

Ordinals: Digital Inscriptions on Bitcoin

By Fiftysix

What are Ordinals?

Ordinals, also known as Bitcoin **inscriptions**, are a way to permanently store digital content directly on the Bitcoin blockchain. Introduced by developer Casey Rodarmor in early 2023, Ordinals allow individual units of Bitcoin to be **inscribed** with data.

Before Ordinals were invented, the Bitcoin network was used for transferring value securely across the internet. Now, it is also used to create and preserve unique digital items.

How do Ordinals work?

Much like traditional currencies have cents to every dollar, every Bitcoin is made up of 100 million **satoshis**. Just as each cent in a physical currency has its own material, print date, and design, each **satoshi** on Bitcoin can be uniquely identified based on when it was mined.

The Ordinals protocol assigns each satoshi a serial number, traceable by anyone on the network. Users can then **inscribe** data onto a specific satoshi they control with a Bitcoin transaction. Once the **inscription** is complete, that satoshi permanently carries the data across the blockchain.

What can I do with Ordinals?

People are creating permanent artwork, inscribing books, and even making interactive games. Anything that can fit within the limited size of an inscription can be preserved forever on the blockchain.

Ordinals are similar to NFTs (Non-Fungible Tokens), popular on networks like Ethereum or Solana. However, Bitcoin Ordinals differ in a crucial way: rather than linking to external servers or hosting data elsewhere, the content itself is embedded directly into the Bitcoin blockchain. Thus, Ordinals offer a form of digital permanence that few other technologies can match.

Why are Ordinals important?

Ordinals expand Bitcoin's use case beyond financial transactions, introducing an entirely new dimension to the network. Now, Bitcoin can act not only as a decentralized money system, but also as a permanent repository of culture, art, and information.

Ordinals reinforce Bitcoin's strength as a trustless and censorship-resistant platform. With no need for third-party storage or centralized validation, artists, writers, and developers can create digital works that will live on as long as Bitcoin itself continues to exist.

Challenges and Controversies

Some Bitcoin purists argue that the blockchain should be reserved exclusively for financial transactions, warning that storing non-financial data could increase network fees. There are also technical concerns: larger inscriptions take up more space in each Bitcoin block, slowing down network transaction time. Managing and viewing Ordinals still requires specialized wallets and tools, and creates friction for everyday users.

However, most see Ordinals as a natural evolution of Bitcoin's utility. By giving Bitcoin the ability to store meaningful content in a decentralized, immutable way, Ordinals enrich the ecosystem and attract new participants without altering Bitcoin's core principles.

Conclusion

Bitcoin Ordinals represent a new chapter in the ongoing evolution of Bitcoin. No longer limited to transactions and value transfer, Bitcoin can now serve as a permanent archive for digital art, history, and expression.

As the infrastructure around Ordinals matures, Bitcoin will not only store wealth for generations, but also preserve humanity's creativity and culture.

Whether you are an artist seeking permanence, a collector of rare digital items, or simply curious about the possibilities of blockchain technology, Bitcoin Ordinals offer an exciting new frontier for innovation built on the world's most secure and time-tested network.

Where can I find Ordinals?

Several platforms now make it easy to explore, create, and trade inscriptions:

- [Ordinals Wallet](#) – Official Page
- [Magic Eden](#) – Ordinal Exchange
- [Xverse](#) – Ordinals Wallet