



## **Janssens and Harper Elected to Bitcoin Foundation Board after Lengthy, Chaotic Election Process**

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The process was “messy” but the results are in.

The new board members for the Bitcoin Foundation are Olivier Janssens and Jim Harper with 63% and 60% approval respectively. Michael Perklin finished third with 52% approval followed by Bruce Fenton with 50%.

Out of 595 confirmed voters, 440 votes were cast (74%). In order to be elected, candidates had to be approved by at least 50% of eligible voters. In the first round of voting, none of the 13 candidates met that 50% approval threshold, so a run-off election among the top 4 candidates was held.

Olivier Janssens, a libertarian and voluntaryist, ran on a platform of decentralizing core development, bringing full transparency to the Foundation, and focusing on widespread adoption of bitcoin around the world.

Jim Harper brings an extensive breadth of knowledge and experience to the position. He is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute, where he focuses on privacy, telecommunications, intellectual property, security, government transparency, and digital currency. In 2014, Harris served as Global Policy Counsel for the Bitcoin Foundation.

Janssens and Harper will begin their two-year term officially on March 15, 2015.

In statements released to members and posted on the Bitcoin Foundation blog, Brian Goss, Elections Committee Chairman thanked members for their participation. “From members to bystanders, we appreciate all the feedback and suggestions for improvement along the way.” Patrick Murck, Executive Director of the Bitcoin Foundation added, “I look forward to working with our newly elected board members, and congratulations to every candidate for your active participation.”

The run-off election began on February 25, accompanied by confusion and outrage from its members. While the first round of voting had been held using the Helios voting platform, at the eleventh hour, a new on-blockchain platform run by Swarm was suddenly introduced. Amidst concerns over security, lack of clarity and transparency, system integrity, and voter disenfranchisement, the Foundation heeded the candidates' unanimous request for a restart. Votes cast on the Swarm platform were discarded and the process began again the next day, using the former Helios system. The voting period was extended by a day and concluded on Saturday.

In response to the decision to move the election back to the Helios platform, Murck said, ““This clearly struck a nerve with folks that think blockchain technology should only be used for transferring Bitcoin and not other [applications] like voting. [It] sparked a debate on how people use the blockchain.”

The majority of the criticism on the Bitcoin Foundation forum, however, focussed on the poorly managed process rather than on the concept of on-blockchain voting itself.

Not that there wasn't concern over the principle idea. Core developer Peter Todd was critical of the on-blockchain concept from the start. As he stated in an email to *Bitcoin Magazine*, “The big picture is that voting generally already involves a central entity — the organization — so the decentralisation that the blockchain gives you isn't needed. What you do need is strong auditing of the honesty of that central entity, which is a problem that's already well studied, and has some really nice solutions that are only available in systems with a central entity.”

Todd also raised concerns about the inherently public nature of the blockchain and the difficulty that poses in maintaining secret ballots, as well as the potential for miners to reject ballots that they don't agree with.

“While there are ways around this problem,” he concluded, “why bother when better non-blockchain voting schemes like Helios already exist and have undergone peer review?”