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# DeSci: The Future of Science?

## TLDR

- DeSci combines crypto technology and academic research to address issues in the scientific community, such as limited access to research, centralized control, and funding challenges.
- Key elements of DeSci include blockchain for immutable data storage, smart contracts for transparent funding, and NFTs for tokenizing research to secure ownership and funding.
- Although DeSci promises advantages like open access, decentralized funding, and transparent data, it faces significant challenges, including DAO governance issues, resistance to adoption, technical barriers, and regulatory issues.
- DeSci is currently more meme than tech. This is best exemplified through RIF, the leading DeSci token which also happens to be a memecoin launched on Pump.fun. It now accounts for 13% of the entire DeSci market cap after it rallied by 217x over the weekend.
- DeSci's current meme status is not necessarily a bad thing for trading, as we continue to be bullish on memecoins. As it stands, we view DeSci as another vessel for the launch of "fresh" memecoins.

## DeSci: Eureka!

Devcon SEA was held in Bangkok from Nov 12-15, and amongst other exciting developments, there was every indication that Decentralized Science or DeSci will be a major sector for growth. If industry behemoths such as CZ and Vitalik Buterin attend to [talk about](#) their vision for DeSci's future, there is reason to believe this sector will continue to receive attention.

A single week can feel like a whole quarter in the land of altcoins. Just as so-called "dino coins" (older coins launched in previous cycles) such as XRP and LTC were gaining attention with some significant rallies, DeSci absolutely exploded in the on-chain trenches. With some tokens going 50x or more over the weekend, attention has turned to a sector that has struggled to gain momentum in the past.

But what is DeSci? Does it have a future? What about these token moves? Navigating Narratives focuses on narratives, but we will begin today by giving a fair presentation of DeSci's value proposition before diving into how we view the sector and how it is actually trading. Let's discuss!

## **DeSci: What's It All About?**

DeSci is a combination of crypto technology and academic research with the aim of solving the major issues that the scientific community faces. Currently, scientific research suffers from problems such as restrictive access to information, centralized power structures, and funding problems. While Navigating Narratives does not take a strong stance on whether or not DeSci can solve these issues, this is the stated aim of the DeSci community.

So how does it work? At its core, DeSci seeks to decentralize the processes that dictate scientific research, using crypto technology. This proposed decentralized model is built on the common crypto ideals of transparency and accessibility. Crypto tech plays a significant role in DeSci's value proposition:

- Blockchain tech ensures that research data and publications are stored in an immutable and transparent fashion. This means research can be verified independently, helping to reduce issues like data manipulation and biased results.
- Smart contracts can automate contracts, allowing funding to be allocated in a transparent and fair manner. Research grants can be issued based on pre-defined milestones, ensuring that funds are distributed only when the terms are met.
- NFTs enable researchers to tokenize their work. This helps to prove ownership, secure intellectual property rights, and even create new funding mechanisms by selling fractional shares of their research.

While traditional scientific research has pushed humanity forward in countless ways, it comes with some problems and these pose limitations, something which DeSci aims to overcome. On paper, DeSci offers some distinct advantages over "traditional science" in many aspects of the process behind producing academic research.

|                   | Traditional Science                                 | DeSci   |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Research Access   | Restricted, limited open access                     | Fully open and accessible                                       |
| Funding           | Centralized through institutions                    | Decentralized via DAOs (assumingly)                             |
| IP                | Managed by journals and institutions                | Tokenized ownership through NFTs                                |
| Data Transparency | Data can be manipulated or withheld                 | Immutable blockchain ensures data is verifiable and open        |
| Peer Review       | Often conducted by biased gatekeepers               | Open peer review  |
| Incentives        | Recognition often tied to publication impact factor | Direct compensation through tokenization and engagement rewards |

## DeSci: Facing Challenges Aplenty

This all sounds promising, but it is not without its challenges. The primary issue behind DeSci is arguably the limitations of DAOs. Human civilization still struggles with the concept of governance, and DAOs are far from solving it as evidenced by the myriad of controversies involving DAOs skewing towards power centralization and corruption. This is before we ask whether or not DAOs can efficiently guide the scientific research process at all.

The traditional scientific industry has been centuries in the making, and so, adoption is another major hurdle for DeSci. The scientific community is cautious, moves slowly, and is largely fixed in its traditional methods. Convincing institutions to shift to a decentralized model is a major challenge. Technical barriers also present a problem. Blockchain tech offers some benefits, but issues like scalability, transaction costs, and energy usage are real concerns.

Lastly, legal and regulatory obstacles are another issue to overcome. Research often involves sensitive data that has to comply with privacy laws across various regions or jurisdictions. Blockchain's transparent, immutable nature can make compliance with these rules difficult or next to impossible, especially in fields with particularly sensitive data like medical research.

## DeSci: What's All The NOISE About?

So far, we have discussed what DeSci is and what challenges it may face in order to realize its vision. At this point, we will shift gears to talk about what is happening in the DeSci market. In short – the tokens have started flying. Only a week ago, the entire DeSci category as configured by CoinGecko was under \$500 million market cap. After a few days of aggressive price appreciation, the sector is now fluctuating wildly between \$1 billion and \$2 billion market cap.

Small cap and primarily on-chain sectors such as DeSci are marked by ultra-low liquidity, hence, the market is much easier to move. In our view, the recent rise in bullishness on the potential real-world utility and applications of DeSci is firmly a case of the narrative following the price action. Tokens going up = revolutionary tech.

Proof of this is not difficult to find. The leading DeSci token amidst this rally is Rifampicin (\$RIF) – a DeSci meme token that rallied by 217x from the Friday low to the Monday high. At the time of writing, RIF (\$165M market cap) currently accounts for around 13% of the entire DeSci sector at \$1.28 billion market cap according to CoinGecko.



## **More Meme Than Tech, But That's OK**

Theoretically, DeSci has the potential to reshape the landscape of scientific research by creating a more transparent, fair, and accessible system. However, in its current state, DeSci is more meme than tech. While the stated goals of the community and the intentions of those actually working on the tech are admirable, we are many years away from seeing its vision realized, if that even comes to pass.

However, as stated many times before, we continue to be bullish on memecoins. DeSci is currently being used as a vessel for "fresh" memecoins. RIF can be seen as the token giving birth to a new memecoin subsector, just as the AI memecoin sector was officially established after the launch of GOAT.

Current market cap for the DeSci sector is \$1.28 billion. The AI memecoin sector has grown from a market cap of \$1.9 billion to \$5 billion since we released [our piece](#) on it one month ago. While DeSci may not see the same growth rate as AI memecoins are enjoying, it will be difficult for this sector not to grow alongside the broader market if it has the backing of major industry players and Bitcoin continues its epic rally towards \$100k.

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