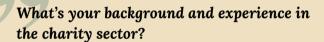# Why Should Non Profits Care About Web3 and NFTs?

an interview with **David Mitchell, Crypto Philanthropy Manager** at **Edinburgh Dog & Cat Home**

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What's your background and experience in the charity sector?

I started working with non-profits almost 15 years ago. I was a support analyst with Blackbaud where I'd help charities with their databases and online donation systems, and that led to a role as a data analyst with an international development organisation. I spent a few years working with data and then moved into digital marketing where I've spent the majority of my career. I've also had roles in content creation and in comms, so I've been fortunate to hold a diverse range of positions within the non-profit sector.

When did you get into Web 3/Blockchain?

It was early in 2021. I wanted to invest in cryptocurrencies, and that was the rabbit hole which opened up the entirety of web3.

Why did you get into it?

Initially, I just wanted to learn more about crypto in order to make better investment decisions. However, when I started learning about NFTs, the Metaverse, and a lot of the culture and philosophy which underpinned web3 I found it very interesting. Quickly I realised it was something I wanted to focus on within my career.

What first made you think about the potential for web3 and the charity sector to cross over?

My favourite aspect of all my non-profit roles has been in relation to innovation. Whenever I hear about a new technology, platform or tool I always consider how it might be utilised for fundraising or how charities can capitalise on it. When I explored the crypto and web3 space it seemed clear to me this technology had applications everywhere, and charities would be no exception.

What do you think is the most interesting potential for the charity sector in web 3?

Having spent a lot of my career with an international development organisation, I'm very interested to see how smart contracts might be applied to micro loans, or how they might allow for secure transactions of very low values....

...within the fundraising and communications sphere, I don't think we've even scraped the surface of what's possible. Donations via crypto are fantastic, and I suspect they will continue to grow, but I can also imagine a time where volunteer hours are rewarded with NFTs which entitle owners to real-world benefits. Gaming and streaming is now firmly established as an income stream within the non-profit sector, but I suspect we might see play-to-earn gaming used as a means to support charities too. I think VR and the metaverse has fantastic potential for immersive storytelling.

Transparency and stewardship of funds will always be a priority for donors, so if organisations can track spending and impact on-chain it has huge potential for demonstrating the effectiveness of their operations.

What do you wish people understood about web3?

I think the important thing is to understand that what we are looking at today in relation to web3 is only the beginning. When we looked at a dial-up modem and a basic chat room in 1992, it was almost difficult to understand how important the internet would be by 2002. Even when people made their first MySpace page, we had no idea the degree to which social media would become embedded in our lives. We didn't really grasp the...

...implications of technology like YouTube or Podcasts until they had already disrupted the entire media landscape. When we look at blockchain, crypto, NFTs, and metaverse, it's reasonable to assume the whole space will be unrecognisable in ten years time, and the potential changes they'll have made 15 years from now are scarcely imaginable.

Would you encourage charities to explore web3?

Absolutely. I would start small, maybe buy a few pounds of crypto, or just start watching some videos or webinars on the subject. The initial barrier to entry can seem quite high, but in reality it's not that difficult to get a basic understanding. You only really need the conceptual overview. In the same way you don't need to grasp the entirety of the global financial model to fundraise, you don't need to know cryptography to ask for a donation in bitcoin. Getting a bit of an understanding opens a lot of doors and takes you a long way.

How would you convince charity boards to care about crypto?

Every day I see a news story about a brand or organisation taking their first steps in crypto or NFTs. I think it's about showing the technology will be adopted, and there is more to gain by being early....

There are certainly legitimate concerns which you'll need to address, but there is good information out there to help you make your case. Ultimately it's about balancing the potential of being early in the space, against concerns and risk. Just like with traditional cash donations you can mitigate risk with good policies and procedures.

What is the future of this intersection in your opinion?

In the short term, I think we'll continue to see positive collaborations between charities and crypto projects. There's definitely a strong altruistic streak which runs through crypto, so I think it makes sense for us to work together. We know the non-profit sector, and they know blockchain.

Longterm, I think it's difficult to say, the potential is so great that it's hard to predict where web3 might lead charities!