Audio Lockdown v2.wav

Charles Miller [00:00:00] Brad Jasper is an American developer with a track record of creating interesting projects, everything from an app to turn videos into podcasts to a website to help remote workers.

Charles Miller [00:00:12] Now he's focussing on Bitcoin SV and his latest project is Bit.sv, a platform for creators, whether they're coaches, journalists, artists or traders, allowing them to offer premium content, monetised with Bitcoin SV.

Voiceover [00:00:29] You're listening to CoinGeek conversations with Charles Miller.

Charles Miller [00:00:37] So, Brad, thank you very much for doing this. Thank you for having me. Now let's talk about your latest project, which is Bit.sv. For those who haven't seen it, just tell me what that is.

Brad Jasper [00:00:47] Bit.sv is a platform for creators to earn money from their interest. The big idea is that it's actually pretty difficult to do this on the Internet today. Most creators make money from advertising. With advertising, you need relatively large audiences. And that's actually pretty difficult to grow for most creators. So the kind of niche content that a lot of people are interested in, the long tail content where a lot of the stuff kind of bubbles up into the mainstream, it's really difficult to make a living doing that kind of thing. And so you don't get a lot of it, you don't get as much of it as you otherwise would. Bit.SV is really a platform to incentivize the kind of, you know, interesting, weird, fun, cool content that we all really want, but it's difficult to make the time for.

Charles Miller [00:01:28] With your project and others that are available or being developed for Bitcoin SV, my question is always: it's easy to see what's in it for the people who are creating, and that there's some money there. How are you going to get people to pay for stuff which they think they should have for free, i.e. not really free, but advertising-supported on the |nternet?

Brad Jasper [00:01:48] Yeah, it's a really, really important question. The way that I've been thinking about it is the content just has to be better. It has to be better than anything you can get anywhere online for free. And there's gonna be pockets that I think are going to be better than others. Eventually want to do all kinds of content. In the early days it's more difficult, I think, to make money from. like, entertainment and art because it doesn't really solve a big pain point in people's lives and that tends to be what they're willing to pay for. So in the early days, I mean, it's kinda like painkillers or vitamins, it's something that really is solving a need in people's lives. And it's not always about being the best writer. It's about kind of taking them solutions and thinking about how to how to improve their life. And so I think people are willing to pay for that, especially with, you know, the abundance of information. You have to spend your time to start going through this stuff and it takes a lot of time to sort. So there's a few different ways that I think people can can kind of justify these costs, making it a lot easier to digest. You don't have to spend as much time putting it in people's language. So if you're a yoga teacher, not just doing yoga, but yoga for programmers who spend 10 hours a day at the computer. Putting things in people's language adds value for them and people I think are willing to pay for that.

Charles Miller [00:02:59] Are you going to approach content producers or will you just hope that they will find this platform?

Brad Jasper [00:03:06] I'm approaching a handful of creators. I've onboarded a few dozen creators to the site already. We've been kind of doing alpha testing, now starting to roll it out into a wider kind of beta where we're introducing more people. I'm also though just of the mind that we just might have to show people rather than kind of telling them. Once they see other people doing this and the kinds of content that you can create and the fact that people are buying it, and that that means that you as a creator can now go and do even more interesting stuff, bigger, you know, stuff like that. I think it's going to be a challenge, but I think there's a big opportunity to solve this for creators.

Charles Miller [00:03:41] If I buy something on the platform, do I then have access to it permanently?

Brad Jasper [00:03:46] Yes.

Charles Miller [00:03:47] And so I would always need to go to the platform and log in as myself, and then it'll know what I should be able to see for free.

Charles Miller [00:03:55] Yeah. So there is a way to log into the platform, but a pretty big feature of the platform is actually you don't have to be signed up or logged in to use it. And so the way that we would do that is just through capturing emails. And then once you enter your email, you'll always be able to gain access to that content. So kind of similar, but the idea is to make it really so that you don't have this huge hurdle to jump over. You're just finding content that you like. You engage with it. And then there's there's easy ways to save it.

Charles Miller [00:04:20] And will it be a chance to sample things for free before you buy?

Brad Jasper [00:04:25] Absolutely. So with the paywalls that we've built, there's ways to put information before. And so you can do as long you can do it like a 90 percent free post and then just the end, maybe a forward thinking statement or, you know, some kind of like really valuable thing. You can make 100 percent of it paid. It's really up to the creators. We're giving them tools to be able to experiment. And so just like any market, you're going to have different activities in different places. And so we expect that most posts will have some kind of preview just to kind of give people some context of what's there. But there might also just be kind of like a longer term play here, which is, you know, people aren't as willing to give you money when they don't know you, whereas if you'ver built a relationship with them than they are. And so maybe some of the posts will start out free. That kind of attracts initial users and then it converts into some of the other paid posts.

Charles Miller [00:05:15] And what about the sort of community aspect of it? Will you have comments and reputations and so on?

Brad Jasper [00:05:21] Yeah, I've been thinking a lot about this. We already have comments and reputation is something that is a little tricky because I've built Bit.sv as an open network. And what that means is that you gonna be able to take your data and leave to a competitor. And that when we talk about owning your data, I think that's really what owning your data means, it's being able to use your data in really meaningful ways. And so these open networks can get tricky in terms of reputation. Because Facebook gets to control who joins their network. And they say that if you're signing up with bots or spam accounts, they're able to detect that and kick those out of the network. And you're now trying to do this in a much more open way. And so there's a lot more ways to attack it. But Bitcoin actually provides some really interesting solutions to this, where you can maybe

build things based on proof of work to basically filter out some of the signal from noise of, you know, anonymous people or pseudonymous people that you don't necessarily have a reputation system for but you can still start to find some value in what they're talking about.

Charles Miller [00:06:22] Now, you're not the only person thinking about this area of Bitcoin. There's Streamanity already, do you see it as a competition between people to grab the opportunities and then one of them will get big? Or will we end up with a whole range of different choices?

Brad Jasper [00:06:46] Yeah, I think it's very much I think a co-opetition. I'm not really interested in kind of moving in the direction that Streamanity is. We're very focussed on our own thing and they do a great job for creators. You know, people are able to make good money uploading videos to Streamanity. And that's that's similar to our mission. But we're it we're approaching it from a very different way. My goal is that with the open network that, you know, I want to be the most successful one and then open the network to other people that like to join. So you don't just have one Facebook, one Twitter. You have 100 people competing on this Facebook protocol. And that's one of the things that Bitcoin allows that really hasn't been possible before. But I don't think you can just say it, you have to actually build it and then people will come and then you can start to open it up and get some of that more competition but cooperation.

Charles Miller [00:07:42] Now you've already got a history in Bitcoin SV apps, which is amazing because your previous one was Open Directory. Open Directory is still going. Why did you decide to concentrate on a new one rather than pursue that and develop it?

Brad Jasper [00:08:01] Yeah, it's a really good question. I spent a lot of time thinking about this. And so basically I built Open Directory as an experiment.

Charles Miller [00:08:08] Just for those who haven't seen it, just give us a brief outline of Open Directory.

Brad Jasper [00:08:12] Yes, so with Open Director, the big idea is just put Reddit on the blockchain. That was really the big idea - is that up votes are micro-transactions. When people a lot of people upload your content, you can make pretty good money. So if you go viral on Reddit today, you make no money. If you go viral on Open Directory, you can make good money. And immediately after building it, I realised some big things that completely changed my focus, which is at scale it doesn't just replace Reddit, it replaces Patreon too. And this was like a big 'aha' moment because I realised that the rules of the Internet are changing. We don't just have to build old services and put them on the blockchain. I realised there's like new elements on the periodic table of product development and business and the ability to think in like a Bitcoin native way. So we're not taking the baggage from the old world. We're actually trying to build entirely new services that are true to what Bitcoin can allow. I saw that as a huge opportunity and the infrastructure that I had built with Open Directory wasn't gonna allow me to get there. The open network that I've been talking about requires a certain infrastructure and it's very difficult to build it on some of the tools and services that are out there today. So that was really the shift as I realised that, you know, I've been a creator for the last 10 years. I've been trying seriously for the last five years. I've been lucky enough that I've been able to do it. And it's really difficult. But it's it's one of the most viable things I've been able to do. And so I realised that there is an opportunity to do this, I think, in a very large scale and do it on Bitcoin and do in a way that gives creators way more leverage than they've ever known. And so to me, it was, you know, I love the Open Directory concept. And I still would

like to see it worked on but this was a much bigger calling to me. This felt like a mission that I wanted to pursue.

Charles Miller [00:10:01] It's interesting. I was reading about the evolution of Blogger and the idea that that is a medium that is sort of native to the Internet as opposed to the websites that went before, where you just put something online that you would have had on a on a piece of paper before. And I think people are fumbling towards - well, I don't mean to be rude - but I mean, they're trying to discover the equivalent for the Bitcoin economy, which is going to be a mixture of online content and an economy sort of attached to it through Bitcoin, I guess. Do you feel like you've got the answer to that yet or are we still on that journey?

Brad Jasper [00:10:50] I'd like to say yes, but the reality is you're always searching for product market fit in larger and larger scales. And so it's very early. We're very encouraged by what people are using. You know, people are making good money on the platform, on Bit.sv on the project. Some of the early creators, even with a relatively small audience, people are making pretty good money. Open Directory has a number of directories that have kind of broken out and they've done really well. BSVapps.net is a really cool website that basically points to an Open Directory and so it's the best BSV apps. And it becomes a really interesting kind of resource. I think it's kind of like an evolutionary process, right? Which is it's hard to think too far out. You kind of have to take a step at a time and have these long term goals, but be very flexible in how you're going to get there. So I think this could look v ery different than it looks today.

[00:11:40] And for you as a platform curator, what's the business model looking like? Are you encouraged by that side of things?

[00:11:50] Yeah. So on Bit.sv we take a 10 percent cut from from the paywalls and there's going to be some other services on the site that will we'll take a similar cut for. I'd also just like to be a creator on Bit.sv, to be kind of Creator Zero and show people how it's done and make an independent living from it myself. So, yeah, I think there's there's a lot of really interesting opportunities for creators that I'm excited to kind of burst open the doors and let people start playing with it and see what they do.

Charles Miller [00:12:19] I suppose the limiting factor really at the moment is the small, relatively small number of people who are just involved in Bitcoin SV at all? And you've got probably a fairly decent proportion of that population, but that population needs to be 10 or 100 times as big for the thing to really take off?

Brad Jasper [00:12:40] Absolutely, there's kind of two sides to that. One is we'd like to be able to help creators make a living from a relatively small audience. So we do think we can test out the idea in the BSV ecosystem and we can understand whether it's working or not. That being said, 100 percent, we have a huge onboarding challenge where we have to onboard the world and most people don't have BSV wallets. Most people don't have BSV. Most people don't have any of those things. And so this is a real challenge. A lot of the big breakouts in the space are having this challenge of how do you get people onboarded to the platform. And there's a lot of really kind of creative, interesting ideas. But yeah, it's it's a big challenge, but also a big opportunity.

Charles Miller [00:13:22] If somebody hears about Bit.sv and they have a look at it, but they're not involved in Bitcoin at all up to this point, do you have any way that sort of funnels them towards a way of getting on board with Bitcoin?

Brad Jasper [00:13:35] Yeah, there's plans to do more for sure as well. One really cool thing is Relay X, the wallet. They have financial rails. So basically on Bit.sv using Relay wallet you can pay in BTC, you can pay them Litecoin, you can play in Ethereum, you can pay in Venmo, you can pay in CashApp and it all just works. And so that's all them, that's them doing the hard work of onboarding these different financial networks onto BSV, taking some financial risk there and making it all a good experience. So that's great. I think there's gonna be more things like that. Bit.sv is going to be able to accept credit cards one day. It makes sense for certain things over a certain price point. Maybe not micro-transactions, but that's a big part of the way of thinking about Bit.sv in general, which is you kind of start with these, you know, it's called bit for a reason. When you start with these small pieces, these are supposed to evolve into a much bigger project and as they evolve, the price can go up and then you can start charging for these things in more traditional ways.

Charles Miller [00:14:37] So you're not going to be purist in drawing a circle around it, saying if it's not BSV, it is not for us?

Brad Jasper [00:14:45] We're building on BSV and we feel like that's that's the purism, right? We're converting everything to BSV and so we can't build this on any other platform.

Charles Miller [00:14:53] It comes out as BSV, but it can come in as...

Brad Jasper [00:14:55] It would be like saying you only accept American Express or only accept Visa. We want to we want to make creators as much money as possible. We have to accept lots of different payment forms. And again, we're not interested in natively accepting Ethereum or letting you cash out on that. We're going to convert everything to BSV. The only thing we might do is like local fiat, like local stablecoins. So if you don't want to hold your money in Bitcoin, you can hold it in your local currency, but it's tokenized on BSV. And all roads lead back to BSV.

Charles Miller [00:15:28] ...Which is great for the BSV community as a whole.

Brad Jasper [00:15:30] Absolutely.

Charles Miller [00:15:31] So we looked both recently in Lisbon at the second CambrianSV Bootcamp. And the idea there was that the different developers with different projects were going to integrate with each other. How well do you think that idea is working and how different is that from the Internet economy?

Brad Jasper [00:15:54] I think it's working really well. Before I went to Cambrian and I was a little nervous in the sense that I don't hear a ton of people talking about like app interoperability and these integrations that we're talking about. But at Cambrian I learnt about two new projects and I talked to a ton of people that are really interested in making this happen. So I left feeling really positive about the state of apps working together. I think this is just completely different than the Internet. I released a blog post earlier today about how Bitcoin changes software. And this is really about what it does to the network effects of software where everybody wants to be on the network that everybody else is on. And traditionally, you could do that with a closed garden so you'd get these unicorns that raise billions of dollars and then they capture the network and then they extract value from the network for 20 years. Craigslist, Facebook, Twitter - this is the main model that consumer Internet companies anyway follow. And Bitcoin just flips that all upside down. You can't do

that anymore. And because you can't do that anymore, it forces you into a more cooperative environment, because if you're not, then you're gonna lose.

Charles Miller [00:17:03] What's interesting about that is from a sort of idealistic point of view, what's rather nice about it is that you and Jack Liu from Relay need to know each other and trust each other. And the more that it's a human relationship, probably, I guess this interoperability will be promoted really?

Brad Jasper [00:17:26] Yeah. I mean, I think there's kind of two ways I've been thinking about it. One is going to Cambrian and meeting all the people coming here, meeting a bunch of people talking about deals.

Charles Miller [00:17:35] Because we're at the London CoinGeek conference today.

Brad Jasper [00:17:39] So that I think it makes a lot of sense. There's also, I think, just another reality to it, which is if you're getting traction in the marketplace, people want to follow you. And so I think it's a balance of, you know, we could decide by committee, but that doesn't mean that that's what the market's going to choose. And so I think we have a pretty healthy attitude here in BSV. We have lots of ideas. We want to collaborate. We want to experiment. Really at the end of the day, customers are gonna decide. Businesses are going to decide. You know, the market is going to decide. And so that's one of the reasons that I think we're keeping our experiments relatively short, is because you just need to be able to experiment and learn and then be able to fix what didn't work and then take it onto the next stage.

Charles Miller [00:18:20] But I do think the incentive system is completely different. I'm reminded of when new versions of Windows came along, a lot of independent app developers complained that it had been changed in a way that made their apps less easy to open and that really, Microsoft was working against them. In this ecosystem, that's not in anybody's interests, is it?

[00:18:46] What you just said completely resonates with me. I was a Mac developer before I got into BSV and been a longtime Mac user, really loved building productivity and creativity software. And for the last few years, Apple's really just focussed on IOS and the iPad and they've locked down the Mac to be closer to those. And it really makes my work difficult. It's really hard to plan long term when you don't know what's going to happen. So I think besides Bitcoin itself, I think the stable protocol is the most underrated feature that people just don't understand today. And I think we're seeing it: things that happen with Bitcoin Cash where they start collecting taxes and, you know, blockchains that are decentralized but keep changing. It's like who's changing them? It's a centralised team that's changing them. And this is a very difficult thing because people say software is never finished. And that's true. But with these low level protocols, they have to freeze. They have to freeze over time. And BSV is really the only blockchain thinking about this. And so it's very surprising to me, actually, that other people aren't picking up on this, but I think they will. You know, if you in the past have also built on Google, Google changes their rules and you lose a huge amount of your business overnight. That's not a stable foundation to do anything interesting. And so Bitcoin changes a lot of that.

Charles Miller [00:20:02] That's great. Now, you've been in this business for a long time, and you also have a very nice app called Pitch Perfect Piano.

Brad Jasper [00:20:12] That's another idea.

Charles Miller [00:20:13] ...Which I'm looking forward to trying because I would like to be able to play music by ear. But just for those who haven't seen it, tell us about that.

Brad Jasper [00:20:23] I've been independent creator for a long time. I always just have kind of random ideas that I want to throw out and try. I'm a musician as well. And so I like to play music and stuff like that.

Charles Miller [00:20:32] Where do you play?

Brad Jasper [00:20:34] Different stuff. Guitar, piano, do music production and stuff like that. So I really like to compose music and just like pull ideas together, kind of similar to maybe what building apps feels like sometimes - just pulling lots of different ideas together and packaging up in the products. But it was just supposed to be a fun way to learn to train your ear so you can learn to play music, you know, read music and you can play that way or you can hear something and then recall it. And it's actually very possible to do this. It's not as hard as sometimes people saying. Not that I'm great at it. So, yeah, the Perfect Pitch Piano was the idea of making it a game so you can learn to play the Game of Thrones theme song.

Charles Miller [00:21:18] And you really can get better if you practise at that?

Brad Jasper [00:21:20] Absolutely.

Charles Miller [00:21:20] Because this is a new idea to me, that if you can't play by ear, you can just learn to play by ear. I thought it was just like a God given talent that you either have or don't have.

Brad Jasper [00:21:29] I think there's things like perfect pitch and I don't have anything like that. I think some of that can maybe be learned. But I think some of that is also just raw kind of ability or talent. But yeah, I think people can learn intervals. Once you learn intervals, you start picking up patterns in music and you understand things like perfect pitch and you understand how how chords are composed. Yeah, it's 100 percent learnable by most people. Perfect Pitch Piano isn't something I work a ton on these days. And part of it was this is kind of been my evolution as a creator of learning where's the sweet spot for me. You know, as a creator, you have things, kind of like as an artist, of things that you want to create that you just want to see exist in the world. There's things, though, that audiences are willing to pay for. And so it's really the intersection of these ideas that I think where the magic happens. And it's taken me quite a few years to learn where my own personal intersection of that is - things that felt true to what I wanted to do that wasn't selling out. You know, I could just go get a job and go make good money doing consulting and like, why not do that if you're just doing something you don't want to do anyway? But I think there really is an intersection between the two, of things that you want to do and things that people want in the world. And that's really what the Bit.sv Is trying to do. It's trying to make it so that it's a platform for creators to find their voice and find their thousand true fans so they can start spending all their time doing it. So a lot of my old projects have kind of led me down this path, that's kind of, you know, led to Open Directory, led to Bit.sv. And it's kind of just taking one step in front of the other.

Charles Miller [00:22:58] Right. So you have got a whole history of of projects. Is Bit.sv. the big one? I mean, if we are talking again in 18 months or two years time, are you gonna say, well, Bit.sv was very good, but now I've got something even better?

Brad Jasper [00:23:13] I don't think so. I've always been a little distracted in what I do. So I'm always going to have new projects and new things. One hundred percent this is the big one. This is the one that if I could work on one idea for the rest of my life it would be this one. I really care about getting creators independent. And it might not look like paywalls. We could take different routes to get to the same place. But it's made such a huge impact in my life that I think the most impactful thing I can do is to work on my best idea, which is to get as many people as possible working on their best ideas. And that's just about the longest lever I think I can pull. And so, yeah, not that ideas won't change. And, you know, I've got other projects that I mentioned and stuff like that. But this is this is the top of the mountain. This is the this is the mission.

Charles Miller [00:24:02] Fantastic. Thank you very much, indeed Brad.

Brad Jasper [00:24:05] Thank you.

Charles Miller [00:24:07] My thanks to the multi-talented Brad Jasper. We look forward to seeing Bit.sv come to life. If you don't mind, please 'like' or subscribe to CoinGeek conversations on audio, video or both. Thanks for listening. And please join me again next week. Till then, stay safe.