

What exactly does the word “crypto” mean?

by

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Abstract

When humans or machines see the word “crypto”, what is the first thought that comes to mind? And what does this word really mean? The word resonates powerfully, it is cutting, sharp sounding, blends into a sentence and can also stand out like a sore thumb, all while being a blast of two syllables from the past. The origins of this word can be found dating back to at least ancient Greek times, and is discussed within this conceptual research paper. In addition we polled a small audience of Canadian and U.S. individuals and recorded their feedback on their first thought interpretation of the word. Not surprising, it was found most people think of “cryptocurrency” now when they see this word. Yet a mere ten years ago, likely most would have replied with it meant “secrets” or “cryptography”, or simply “I’ve never heard of it”. It is a fascinating word with a potential for an infinite complexity of understandings, that perhaps may never have an exact global meaning.

This is an ongoing data collection study, and psychological language research experiment. The data could contain bias and errors, and some text is discussed in first person from the article author, who is also the journal founder.

Table of Contents

1.0 The “crypto” word origins.....	3
1.1 Greek language.....	3
1.2 Biblical appearances.....	4
2.0 What does “crypto” now mean in the modern world?.....	5
2.1 Figure of polled responses.....	6
3.0 Discussion and thoughts on the word meaning.....	8
4.0 References.....	9

1.0 The “crypto” word origins

1.1 Greek language

The origins of the word “crypto” is generally understood to have come from the Greek *krúptōs*. The original Greek text was written as: κρυπτός [1]

(kappa, rho, upsilon, pi, tau, omicron, yeta)

κρυπτός is pronounced in English as: kroop-tos'

The word is of masculine gender typically resembling:

concealed, hidden, secret within the historical literature.

There existed a feminine equivalent of *krúptōs* which is *kryptē*, and has the Latin translation to “crypta” [2], the English noun was then derived from this Latin conversion to “crypt”, a secret cell or vault. [3]

The etymology of “crypto” (historical meaning) is best understood from literature of κρύπτω (*krúptō*, “I conceal”) [4]. However the actual root origin of *krúptō* and *krúptōs* remains somewhat unknown and is debated. Funny how there is a secret, to the secret. The determination of this etymology is complicated by the fact that the word is both in sense and form similar with ancient Greek καλύπτω (*kalúptō*, “to cover”), thus indicating a possible (bi-directional) analogical influence.

There are some who suggest possible pre-Greek origin due to the lack of Indo-European etymology, which would put the word origins into an unknown substrate spoken in prehistoric Greece (>9-12th century BC). [ref needed] There is possible evidence as well dating back to at least 1st century BC Egyptian texts where the verbal pronunciation was determined to be as: *kryp'tos* [ref needed]

All in all, each variation in history typically resembled a hidden, unseen, or secret type of meaning. So what does it mean now in modern times? First lets see what it meant in an old legendary text we know as the Bible.

1.2 Biblical appearances

No way! There was crypto in the Bible? Indeed. But not how you think of it today. The Old Testament (~1st - 2nd BC) was originally written in Hebrew. More research needs to be done for this language, but in terms of the Greek translated text including The New Testament, the word *κρυπτός* i.e. *krúptōs*, appears an impressive 14 – 20 times (depending on what Bible version you reference today) [5]

The relevant word usage context is broken down to approximately:

5 meanings of hidden, 1 of inwardly , 7 of secret, 2 of secrets, and 2 of things hidden.

How was it then used in Biblical context? Here is an example from Matthew 6:4 (English version: New American Standard), that has an interesting takeaway especially now in regards to our current understanding.

“so that your giving will be in secret; and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” - Matthew 6:4

So who is our Father now? It can't be our allied companies and government agencies can it? Most will agree the Father represents every compound in the universe. Secrets rewarded from an already secret Father. A loop of secrets; the Bible went deep on that one.

Here's a thought: perhaps the "Father" is and always has been some quantum secret intelligence living in the vacuum of space. Who knows? It's a secret! Matthew 6:4 is definitely an interesting "crypto" reference, but at the same time, information in religious texts seems almost difficult to compare with in the fast modern times we live in now. Furthermore this journal (Energy Unknown) is neutral and accepting of all religious beliefs, and we only mention the Bible here for reference.

2.0 What does "crypto" now mean in the modern world?

An online survey was performed via a machine learning platform (with new data slowly being collected) on ~118 Canadian and ~64 U.S. individuals, who were paid a small monetary sum for their time and answers in our survey. We are not sure who and what backgrounds these people are from, or what ages, races, etc. just that they are at least general internet users. Therefore there is a small bias in this data, as they have likely seen the word crypto before in online articles or advertisements.

We asked: *What is the first thought that comes to mind when you see the word "crypto"? [SELECT ONLY ONE]*

All logical possible single answers we could think of were presented (in this order). There were 11 possible answers.

- Cryptography (security)
- Cryptococcus (fungi)
- Cryptosporidium (eukaryote)
- Cryogenics (freezing)
- Cryptocurrency
- Secrets
- Blockchain
- Bitcoin
- Software
- Money
- Other..

There could be of course be deeper multi-sentence meanings, or more meanings, but to keep the data simple for now, only these single word responses are researched.

2.1 Figure of polled responses

Even though the survey participants were requested to only select one answer, about 30% picked more than two answers, the most someone picked was 6 out of the 11 answers. All are included in the counts. See Figure 1 below:

crypto.farm/research - 2021 Survey Results on What Exactly Does "Crypto" Mean?

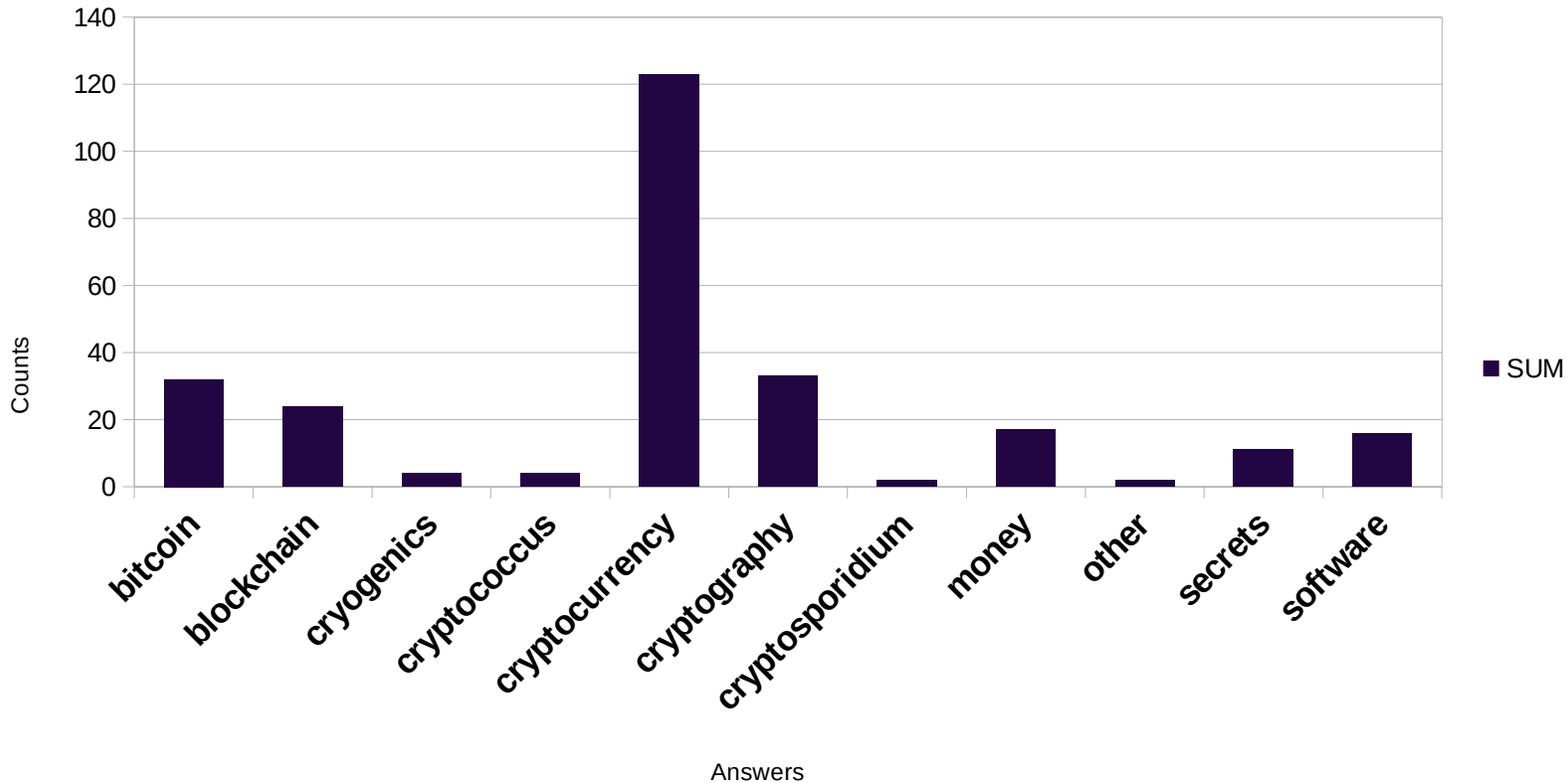


Figure 1: Responses from year 2021 conceptual survey of CAN+US English native speakers on what they think “crypto” means. (Selecting the first thought that comes to mind)

“**Cryptocurrency**” comes in at #1 followed by “**cryptography**” and then “**bitcoin**”. Only ~4% from this data think of “**secrets**”. Apparently we have now morphed this ancient word of “**crypto**” from a simple meaning of “**a secret**” – to some form digital asset and exchange, that are inherently technical and software-complex in nature. A recent language meaning change has been observed.

3.0 Discussion and thoughts on the word meaning

[author's perspective]

With this new perception of what “crypto” may mean in modern times, has society turned the tide to being more capitalistic and possibly financially manipulated when seeing this word? Is it because all cryptocurrencies and their trading prices as a whole are viewed and calculated through pure capitalism, which, in itself, has secret underpinnings? Secrecy of course has always had this eerie relationship to knowledge, finances, commerce, and power throughout history, and will likely keep to a part of this tone for a long time.

It is but the thirst of curiosity and quests for information that makes us all naturally want to know someones secret. If I tell you I have a secret, or you find out I have some secrets, now you want to know what it is, regardless of what it may be. People and systems in power thrive on discovering others' secrets; in order to gain the tactical advantage over them, demand more money from them, or serve them more 'relevant' content, etc. But keep in mind, once you discover this secret, there is no going back, you might even regret it.

Thus crypto is like a magnet of attention, drawing more focus and curiosity towards it. It goes hand-in-hand with its language origin of secrets, as people naturally want to discover a secret. But does it have to be this way? In this newly found modern concept, does being non-secret and open now mean you are disadvantaged, not taken seriously, and likely poor? Hopefully not. An important question remains, can you be private and still hold no secrets?

I'm a believer that if no one kept any secrets (hard to imagine, we would all have to be pure anonymous transparent open-source beings for this to happen), information, knowledge, and trust would flow so clean and fast, our global intelligence and capabilities would accelerate by orders of magnitude. That means everyone would have to be on the same page, there is no good or bad actors, simply actors. A difficult

near impossible feat that could take thousands of years to achieve. The key is context, and if it is not a secret to be discovered anymore, but just an accepted immutable fact of the system, it is more useful and relevant for our advancement. Because even accessing and analyzing a secret is old past data, and essentially a waste of time, especially if you can never discover what it is. It is better to never have to even think, analyze, or rely on the past. The application of forward looking time-perspective information holds many great possibilities. [more research on this topic later]

All of these effects from the emergence of this new meaning of “crypto” have yet to be seen long term. I do suspect every 5 decades or so the word meaning will shift throughout society. Which will vary based upon the mother tongue of the reader, and what language the text it is presented in. For now it appears to be related to cryptocurrencies, but what will people think about it in year 2070? Can you even imagine what crypto means in year 3000? Personally in 2021 when I see this word it means future possibilities, and the potential for all to do something great.

Ending this article, the question to ask yourself is:

what exactly does crypto mean to you?

4.0 References

- [1] https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%CE%BA%CF%81%CF%85%CF%80%CF%84%CF%8C%CF%82#Ancient_Greek
- [2] <https://mwc.en-academic.com/14409/crypt>
- [3] <https://www.quword.com/etym/s/grotto>
- [4] https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/%CE%BA%CE%B1%CE%BB%CF%8D%CF%80%CF%84%CF%89#Ancient_Greek
- [5] <https://www.studylight.org/lexicons/eng/greek/2927.html>

Drop us a note at research@crypto.farm to share your views, or if you would like to contribute in any way to this research experiment topic please let us know.