



Go-Crypto

Digital Assets Investigations

A Non-Profit project of Go Mobile Education Zone

CRYPTOCURRENCY & BLOCKCHAIN INVESTIGATION GLOSSARY

PLAIN-LANGUAGE DEFINITIONS • A-Z

A free educational resource for individuals, attorneys,
law enforcement, and financial professionals.

GO-CRYPTO.ORG

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About this glossary

Cryptocurrency terms can be unfamiliar, especially in matters involving fraud, blockchain tracing, financial records, divorce, and digital asset ownership. Go-Crypto created this free resource to make commonly used technical and investigative terms easier to understand.

Definitions are intended as general educational explanations. Terms may have different technical or legal implications depending on the network, provider, and facts involved. A wallet address, transaction, or service connection does not automatically establish ownership, intent, or wrongdoing.

Browse alphabetically

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A

Address Attribution The process of associating a blockchain address with a wallet, service, entity, or individual using available evidence. Attribution does not, by itself, establish legal ownership or control.

Address Clustering An analytical technique that groups addresses potentially controlled by the same entity, based on transaction patterns and other evidence. Results can be uncertain.

Asset Discovery The identification of additional wallets, assets, services, accounts, or transaction paths suggested by the evidence examined.

Asset Dissipation The expenditure, transfer, reduction, or disposition of assets. Whether activity constitutes legally relevant dissipation is a question for counsel or a court.

Asset Snapshot A summary of identified digital asset holdings and estimated values at a specified date and time.

B

Blockchain A distributed digital ledger recording transactions and other information in cryptographically linked blocks.

Blockchain Explorer A tool for viewing publicly available blockchain transactions, addresses, blocks, and related records.

Blockchain Forensics The analysis of blockchain data and supporting evidence to examine asset movement, transaction relationships, and investigative leads.

Blockchain Network The participants, software, and rules maintaining a particular blockchain.

Bridge (Cross-Chain Bridge) A protocol or service that facilitates transferring or representing digital assets between blockchain networks. Mechanisms differ by bridge.

C

Centralized Exchange (CEX) A service-operated cryptocurrency platform that facilitates trading and may hold assets or maintain customer accounts.

Cold Wallet A wallet whose private keys are kept offline or isolated from internet-connected systems.

Consolidation Transaction A transaction or series of transactions combining assets from several addresses or outputs into fewer destinations.

Counterparty A person, entity, service, account, or address on the other side of a transaction or otherwise involved in the activity examined.

Cross-Chain Transaction Activity moving or exchanging assets, or representations of assets, between blockchain networks.

Cryptocurrency A digital asset employing cryptography and generally recorded or transferred using blockchain or related distributed-ledger technology.

Custodial Wallet An arrangement in which a third-party service manages private keys or holds digital assets for a customer.

D

Decentralized Exchange (DEX) A blockchain-based protocol that facilitates token trading, often using smart contracts.

Decentralized Finance (DeFi) Blockchain-based financial applications such as lending, borrowing, trading, staking, and liquidity provision.

Digital Asset A digital representation of value or rights; in these materials, primarily cryptocurrencies and blockchain-based tokens.

Disclosure Gap A missing item, discrepancy, or unresolved question identified when comparing disclosed information with other records or blockchain activity. It does not alone establish concealment.

Dormant Assets Assets associated with addresses or outputs that show no observed outgoing movement within a defined period. Dormancy does not establish abandonment or recoverability.

E

Exchange Deposit A cryptocurrency transfer to an address associated with an exchange. The receiving exchange account holder may not be identifiable from the blockchain alone.

Exchange Withdrawal A cryptocurrency transfer from an exchange-controlled account or address to another blockchain address.

F

Fiat Currency Government-issued currency, such as the U.S. dollar.

Fiat On-Ramp A service or process for converting traditional currency into cryptocurrency.

Fiat Off-Ramp A service or process for converting cryptocurrency into traditional currency.

Financial Reconciliation Comparing financial and transaction records to account for relevant amounts, identify differences, and avoid double-counting.

Freeze or Blacklist A restriction imposed by an issuer, service, or other authorized mechanism that may block transfers or access to particular assets or accounts.

G

Gas Fee A network fee paid for transaction processing or smart-contract operations on certain blockchains.

H

Hot Wallet A wallet with a key-management or signing environment accessible through an internet-connected system.

I

Investigative Lead Information suggesting an address, account, transaction, person, entity, or service that may warrant additional examination.

K

Know Your Customer (KYC) Identity-verification and due-diligence procedures used by certain financial institutions and virtual asset service providers.

L

Liquidity Pool Digital assets contributed to a protocol to facilitate functions such as token swaps, lending, or borrowing.

M

Material Inflows and Outflows Incoming or outgoing transactions considered significant to the questions and scope of an investigation.

Mixer or Mixing Service A tool, service, or protocol that can obscure links between cryptocurrency sources and destinations. Use alone does not establish wrongdoing.

Multi-Signature Wallet A wallet requiring more than one authorized cryptographic signature for particular transactions.

N

Non-Custodial Wallet A wallet arrangement in which the user or designated controller manages the private keys rather than a custodial provider.

Non-Fungible Token (NFT) A token associated with a distinct identifier and often used to represent or reference a particular digital item or right.

O

Off-Chain Activity Activity not individually recorded on a public blockchain, such as an internal exchange ledger transfer.

On-Chain Activity Transactions, token movements, smart-contract interactions, and other events recorded on a blockchain.

Open-Source Intelligence (OSINT) Collection and analysis of lawfully accessible public information to identify relevant entities, relationships, and leads.

P

Portfolio Valuation An estimate of identified asset holdings at a documented date and time using specified prices and balance evidence.

Private Key Secret cryptographic information that permits authorization of transactions or control over associated digital assets.

Public Key Cryptographic information related to a private key that can be used in some blockchain systems to verify signatures.

R

Records Gap Review Comparison of available records and disclosures with identified activity to locate missing documentation, incomplete periods, or unresolved inconsistencies.

Recovery Phrase (Seed Phrase) Words used by many wallet systems to restore cryptographic keys. Disclosure may enable unauthorized control of assets.

S

Smart Contract Software deployed to a blockchain that executes programmed functions.

Source-of-Funds Analysis Review of transaction history and available records to examine where specific assets or their funding originated.

Stablecoin A token designed to reference the value of an asset such as the U.S. dollar; its market value is not guaranteed.

Staking Participation in certain blockchain or protocol arrangements using committed or delegated assets, sometimes with rewards.

Swap An exchange of one cryptocurrency or token for another through a service or protocol.

T

Token A digital asset represented on a blockchain, commonly through a smart contract.

Token Approval Authorization given to a smart contract or address to transfer or use tokens subject to specified conditions.

Transaction Hash (TXID) A transaction identifier used to locate or reference a transaction on its blockchain.

Transaction Timeline A chronological presentation of relevant transactions, communications, records, and events.

Transaction Tracing Following transfers and related activity through blockchain addresses, outputs, services, or protocols.

Transaction Fee A charge associated with processing a blockchain transaction or operation.

U

Unspent Transaction Output (UTXO) An output of a previous transaction not yet spent, available for use as an input on UTXO-based blockchains such as Bitcoin.

Use-of-Funds Analysis Analysis of how specified assets were transferred, exchanged, deployed, or otherwise used based on available evidence.

V

Valuation Date The date, and when relevant the time, used to calculate estimated asset values.

Vector of Compromise A suspected pathway or method used to obtain unauthorized access or authorization, such as phishing or malicious approvals.

Virtual Asset Service Provider (VASP) A person or business providing certain virtual asset services, including exchange, transfer, or custody, as defined by the relevant regulatory framework.

W

Wallet A hardware, software, or other arrangement for managing cryptographic keys and interacting with digital assets. One wallet may manage multiple addresses.

Wallet Address A blockchain identifier for receiving or interacting with assets; it does not independently identify an owner.

Wallet Attribution Analysis associating a wallet or address with an entity or person using available evidence, subject to evidentiary limitations.

Wallet Monitoring Observation of specified addresses for publicly visible incoming, outgoing, or other relevant blockchain activity.

Wallet & Portfolio Review Review of specified wallets and available records to summarize assets, balances, relevant activity, and estimated values.

Z

Zero-Knowledge Proof A cryptographic method for proving a statement without revealing specified underlying information.

How to interpret investigative terminology

The identification of a wallet, address, transaction, or service is not, by itself, proof of a person's identity, account ownership, beneficial ownership, or legal responsibility. Investigative findings should be considered alongside the supporting records, analytical assumptions, time period, and limitations documented in the case.

Go-Crypto provides digital asset education and investigative support, not legal opinions about marital property classification, asset dissipation, liability, or entitlement to recovery. Consult appropriately qualified legal professionals for those determinations.

Continue learning with Go-Crypto

Explore free cryptocurrency education and professional resources at [Go-Crypto.org](https://www.go-crypto.org/), including information about fraud prevention, blockchain tracing, wallet activity, and digital asset matters.

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