

The logo for WORX features the word "WORX" in a bold, dark blue, sans-serif font. The letter "O" is replaced by a stylized gear icon with a teal and blue color scheme and a white center. The background of the page is a large, light blue gear with a white center, overlaid on a light purple background.

WORX

WhitePaper

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Abstract

The WORX project is looking to address some major issues that exist in the freelance / gig economy such as trust, arbitration, and large day to day operating costs for freelancers. The platform will also provide tools to freelancers and customers that will be beneficial and reduce day to day operating costs along with saving considerable amounts of time. This white paper will walk through the major issues facing the freelance market today and how the WORX project will address those issues. It will also show an example transaction and how the WORX platform will handle the transaction. Arbitration is discussed, and a new decentralized method is proposed. Finally, the team is presented, and the roadmap is discussed.

The Freelance / Gig Economy Problem:

More and more people in the world are transitioning from the normal nine to five corporate grind to work for themselves in the freelance / gig economy space. It is estimated that in the United States and the United Kingdom, 50% of the workforce will be freelance / gig economy in the next five years (Small Business Trends, 2016). Furthermore, Europe saw a 45 percent increase in the number of independent workers from 2012 – 2013 and in India about 15 million people (roughly 40% of the worlds freelance community) are considered to be independent workers. This practice has become possible through the use of technologies and websites such as Upwork, Fiverr, and Rent A Coder, however many problems still exist in this space that makes it very high risk for those involved as both freelancers and customers. The largest of the risks include customer acquisition costs, cash flow shortages, trust, arbitration, and all other day to day costs related to running a business.

Customer acquisition costs are very large for independent workers because they must do their own marketing in order to find the customers. Marketing is expensive and can provide a rather large barrier of entry into many spaces, where already established entities control the ability of others to market by buying up all the traditional marketing space at prices that are out of reach of regular independent workers. Cash flow shortages can occur quite frequently for independent workers since they may not have the credit needed in order to cover upfront costs of performing the work. Trust and arbitration are needed in every aspect of the work that is performed and that also can be costly if arbitration is required. Finally, the tools that are needed in order for the worker to meet all business requirements as directed by law or otherwise (taxes, project management, payment acceptance, etc) are all financial burdens for the operator.

Trust and Arbitration currently are also very hard and expensive to come by. Independent workers / customers can opt to use services such as Angie's List or Rent A Coder, however, these sites charge a significant premium for these services and are also very centralized which increases costs. The WORX platform will address this by overseeing each transaction and making it available on the blockchain. Arbitration will be handled by community members and each case will require a certain number of customers and freelancers to review and provide a vote. Once a consensus is reached, the parties will be informed, resolving the dispute in a timely and cost-effective manner.

The WORX platform will tackle the financial problems by providing a marketplace for freelancers and customers to advertise, connect, and find each other. Independent workers will be able to post their profiles for potential customers to review. Customers can post jobs which independent workers will be able to bid on. Upon acceptance of a bid, the agreed upon payment will be collected by the WORX platform and held in escrow on the blockchain. Once the deliverables are delivered and accepted by the customer, the payment will be delivered to the freelancer as per the agreed upon terms (this can be done all in one payment, or multiple payments once specific milestones are completed for larger and more complex projects). Finally, various tools that independent workers need will be provided on the platform such as project management and financial tracking.

So, this all sounds great, but how does WORX provide all these services and not fall into the same trap as current companies competing in this space? Well the answer is decentralization and the blockchain. Using blockchain technology, we can lower the operating costs of running a service like this by using investors (miners / masternodes) to handle all the transactional items.

These investors create the infrastructure that allows the WORX platform to operate as discussed, an infrastructure which in a centralized environment is very costly. This type of infrastructure will allow WORX to provide all the needed services to customers and independent workers for very small fees (the actual fees are still to be determined and will be determined, based on further research and market trends at the time of the official launch of the platform, as this is a very competitive space). These fees will be used to directly pay the investors for their work in maintaining the infrastructure, arbitration teams for their time in reviewing cases, and to cover the needed costs of running the business. Independent workers will be able to select payment plans that work best for their needs (monthly one-time fees or per job fees). Since the WORX platform will provide everything that is necessary for an independent worker to stay fully employed, their overall operating expenses will go down and through using the WORX platform their net margins should be in the area of about seventy-five to eighty percent.

The Freelance / Gig Economy Solution:

The solution that WORX will provide is threefold. First, we are developing the WORX platform which will consist of the user interface / website and be where Freelancers and customers interact with each other. The next is the payment gateway which will be what enables payments to occur, via the way of either a variety of different cryptocurrency or fiat, and this will contribute towards WORX coin price stability (Initially the gateway will only support WORX coin but more options will be added based on demand). Lastly, the actual WORX blockchain itself which will contain the ledger of all WORX related transactions.

The platform will utilize the latest technologies that are available in web development. The goal here is to create a simple, efficient, easy to use interface that makes the entire process quick and easy for both customers posting jobs and Freelancers posting competing bids. One of the issues with similar sites and platforms is that customers and Freelancers have to spend considerable time in the websites to accomplish very small tasking. We will automate a lot of that and with the power of blockchain remove the need for large amounts of general information that is not really needed. The overall process has also been evaluated and improved for what we feel is maximum efficiency.

As an example: A customer needs a small web application made that allows a user to log in, enter some information, and receive a password that is needed to access information. The password request should be logged for later review. The customer would come to the WORX platform website and create a job listing. Since this is a web application, the customer can select the web application template which will streamline what processes and workflows are needed. Furthermore, they can select if this needs to be handled by a local Freelancer or if this would be open to anyone regardless of geographic location (filters can also be used to limit various Freelancer demographics to meet the customers' requirements). The following steps are what would be entailed for a web application development:

1. Initial posting / bidding: Customer will post the job, what the requirements are, what the deliverables are, plus any additional information. They will also select how long each stage can last and what Freelancers they want to see bids from based on various metrics. During this process, bidders may ask questions to the customer freely. These questions and answers will be made available for anyone reviewing the posting and the customer will be able to update the posting as needed in case items come to light that

they may have forgotten or perhaps need to clarify further. Freelancers will be able to post their bids using this additional information. Any bid that is posted will be considered contractual in the case that the bid is accepted by the customer. Should the customer make a change to the posting after a bid is received, the Freelancer will need to either accept the changes or adjust their bid accordingly.

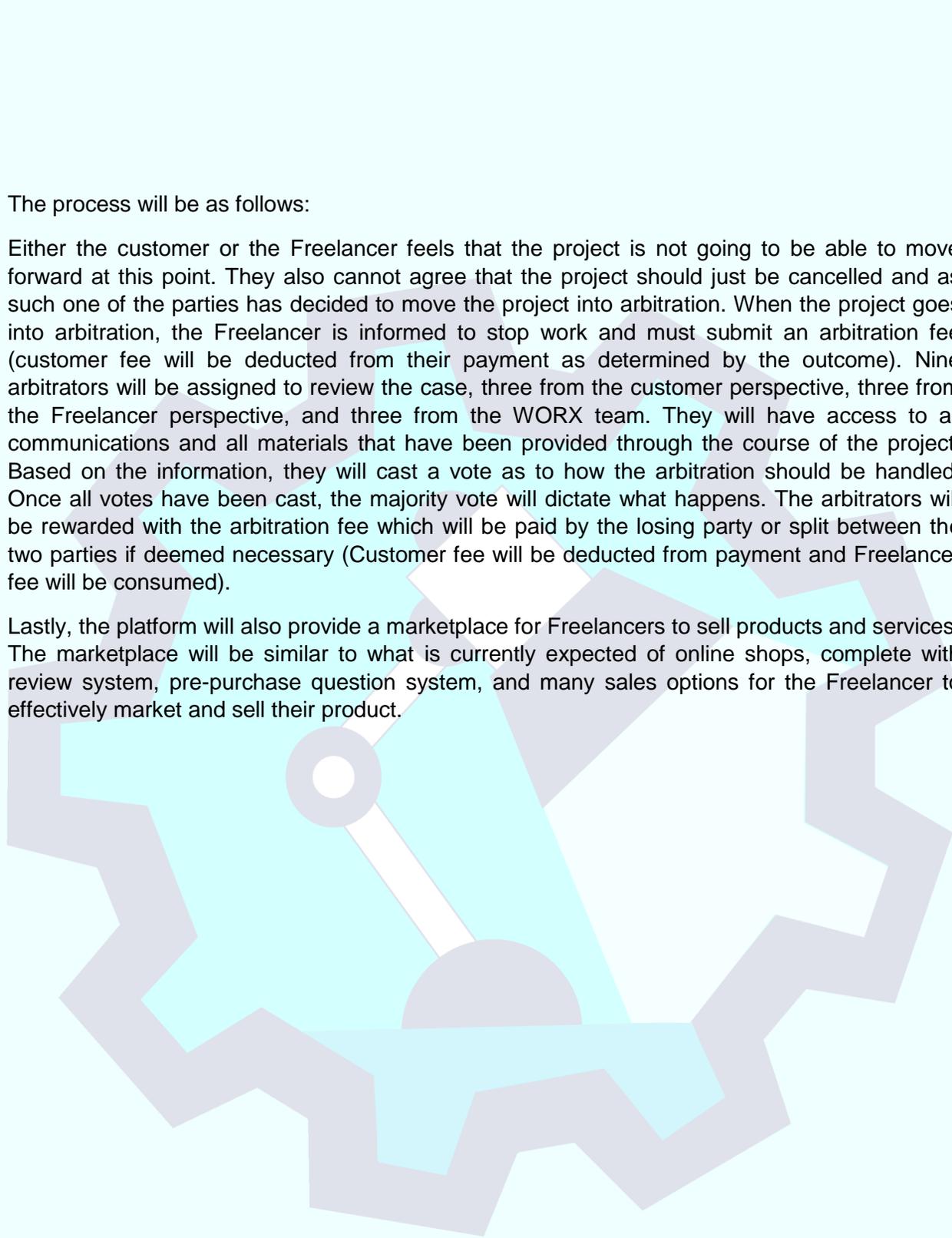
2. Bid Review / acceptance: Once the customer finds a bid and a Freelancer that they feel is acceptable, they can then accept the bid and the contract will be initiated. Should the customer find no proposals acceptable in the chosen time frame, they can either relist the posting for additional time or cancel it.
3. Project clarification: This stage is where the Freelancer and customer will discuss the finite details of the project and allow the Freelancer to fully understand what the customer is looking for. Any private information that is needed can now be passed to the Freelancer (NDA's can be signed if needed), and the Freelancer will also have a chance to propose an amended price based on the better understanding of the project. This will be limited to a percentage of the original proposal in either an upward or downward direction. Both parties must agree to the new price if the price is changing. This will be a metric that is publicly visible for both customers and Freelancers so everyone can see how often prices are changed in this stage and how often they are accepted. This information can then be used by Freelancers and customers to better understand each other and make more informed decisions on who they do business with.
4. Project Development: Once this stage begins, the money that has been agreed upon will be submitted by the customer and held in Escrow by the WORX Payment Gateway. The contract will be submitted to the blockchain and is now considered binding. Following payment, the developer will be informed that they may begin their work.
5. Project Review: Once the developer has completed the project, this stage will begin where the customer can review the deliverables and provide feedback to the developer on any changes that need to be made. This stage can be repeated as needed (for example a website development may require a few review stages before completion).
6. Project Acceptance: Once the customer is happy with the deliverables, they will accept the project. At this point, the Freelancer will be paid, and the project closed. The Freelancer and customer will both have an opportunity to rate each other for public display in their profiles.

The above example shows a sample project where everything ran smoothly between the customer and the Freelancer and our hope is that with the design and implementation of the platform this will usually be the case. We also understand that there will be times where there are issues between the Freelancer and the customer and this will require some form of an arbitration process. Part of the platform strength will be from what we feel is a new process that will be fair to all parties and provide the best solution for each and every situation that can't be resolved directly. One of the main problems with arbitration today with other companies is that the people reviewing the case are not familiar with what is going on and do not really have the proper background to evaluate the situation effectively. Our process aims to correct this and provide an outcome that is based on reviews from people who have the correct backgrounds to understand the situation and decide what the correct course of action is. This arbitration process will be viewed upon the facts and recorded communication between the customer and freelancer, but their identities will remain anonymous to the arbitrators, to ensure all decisions are non-bias.

The process will be as follows:

Either the customer or the Freelancer feels that the project is not going to be able to move forward at this point. They also cannot agree that the project should just be cancelled and as such one of the parties has decided to move the project into arbitration. When the project goes into arbitration, the Freelancer is informed to stop work and must submit an arbitration fee (customer fee will be deducted from their payment as determined by the outcome). Nine arbitrators will be assigned to review the case, three from the customer perspective, three from the Freelancer perspective, and three from the WORX team. They will have access to all communications and all materials that have been provided through the course of the project. Based on the information, they will cast a vote as to how the arbitration should be handled. Once all votes have been cast, the majority vote will dictate what happens. The arbitrators will be rewarded with the arbitration fee which will be paid by the losing party or split between the two parties if deemed necessary (Customer fee will be deducted from payment and Freelancer fee will be consumed).

Lastly, the platform will also provide a marketplace for Freelancers to sell products and services. The marketplace will be similar to what is currently expected of online shops, complete with review system, pre-purchase question system, and many sales options for the Freelancer to effectively market and sell their product.



The Team:

Tom Lotz | Project Leader

Tom has experience in project planning and management due to his international academic work. He has experience in user support and is a Community Manager in the Discord of one of the biggest POS pools. Tom has a Master's Degree in Physical Geography and is working to finish his PhD thesis with a focus on hydrological computer modelling.

Matthew Randolph | Marketing Manager | <https://www.linkedin.com/in/matthew-randolph>

Matt has over 12 years of experience in business development, management, sales, marketing, and leadership. Matt recently sold a tech company that he started in 2006 and which was profitable every year in which he was at the helm. Matt's most recent experience is as Commercial Manager for a company that generates over \$100 million annually. Matt has a Bachelor's Degree in Computer Science and a Master's Degree in Business Administration with a focus in Technology Management.

Celeste Weingartner | Lead Developer

Celeste is a Linux systems admin/developer with over 20 years of Linux and development experience. She also has an extensive networking and security background working for some of the largest web hosting providers in the world. Her Cryptocurrency resume includes working for mining hardware manufacturers, as well as working alongside various software devs and pool admins.

Justin O'Neill | Developer

Justin brings over twenty years of programming experience to the table having worked on projects for companies such as Hewlett Packard and Charles Schwab. He is also well versed in Agile Development and will be helping manage the software project development side of things.

Rockwell Smith | Marketing

Rockwell comes to us with over twenty years of sales and marketing experience, with a large portion of that time being self-employed. His main focus with WORX will be our online presence and public relations.

Ayo Telufusi | Advisor

Ayo has more than 10 years of experience in business management, sales, and marketing. He is the founder of A&A Cibei International Limited dealing in any item ranging from phones, accessories, clothes, shoes, and anything his customers ask for. His companies main focus is to buy Chinese products and sell back to customers in China and outside China helping stimulate local economies. He has a Bachelor's Degree in International Economy & Trade.

Aleksandar Chalakov | Advisor

Aleksander has 14 years of experience in business development, sales, marketing, and product management. He is the Co-founder of a manufacturing company. He also owns a small family company with his wife delivering digital marketing, public relations, and event services. He has a Master's Degree in Economics.

Francis Aiello | Promoter

Francis has a large engineering background and is a recognized Steemit blogger. He has created a large network of followers and fellow bloggers that can help promote ideas and projects very quickly and effectively. He is certified in cyber security and blockchain technology and holds an Associates Degree in Applied Sciences. He is currently working towards a Bachelors in Information Technology.

Graeme Kent | Advisor

Graeme is a qualified accountant and business coach with over 20 years' experience specializing in the primary production and small business sectors. His focus with business coaching has been on helping business owners implement systems, strategies and processes to increase profitability and turnover while reducing expenses. A major focus has been helping business owners step out of their business, so it can run as an investment. He gained accounting experience through various medium tier firms and now runs his own business and prior to that, he was involved in the banking industry.

He has a vast knowledge and experience of real estate, share market investments and is an active trader himself, in both option trading and cryptocurrency trading.

Conclusion:

We here at WORX believe that we have identified a problem in the Freelance market and that this can be rectified through effective use of blockchain technology. Along with using blockchain, we will be introducing some new ideas into a rather stale market place that should hopefully contribute to the Freelance economy and make the space much easier for all parties involved to use.

References:

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