# Worldcoin launches iris-scanning crypto identity system in US amid regulatory optimism



Sam Altman's digital identification initiative, Worldcoin, has officially launched in the United States, introducing its distinctive iris-scanning technology and cryptocurrency token to the American market. This development coincides with the Trump administration’s more favourable stance towards the digital asset sector, in contrast to the prior Biden administration's more cautious approach to cryptocurrencies.

Worldcoin, recently rebranded as World, had initially launched its product outside the US in 2023. Sam Altman, who is also the CEO of OpenAI, a leading artificial intelligence company valued at approximately $300 billion, previously expressed frustration over the US exclusion, describing his venture as "World minus the US coin." This gap is closing under the new US administration; Donald Trump has pledged to make America the “crypto capital of the planet,” signalling a more welcoming environment for ventures like Worldcoin.

Adrian Ludwig, chief architect at Tools for Humanity—the primary developer behind Worldcoin—explained the reason for the initial international rollout: "There were very good reasons why we focused on making sure that the product worked in the entire world before coming to the United States. Some of them are related to regulatory changes." Tools for Humanity was founded by Altman and Alex Blania in 2019 and has raised about $200 million from notable investors, including Andreessen Horowitz, Khosla Ventures, LinkedIn co-founder Reid Hoffman, and FTX founder Sam Bankman-Fried, who was sentenced to 25 years in prison for fraud in 2023.

A key premise behind Worldcoin is the need for a reliable method to distinguish humans from AI-generated entities as artificial intelligence grows increasingly advanced. Worldcoin produces eyeball-scanning devices known as “orbs,” which generate unique digital identities. These IDs grant users access to the Worldcoin token. The orbs are roughly basketball-sized, but the company aims to develop handheld versions and eventually embed the technology directly into webcams and mobile devices.

For the US market, World plans to build approximately 10,000 orbs within the next 12 months, a fivefold increase over its current global production. To facilitate this, the company is establishing a new factory in Richardson, Texas, dedicated to orb assembly.

The rise of sophisticated AI models capable of mimicking human interaction has expanded practical applications for Worldcoin’s technology beyond initial expectations. These advanced AI capabilities have also increased concerns over fraud, phishing, and impersonation in digital environments. In response, World recently announced a partnership with Match Group, the parent company of dating apps such as Tinder, to help verify user identities on these platforms.

Ludwig emphasised potential applications beyond commercial dating, suggesting the technology could enhance government and community services as well as improve trust and safety on social networks. While OpenAI is reportedly developing its own social network that could potentially integrate World’s technology, Ludwig noted that rival platforms like Elon Musk’s X or Meta could also become partners.

Despite the launch and expansion plans, World has not yet reached profitability and has encountered challenges internationally regarding security and privacy. In 2023, Spain’s data protection regulator blocked the initiative over concerns about the collection of personal data, particularly involving minors. Similar regulatory hurdles, including bans, investigations, and fines, have arisen in Portugal, Hong Kong, South Korea, and France.

Ludwig responded to these criticisms by affirming that all biometric data collected by World is anonymised. He forecasted that within approximately 18 months, the operational costs of running the World network would begin to be offset by the fees generated from its use.

The Financial Times is reporting on the launch, reflecting the growing intersection of digital identity, biometric technology, AI, and cryptocurrency in the evolving digital economy.

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

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