IBM Newsroom

Covalent Taps IBM Blockchain to Help Track the Carbon Impact of its AirCarbon®-based Fashion Goods

Covalent uses IBM Blockchain, powered by IBM LinuxONE, to help it create a new, validated level of environmental impact tracing

ARMONK, N.Y., Jan. 13, 2021 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE: IBM) and Covalent, a fashion brand recently launched by Newlight Technologies, today announced that Covalent is using IBM Blockchain technology on IBM LinuxONE so consumers can track the carbon footprint and supply chain of its sustainable, AirCarbon-based fashion accessories, from eyewear to handbags.

Purchasing sustainable products is a growing motivation for consumers. A recent study by IBM showed 57% of consumers surveyed were willing to change their shopping habits to reduce environmental impact.

Covalent's products, which can be purchased on its website, are made with AirCarbon, a biomaterial made by microorganisms that is meltable and can be used as an alternative to fiber, plastic and leather. Because it is made using renewable power, AirCarbon is certified as carbon-negative by the Carbon Trust, meaning it reduces the amount of carbon in the air.

In addition to being part of a new category of "regenerative" products emerging that can have a positive impact on the amount of carbon in the atmosphere, Covalent's AirCarbon-based products provide a new level of traceability through the application of IBM Blockchain technology. Often, when consumers buy products labeled as sustainable fashion, they cannot see a verified record of how the product was made or how it affects the environment. Covalent's products bridge that gap with a blockchain-based number that can be used to show the steps in the production process for that specific product as well as its third-party-verified carbon impact so customers can view impact the product is having on the environment.

A unique 12-digit number printed on each Covalent product, known as the "Carbon Date," represents the time when the AirCarbon used to create that specific product was created. The number can be entered into Covalent's website to trace the steps that went into creating the product. The supply chain journey that brought each product to life is stored in an immutable record on the blockchain and stretches from when the AirCarbon was formed and molded into a handbag to who independently verified its carbon footprint and when it was moved to a stockroom.

"Our goal was to give people the information they need to decide what kind of impact they want to make," Newlight CEO Mark Herrema said. "With IBM Blockchain and LinuxONE technology, we can now provide visibility into not only the steps used to make each Covalent product, but also the carbon impact that each specific product has on the environment. For us, that's important, because it helps make tangible the unique pathway that led to the creation of that product."

By working with IBM Business Partner Cognition Foundry, a services provider and systems integrator, Covalent is able to host its IBM Blockchain solution on IBM LinuxONE, a highly secured server for mission critical workloads and that provides scalability and resiliency, including the industry's first and only FIPS 140-2 Level 4 certified Hardware Security Module (HSM).[1]

"Blockchain's ability to foster trust gives Covalent's customers a better understanding of how their products were made," said Alistair Rennie, General Manager of IBM Blockchain. "In turn, Covalent can create a better customer experience, and a better opportunity for consumers to understand how their choices impact the environment. This is another great example of how blockchain is supporting our mission of using technology for good."

For information on how IBM is using blockchain for social good, please visit here.

About Newlight Technologies

Founded in 2003, Newlight Technologies is a biotechnology company in Huntington Beach, California dedicated to producing materials that help improve life. After over ten years of research, Newlight developed AirCarbon: a regenerative material made by natural ocean microorganisms that is being used to replace synthetic plastic and fibers to help solve plastics pollution and climate change. AirCarbon was named "Biomaterial of the Year" by the Nova Institute and "Innovation of the Year" by Popular Science. Newlight was also recognized as a "Technology Pioneer" by the World Economic Forum and awarded the Presidential Green Chemistry Challenge Award by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

About IBM Blockchain

IBM is recognized as the leading enterprise blockchain provider. The company's research, technical and business experts have broken barriers in transaction processing speeds, developed the most advanced cryptography to secure transactions, and are contributing millions of lines of open source code to advance blockchain for businesses. IBM is the leader in open-source blockchain solutions built for the enterprise. Since 2016, IBM has worked with hundreds of clients across financial services, supply chain, government, retail, digital rights management and healthcare to implement blockchain applications, and operates a number of networks running live and in production. The cloud-based IBM Blockchain Platform delivers the end-to-end capabilities that clients need to quickly activate and successfully develop, operate, govern and secure their own business networks. IBM is an early member of Hyperledger, an open source collaborative effort created to advance cross-industry blockchain technologies. For more information about IBM Blockchain, visit https://www.ibm.com/blockchain/ or follow us on Twitter at @ibmblockchain.

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[1] *The Federal Information Processing Standard (FIPS) Publication 140-2 is a U.S. government computer security standard used to approve cryptographic modules. It is issued by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST). Level 4 is the highest level of security.*

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