversies: Criticized leaders prioritizing profits over values.

Issues with Authorities: None known; Ethereum faces regulatory discussions.

WEB:

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@VitalikButerin](#) 5.6M Followers

14. Brad Garlinghouse

Net MarketCap: \$1 billion

Age: 54 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Topeka, Kansas, USA **Background:** CEO of Ripple, known for advancing blockchain technology in cross-border payments.

Education: MBA from Harvard Business School.

Involvement in Startups: Former senior positions at AOL and Yahoo! before joining Ripple.

Controversies: Ripple faces an ongoing SEC lawsuit over the classification of XRP.

Issues with Authorities: Ripple's SEC lawsuit remains a significant legal battle.

WEB: <https://ripple.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@bgarlinghouse](#) 1M Followers

15. Anthony Di Iorio

Net MarketCap: \$750 million

Age: 49 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Toronto, Canada

Background: Co-founder of Ethereum and founder of Decentral, Jaxx, and other blockchain projects.

Education: Degree in Marketing from Ryerson University.

Involvement in Startups: Played a significant role in the early development of Ethereum and founded several blockchain ventures.

Controversies: No major controversies reported.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://www.andiami.org/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@diorioanthony](#) 34.9K Followers

16. Brock Pierce

Net MarketCap: \$700 million

Age: 44 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Minnesota, USA

Background: Entrepreneur and early adopter of cryptocurrency. Former child actor turned blockchain advocate.

Education: Did not pursue formal higher education.

Involvement in Startups: Co-founded Blockchain Capital, Tether, and EOS Alliance.

Controversies: Faced lawsuits and allegations related to his past business dealings but denies wrongdoing.

Issues with Authorities: None currently reported.

WEB: <https://dollaronationclub.com/?r=Brock>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@brockpierce](#) 88.1K Followers

17. Dan Larimer

Net MarketCap: \$700 million

Age: 42 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Colorado, USA

Background: Creator of BitShares, Steem, and EOS. A pioneer in the development of decentralized platforms.

Education: Studied Computer Science at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.

Involvement in Startups: Co-founded multiple blockchain platforms, including Block.one, which developed EOS.

Controversies: Criticized for moving between projects without fully completing them.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://moreequalanimals.com/> <https://steemit.com/hive.blog> <https://bitshares.org/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@bytemaster7](#) 59.5K Followers

18. Charles Hoskinson

Net MarketCap: \$600 million

Age: 38 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Hawaii, USA **Background:** Founder of Cardano and co-founder of Ethereum. Known for his emphasis on academic rigor in blockchain development.

Education: Studied Mathematics and Cryptography at the University of Colorado.

Involvement in Startups: Co-founded Ethereum and later founded IOHK, the company behind Cardano.

Controversies: Criticized for disputes with the Ethereum team and slow rollout of Cardano features.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://iohk.io/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@IOHK_Charles](#) 1M Followers

19. Joseph Lubin

Net MarketCap: \$500 million

Age: 60 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Toronto, Canada **Background:** Co-founder of Ethereum and founder of ConsenSys, a blockchain technology company.

Education: Electrical Engineering and Computer Science degree from Princeton University.

Involvement in Startups: Played a pivotal role in Ethereum and established ConsenSys as a leader in blockchain development.

Controversies: Criticized for ConsenSys's internal practices and financial transparency.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://consensys.io/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@ethereumJoseph](#) 320.3K Followers

20. Arthur Hayes

Net MarketCap: \$500 million

Age: 39 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Detroit, Michigan, USA

Background: Co-founder and former CEO of BitMEX, a cryptocurrency derivatives exchange.

Education: Degree in Economics from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School.

Involvement in Startups: Played a key role in popularizing cryptocurrency futures trading.

Controversies: BitMEX faced allegations of money laundering and regulatory violations.

Issues with Authorities: Pleaded guilty to violating the Bank Secrecy Act, resulting in a fine and probation.

WEB: <https://maelstrom.fund/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@CryptoHayes](#) 591.9K Followers

21. Roger Ver

Net MarketCap: \$500 million

Age: 46 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: San Jose, California, USA **Background:** Known as "Bitcoin Jesus," an early promoter of Bitcoin and later Bitcoin Cash.

Education: Did not complete formal higher education.

Involvement in Startups: Early investor in blockchain startups like Blockchain.info and Ripple.

Controversies: Advocated for Bitcoin Cash, leading to divisions in the crypto community.

Issues with Authorities: Served time in prison in 2002 for selling illegal explosives online.

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

WEB: <https://RogerVer.com>

Active Social Platforms: X [@rogerkver](#) 756.2K Followers

22. Sam Bankman-Fried

Net MarketCap: \$250 million (down from \$26 billion pre-crash)

Age: 33 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Stanford, California, USA

Background: Founder of FTX, a cryptocurrency exchange and trading platform.

Education: Degree in Physics from MIT.

Involvement in Startups: Founded Alameda Research and FTX.

Controversies: FTX faced liquidity issues, leading to bankruptcy in 2022.

Issues with Authorities: Facing multiple investigations for fraud.

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@SBF_FTX](#) 964.7K Followers

23. Erik Voorhees

Net MarketCap: \$135 million

Age: 39 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Colorado, USA

Background: Founder of ShapeShift, a cryptocurrency exchange platform.

Education: Studied at University of Puget Sound.

Involvement in Startups: Founded Coinapult and ShapeShift.

Controversies: Faced regulatory scrutiny over ShapeShift's operations.

Issues with Authorities: Fined by the SEC in 2014 for unregistered securities offerings.

WEB: <https://venice.ai/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@ErikVoorhees](#)

24. Gavin Andresen

Net MarketCap: \$100 million

Age: 58 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: Melbourne, Australia

Background: Lead developer for Bitcoin after Satoshi Nakamoto stepped back. Played a key role in Bitcoin's early development.

Education: Bachelor's degree in Computer Science from Princeton University.

Involvement in Startups: Focused on Bitcoin-related projects and foundations.

Controversies: Criticized for his support of Craig Wright's claim to be Satoshi Nakamoto.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://gavinthink.blogspot.com>

Contact Information: @gavinandresen 176.9K Followers

Active Social Platforms: Not publicly active.

Date: Jan. 10th 2025

25. Andreas Antonopoulos

Net MarketCap: \$50 million

Age: 51 (as of 2025)

Place of Birth: London, UK

Background: Educator and author, widely respected for his books and talks on Bitcoin and blockchain technology.

Education: Degree in Computer Science from University College London.

Involvement in Startups: Not involved in major startups but focuses on education and advocacy.

Controversies: None reported.

Issues with Authorities: None reported.

WEB: <https://aantonop.com/>

Contact Information: Not publicly available.

Active Social Platforms: X [@aantonop](#) [775.1K Followers](#)