The Story Of PPQ.ai: Privacy-First, Lightning-Enabled AI

Introduction

Matt has been immersed in Bitcoin for over a decade. From analyzing peer-to-peer markets in developing countries to building a global AI platform powered by crypto payments, his story bridges data analysis, entrepreneurship, and monetary freedom. In this interview, he shares insights from his journey, how Bitcoin inspired him, what led to the creation of PPQ, and why permissionless systems may shape the future.

Discovering Bitcoin

Janusz: Let's start with how it all began.

Matt: Sure. So I first heard about Bitcoin in 2013, when it hit $1,000 for the first time. I read about it in a newspaper. I've always loved technology, privacy, and anything a bit rebellious, and Bitcoin had all of that.

Janusz: Was it love at first sight?

Matt: Not exactly. At first, it was just interesting. But then came a big moment. During the 2014–2015 bear market, I noticed something while looking at data from LocalBitcoins, volumes were going up, especially in countries like Venezuela, Nigeria, and Kenya. That told me people were using Bitcoin for real-world problems, not just speculation. That's when I got hooked.

Janusz: So you're a data geek?

Matt: I am. I don't have a formal CS degree, but my passion for Bitcoin pulled me into data analysis. I took several data science bootcamps. Every project I worked on had something to do with Bitcoin.

The Utility of Bitcoin in Developing Markets

Janusz: What kind of use cases were you seeing in those markets?

Matt: The key driver was broken monetary systems. Governments in places like Venezuela block capital movement and manipulate exchange rates. For example, if a Venezuelan works in Mexico and tries to send money home, they'd get a terrible rate through Western Union. Instead, they'd buy Bitcoin in Mexico, send it, and the recipient would get a much better rate.

Janusz: So it seems like Bitcoin created an unofficial remittance rail?

Matt: Exactly. And it worked in both directions. People inside Venezuela wanted to get rid of bolivars and buy dollars. So they sold bolivars for Bitcoin, then exchanged Bitcoin for USD. It formed a circular economy of sorts.

Janusz: Did you travel to those countries?

Matt: I went to several African countries in 2022, but not Venezuela. What I did instead was contact traders directly on LocalBitcoins and Paxful. Many would list their WhatsApp numbers in their trade ads. I messaged them and interviewed them to understand what was really happening on the ground.

From Data to Product: The Birth of PPQ

Janusz: Let's talk about PPQ. What is it, and why should I use it?

Matt: PPQ is a platform that gives access to all major AI models, OpenAI, Anthropic, Perplexity, Grok, in one place. The twist is, it's all pay-per-use and crypto-first. No subscriptions. You can deposit as little as ten cents, especially over Lightning, and you get a bonus for using Lightning. You don't even need an account.

Janusz: Where did the idea come from?

Matt: Subscriptions frustrate me. They assume everyone has a credit card, but many people don't, especially in developing countries. While not everyone has crypto either, the group that does is growing. I thought: what if I offer premium AI access to this growing global crypto-native audience?

Janusz: How did you get your first users?

Matt: Just tweeted it. I had a small Twitter following from my Bitcoin work. I posted, "Hey, I made this, try it." That was enough to get the ball rolling.

The Role of Bitcoin in PPQ

Janusz: So it seems like Bitcoin helped you unlock the market?

Matt: Totally. It lowered the entry barrier and gave us global reach from day one. Subscriptions lock you into credit cards and local payment systems. Bitcoin is borderless.

Janusz: Why don't more companies do this?

Matt: The bitcoin market is still niche. Also, businesses love subscriptions because people forget to cancel them. It's steady cash flow. What I'm doing goes under the radar for now.

Janusz: You mentioned Lightning. How's that working out?

Matt: I've been a Lightning fan for years. Adoption isn't exploding, but it's steady. From a business view, holding some Bitcoin as treasury has been beneficial too, especially during bull markets.

Bitcoin's Future and Global Impact

Janusz: Based on your data experience, what's your big picture view?

Matt: I think we'll see fewer fiat currencies in the next 10–15 years. Small countries will be forced to dollarize or look to Bitcoin. Having Bitcoin as a counterbalance to fiat is a strategic move, like El Salvador is doing.

Janusz: Hyper-bitcoinization?

Matt: Maybe. What I see is Bitcoin slowly infecting fiat systems, not fighting them head-on, but integrating. Politicians own Bitcoin now. That changes the dynamic.

Janusz: You think Bitcoin has values beyond just the tech?

Matt: Definitely. It exposes the dysfunction in fiat systems, the complexity, the hidden tricks, the money printing. Bitcoin is simple: fixed supply, permissionless, transparent. It forces a rethink.

Lessons in Entrepreneurship

Janusz: What would you change if you could go back?

Matt: Honestly, I would've started earlier. I was afraid, of failure, of losing money. Fear delays action. A little savings helped me finally take the leap.

Janusz: And now you're on a mission?

Matt: I think everyone should be. For me, it's about helping Bitcoin become a medium of exchange, not just an asset. The more we use it, for groceries, for AI, for anything, the stronger and more resilient it becomes.

Janusz: Thanks, Matt. I really appreciate the time and depth.

Matt: Likewise. Great talking with you. Let's keep in touch.