

Whitepaper. 21 Theses: Why Co-operatives and Bitcoin are perfect for each other; How Lightning can instantly connect coops in the Philippines and around the world today



“The university environment is the perfect place for bitcoin education.” — Dean Florin T. Hilbay, Silliman University College of Law, topped the 1999 Bar and was the youngest Solicitor General appointed to the post (2014 to 2016)

“Bitcoin and co-operative advocates are almost one and the same, they want to establish a just and fair economic and social system, where everyone prospers because no one lives on rent privileges and sweat of other people.” — Roy S. Micalat, one of the Philippines’ leading cooperative figures

Fellow Cooperators,

I. **Bitcoin** is sound money perfect as antidote for any unsound money system. **Lightning** makes payments fast and cheap. **Co-operatives** are a 200-year-old silent revolution waiting for an unstoppable munition.

II. When I saw Silliman University put its academic armada behind what Dean Hilbay calls the “gift from a faceless man,” I knew we have to make our move. If the university and its intelligentsia are perfect for bitcoin education, cooperatives and our communities are the perfect laboratories for playing with fire, *este*, Lightning.

III. Alas, remember what happened when our *lolos*, the *Homo Erectus*, discovered fire. When uncle Ben [Franklin, not Spidey’s] caught Lightning in a bottle. With great power comes great responsibility, uncle Ben [Spidey’s, not the Puritan’s] said. Now, we have Lightning. So let’s bring light to our co-ops!

IV. I will say this without batting an eyelash: **All co-operatives today, at this very moment, minute and second, as in now, pronto, can be connected to each other thru Lightning.** By “all co-operatives” I mean cooperatives in Africa, India, Europe and the U.S. connected *to and with* each other. I mean cooperatives in the Philippines connected *to and with* each other. I mean all branches and offices of

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our co-ops connected *to and with* each other. I mean members of cooperatives connected *to and with* each other, and their kin. **Instantly. Not slowly. But suddenly.**

V. How is that possible? **It's possible because Lightning is an open protocol. As an open protocol, it is available to everyone, but controlled by no one.** Any coop, *your* coop, *their* coop can design a system and build Lightning into it.

VI. Lightning is a network, *i.e.* “Layer 2,” on top of the bitcoin network. **The Lightning payment network makes the transfer of 1 peso from the Philippines to Togo and back instant and almost free.**

VII. **No funds to make an app, no time, no technical people: No problem.** You can get any of the many free Lightning applications to any of your mobile devices [You can even use “dumb” phones, *i.e.* non-smartphones, phones without internet, etc. But this would be a topic for another day]. I will highlight a few Lightning applications here so you can get started instantly, immediately, now, before you even finish breakfast. For you to show yourself, to experience how Lightning can transfer value to anywhere in the Philippines, and to anywhere else in the world, very fast and very cheap. Get them thru the links [blue underlines] in this pdf document.

- A. [Muun](#), a Lightning wallet made by less than a dozen aloof Argentinians who largely avoid the limelight.

They don't go to conferences, they respond to me only [via Twitter](#). But my goodness, the best UX and UI ever, their Lightning wallet rocks!

I thought “Muun” was a strange name [“Korean?” when I first heard what sounded like *kabilugan ng buwan*, *i.e.* “moon”] for a Lightning wallet. A little googling would show that the InterGalactic Banking Clan in Star Wars was a largely Muun-run organization. Muun was started in Argentina, a country known for their football [Messi and World Cup, *duh!*] as much as for their currency controls and devaluation (seven times in 20 years).

- B. [Pouch](#), a Lightning wallet proudly made in and for the Philippines.*

1. When you download Pouch, you get an automatic bank account to which you can deposit pesos via InstaPay.

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2. You can send bitcoin to it [*e.g. from Muun*] via the Lightning network. That bitcoin is automatically converted to, saved and kept in pesos.
3. You can send those pesos to another Lightning wallet [*e.g. to Muun*] and those pesos would be converted to, saved and kept in bitcoin. All these movements happen via Lightning, so they are very fast and very cheap.

*Aside from the usual suspects, their “3 Musketeers” whom I’ve sparred with in cyberspace, I’ve met in person some of their young, idealistic Pinoy developers *cum* revolutionaries during bitcoin meetups in Makati, my main tech playground. Two of those Musketeers are married to *kababayans*, I believe that’s their lucky charm!

C. To send money from the US to the Philippines, your relative can use [Cash App](#) [US citizens only], [Strike](#) [US citizens only], or any other Lightning wallet.

1. Whether sending USD or bitcoin from the US to the Philippines, [Pouch](#) converts, saves and keeps that in pesos.
2. It works the other way. You can send to the US. To Europe. To Africa. Anywhere there’s Lightning. Lightning is everywhere today.
3. You know the drill. Lightning makes these all possible. Lightning makes it all very fast and almost free, like, yes, Lightning!

VIII. There are many Lightning apps today, all available for free! Dean Hilbay’s favorite Lightning wallet seems to be the [Wallet of Satoshi](#). I paid for [my book orders](#) thru it. I used Pouch for my first batch of book orders. I used Muun for my second batch of book orders. I can use any other Lightning or bitcoin wallet for my next book orders for family and friends. **This is open protocol in action. This is the beauty of it.**

IX. FICCO can have its own Lightning wallet, *e.g.* “Lightning Egay” wallet. ACDI can have its own Lightning wallet, *e.g.* “Lightning Aces” wallet. 1CISP

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can have its own Lightning wallet, *e.g.* “Ride the Lightning” wallet. Lightning.coop can use Muun, Pouch, and 21 other Lightning wallets. **These will all work the same way. Open and free. Without borders. Without permission. Freedom! Or pardon my French, *liberté!***

X. This growing number of Lightning applications, systems and platforms will continue to grow precisely because Lightning is an open protocol that is available to everyone but controlled by no one, *i.e.* no single person or entity dictates who can or cannot use Lightning. I have a living inventory of them in [Lightning.coop](https://lightning.coop) and LymanManzanares.com.

XI. **Today, entire payment systems of co-operatives can be implemented with Lightning. And/or Lightning apps that already exist.** When I spoke in Vigan, Iocos Sur during a tertiary cooperative federation strategic planning early this year about “open protocols” I was a bit cryptic, but this is what I meant. Probably.

XII. **Whether intra-cooperative, inter-cooperative, intra-federation and inter-federation, apex to apex, local and international systems, Lightning will work with any other Lightning app, system, or platform just the same.**

XIII. Cooperatives exist to eliminate rent-seeking gatekeepers and middlemen who provide zero value-add. They used to think they can profit from the work of our backs, and the sweat of our brows. They used to think they’re better than us, faster than us, smarter than us. Not anymore. With the “gift from the faceless man,” we will beat them at their own game. Obsolete them, if we must.

XIV. As Nicolas Dornier would say in 2017, “This is lies, my trust in you is broken, I will make you obsolete.”

XV. Cooperatives have always wanted what’s best for their members, quality products and services at a reasonable price. With Lightning, cooperatives are getting the best possible payment network that knows no boundaries but crosses national borders anyway, without permission from anyone, and at the least possible cost.

XVI. I founded [Lightning.coop](https://lightning.coop) and our shibboleth says it all ‘Cooperatives for collective freedom, Bitcoin for individual liberty.’ Our primary mission is to bring Lightning to the Philippines’ more than 10,000 co-operatives and 10M cooperators. With the combined armies of passionate bitcoiners and cooperators

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in the Philippines and around the world, we are making this happen. And then on to Asia and beyond!

XVII. We don't have to wait for anyone. Our brains in the Philippines are made of the same biological material and neurons as the brains in the Western World. The ICA, or the International Cooperative Association, is too smart not to get this very soon. But Lightning doesn't need an apex for consensus, committees for compromises, or consensus. Because Bitcoin is consensus by physics, energy and mathematics. Without a CEO, nor board, nor management, nor agitator-lawyers like me and former SolGen Florin Hilbay, [Bitcoin has been running 99.9% without missing a bit since the last banking sector collapse in 2008.](#)

XVIII. In respect to cooperative systems, technology, innovation and policy, I've always hoped for opportunities to "leapfrog." Lightning is leapfrog technology and bitcoin is a leapfrog way of viewing the economic, social and monetary structures we have lived with all our lives. In the same way cooperativism was with the Rochdale Pioneers. In 1844! With Lightning, we don't have to wait, nor make the same baby steps made by ordinary non-cooperative businesses. Neither do we have to make the same mistakes they made. With Lightning, we can do something different. And we can do it now!

XIX. Given the privilege of writing the book review of **former Solicitor General Florin Hilbay's** recently launched book **'Bitcoin, An Introduction to the Peer-to-Peer, Open Source, Censorship-Resistant, Immutable, Permissionless, Decentralized, Global, Digital Monetary Network of the 21st Century,'** which will be available to bitcoiner-delegates to the 2023 Bitcoin Island Retreat, I wrote it with a clear co-operative bent:

"Bitcoin for individuals is easy, either a person gets it by gut or gets it five or 10 years later. To bastardize a famous Satoshi quote: Either you get it now or you don't, I don't have time for you now. I'm already on to the next step, bitcoin for institutions (*e.g.* conglomerates, companies and co-operatives). It is in this context that I'd like to give Prof. Florin's bitcoin book its plaudits and critique.

"The book is a game of two halves. The first (Chapters 1 to 7), a disguised deconstruction of our mental concept of 'money,' masquerading as a series of bedtime stories. The second (Chapters 8 to 15), a careful construction of the rational argument for bitcoin. Two faces of the same coin, pun intended. The writing is at once free and cohesive for such a normally elusive subject. Tempered and disciplined in the details it covers and what it doesn't. Measured, without being compromising. Deep dives, without getting lost in the moment.

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“This work is firm in its foundations, without getting distracted by things that usually elicit the vitriol of bitcoiners the world over: the highway robberies being conducted in broad daylight by charlatans and barons in the parallel universe of crypto, altcoins, and ‘shitcoins.’ The message seems to be, ‘Not now. Pick your battles. There’s time for everything.’

“This is a time of congratulations. Half of it goes to Dean Hilbay. Half of it has to go to Silliman University (est. 1901) for launching the book and for putting its academic armada behind it. This is a first-mover advantage, a unique intellectual value proposition that will serve the university very well in the years to come.

“As founder of Lightning.coop, through which we advocate for the adoption of open protocols such as Lightning (bitcoin’s 2nd layer) under the shibboleth ‘Coops for collective freedom, bitcoin for individual liberty,’ our audience are boards of directors, conglomerates, groups of companies, cooperatives, CEOs, and law firms. This is the book I have been waiting for. This is the book I wish I had written.

“Overall, this book was written by sound money, literally. It is no coincidence that Chapter 3 of this book tells the story of how in 1252, the *fiorino d’oro* (the florin) came about. Prof. Florin is a bitcoiner’s bitcoiner. In our secret nooks around the world, this book will be read by the candlelight.

— A book review by Lyman A. Manzanares, my student at the U.P. College of Law, and a “pleb” whose primary mission is to arm the Philippines’ more than 10,000 co-operatives and more than 10M cooperators with what I refer to in the book as our “gift from a faceless man” (Chapter 8).

XX. The book, launched on March 9, 2023 in a university-wide event attended by no less than Dr. Betty Cernol-McCann, President of Silliman University, Dr. Earl Jude Paul L. Cleope, Vice President for Academic Affairs, Atty. May S. Aguilar, Member of the Board of Trustees, Atty. Gretel Kelly M. Delos Santos-Dy, IBP Negros Oriental President, leading members of the business chamber in the Dumaguete City, students and faculty and bitcoin advocates from Manila and elsewhere, is earning raves from bitcoiners worldwide.

XXI. **[Pouch](#), the country’s most popular Lightning wallet, is rolling the red carpet for cooperatives in this year’s Bitcoin Island Retreat, the country’s first bitcoin conference.** This is generating a lot of excitement in the local and

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international bitcoin community. The conference would be held from March 27 to 29 at the Hennan Regency in Boracay, Philippines. [Let's make this count!](#)

Thank you. In co-operation, I remain,

Very truly yours,

/s/ Lyman A. Manzanares

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