

## getting started with cryptocurrencies

Bitcoin's source code is open source, it serves as an audit tool for the Bitcoin protocol and it also means that anybody with a bit of programming skills can take the code, modify it a bit and release their own personal altcoin. This is an ongoing process and there are already over 200 cryptocurrencies available, also known as altcoins. Most of them will not survive on the long term, but some of them are fantastic new altcoins, improving on the whole Bitcoin project. Bitcoin has a few things that need to be improved and altcoins could address many of the following:



- transaction speed – the lower the better
- transaction fee – the lower the better
- protocol security – the more encryption the better
- improved blockchain and better mining algorithm

A good place where altcoins are being announced and discussed is [here](#). Some people make money with that, because they spot a great and promising altcoin, then buy massive amounts at extremely low prices and shortly after the altcoin takes off and at the peak of its price, they dump a huge amount of coins on the market, crashing the price and leaving many people crying after their lost money. This is the bad thing about altcoins: they have an extremely low market share and are being manipulated by greedy entities. Altcoin trading is a separate subject and I've written an article [here](#).

Do we really need any kind of altcoins? Absolutely not. One would suffice. However, since Bitcoin is getting most of the the flack from the current dinosaur fiat system which tries to bring it down, and knowing that many Bitcoin features can be improved, then it makes sense to have a few other altcoins around, in case Bitcoin will not make it or will get stuck in a spiral of unfortunate events.

### How to choose altcoins?

Well, tough question. Whatever you choose, the first thing you need to do is read about it on forums, then check that altcoin on [bitcointalk.org](#), [reddit.com](#), Twitter and of course its main website. See what that altcoin brings in terms of how the website is designed, transaction speed, protocol encryption, how many total coins, mining algorithm, what do people think about it, what do miners say about it, is there anything new and unique that this coin offers?



There are many assessments that need to be made and it becomes increasingly difficult to know for sure. But whatever you do, try avoiding trolls who try to kill any altcoin. If some people talk bad about a certain altcoin but do not bring any arguments to back their claims, you may need to look into that altcoin. If other people keep screaming to buy that coin because it's "going to da moon", but they do not provide any kind of reasoning to back those claims, than I would suggest you let that one slide.

A valuable altcoin must have an Android wallet (or at least one in the making), a few thousands subscribers on Reddit with active daily posts, many projects in the making, video animations, beautiful website, updated desktop wallet, and so on. You must be able to clearly see, without a shadow of a doubt, what are the advantages of that particular altcoin and how the community and its original developers are working together to improve it.

But even if you do that, expect a continuous price fluctuation. There are so-called "whales", people with large amounts of money who pump and dump many altcoins. Before choosing a new altcoin, you must check its price history and see what was the overall top and bottom price, that way you can get a better idea if it has been pumped and dumped.

## How to start trading?

Once you buy BTC with fiat money, you can easily start trading altcoins on any of the existing (and ever expanding) pool of online exchanges. The most notable online exchange is [cryptsy.com](#). It has the highest number of cryptocurrencies available, but this exchange is sometimes experiencing slowdowns or weird website issues. Another promising example is [Kraken](#) but I don't have hand-on experience with it and [MintPal](#).



Most other exchanges are growing, but some have been hacked and closed down. Cryptsy has managed to not only stay afloat, but kept improving its services continually. It did have some problems in the past and it sometimes has delays in processing some cryptos. IE: Vertcoin transfers may take a really long time and some orders can't be canceled unless you refresh the page many times. Overall it's worth it, but only until a better exchange comes along.

## Cryptos mean to die

The trend of new cryptocurrencies continued in early 2014 with over 200 available and growing on a daily basis. You can check [coinmarketcap.com](#) to see about 100 of them, but this is just a fraction of all the coins in existence. I have carefully studied this trend on a daily basis and managed to not only do some extremely poor investments in cryptocurrencies that were meant to die, but also realized about 95% of the altcoins market is pure junk, garbage, trash, rubbish.



I was pretty disappointed overall, because when I got comfortable with the cryptocurrencies trend I just wanted to find a place to hold my savings, a place where I could be free of banking and corporate greed. Little did I know the cryptocurrency market is by far more volatile and excessively aggressive in price manipulation and overall speculation than fiat money. It's the Wild West of currencies, it's not a safe place to be, not just yet. The whole crypto world is created based on a noble idea, to free people of banking shackles and that works great, but this also allows for many greedy entities to capitalize on the gullible people who think they discovered the Mecca of currencies, that brave new world were we're finally free.

Fortunately there is hope, though covered in blood and tears, but hope nonetheless. Some notable altcoins have managed to not only absorb the damage of market manipulation, but also to get more and more adoption in the crypto world. Some of them are: [Litecoin](#) (a bit questionable now), [Quarkcoin](#), [Vertcoin](#), [Namecoin](#), [Dogecoin](#) and a few others. These altcoins actually bring something new to the table, they improve the whole crypto concept, they have active supporters and pretty big communities. But all of them went through the same ruthless price manipulation.

## Wrap-up

Don't let a handful of greedy people ruin the chance we have for a better future in terms of how money works. Cryptocurrencies bring us the freedom we need from the corporate selfish banks who control, regulate and tax everything we do, while at the same time they print money out of thin air and lend imaginary money with interest ([quantitative easing](#)) and are involved in insider tradings and various market manipulations.

Cryptocurrencies bring us the liberty to decide who we should send our money to with little or no fees, in a matter of minutes, regardless of the time and day, without the need of a central authority or any third party. A good example of this is how Master Card, Visa and Paypal [froze the accounts of WikiLeaks](#) with no legal reason, but now most of [donations](#) get to them in Bitcoin and Litecoin, which means corporations can no longer crush activists who need financial support.