

### **Crypto Focus**

# Meet the User, Not the Mempool: The Consumer Crypto Stack

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Source: Presto Research

### **Summary**

- **Thesis:** Consumer crypto is ready to take off. Distribution and the application stack have matured enough to turn a first impression into a first action within minutes.
- What changed: Users meet apps where they already are. Chat and social rails (Telegram mini-apps, Farcaster Frames) and chain front pages (e.g., Abstract's Portal, Base Mini Apps) shorten the path from attention to action. Embedded wallets and account abstraction remove most setup steps, and rollups make small transactions predictable.
- Why now: Post-2017 and 2021 cycles, the industry built up capacity and reliability. The pendulum has swung back to applications, with discovery concentrated in a few entry points that can route real demand.
- What "consumer" looks like: Products feel like normal apps. People sign in with existing
  emails or passkeys, take an action without hunting for gas, and have asset ownership
  handled in the background.
- **Go-to-market:** Start with short-session entertainment and creator tools to form daily habits, then expand into payments and finance once identity and balances are in place.
- Case study: Abstract is a consumer-oriented L2 that bundles a wallet, discovery hub, on-ramps, and incentives to lower time-to-first-transaction and improve retention.

# 1. What is consumer crypto?

Consumer crypto is a category of applications that make using blockchains feel like a regular product experience. The chain fades away into supporting infrastructure, not a task to be managed by the user.

A useful definition is a first-time user completing a meaningful on-chain action within minutes, in a single session, and without learning new technical concepts. Typical actions include tipping, playing a short game session, participating in a prediction market, or making a simple trade. Identity, balances, and assets carry across apps through the same wallet. Gas may be sponsored for the first action or paid in supported assets (e.g. stablecoins). If neither is available, a quick top-up happens through an integrated on-ramp.

In this report we cover:

- **Emergence of the trend:** Why prior cycles over-indexed on infrastructure and how new distribution rails changed the game.
- **Enablers:** The UX, settlement, and distribution pieces that make consumer flows possible today.
- Landscape: An illustrative mention of sub-sectors across social, messaging and games, creator tools, and lightweight speculation.
- Abstract case study: How Abstract bundles wallet, discovery, on-ramps, and incentives into a consumer-first stack.
- **Q&A:** A short interview with Brian Hong, head of APAC at Abstract, to ground the thesis in an operator perspective.

### 2. Why now?

For years the conversation centered on throughput, TVL, and new chain launches. Capacity improved and interoperability solutions matured, yet most first-time user journeys still began with a wallet install, a seed phrase, and a search for gas before anything useful could happen. Reinforced by early stress tests like CryptoKitties in 2017 and the DeFi/NFT mania of 2021, the industry focused on delivering scale and reliability, but user adoption often stalled at the setup screen.

apps

apps

infrastructure stack

Figure 1: The Apps - Infrastructure Cycle

Source: Union Square Ventures

Breakout apps create demand for better infrastructure, and better infrastructure enables the next wave of apps to flourish. The "myth of the infrastructure phase" reminds us that development does not run in a linear fashion from infra to apps, but instead progresses in cycles that feed into each other. Early congestion fee issues helped to trigger a long infrastructure phase of rollups, data availability, and cheaper settlement. This then built the foundations for the pendulum to swing back to applications that can now spend that capacity on great first sessions and clear user journeys.

Over the last 18–24 months this application cycle has arrived in full force. Distribution moved into places that people already use, and onboarding felt closer to a regular app. Telegram mini-apps showed how chats can convert attention into action, with Notcoin reporting ~1M users within a day and ~30M within months, and Hamster Kombat later claiming hundreds of millions of players. Social feeds like Farcaster Frames soon followed with in-line actions.

On devices, Solana Mobile shipped a dApp Store, and ecosystems built their own launchers with Ronin's Mavis Hub among early examples. In Asia, Kakao and LINE merged Klaytn and Finschia into Kaia, then rolled out Mini Dapps and a Dapp Portal inside LINE, backed by a Kaia Portal for swaps, staking, and on-ramps. Major L2s converged on consumer distribution as well: Base reworked its client with a home for mini-apps and a unified "Base Account" login.

In short, infrastructure is no longer the bottleneck. Rollups pushed costs down to levels where sponsorship and micro-transactions were viable, while distribution and wallet UX moved to meet users through familiar interfaces. The center of gravity has shifted from building faster chains to building faster first sessions.

### 3. Enabling Technologies

Crypto's early adoption was driven by enthusiasts who tolerated setup friction because the novelty and upside were clear. Over the past two years the balance shifted: onboarding now feels natural, transactions became reliable, and ease of discovery led to enhanced experiences within familiar interfaces. That enabled the bridge from early adopters to the early majority, and explains why recent growth is coming from chat, feeds, and curated entry points rather than from raw technical improvements alone.

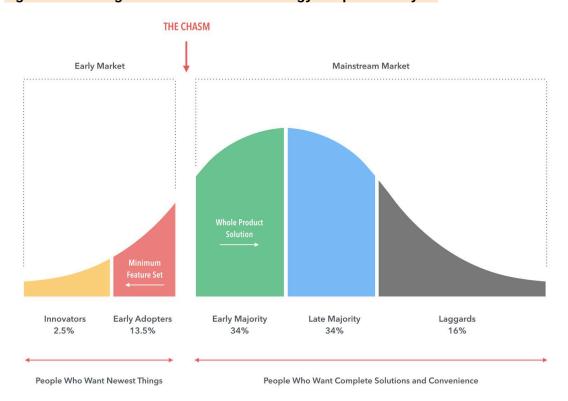


Figure 2: Crossing the Chasm - The Technology Adoption Lifecycle

Source: Smith House, Geoffrey Moore

This curve shows us that products do not cross into the mainstream just by adding more features to a minimum viable product, but only successfully make that leap because the experience feels complete to pragmatic users.

The consumer crypto revolution is only taking place now because required pieces in the underlying stack are finally mature. UX improvements reduce early friction, settlement keeps costs predictable, and the right distribution channels enable seamless integrations. When these layers line up, a first intent can turn into a first action within minutes.

#### 3.1. UX improvements

Embedded wallets let everyday users sign in with email, social login, or a passkey. This entire process lives within the app and does not require installing a separate extension. Account abstraction then adds further conveniences to make the experience feel native to the user. For example, session keys help to batch sequential transactions, social recovery does away with the need for seed phrases and lowers the fear of losing access, and account-specific spending limits reduce risks.

Fees should also not stall the first action here. Where supported, gas is sponsored or payable in stablecoins so that users can begin interacting on-chain without sourcing for a native token. If

further gas top-ups are needed, this happens in flow through integrated on-ramp options before returning the user to the action they intended to complete. Chain choice can stay hidden until users request for movement of their wallet assets.

The result is a first session that feels like any modern app.

#### 3.2. Settlement guarantees

Scaling improvements pushed fees down to consumer-friendly levels while making confirmation times more stable. For rollups, they further inherit security from the base chain while keeping costs low. That shift turns gas sponsorship into a viable tactic and makes small transactions palatable to the everyday user. Improvements in data availability and batching improved chain capacity and reduced fee spikes during periods of congestion, which helps app developers build for lower-value, casual use cases.

Reliability is just as important as price. Apps should retry quietly when conditions change and show clear messages if a transaction fails. Users do not need to see the entire transaction lifecycle or interact with a block explorer. Instead, they should be presented with clear confirmations that the action is in progress, when it completes, and if not, an explanation of how the app recovered all within the same instance.

#### 3.3. Distribution channels

These new rails shortened the path from attention to action. Existing messengers were upgraded to host mini-apps inside a familiar chat interface, so a conversation becomes a session without the need for a context switch. Social feeds support tap-to-act cards that lead directly to a mint, a tip, or a purchase. Chain-native portals bundle discovery, on-ramp, and rewards in one place, and help to send returning traffic to new launches. Wallets enriched their interfaces and added new entry points through deep links, notifications, and in-app catalogs.

Distribution further compounds when insights can be drawn from measurable data. These interfaces allow teams to capture basic telemetry such as activation and user retention rates. Some integrate social elements into the rankings themselves so that popularity becomes a positive flywheel of user activity. With distribution rails, measurement, and costs aligned, ecosystems can route real demand to relevant apps rather than relying on a dispersed collection of siloed websites.

### 4. Landscape and sub-sectors

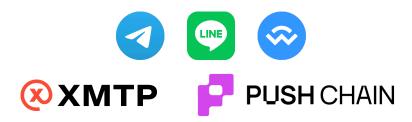
This section is by no means comprehensive, but serves to give a sense of what consumer verticals have been developing and what projects are at the forefront of the trend. This includes applications and also supporting infrastructure tooling that makes these experiences possible.

#### 4.1. Social & identity



- Farcaster: actions integrated in social feeds that mint, tip, vote, or buy
- Lens: portable social graph with apps that share identity
- ENS: human-readable names used across wallets and apps
- Cyber (formerly CyberConnect): social graph and creator tools with portable profiles
- World ID: proof-of-personhood for incentives and voting

#### 4.2. Messaging



- Telegram Mini Apps: chat-native apps and casual games
- LINE × Kaia Mini Dapps: in-messenger dapps with a native portal behind them
- WalletConnect Chat / Dialect: messaging rails tied to wallets and app intents
- Push Chain (formerly Push Protocol): on-chain notifications tied to wallet identity
- XMTP: wallet-to-wallet messaging and notifications

#### 4.3. Creator communities & media







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- Zora: low-friction mints and creator tooling
- Manifold: creator-owned contracts for on-chain releases
- Catalog: music-focused releases and fan ownership
- Paragraph (acquired Mirror): publishing and token-gated posts
- Highlight: drop pages and membership passes for communities

#### 4.4. Gaming



- Pixels: casual world with strong creator and social loops
- Parallel: trading-card game with on-chain assets
- Sorare: fantasy sports with collectible cards
- **NFL Rivals**: mobile team-builder with tradable player cards
- Dark Forest / Autonomous World projects: experiments in persistent, player-run worlds

#### 4.5. Community & brand



- Pudgy Penguins: IP that spans across both retail and digital
- 9dcc: NFC-linked fashion and on-chain membership
- Blackbird: restaurant loyalty that lives in the wallet
- NBA Top Shot / Socios: sports moments and club fan tokens
- IYK / Guild: tooling that many apps & communities rely on

#### 4.6. Markets & speculation













- Polymarket: prediction markets with event-based trading
- Pump.fun: one-click token launches that feed memecoin cycles
- Fantasy.top: creator-themed trading cards linked to social metrics
- OpenSea / Blur / Magic Eden: marketplaces that route culture into trading

#### 4.7. Distribution layers



- Telegram Mini Apps: in-chat apps that turn conversations into sessions
- Base Mini Apps: app ecosystem home with unified login
- Solana Mobile dApp Store: on-device catalog for crypto apps
- Ronin Mavis Hub: launcher and discovery client for multiple games
- Kaia Portal: LINE-integrated app portal with swaps, staking, on-ramps
- Abstract Portal: chain-native discovery hub with quests and a place to return

## 5. Abstract: The rising consumer hub

Abstract is an Ethereum Layer-2 purpose-built for consumer apps. It uses ZKsync's ZK Stack to keep fees low with reliable confirmations, and the chain is positioned as a place where mainstream users can get started quickly without worrying about on-chain setup.

Figure 3: Abstract promotional material



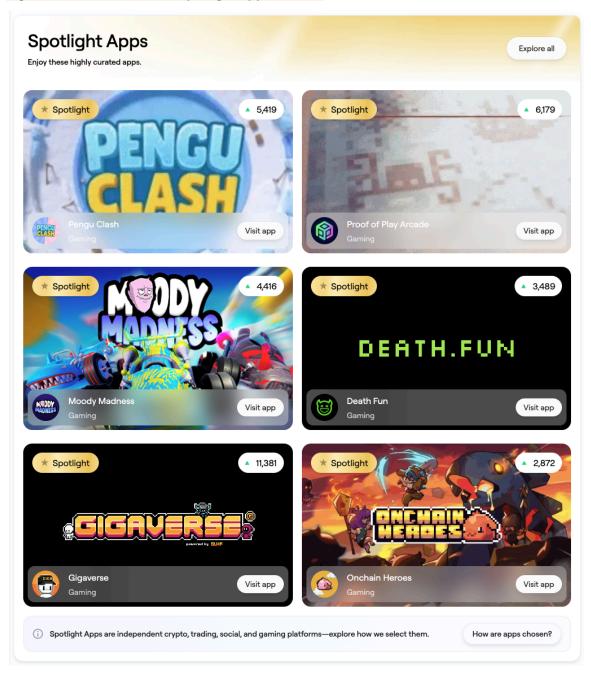
Source: @AbstractChain, X

#### **5.1. Key products**

Abstract ships two integrated user-facing products: Portal and Abstract Global Wallet (AGW).

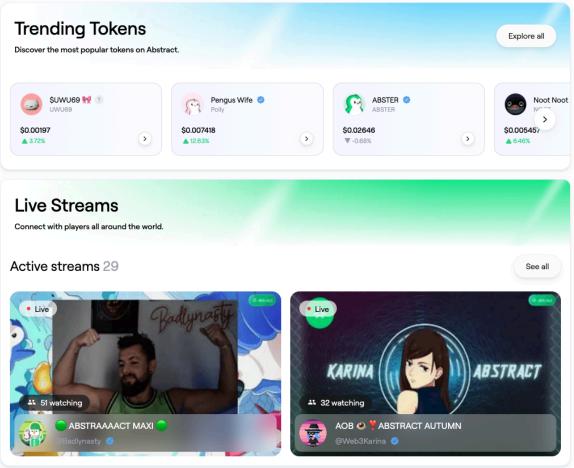
Portal is a curated discovery hub that behaves like a chain-native homepage. It highlights apps and creators, layers in quests, badges, and XP, and gives people a single place to begin and return to after their first action.

Figure 4: Abstract Portal's spotlight apps section



Source: Abstract Portal

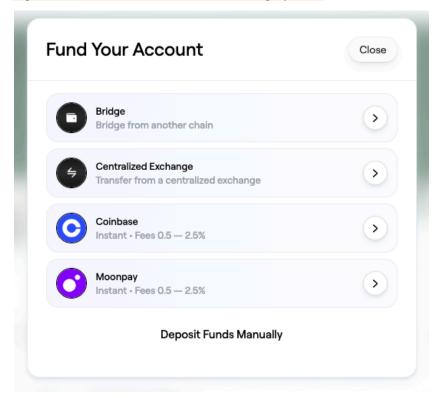
Figure 5: Abstract Portal's trending tokens and livestreams section



Source: Abstract Portal

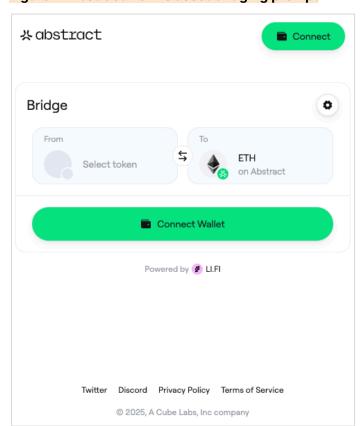
AGW is an embedded smart-contract wallet that supports familiar sign-in options (email, socials, passkeys) and native account abstraction. This includes a multitude of on-ramp options to ease users into the chain and avoid bridging woes.

Figure 6: Abstract AGW's wallet funding options



Source: Abstract Global Wallet

Figure 7: Abstract AGW's asset bridging prompt



Source: Abstract Global Wallet

Together, the Portal + AGW combo is designed to minimize time-to-first-action and maximize retention. A user can create an account in-flow, discover an app, and complete an action all without changing contexts. The AGW also supports paymasters, which lets builders sponsor gas or accept fees in other supported tokens that a user may already own.

#### 5.2. Ecosystem focus

Abstract is curating a mix of apps that first capture curiosity, rewards it, and turns this into habits. The emphasis is on short-session games, creator and media tools, and lightweight trading or prediction. These formats work because they provide engaging loops quickly and give people a reason to keep coming back day after day.

Explore All Apps Your gateway to decentralized apps starts here. Featured Apps 24 Featured Gaming Trading Gigaverse Proof of Play Arcade 11,381 6,179 gigaverse is an epic onchain RPG, built by GLHF and powered by Proof Proof of Play Arcade hosts a high-octane roguelite born from Pirate of Play. Progress and earn your way through gigaverse, enjoy PvE & Pv... Nation's hit Infinite Tides mode. Pick your pirate captain and dive into. Pengu Clash Roach Racing Club **5,419** 4,901 Pengu Clash is the first skill-based, cross-platform game from Pudgy Roach Racing Club is a gamified trading competition universe where Penguins, built on Elympics. Battle in real-time multiplayer modes,. players control crypto-linked roaches and compete for the bank. See More See More Moody Madness LOL Land 4,416 **3,615** A Super Bowl-level spectacle — but on wheels, on-chain, and on fire! LOL Land is a Monopoly-Go style browser game built for web3 degens Tournaments, guilds, and glory. and casual gamers alike. Roll, move across vibrant game boards, and... See More See More Myriad 3.240 Predict, Earn, Repeat. With MYRIAD you can predict on anything from Bet ETH. Don't die. Cash out, Repeat. the Super Bowl to presidential outcomes, to memecoin market caps.... See More See More

Figure 8: Abstract Portal's apps catalog

Source: Abstract Portal

The Portal adds to this with targeted placements, collections, and limited-time campaigns, increasing a new app's chances of success. On the builder side, AGW and developer SDKs keep integration requirements easily accessible. The goal is a shared user base that moves between apps with the same wallet and identity, so that progress carries forward and compounds under the same unified umbrella.

#### 5.3. Growth strategy

Abstract's scaling plan starts with attracting demand. The beachhead is discretionary use: short-session games, creator drops, tokenizing culture, and trading. These use-cases capture attention easily and begin to form repeated habits. With a base of recurring users in place, the ecosystem broadens into necessary spend: commerce, media, subscriptions, payments, and eventually essential categories: identity, savings, credit.

Step 1: Onboarding Flow

Step 2: Build the Hub

Create the premier attraction in the ecosystem: Digital amusement park (hub).

Grow user base and retention on platform.

Expand offerings to user base and start to capture other parts of their lives.

Figure 9: Abstract's path to success

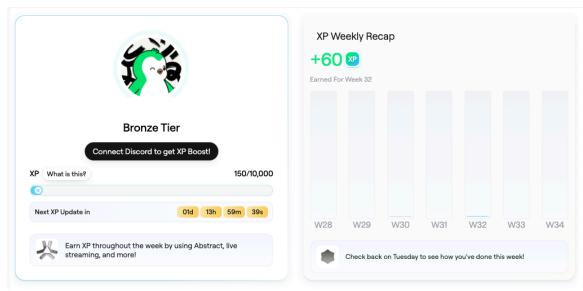
Source: Abstract blog

As Abstract themselves describe, their strategy is akin to building a theme park. Premier attractions first drive people into the ecosystem, then a pursuit of growth from services being built around them.

#### 5.4. Incentives

Abstract treats incentives as deliberate programming rather than just simple giveaways. Users accrue platform XP for doing things that specifically benefit the ecosystem e.g. discovering and using apps via Portal, completing limited-time guests, or participating in creator-led livestreams.

Figure 10: Abstract's XP system



Source: Abstract Portal

Badges act as immutable on-chain milestones. Some campaigns mint badges that are soulbound while others opt for tradability, which lets status and progress show up in markets and capture tangible value. This design aims to reward curiosity and nudge users to explore all the platform has to offer, instead of remaining with titles they might be familiar with. For new launches, quests and badges seed an initial cohort with something to do on day one, which reduces cold-start risk and gives Abstract data to rank and feature apps based on observed engagement metrics.

Figure 11: Abstract's badge system

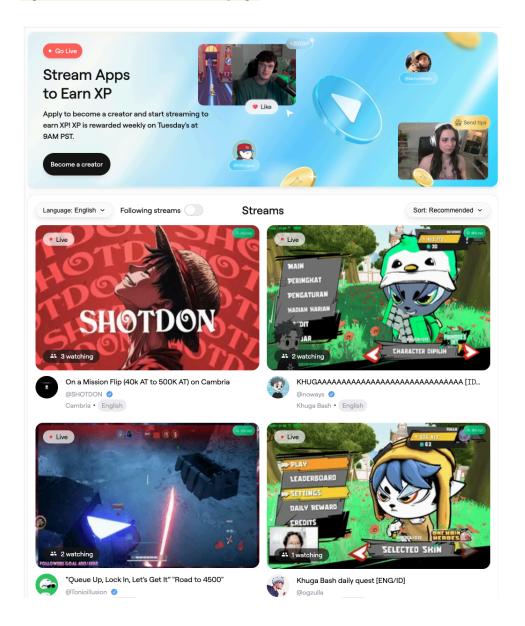


Source: Abstract Portal

#### 5.5. Creator livestreams

Abstract brings creators into the hub itself through native livestreams. Shows and spotlights run next to app tiles, with each stream just one click away from progressing in a quest or collecting XP.

Figure 12: Abstract's livestream page



Source: Abstract Portal

Simply remaining within the platform is a powerful retention feature. Instead of sending viewers to an external platform and hoping that they still return, here the video and related actions sit side-by-side all within the Portal. Users can watch a segment, click into the featured app, try it out with the same wallet, earn XP, and come back for the next round of discovery.

The format favors short casual segments and rapid reward loops. Creator spotlights can be tied to a promotional quest, a limited drop window, or a seasonal competition. This makes the platform consistently engaging to users while helping new teams launch to a stream of guided traffic.

Done well, the livestreams become an always-on launch engine. Audiences return for the creator, stay for the action, and leave with visible progress recorded as XP and badges.

#### 5.6. How Abstract wins

Abstract's edge is owning the entry point at the chain layer. Where messenger rails borrow attention and game launchers serve a single vertical, Abstract concentrates demand in a curated front page that spans a collective universe. Livestreams turn awareness into same-session actions, and quests steer those actions into concrete outcomes. The result is a powerful in-house loop of discover, act, return, all of which happens in one place.

That loop compounds into a distribution and data advantage that then reinforces the edge. Because usage flows through a common hub, ranking can lean on real engagement rather than hype, which sends warmer traffic to the next launch and lowers acquisition costs for builders. Shared identity means progress and balances carry across apps, so one win begets the next: a badge earned here unlocks a trial there, and on-ramps make it easy to fund several sessions throughout the week. Apps may come and go but the hub remains the daily home base.

If Abstract stays focused on its core thesis, the flywheel is clear: concentrated demand  $\rightarrow$  better curation  $\rightarrow$  higher conversion  $\rightarrow$  more reasons to come back. That is how a consumer chain turns first touches into habits and habits into a thriving ecosystem.

### 6. Q&A with Brian Hong, Head of APAC at Abstract

#### Please tell us more about yourself and what you do at Abstract.

My name is Brian, and I serve as Head of APAC at Abstract. In my role, I oversee a broad spectrum of initiatives aimed at expanding Abstract's presence across Asia, including ecosystem development, marketing, and community strategy.

Asia-Pacific is a highly fragmented region—not just in terms of preferred social media platforms, but also in cultural tastes and consumer preferences. For instance, what resonates in Korea may be distinct from what appeals in China or other neighboring markets. My objective is to introduce culturally relevant projects and products tailored to each region, ensuring that outstanding projects receive the recognition they deserve.

A prime example is Abstract's collaboration with Modhaus, a leading K-pop studio behind tripleS, ARTMS, and idntt. Thanks to this partnership, more than 100,000 users interact with our products monthly—often without realizing these experiences are powered by crypto technology built on Abstract's infrastructure. This demonstrates how our approach bridges mainstream culture and innovative technology, driving organic adoption and robust community engagement throughout the region.

#### What problem does Abstract solve for a first-time user that a generic L2 doesn't?

Abstract is a consumer-focused blockchain platform designed to simplify entry into the crypto ecosystem for first-time users. Unlike traditional onboarding—which requires downloading wallet extensions like MetaMask, researching reputable apps, and learning how to swap tokens—Abstract removes these barriers.

For example, asking a friend to try Solana often involves challenges such as downloading the Phantom wallet and finding trustworthy applications. In contrast, Abstract allows anyone to create an account using just an email, without the need to install browser extensions.

Users can access all supported and popular decentralized applications through the Abstract Portal (abs.xyz), a curated app store-like interface. Additionally, they can swap tokens and view their holdings—including NFTs—all in one seamless location. This streamlined approach enables broader crypto adoption by eliminating common hurdles faced by new users.

# Why is a chain-native front page the right approach now? Any examples where placement clearly changed an app's trajectory?

A chain-native front page is the optimal approach, and we are confident this is the right direction—especially as many other chains are now adopting the same strategy. The primary challenge facing current blockchain ecosystems is the fragmentation of the user journey. Chains, wallets, apps, and users exist in silos without seamless integration, despite shared incentives that could align them.

At present, chains cannot assist wallets in acquiring or retaining users, and wallets fail to effectively funnel users to apps, which are truly at the core of any chain ecosystem. When a single app thrives, the entire chain and its ecosystem benefit, as seen with examples like Virtuals and Farcaster on Base, and Pumpfun on Solana. Unfortunately, individual apps currently handle marketing independently, limiting collective growth.

The chain-native front page—Abstract's Portal—solves this by curating the user journey. After logging in with their email, users access an app store–like interface displaying all available apps and tools, including swapping and wallet functions, in one unified location. Moreover, being listed on the Portal instantly boosts an app's visibility. Tens of thousands of users visit the Portal every month; if an app effectively converts and retains a portion of this traffic, it achieves a viable business model and product-market fit.

# What specific behaviors are you designing for with XP and badges, and which quest formats have been the most well-received?

When designing the XP and Badge systems, we always focus on curating a meaningful and engaging user experience. For example, when we launched digital collectibles in partnership with Red Bull Racing to celebrate Formula 1 races in Monaco, Silverstone, and Singapore, our goal was to immerse users in the visually striking website and showcase the artwork created by renowned artists including Timpers, DutchTide, and ALIENQUEEN.

By the end of the campaign, approximately 3.5 million digital collectibles had been claimed, and hundreds of thousands of new users were onboarded to blockchain technology.

Another notable example is our collaboration with Modhaus during the launch of their app, COSMO, on Abstract. We introduced a badge designed to guide users toward exploring the app, learning about tripleS—one of Korea's top five K-Pop girl groups—and experiencing firsthand how

the fastest-growing industry is embracing blockchain innovation and pioneering consumer crypto adoption.

# What does a great new launch on Abstract look like from your side, and what support do top-performing teams typically receive?

Abstract's greatest competitive advantage lies in its Portal and robust user base. As previously explained, the Portal serves as a centralized hub that curates the entire user journey—from wallet creation to app engagement. When a new app is featured on the Portal, it naturally attracts a portion of the hundreds of thousands of monthly Abstract users.

If the app delivers a compelling user experience and effective mechanics, and successfully converts and retains its users, it achieves immediate product-market fit and revenue-generating potential.

Most importantly, Abstract's user demographic closely resembles that of the Apple App Store—primarily consisting of users from high-capital countries who are willing to spend on collecting, gaming, and entertainment.

Therefore, a successful app launch on Abstract looks like this: the app is listed on the Portal, Abstract drives organic user attention, users enjoy the app and return regularly, and the app monetizes effectively through demonstrated product-market fit.

# Where has the Abstract Global Wallet made the biggest UX difference? Any before/after stories you can share?

The Abstract Global Wallet (AGW) has been our most powerful asset by removing significant barriers for users. It eliminates the need for users to understand what a crypto wallet is or to download complex browser extensions—common hurdles that often deter average users unfamiliar with blockchain. Moreover, it mitigates risks such as losing private keys or falling victim to hacks.

Additionally, users can seamlessly use the same wallet—created simply by logging in with an email address—across every app built on the Abstract platform. Our 30-day user retention rate of 60% for AGW demonstrates that this strategy is successfully engaging and retaining users.

Tell us more about any partnerships you're excited about: creators, studios, or brands that best illustrate Abstract's approach.

There are numerous exciting projects in the pipeline that will pioneer consumer crypto adoption with Abstract, though I am unable to disclose details at this time. However, I can assure the audience that they will be amazed by how seamlessly crypto infrastructure can be integrated into traditional Web2 applications—and by the scale and caliber of the teams involved.

# From an APAC lens, what's distinctive about distribution for consumer crypto, and which categories are best poised to break out?

Given the vastness of APAC and the cultural and preference fragmentation across its countries, it is challenging to assert that any single vertical or category will dominate the entire region. However, I am personally very optimistic about the potential of digital collectibles. Unlike the NFT profile picture collections popularized in 2021, these digital collectibles are designed to help traditional businesses acquire and retain users more effectively while supporting sustainable and legitimate business models.

# Fast forward to the future: what does consumer crypto at scale look like for a typical user on Abstract?

Consumer crypto is the final frontier. It is often misunderstood that what is visible on Crypto Twitter (CT) reflects the entire market; in reality, CT functions as an echo chamber. The majority of consumers and capital reside outside this space. To attract them, the consumer and user journey must be seamless, and products built on crypto infrastructure should be so finely tuned that users remain unaware they are interacting with blockchain technology.

For instance, when logging into platforms like Google or Instagram, users do not concern themselves with the underlying backend technology. Abstract aims to be the blockchain that empowers both crypto-native and crypto-curious users to experience products without fragmented or flawed user experiences.

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