

(cleaned) Participant 37 and TE Study

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SPEAKERS

Livia, Participant 37

00:05

Okay, I think is working even though it's not here. Yeah. And let me start this recording recording in progress. So yeah, thank you so much for participating in our study. We're very excited to have you here. And just a reminder, the

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goal is to better understand token engineering the definition of token engineering and what are so needs and challenges of T practitioners. So, we have around 4560 minutes for the interview, we should take around that and more or less 10 questions and you're, of course free to withdraw from any question and to leave the study at any point and this is being recorded just the audio will be stored with us after the interview, and yeah, I think that's it. Do you have any questions refers to the scope. Cool. So can you share a little bit about your personal journey of how you got involved in your field of work?

Participant 37 01:28

Yeah, sure. So my background is in economics and finance and you know, with sort of one's journey of discovering crypto and also the desire to like work in a place that is outside of the banking sector or like outside of the system, if you will. I started to research around what the, like the nature of the projects that were in the space by basically diving deeper into the technology, and I'm just reading a little bit more about white papers of the projects. And of course, asking the question, like, how can I contribute to the space more than any particular project I realized that that was coming from a business strategy management consulting standpoint. And I started kind of creating that offering for myself in the space. Then I met some technical people that I really like to work with. Then I started being involved with actually designing the software together with those teams. And this is where I think like, that's sort of high level business advisory turned into mechanism design and you know, like what you would call token engineering. I hesitate to attribute myself to that, like engineering. Nomenclature, because I'm by no means an engineer myself. I do understand the sort of given the sort of like complexity and consequential theory of these systems. It sounds like an appropriate sort of tips to talk about mechanism design in this context. But for me, I think like engineering also implies a very methodical, sort of modus operandi that is not necessarily doesn't have you know, 1000 ways to go about it. But like, while you talk about design, there's, you know, like, you have much larger design spaces than you have engineering spaces, if you will. So I find myself much closer to design in that sense. Than engineering, both in terms of lack of training and also artistic or creative intentions.

04:27

How do you think token engineering is an appropriate term?

Participant 37 04:35

Yeah, I depends on what is its objective, I guess. I think there definitely has to be some term and study of that sort. And I appreciate that that exists, that people with skill sets around engineering practices and you know, rigorous research methodology, research and implementation methodologies are much needed in the space I personally need them in my practice, so it is definitely needed. It's just like, I can't say that it's my personal practice,

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and how would you define token engineering?

Participant 37 05:22

I think token engineering is the research or could be the research and development of methodologies with which to approach the design and deployment, design simulation and deployment of digital value systems. concepts where

05:54

Thank you. That's great. What would you say that token engineering is solving that other fields are not solving, like what is unique of token engineering?

Participant 37 06:04

As opposed to

06:07

as opposed to let's say the design practices you mentioned or

Participant 37 06:13

Yeah, I think like it's a tricky tricky area because like there's a certain degree because what is engineering good at like one is like capability building. You know, like, now we can build bridges is the classical example of engineering right? And then the other is accountability. So like, we will only have bridges being built by these people who have been certified as engineers. So I think like those two things are very relevant for society. But also when you take that to the realm of complex systems design. The Accountability part is a bit of a tricky question because I don't think like many people are like many like we haven't built such a rigorous practice yet, that we can actually expect individual accountability or even the accountability of licensing institutions or the liabilities that could be emerging from these complex systems. So I think like it's a little bit three, token engineering realm, but it needs to establish itself and its practices. From one point of view from another point of view, it could be that there's some kind of complex like, critical complexity that will never I don't know, I don't know I think there are other complex system engineering fields. So I think like society, develop ways of coping with that type of high dimensional complexity or emergence and engineering practice at the same time, so should be fine.

08:21

Yeah, the accountability is a really great point. Can you share about your daily work routine? Like what are examples of typical tasks, rituals, processes that you handle daily?

Participant 37 08:34

Daily is a little bit about my daily practice because I have too many calls. Because I'm also the co founder, not only mechanism designer, so I'm spending a lot of time in a lot of auxiliary business functions, which includes taking a lot of calls, but it's more relating to token engineering or mechanism design practice. There's a huge component which is about familiarization with a certain domain or a field which is going to be the field of the design matter of mechanism design. Which you know, is usually pretty fresh, you know, like we work sometimes with artificial intelligence, decentralized science. And all of these, like new fields pose a new epistemological challenge to familiarize oneself with to a high standard. So there's a lot of research involved. There's a lot of in my personal practice, a lot of sense making, which takes the form of conversations with people who are authoritative in those fields. And also modeling and visualization. So like I'm my single most sort of relevant practices diagramming for sense making the systems of study and then going from that to like creating certain documentation that make it more understandable for people that I have to communicate. Such system modeling and then system design with I will say these are more pertaining to mechanism design practice itself.

10:51

What are some specific tools that you use?

Participant 37 10:56

I use Mero I use concepts and other application for free drawing I use for research obviously chat GPT quite extensively. Like it's on like became such a integral part of the research practice in such short amount of time. Apart from that, like unexciting stuff, like notion and communication channels and so on.

11:31

And can you give two examples of popular token engineering projects that you've been involved with? What's the first one polar polar opposites?

Participant 37 11:44

polar opposites. Two opposite examples. What they be opposites in? Yeah, sure. I guess like, we there was one project with \$name\$ that we implemented a smart contract system, basically a current bonding mechanism that would manage the exchange between a fungible token and a security token or particular use case. Which was like in incentivizing crowd participation in kind of like a data collective hedge fund type of use case, which was like the requirements were extremely well defined, like even regulatorily well defined. And so there was like, very little wiggle room and it was basically about like, efficiency and execution. And, you know, like, I would say, this is like token engineering, maxing. And then the other example would be the \$name\$ where I developed an NFT game for performing artists to bring back their past performance as these digital souls which people could stake etherium to. And after that campaign, they became bounties for new artists to reinterpret those works and share the revenue with the old artists. So it's called karmic engine. So like these two projects, I would say like one is the token Arctic, what I call mechanism arts, and the other is like token engineering. So that kind of maybe where they meet like a little bit of mechanism design, that those two will be the polar opposites as to the creative field that they afford to the designer.

13:45

Amazing. Thank you. That's super clear. And which areas of knowledge do you consider essential for token engineering practice?

Participant 37 13:54

This is a big one. I mean, like nothing is off the table, right? Because like you need to be I really think it's like there's infinite type archetypes. Maybe I'm answering a little bit for mechanism design, but I will keep it that way. I think there's like infinite archetypes, one can embody like, you know, you can bring your own geometry as to like what are your fields of interest? And is similar to game design, right? Like, I really like \$Will Wright\$ when he says like, which is the designer of Sims, SimCity and all this type of simulation games. Really great game designer. He says like, if you are obsessed about like, one

particular thing sufficiently enough, you can like make a game about it. You know, like if you look into a leaf or like a stone long enough, you know, you can create a game from that. So in a similar way, I think it's it depends on what obsessions are you bringing to the table and how can you utilize them? But besides I think like, obviously like, how would you call that like critical? Critical Theory is super, super critical. Because the social implications of the things that you are developing, you need to also have like, kind of internal checks and balances, intellectual checks, checks and balances on the systems that you are creating. You need to have a good sense of like how they have gone wrong in the past, not only in the mechanism, design field, but also Society of design field, like if you read Plato's Republic, you see the first mechanism design, text, you know, like the guy is trying to articulate a vision for society extremely rigorously, obviously, like with today's values like that. There's a lot of things that fall short or like are grossly heretical with today's values, but like having an understanding of the lineage of such how humans went from intention to design to the attempts at deploying those systems in reality and how that worked for society. What their consequences have been, which like spans the fields of like, political history, economy, philosophy, anthropology, etc. So like, all knowledge of all of these fields are extremely relevant. And then you know, when you bring in engineering I think, you know, needless to say, game design, game theory, graph theory, complex systems. Yeah, I would say these are the more tangible sort of like practical requirements, and also like, I guess, anything that's relating to systems and systems engineering from, like, Jay foresters to suffered beers and so on, like understanding the history of cybernetics, and the pitfalls that also are sort of dotting the field there is interesting I think, also having an understanding of art is interesting because not not understanding of art, but like, just as the opposite thing that I think is the value there, which is the non understanding, in the sense that if you are, too stuck in models of rationality, that's it cannot take into account non rational or post rational forms of existence, behavior, etc. I think that's also a major dullness, especially with engineering practices, that needs to be taken into account. So I would say, artistic expression, I just think the impulse also needs to be catered for. So it's like a very, you know, as I said, like, nothing's off the table. Definitely take psychedelics all of the above.

18:37

Yeah, thanks for bringing that perspective on art thats refreshing. And what challenges have you faced in your work personally with token engineering?

Participant 37 18:55

Think like establishing the confidence in your practice is like a tricky thing as a mechanism designer or token engineer, I would say because, like, it's such a huge step like, I guess for any practice. You need to have this like repeatable act action or practice that you can undertake in a realistic environment, not in a simulated simulated environments, so that you can like, fail early and learn fast and with this is just, like, super difficult, because you don't get to deploy systems here and there, you know, like, every Tuesday or something so like, I guess it's super important to engage in small projects. With like, not too much at stake to put those practices in place and build the confidence in your own practice. build the confidence in your research methodology in your modeling methodology and in your design methodology. think this was for me. Not that I'm complaining about it. I think I was like, very fortunate that I have an entrepreneurial impulse or I don't know trait or whatever. That allowed me to kind of like take those steps without too much hesitation. So but I think overall, that that would be the the biggest challenge. And other is like just communication. Like it's both so much work to like develop these competencies to design those like do the research and design those systems and then like to do the pedagogy of the the system so that, you know, people who are downstream of design can actually understand those objectives and implement them without like creating extreme amounts of communication overhead for the organization. It's a huge challenge. That's yeah, I'm still struggling with actually

21:13

I'm what are the common pitfalls when practicing token engineering?

Participant 37 21:20

Yeah, like I think the last points would be one of them. Like I think it's referred to in writing as curse of knowledge. Like you. You think that everything is clear. Because you are kind of operating within a certain neural network yourself. But actually, you know, the references that you might be having is not shared with the audience on the other side. So being very clear and concise and methodical process oriented there I think is super, super important. And other is like, I think, as I mentioned, like being too stuck in certain models of rationality is another problem when it comes to complex systems and systems that are exposed to a lot of emergent behavior and like open systems basically. Yeah, like, I think designing two determinate mechanisms is another, I would say. Tricky. Another pitfall. And finally

22:42

maybe that's Thank you, and what what do you see as the most pressing needs for the few to address like what is missing in the field right now?

Participant 37 22:53

Yeah, I think like the more off the top of my head is like the the pedagogical frameworks that allow for, like, kind of pathfinding for like, not in not necessarily true, deterministic or like singular routes for becoming a token engineer or something but more about how people can discover their way in how they can contribute in that field. Yeah, like we there's a

clear tangible need for many different roles in this field like and this is like, I'm saying this as you know, like, sounder of multiple projects that you know, I see the need of like hiring these people. So there's like economic value that is already waiting for those people to come out of those pedagogical systems. So these are mainly I think, especially entry roles wouldn't be like writing, like the communication aspect of those systems. Like research a lot of there's a need for a lot of rigorous research practice in the field, I think. Yeah, like the field can be profoundly enriched by a diverse set of talents that is coming from a wide token engineering practice.

24:34

Do you think those roles are well defined, or there's still missing some refinement on how to communicate the needs for specific people?

Participant 37 24:48

So like, I think the issue with definitions is that like, it's always limited to a functional area. Say like, I'm writing a job description to hire someone. It's like something that is limited to my needs in that moment. So I think like there needs to be the compilation of all this sensory, all these inputs and sort of digest them into general areas within which there are different threads of competencies that people can accumulate in according to their own desires of, you know, our personal growth and yeah, through whose accumulation they can like, find economic value in the end, which is obviously like super, super important. So the practice needs like a theory of change. We could refer to such that ties into an economic context in the end, because otherwise, you know, doesn't really make sense.

26:03

That's great. Yeah. Thank you. We're moving a little bit to ethics now. So can you describe the role of ethics in token engineering?

Participant 37 26:15

Yeah, ethics. It's a subject that I am I think, quite weak on in terms of ethics as like a canonical inscription of like a value sets. But I think like my first answer would like work here, in the sense that I think the responsibility if we would call it ethics as it relates to the token engineer, like the response, the set of responsibilities, I think, off the top of that list is like awareness, awareness of like precedents, awareness of consequentiality. And yeah, I think those are very, very relevant. And then like, you know, I mean, I don't know if like the fields and field needs something like hypocrates, type of oath you know that doctors are taking for like, integrity of the practice or something like this. But yeah, I will be a little bit more less institutional and more loose and point to a generals striving towards awareness of precedence, and consequentialism.

27:41

Do you have thoughts on how to increase diversity and inclusion in the field?

Participant 37 27:49

Not systemically. I mean, I'm doing things in my, which have also happened like naturally. I didn't say I want to increase diversity and started doing that but just you know, there are brilliant people that are around the worlds that are, you know, waiting for, you know, a platform at some some help and some mentorship. So I think making time for sharing your knowledge with and not time in terms of like like, I'm being I'm talking about being generous in terms of like, because these this type of mentoring, it doesn't really like you should be available beyond just some I don't know preset hours per month. or something, but like, not even emotionally available. Because it's also more than just like conveying some data, but, you know, like being there for someone. So I think like, if you feel capable and experienced in the field, I think there's definitely there must definitely be some, it's also extremely satisfying as a practice, so I think mentoring is very, very relevant, but systemically I've seen so many systemic policies for diversity go wrong. So I'm like usually wary of such formalisms.

29:31

So how so how would they go wrong?

Participant 37 29:35

I mean, they, you know, usually end up I mean, they I don't know I didn't even define what they are, but like it ends up with, you know, when you remove the human and you put a policy in that space, or like, kind of like a social a meme or something that you know, pervades people's minds rather than their practices. That also kind of is hollowing. Like they're the real intention behind this. Beneath these things, yeah. How did how does it go wrong? Like, you know, organizing diversity, like thing, you know, having diversity as both the positive and the negative diagnostics of diversity as signals, right, like saying that is bad because there is no woman on that panel. That is bad because there is no, you know, like things being hollowed out from its contents I think is never a good idea. I don't think any woman wants to be honest. Not any woman but some do. But I don't think these are the people that we I would like to help would want to be there for whatever they're interested in and not at all about their gender or their skin color or whatever, you know. So like, I think just creating those spaces would be a good policy and not enforcing some. Yeah, enforcing some, like ideological position or judgments. for that. I just would like a world that is more liberated from that type of judgment, not becoming

31:28

a statistic. And talking about finances now, in your perspective, what are the incentives to be a practicing token engineer, like what are typical rewards in terms of value in form that someone receives

Participant 37 31:50

economic incentives we're talking about

31:52

not only like all types of incentives

Participant 37 31:58

Well, I think like in terms of the like, the spiritual side of things like it's, I think, an incredible practice because, you know, one of the shittiest things about the world is that, you know, it's filled with cynicism, and, you know, overloading with critique, but very little, you know, constructive argumentation or paths forward towards a practice. And this is basically the pinnacle of that, in my opinion, like it's the sort of branch of magic where you're able to convert critique into a practice and that's incredible. So it's, like, incredibly satisfying, I would say that's the, like, the challenge is like not to be a smartass about it. You know, it's to be humble about that practice. Because it's easy to, you know, then be a second order critique of the critics of the world. So, yeah, so being generous and humble is important. besides this like spiritual incentive, to transcend the normativity of the times is, I think economically very valuable. There's definitely a career for it. Open Systems are not going anywhere, if you like, and, you know, the open source ecosystem. is growing, the primitives that are in its affordance are growing, which means a toolkit that you can build with is growing. So, you know, the creative design space is significantly growing. So you can be more creative you can be you can have more resources as you go. So I think like, the costs are significantly lower to jump in. There's more people that have tried and failed and learn stuff that came before so a lot of possible mentors around I guess. And yeah, there's like plenty of work, economic context also, for variety of token engineering related work

34:26

and this has been we have this is one of the deliverables of our study to understand the compensation of a token engineer and how wide this has been varied. So what do you think is the average salary of a token engineer

Participant 37 34:44

Hmm, interesting. I think like there's obviously huge variance with regards to seniority. But I think token engineers, or like the prac, token practitioner or token engineering practitioners, mechanisms and practitioners, I think they shouldn't be too shy from low compensation, in all honesty, and to get into this like, starting early phase. So I think like, things like being a student researcher, things like being in internship positions, I think they should offer this too, because, you know, I don't think too many employers are like putting out these offers, but like, you know, this can come from, you know, contributors themselves. I think that that's definitely important. But with regards to like hire sort of like full time hires, I would say, the range would be between seven to 14k per month. This would be like the range that I'm used to.

36:01

Yes. And what do you wish for the future of the field? How do you see in the next three years

Participant 37 36:15

so how do I see I actually don't have such a clearer view of general trends like I think more people will be in the fields. Thanks to you guys, better pedagogic rails for those people to ascend into the practice. But what would be my wish is also what I described earlier, like sort of like something that would not just be a university you know, like something that would actually propose also something new, like, revised, renegotiated, pedagogic platform, that if I would design it, I would definitely prioritize like the pathfinding of the individual themselves, rather than like creating sort of one model of a token engineer necessarily, but allowing for you know, token artists to exist allowing for various archetypes of designers to exist and and for them to establish their own fields and their own practices and their own templates for others to sort of be inspired by, I think, like, universities have failed, because they became kind of like a tool for the corporate world to create units and we should like learn from that and design. More open games that people can feel the agency of their personal growth, and discover and custom build their careers.

38:17

So specific developments or innovations would be something around that open games is there anything out like, what would be developments or innovations that are needed to achieve? What do you wish to see?

Participant 37 38:31

I would again like connect back to the practice aspect of it, I think. Connecting like identifying talents, soon, and like plugging them into the right mentorships in certain cases and economic contexts for practices in other cases, like where they can actually get their hands dirty. That that will be something extremely helpful. So something that links the exploration, pedagogy research dimension to the practice as sort of like parallel tracks. That will be next level.

39:15

And you mentioned you've been using a lot of chat GPT. And as AI technology continues to advance, there's a potential to significantly impact the practice implementation development of token engineering. So in your opinion, how do you see affecting the field and what would be your role in it?

Participant 37 39:40

So like, you know, as we mentioned, like there's so much complexity in this practice that any research methodology that is like optimizing towards efficiency is extremely welcome. And, you know, Chet GPT is like having computational reasoning on the edges of your practice. So it allows you like I experimented with designing a game from scratch with Chat GPT. And it was a profound experience. I kind of like try to be very, like, not too intrusive in what Chat GPT was creating. So I just like would give directive prompts rather than like, too descriptive, and it will create on its own, so to kind of like on this or to feel as much relinquishment of control as possible in this particular practice. And it was really profound and it was incredibly efficient and effective. Because also, if you know what you're looking for, you get it. So this is kind of where we are already. And we're not even in the like, Agent simulation realm of AI. Yes, you know, like, obviously, those things exist, but like, it's not on this consumer level. And this performance level yet, in my view, but it's definitely coming very, very soon. Yeah, so I think this is just like going to profoundly change who can design what and not only like design but also downstream of that, right like implementation? Maybe mechanism designers can be solo entrepreneurs one day you know, or like, they can go straight into production from from design, and that's, like, super profound. I think like, that's, that's the world I would like to see. Because that's what makes me kind of like excited about the field of open source. That, like, what I'm doing can contribute to the expansion or the widening of the design space for someone else, which is like, what I'm feeding off of my what my practice is feeding off of. So thinking that like the entry barriers like lower to such an extent that you can handle those things almost singularly not necessarily like working solo is fun, but, you know, it's just great that we can go from intention to design to deployments with very, very little cost that is necessarily I think that is going to be that is my like, political theory, in the sense that like, I don't think this should have happened or that should happen. I'm kind of like on the like, allowing for the design space to expand. And the field of opt in systems, I think will bring us to like a generative state where optionality is at such a level where the majority of utopian visions can overcome dystopian visions in assuming that there's this like, we achieve a certain opt in. Transition sort of possibility. For agents to move between. How do I contribute to that? I mean, I don't know. We'll see.

43:37

So lastly, whose work do you admire in the space and is there someone we should talk? We should also talk to this interview?

Participant 37 43:48

Oh, there's this guy called \$name\$. He's not bad. I mean, he's a huge inspiration for me. Definitely, like working with him. Having conversations with him has always been incredibly stimulating. And also, like on top of all that work, like the ability to turn those teachings into like turn those into teachings and then to like, practical methodologies. I think it's like, I just don't get it. How it's possible. So I have huge admiration for him. Apart from that yeah, there's some people it's like a little bit hard to throw the Get a hold off, but like, I really like I mean, I'm just giving colorful answer at this point. But the folks at \$name\$ I really admire like how they make art with mechanism design and smart contract design. That's inspires me a lot also, how they anticapitalistically make fun of those systems. And on the total opposite, I guess, is the I forget what was the name of the collective of people who developed [former 3d], like using these systems again, to like kind of as a joke and sort of amplification of some of the capitalistic or like animal spirit. tendencies that that are prevalent in these systems and production. Do you know former 3d? Yeah. Yeah. I guess those are interesting. I'm sure I'm missing some folks that are of the like, very dear to me. But these are what comes to mind.

45:58

Do you think there's any of them that would be willing to speak with us or you said they're kind of hard to get a hold up?

Participant 37 46:07

I think it can be tried, like Yeah, I could I could try to make an intro with distributed gallery for more 3d I don't have contact I think they are like very under cover, because they're doing like, illegal stuff.

46:27

Awesome. Well, thank you so much. It was a pleasure to talk to you as always very insightful to hear your your protective

Participant 37 46:38

measures, man.

46:40

Do you have anything else you would like to end?

Participant 37 46:44

No, I'm very grateful for the practice. Very grateful for like, yeah, that you're making it a thing in the world. Also your contributions to it are very inspiring.

47:00

Thanks, Jim. Okay, so have a have a nice day. Thank you. There. Ciao. recording stopped