Blockchain technology isn’t just for crypto-currencies and reclusive, anonymous software developers! With its capability to ensure authentication and provenance, its private key/public key transaction security, and its ability to show proof-of-work, blockchain is ideal for situations where user identity and chain-of-ownership must be identified and ensured.

The JPL Library is especially interested in blockchain technology use in the peer reviewed scholarly publishing process, specifically contrasting optimum application scenarios with its limitations – when it’s best employed and when use of the technology can be counterproductive. JPL Librarians work with scientists, authors, and administrators to help shape policy and guidelines surrounding issues in 21st century scientific publishing: preprint servers, public-facing data repositories, ORCiD, and open access publishing. We see applications for blockchain technology in many of these areas, but we must also take a measured, long-view, approach.

While this area of interest is still developing, JPL is actively partnering with other organizations on Lab, namely Documentation Review, the Engineering and Science Directorate, and the Office of the Chief Scientist, to enable infusing blockchain into the 21st century scholarly publishing process in order to help our authors more effectively share their discoveries.

Caroline M Coward, MLIS

Library Group Supervisor

