

STORY PROTOCOL
MANIFESTO





“Story Protocol will usher in a *new era of entrepreneurial creators*, and will offer existing IP holders an entirely *new way to engage audiences and advance their IP.*”

S.Y. Lee, Co-Founder of Story Protocol

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STORY
PROTOCOL



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A ABSTRACT

The internet is the most powerful creative tool in history. Creative works are connected, remixed, and distributed at zero marginal cost.

Despite the abundance of content creation on the internet, creators struggle to grow and capture the value of their intellectual property. The traditional IP model is both opaque and slow. Provenance and attribution need to happen at the speed and scale of the web.

By creating an IP framework that embraces the internet's fundamental principles of openness

and collaboration, Story Protocol aims to become the native IP infrastructure of the internet.

The protocol will provide a neutral source of provenance to track the lifecycle of an IP as it evolves across mediums and platforms in addition to modules that power frictionless licensing and remixing of IP.

Just as Git revolutionized the development of open-source software by underpinning the networked evolution of code, Story Protocol aims to transform the development of creative IP.

B A NEW ERA OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Nearly 600 years after the Gutenberg press accelerated the reproduction of creative works, the internet has evolved into the ultimate idea-propagation machine. And just as the Gutenberg press necessitated the first copyright laws, the digital era demands new IP infrastructure.

The internet not only amplifies the abilities of the printing press, but also introduces a new paradigm of networked creation. Everyone can remix and distribute content at zero marginal cost. Consider mash-ups on TikTok (Khaby Lame became the most followed account on TikTok through dueting other videos), spinoff stories on fanfiction.net (Fifty Shades of Grey was originally posted there as Twilight fanfiction), sampling on SoundCloud (remixes ignited Kygo, Zedd, and Diplo's popularity as DJs), and even mod culture in gaming (Defense of the Ancients was a mod of Warcraft III and ultimately inspired hits like League of Legends). People who were previously passive consumers are becoming producers, shaping the culture towards networked development of creative works.

These networked IPs are becoming the new norm, and artificial intelligence will supercharge this transition, shifting the internet towards ever-lower costs of production. In a culture where

replication is instantaneous and remixing is inevitable, we need a new IP regime that respects the rights of creators while acknowledging the fact that creation on the internet is "an endless, recombinant, and fundamentally social process."

However, our IP system is still deeply wedded to the analog age. Though the architecture of IP today maintains its basic commitments to incentivizing creative work, it overlooks the open nature of value creation on the internet. Our current IP infrastructure is too unwieldy to support remixing, community lore, and co-creation as foundational pillars of creativity. Instead of leaning into the fundamental force of the internet — openness — most IP models emphasize a defensive stance, adding friction to the creative process.

Before we can unlock the full creative power of the internet, we must upgrade our IP infrastructure so that it works with the web instead of fighting it. This requires embracing the abundance and sociality of the internet while allowing creators to be rewarded for their work. Doing so will enable an explosion of creative works that can evolve at the unprecedented speed and scale of the internet.



C REQUIREMENTS FOR AN INTERNET-NATIVE IP INFRASTRUCTURE

To build this IP infrastructure, there are two fundamental requirements.

First, the internet needs a standard to track the origin and evolution of IP.

Creation on the internet trends towards zero marginal costs, making the space of content practically infinite. Such abundance of content is one of the superpowers of the internet, but this abundance also makes it extremely difficult for creators to be compensated for the value that they generate. Without a way to trace the lifecycle of IP from the instant of creation to any remixes or derivatives made later, creators lack the ability to ensure that they are compensated for the usage of their work. And as AI makes the production of high fidelity content frictionless, the need for a scalable provenance and attribution solution is only growing more urgent.

Second, the internet needs a seamless and scalable licensing regime.

We not only need to record the provenance of IP, but also offer the tools to extend that IP in a way that allows creators and contributors to capture the value of their work. The current licensing system is often opaque and complex: every license must be custom negotiated on a one-to-one basis, thwarting collaboration and remixing. This high-friction licensing model is an uphill battle against the recombinant nature of the internet, which requires a more open scheme where IP owners can set the parameters for their licensing rights, resulting in scalable one-to-many licensing. If we can provide primitives for frictionless extension of IP that can be plugged into any software application, the next generation of IP will see not only more value capture for creators but also the largest franchises to date.

D INTRODUCING STORY PROTOCOL

Story Protocol will unleash the creativity of the internet by building the IP infrastructure layer of the web. The protocol elevates IP into the internet era by providing both an open IP repository and a set of modules to interact with that IP in a frictionless way.

Our open IP repository enables creative IPs — prose, images, audio, and more — to record their evolutionary journey from inception through the endless combinatorics of digital co-creation. Just as Git enabled the tracking of code through branching and versioning, Story Protocol aims to become the provenance layer for creative IP.

Beyond tracking the attribution of IP as it grows, our modules power seamless composability, allowing anyone to contribute to an IP and to capture the value of their contribution. Our modules add functionality on top of the IP repository, analogous to how GitHub extended the capabilities of Git by providing forking and pull requests.

Nouns and Verbs

To realize this vision, our protocol architecture consists of two elements: data structures and modules. The data structures are the “nouns” of the protocol, storing relevant IP metadata into “IP legos.” The modules are the “verbs,” enabling a diverse array of functionality for the IP assets registered on the protocol. Story Protocol’s data structures capture the core components of IP, and its modules represent the operations that can be performed on the data structures.

The data structures (“nouns”) address the first fundamental requirement of internet-native IP by providing a technical standard for tracking provenance and attribution. Just as the creation of protocols like HTTP, HTML, and CSS accelerated internet adoption by enabling reliable and structured information sharing, IP on Story Protocol is designed to be similarly streamlined. This standardization makes it simple for any application to leverage our data structures as a global source of provenance.

Our modules (“verbs”) address the second requirement of internet-native IP by enabling frictionless extension of IP. Once IP is captured in our IP legos, it can be composed and expanded through our modules. Modules are functions that unlock an array of abilities like licensing, revenue streams from derivative works, and access to global capital. For example, our licensing module enables programmable licenses to be generated with the same flexibility and expressivity as code, like a programmable Getty Images that works for all forms of IP. Instead of relying on one-to-one legal negotiations, creators can set their licensing conditions transparently for others to seamlessly extend their work.

Built on Blockchain

This entire infrastructure — the data structures and modules — is built on blockchain. As content proliferates on the internet, blockchains offer provenance and authenticity without the need for an intermediate entity. Crucially, the decentralized nature of blockchain empowers builders to create applications on the protocol without fear of interference.



E A THRIVING IP ECOSYSTEM

Without these builders, the next era of creative IP cannot be realized. Story Protocol is designed as a base layer for IP applications, but it is only through the efforts of an ecosystem of entrepreneurs and developers building applications on top of the protocol that we can usher in this next era of creativity on the internet. We imagine a robust set of applications – themselves profitable enterprises – that support the entire lifecycle of IP development needs. They represent a new class of services that will exist on top of the protocol in order to support capital formation, co-creation, remixing, and more.

If these applications – and others yet to be imagined – can be built on Story Protocol, the future of IP may look dramatically different.

A New Type of Blockbuster

Imagine the next Game of Thrones-level megafranchise emerges on Story Protocol. The creators behind this franchise register a rich, foundational text containing stories, characters, and locations – stored using the data structures on the protocol. Leveraging the licensing module, they can rapidly build a narrative universe and gain economic rewards by licensing rights to translate the work, expand it into new mediums, create spin-offs, produce merchandise, and more. Professional creators and true fans alike can obtain these licenses to grow the narrative. Fans adore these community-driven stories, and the creators leverage the novel ideas and global distribution of their budding community.

As the initial IP accumulates and expands, so does the value of contributing to the IP. Creators can offer real skin-in-the-game for participants by sharing a portion of their IP rights or revenues using the protocol's licensing and royalty modules. As the IP grows, there is more incentive for contributors – some amateur, some professional – to join the network with the shared mission of expanding the IP, creating a network effect. Aspiring writers see an opportunity to



launch their career by contributing to the canon: a teenage girl from Nigeria contributes a character to the franchise and earns royalties from future earnings, a former Disney writer creates a sequel chapter and makes more than from writing a popular book, a top USC creative writing grad forgoes Hollywood to write full-time on Story Protocol.

The rising value of the franchise allows the creators to expand into TV and film, with chatter in Hollywood about this being the next big thing. Netflix and HBO are clamoring to sign licensing deals. With proven interest, community, and distribution, the power in the negotiations shifts in the creators' favor. What's more, when the IP finally achieves the revenue of a major entertainment franchise, the earliest contributors could receive life-changing rewards.

Capturing Value from AI Abundance



Generative AI is reshaping creative IP. Imagine that a Colombian YouTube star creates a crossover movie between two iconic characters in different franchises by using an advanced version of GPT to create a script and Runway AI to generate the video. It becomes a smash hit, with 200 million views in a matter of weeks. Because the IP for both characters are stored in data structures on Story Protocol, the use of these characters in the AI generated work is tracked automatically. Via the licensing module, any revenue generated by this film instantly flows back to the studios that own each character – much like how profits from YouTube videos with copyrighted music are split with the owner of the copyright itself.

In this hypothetical, instead of fighting against the inevitable wave of high quality AI generated content, creators and studios actively embrace the abundance of community remixing by storing their IP on Story Protocol. IP is designed not to be siloed but rather as open as possible, becoming the foundation for hundreds of inspired works that grow the value of the

underlying property. Popular internet artists begin to allow anyone to generate images in their distinct style, as long as any monetization of the derivative works sends a percentage of revenue back to them. Musicians follow suit. AI has the potential to be part of the value capture problem, but Story Protocol makes AI part of the solution via proper attribution and compensation, allowing creators to leverage the explosion in AI content to capture more value than ever before.

IP as a Liquid Asset Class

Imagine a future where IP emerges as a liquid asset. Previously notoriously illiquid, IP is now plugged into the broader DeFi ecosystem via the composability of Story Protocol's global IP repository. Popular IP marketplaces enable a marketplace between creators, fans, and producers. This new ecosystem of "IP finance" generates efficient price discovery for IP, which offers better funding mechanisms for creative works as well as the derivatives that form around them. A whole new world of applications around IP is developed, offering unprecedented expansion opportunities for creators and their communities.

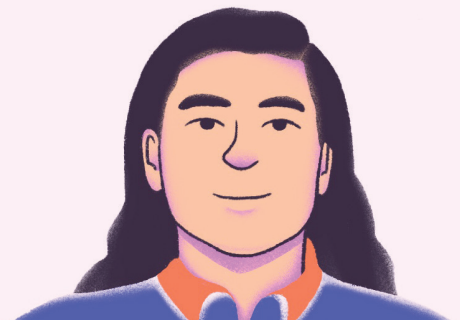
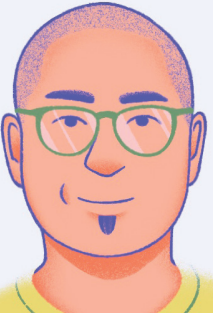
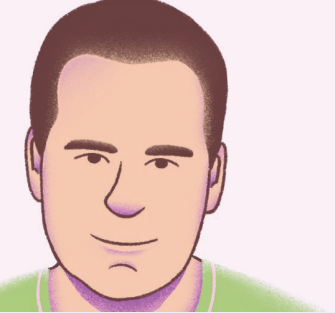
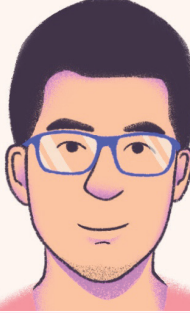
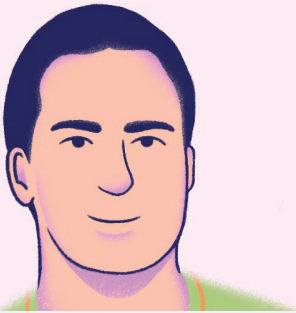
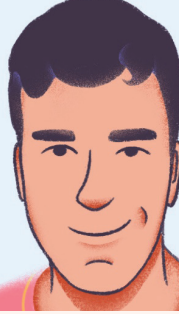
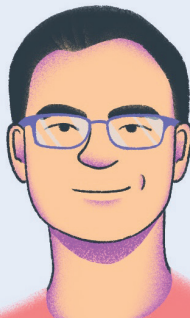
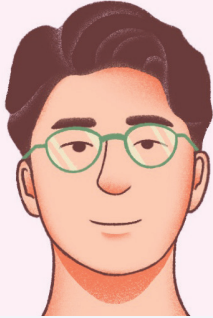
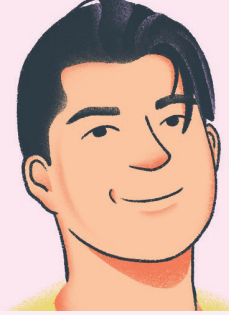
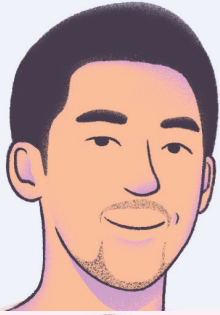
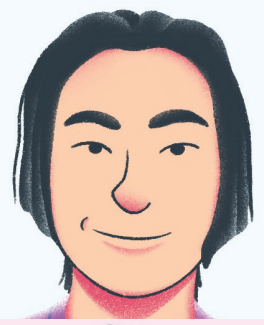
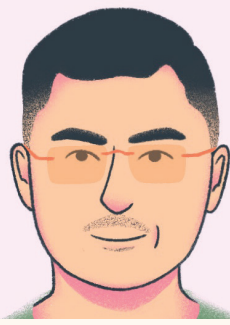
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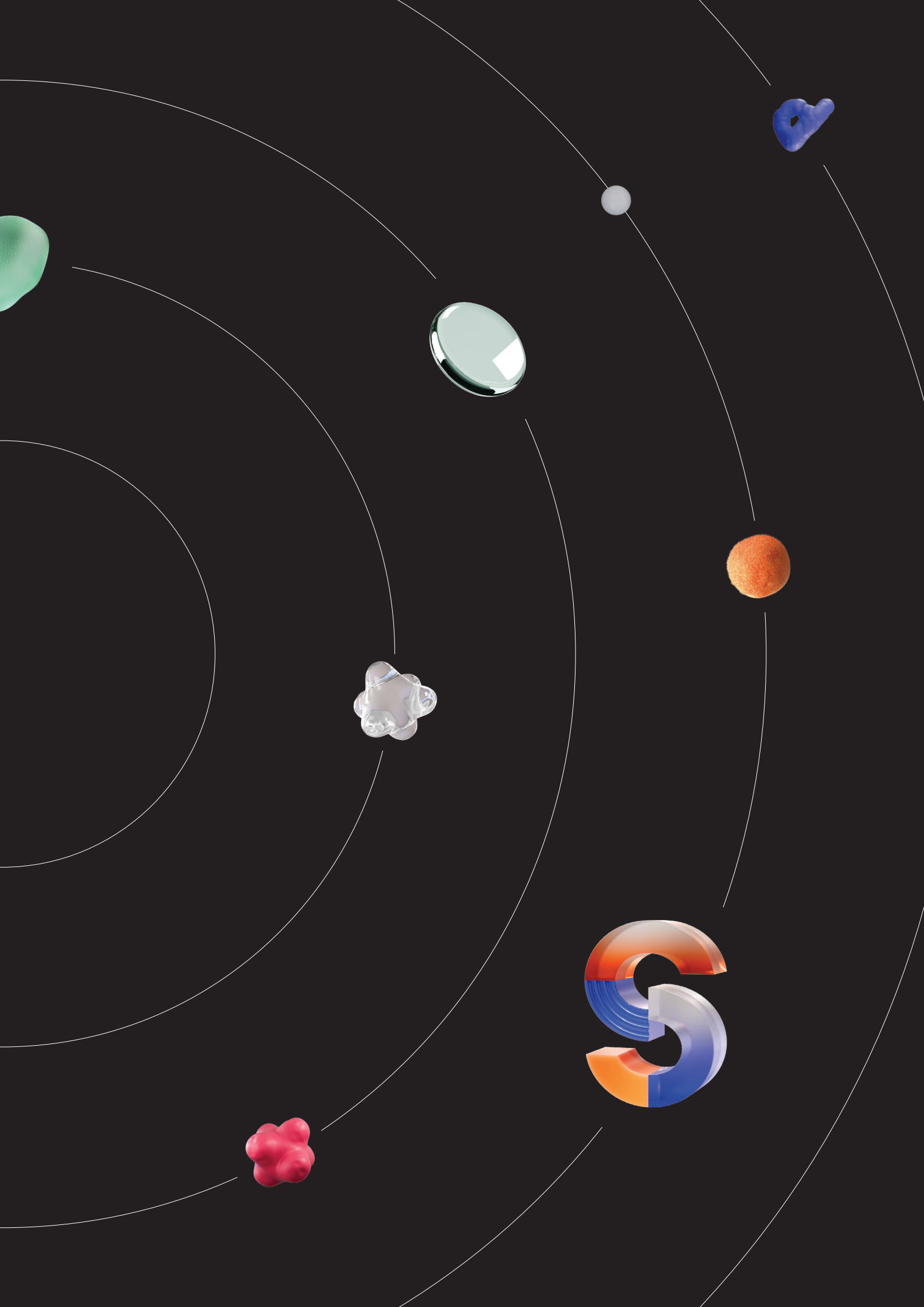
By bridging the world of off-chain IP with the programmability of blockchain assets, Story Protocol is uniting code and law: allowing IP to work with the openness and abundance of the internet instead of against it.

The internet has introduced revolutionary new methods of developing and distributing creative work: endless remixing, participatory franchises, and AI-generated content. However, our current intellectual property infrastructure works against the openness of the internet instead of embracing it. Story Protocol is building an IP infrastructure optimized for the internet era.

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