

Digital Assets:

Tokenization Takes Center Stage as Institutional Infrastructure Matures

This edition focuses on the landmark developments in January 2026 that mark a decisive shift toward tokenized securities becoming part of mainstream financial infrastructure. Core themes include the convergence of traditional exchanges and blockchain settlement; regulatory clarity from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) on tokenized securities frameworks; quantum-resistant cryptography for Bitcoin; the acceleration of tokenized equities on Solana; Ethereum's continued scaling upgrades; and Ripple's enterprise treasury platform launch—all signaling that digital assets are no longer a parallel financial system but are becoming embedded in the core plumbing of global markets.

The key announcements in January:

1. The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE) Develops Tokenized Securities Platform

January 19th, 2026

The New York Stock Exchange (NYSE), part of Intercontinental Exchange, Inc. (ICE), announced the development of a platform for trading and on-chain settlement of tokenized securities, pending regulatory approval. The platform will combine NYSE's Pillar matching engine with blockchain-based post-trade systems, enabling 24/7 trading of U.S. listed equities and ETFs, fractional share trading, instant settlement, dollar-denominated orders, and stablecoin-based funding. The platform will support both tokenized shares of traditionally issued securities and natively issued digital securities, with tokenized shareholders retaining traditional dividends and governance rights. ICE is also working with the Bank of New York (BNY) and Citi to support tokenized deposits across its six clearinghouses for margin obligations and cross-time zone funding.¹

Implications:

- ① **Transforms Equity Market Infrastructure:** The NYSE's entry into tokenized securities represents arguably the single most significant validation of blockchain-based capital markets to date. By combining one of the world's most trusted exchange brands with on-chain settlement across multiple blockchains, the initiative could fundamentally reshape how equities trade—eliminating the T+1 settlement cycle, enabling around-the-clock access, and reducing reliance on legacy intermediaries. For investors, this signals a future where tokenized and traditional securities coexist seamlessly under the same regulatory umbrella.
- ② **Accelerates Institutional Tokenization Adoption:** ICE's collaboration with BNY and Citi on tokenized deposits across its clearinghouses addresses a critical institutional bottleneck—collateral mobility and liquidity management outside traditional banking hours. Morgan Stanley analysts noted that tokenized collateral could enable instant migration across ICE's six clearinghouses, potentially increasing trading velocity and reducing capital buffers. This positions tokenization not as a niche innovation but as core clearing infrastructure.
- ③ **Sets Regulatory Precedent Alongside SEC Clarity:** The NYSE's announcement, coming days before the SEC's formal statement on tokenized securities taxonomy (see item 2), reflects a coordinated regulatory and market environment. With supportive administration and the Depository Trust Company (DTC) having already received SEC approval for tokenized securities in December 2025, the pathway from announcement to operational launch appears increasingly viable for the second half of 2026.

The NYSE's tokenized securities platform announcement represents a watershed moment in capital markets history, signaling that the world's largest stock exchange views blockchain-based settlement as the future of equity trading. Combined with ICE's broader digital strategy across its clearing and exchange infrastructure, this positions tokenization as the next evolution of market structure rather than a disruptive alternative.

2. SEC Statement on Tokenized Securities

January 28th, 2026

The SEC's Division of Corporation Finance, Division of Investment Management, and Division of Trading and Markets jointly issued a landmark statement providing comprehensive guidance on the taxonomy of tokenized securities. The statement clarified that tokenized securities—financial instruments represented as crypto assets with ownership records maintained on distributed ledger technology—fall into two broad categories: issuer-sponsored tokenized securities (where the issuer integrates DLT into its master securityholder file) and third party-sponsored tokenized securities (including custodial models like tokenized security entitlements and synthetic models like linked securities or security-based swaps). Critically, the SEC affirmed that the format in which a security is issued does not affect the application of federal securities laws.²

Implications:

- ① **Provides Long-Awaited Regulatory Clarity for Market Participants:** By formally classifying the various tokenization models and confirming that existing securities law applies regardless of format, the SEC has removed one of the primary barriers to institutional adoption. Market participants now have a clear framework for structuring tokenized offerings, whether issuing equity directly on-chain, creating custodial tokenized entitlements, or building synthetic exposure products—without fear of regulatory ambiguity.
- ② **Enables Compliant Innovation Across Multiple Models:** The statement's detailed taxonomy—distinguishing between issuer-sponsored models (where DLT is part of the master securityholder file) and third-party models (custodial security entitlements, linked securities, and security-based swaps)—provides a roadmap for different types of market participants. Asset managers, exchanges, broker-dealers, and fintech firms can now each identify the regulatory pathway that fits their tokenization approach, potentially accelerating the pace of product development and launches.
- ③ **Validates the NYSE and Broader Tokenization Ecosystem:** Coming just nine days after the NYSE's tokenized securities platform announcement, this SEC statement effectively validates the regulatory foundation upon which the NYSE, Nasdaq, and other exchanges are building. The coordinated timing between the industry's largest exchange and the regulator signals an unprecedented level of alignment between market innovation and regulatory oversight in the digital asset space.

The SEC's comprehensive statement on tokenized securities represents a pivotal moment in the maturation of the regulatory framework for digital assets. By affirming that existing securities laws apply to tokenized instruments regardless of format; while providing detailed guidance on acceptable structures, the SEC has laid the groundwork for a new era of compliant tokenized capital markets.

3. Bitcoin Quantum Testnet Launch

January 12th, 2026

BTQ Technologies Corp. (Nasdaq: BTQ) launched the Bitcoin Quantum testnet, the first quantum-safe fork of Bitcoin, on the 17th anniversary of Satoshi Nakamoto's genesis block. The testnet replaces Bitcoin's current ECDSA (Elliptic Curve Digital Signature Algorithm) signatures with ML-DSA (Module-Lattice Digital Signature Algorithm), the same NIST-standardized post-quantum cryptographic algorithm mandated by the U.S. government for national security systems. The permissionless network includes a block explorer and mining pool, allowing miners, developers, researchers, and users to stress-test quantum-resistant transactions. An estimated 6.26 million BTC (approximately \$650–750 billion) sit in addresses with exposed public keys, creating a vulnerability to future quantum computing attacks. The U.S. Department of Defense issued a memorandum requiring all components to phase out legacy cryptography by December 31, 2030.³

Implications:

- ① **Proactive Defense of Bitcoin's \$2 Trillion Security Foundation:** Quantum computing opens two attack vectors on Bitcoin: deriving private keys from public keys and compromising the proof-of-work algorithm. With Google's Willow chip (December 2024) achieving below-threshold quantum error correction and Microsoft's Majorana 1 (February 2025) introducing topological qubit processors, industry roadmaps now target one million qubits by 2030. The Bitcoin Quantum testnet provides a production-grade environment to battle-test defenses before the threat materializes.
- ② **Addresses Growing Institutional Risk Disclosure Requirements:** The Department of Defense's cryptographic phase-out mandate reflect an institutional consensus that quantum risk is no longer theoretical. For investors, the existence of a working testnet demonstrates that the Bitcoin ecosystem is actively preparing for the most significant cryptographic transition in computing history, rather than ignoring it.
- ③ **Long-Term Network Resilience and Hard Fork Preparedness:** Post-quantum signatures are approximately 200 times larger than current ECDSA signatures, creating significant performance and cost tradeoffs. The testnet uses 64 MiB block sizes to accommodate these larger signatures, surfacing operational challenges that must be resolved before any mainnet migration. Getting the Bitcoin community to reach consensus on a hard fork will be a larger undertaking, making early testing and community education critical.

The Bitcoin Quantum testnet represents a forward-looking investment in the long-term security of the world's largest cryptocurrency network. By providing a live environment to test NIST-compliant post-quantum cryptography, it enables the ecosystem to prepare for quantum threats methodically rather than reactively, potentially serving as what Delphi Digital has described as the "ultimate quantum insurance policy."

4. Solana: Ondo and WisdomTree Bring Tokenized Equities and Funds to Solana

January 21st & 28th, 2026

Two major announcements in January reinforced Solana's position as a leading blockchain for tokenized real-world assets (RWAs).

On January 21st, Ondo Finance expanded its Ondo Global Markets platform to Solana, bringing over 200 tokenized U.S. stocks and exchange-traded funds to the blockchain for the first time. The platform offers custody-backed tokenized equities with 24/7 on-chain transfers, extending beyond Ethereum and BNB Chain where it launched in late 2025.⁴

One week later, on January 28th, WisdomTree announced the expansion of its full suite of regulated tokenized funds to Solana, including money market, equities, fixed income, alternatives, and asset allocation products, accessible through its WisdomTree Connect and WisdomTree Prime platforms. Solana has become a market leader in tokenized stocks, with over \$1.6 billion in tokenized equity assets and \$2.5 billion in total RWA assets on the network.⁵

Implications:

- ① **Establishes Solana as Institutional-Grade RWA Infrastructure:** WisdomTree's decision to deploy its full fund suite on Solana, alongside Ondo's 200+ tokenized equities, positions Solana alongside Ethereum as a primary settlement layer for real-world financial assets.
- ② **Unlocks 24/7 Access to Traditional Financial Products On-Chain:** Ondo's tokenized equities enable investors to hold traditional financial exposure—including technology stocks, blue-chip equities, broad-market and sector ETFs, and commodity-linked products—in the same wallet used for stablecoins, with trading and transfers operating around the clock. Solana's high throughput and low fees make this particularly compelling for both crypto-native and traditional investors seeking access outside of conventional market hours.

③ **Multi-Chain Strategy Validates Blockchain Ecosystem Competition:** WisdomTree's multi-chain approach—now spanning Ethereum, Avalanche, Base, and Solana—demonstrates that asset managers are pursuing a blockchain-agnostic strategy driven by client demand and technical performance.

Ondo's and WisdomTree's January launches solidify Solana's emergence as a premier blockchain for tokenized financial products, bringing regulated, custody-backed equities and funds to a high-performance network. Solana the ecosystem is rapidly becoming a destination for mainstream financial asset issuance.

5. Ethereum BPO Hard Fork and Layer-2 Maturation

January 7th, 2026

Ethereum activated its second and final Blob Parameter-Only (BPO) hard fork on January 7th, completing the Fusaka upgrade's parameter adjustments. The upgrade raised the blob limit from 15 to 21 and the target from 10 to 14, a 2.3x increase in Layer-2 data space compared to pre-Fusaka levels. Blobs are temporary data containers that allow rollups—Layer-2 networks like Arbitrum, Optimism, Base, and Mantle—to bundle transactions off the Ethereum mainnet more efficiently. The BPO fork's modular design allows Ethereum to tune scaling parameters without requiring full hard forks, and developers are already looking ahead to raising the block gas limit from 60 million to 80 million. The planned Glamsterdam hard fork later in 2026 may increase the gas limit to 200 million and introduce parallel processing via Block Access Lists.⁶

Implications:

① **Dramatic Layer-2 Fee Reductions and Scalability Gains:** The increased blob capacity could reduce Layer-2 transaction fees by up to 60% from current levels, directly enhancing the user experience and incentivizing rollup adoption. Each block can now handle approximately 2.6–2.7 MB of blob data, providing substantial bandwidth for the Layer-2 networks that collectively process over 10 million transactions daily. This creates a revenue feedback loop: increased L2 activity generates fee revenue flowing back to the Ethereum mainnet, offsetting previous revenue declines.

② **Strengthens Ethereum's Position as Institutional Settlement Layer:** The validator exit queue dropping to zero ETH in early 2026 signals growing confidence in staking's long-term viability. With institutional demand accelerating and the network's scaling capacity expanding, Ethereum is positioning itself as the foundational layer for institutional-grade decentralized finance and global digital settlement.

③ **Modular Upgrade Approach Reduces Coordination Risk:** The BPO mechanism, originally proposed by OP Labs, represents a significant innovation in Ethereum's governance. Rather than bundling scaling parameter changes into major annual upgrades, BPO forks allow incremental adjustments based on real-world network performance data. This reduces the risk and complexity associated with large-scale upgrades while enabling Ethereum to respond more quickly to growing demand. The Ethereum Foundation confirmed that a third BPO fork will be considered once blob usage reaches the newly expanded capacity.

Ethereum's BPO fork completion marks a strategic inflection point in the network's scaling roadmap, delivering immediate throughput improvements while establishing a modular framework for continuous capacity expansion. For ETH investors, the combination of increased Layer-2 adoption, institutional staking growth, and the upcoming Glamsterdam upgrade positions Ethereum strongly for sustained value accrual in 2026.

6. XRP: Ripple Treasury Product Launch (by GTreasury Subsidiary)

January 28th, 2026

Ripple launched Ripple Treasury, an enterprise-focused platform that combines GTreasury's established corporate treasury software with Ripple's blockchain infrastructure. The launch represents the first major product integration since Ripple's \$1 billion acquisition of Chicago-based GTreasury in October 2025. The platform enables cross-border settlements in three to five seconds using Ripple's RLUSD stablecoin (compared to three to five business days via traditional bank wires), provides a unified dashboard for managing both fiat and digital assets, and connects corporate clients to overnight repo markets and tokenized money-market funds. The platform also leverages infrastructure from Hidden Road, the prime brokerage Ripple acquired for \$1.25 billion, to provide access to short-term funding markets.⁷

Implications:

- ① **Bridges Legacy Treasury Systems with Blockchain Infrastructure:** By integrating GTreasury's four decades of enterprise treasury experience with Ripple's blockchain-based payments and settlement capabilities, the platform addresses a critical pain point for corporate finance teams: managing billions of dollars across borders using disconnected systems. The platform treats digital asset platforms as functional equivalents of banks via API integrations, allowing companies to adopt blockchain rails as an extension of existing banking infrastructure rather than a replacement. Notably, GTreasury CEO Renaat Ver Eecke emphasized that blockchain features remain optional - clients are not forced to adopt crypto technology.
- ② **Positions Ripple as End-to-End Institutional Financial Infrastructure:** With Ripple Treasury, Ripple's product stack now spans payments (RippleNet), custody (Ripple National Trust Bank, conditionally approved), stablecoin issuance (RLUSD), prime brokerage (Hidden Road), and corporate treasury management. This comprehensive institutional offering differentiates Ripple from competitors focused on single product categories and positions XRP's underlying infrastructure as integrated financial plumbing rather than standalone crypto services.
- ③ **Enhances XRP Utility Through Enterprise Payment Volume:** Cross-border settlements via RLUSD on the XRP Ledger could drive significant transaction volume from Fortune 500 treasury operations. The platform's access to overnight repo markets and tokenized money-market funds (like BlackRock's BUIDL) enables companies to deploy idle cash 24/7, generating yield that was previously inaccessible outside traditional banking hours. As enterprise adoption scales, the organic demand for XRP and RLUSD could increase meaningfully.

Ripple Treasury represents a significant step in Ripple's evolution from a crypto payments provider to a regulated institutional financial services platform. By bringing blockchain-based settlement, liquidity management, and digital asset operations into a familiar enterprise treasury environment, Ripple is making the case that the future of corporate finance will run on blockchain rails—with or without clients explicitly engaging with crypto.

Summary

January 2026 delivered a defining month for digital assets, marked by the convergence of the world's largest financial institutions with blockchain infrastructure. The NYSE's tokenized securities platform announcement and the SEC's comprehensive statement on tokenized securities taxonomy provided the twin pillars of market infrastructure and regulatory clarity needed to bring tokenization from concept to reality. Bitcoin's quantum-safe testnet addressed the network's long-term cryptographic resilience, while Ondo and WisdomTree's launches solidified Solana as a leading blockchain for tokenized equities and regulated funds. Ethereum's BPO fork delivered immediate scaling improvements while establishing a modular upgrade framework for sustained capacity expansion. And Ripple's enterprise treasury platform demonstrated how blockchain-based settlement can integrate seamlessly into corporate financial operations. Together, these developments signal that 2026 is shaping up to be the year digital assets transition from alternative infrastructure to embedded financial plumbing, offering investors opportunities across tokenized securities, institutional yield generation, and scalable blockchain ecosystems.

¹ir.theice.com/press/news-details/2026/The-New-York-Stock-Exchange-Develops-Tokenized-Securities-Platform/default.aspx

²sec.gov/newsroom/speeches-statements/corp-fin-statement-tokenized-securities-012826-statement-tokenized-securities

³coindesk.com/tech/2026/01/12/quantum-computing-threatens-the-usd2-trillion-bitcoin-network-btq-technologies-says-it-has-a-defense

⁴coindesk.com/business/2026/01/21/ondo-finance-brings-200-tokenized-u-s-stocks-and-etfs-to-solana

⁵crowdfundinsider.com/2026/02/259193-wisdomtree-adds-solana-blockchain/

⁶unchainedcrypto.com/ethereum-s-latest-bpo-fork-completes-fusaka-upgrades-parameter-tweaks/

⁷coindesk.com/business/2026/01/30/xrp-linked-ripple-rolls-out-treasury-platform-after-usd1-billion-gtreasury-deal

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