

# Digital Assets:

## From Wall Street Vaults to Sovereign Ledgers—The Institutional Infrastructure Developments in 2026

This edition focuses on the pivotal developments in February 2026 that reflect Wall Street's shift from participating in digital assets towards building native infrastructure, while corporate deployment of blockchain-based products accelerated across multiple asset classes, including diamonds and real estate. Core themes include Morgan Stanley applying for a federal crypto custody charter and building in-house Bitcoin custody, Harvard's \$57 billion endowment making its first Ethereum investment alongside its existing Bitcoin position, SoFi becoming the first U.S.-chartered bank to connect directly to a public blockchain via Solana deposits, and the XRP Ledger exceeding Solana in reported real-world asset tokenization value, driven by \$280 million in diamond tokenization and Dubai's government-backed real estate secondary market. Taken together, these developments reflect increased participation by large financial institutions and sovereign entities in digital asset infrastructure, highlighting a broader range of market participants engaging in custody, settlement, and tokenization initiatives.

### Key Announcements in February:

#### 1. Harvard's \$57 Billion Endowment Makes First Ethereum Investment

Following December's Digital Asset Monthly Report, in which Harvard University's endowment disclosed Bitcoin as its largest publicly reported holding, the endowment made an additional, sizable investment in Ethereum. Harvard Management Company (HMC), the investment arm overseeing Harvard University's endowment, disclosed its first-ever Ethereum-linked investment. According to a 13F filing with the SEC covering Q4 2025, HMC purchased an Ethereum ETF valued at approximately \$86.8 million.

Harvard's combined Bitcoin (BTC) and Ethereum (ETH) ETF exposure totaled \$352.6 million, representing approximately 12.8% of its reportable U.S. equity holdings, while the total allocation remains under 1% of the endowment's \$56.9 billion in total assets. The Bitcoin position remains Harvard's single largest disclosed equity position.

#### Implications:

- 1 Institutional Diversification Within Digital Assets:** Harvard's move reflects a progression beyond single-asset exposure within institutional portfolios. Rather than maintaining a Bitcoin-only allocation, the world's wealthiest university endowment has expanded into a multi-asset approach, balancing Bitcoin's digital-store-of-value narrative with Ethereum's role as the dominant smart contract platform especially tokenized assets.
- 2 Peer Influence Across Endowment Portfolios:** Harvard is not the only endowment as Dartmouth, Brown, and Emory have also disclosed stakes in Bitcoin and Ethereum ETFs. Harvard's allocation (\$352.6 million in digital asset ETFs, 12.8% of reportable equity holdings) provides an observable example of how some large endowments are approaching digital asset exposure, which may be considered by other institutional investors as they evaluate their own strategies.
- 3 Ethereum's Distinct Institutional Characteristics:** The timing of Harvard's Ethereum purchase during Q4 2025, reflects an allocation decision made during a period of market volatility, consistent with a strategic approach to portfolio positioning. We believe that Ethereum's network position and its role in tokenized real-world assets highlights ETH (Ether) as a distinct investment exposure opportunity relative to Bitcoin, with its value proposition tied more closely to network utility and on-chain financial activity.

**Overall, the endowment's activity illustrates one approach taken by a large institutional investor as it evaluates digital asset exposure across multiple networks. Rather than maintaining a single-asset position, the allocation reflects consideration of differentiated network characteristics within the digital asset ecosystem, while the overall exposure remains a small portion of total endowment assets. As with all digital asset investments, such approaches involve significant risk, and outcomes may vary based on market conditions, regulatory developments, and asset-specific factors.**

*Source: CoinDesk. Harvard Cuts Bitcoin Exposure by 20%, Adds New Ether Position. February 16, 2026.*

## 2. Morgan Stanley Builds In-House Bitcoin Custody and Applies for National Trust Bank Charter

Morgan Stanley announced two notable developments in February that represent the firm's most substantial structural step into digital assets to date. On February 18th, the bank filed an application with the U.S. Office of the Comptroller of the Currency (OCC) to establish Morgan Stanley Digital Trust, National Association, a de novo national trust bank focused on digital asset custody services. The proposed entity would hold digital assets on behalf of clients and conduct related activities, including buying, selling, swapping, and transferring tokens, as well as facilitating staking services on a fiduciary basis. Separately, on February 26th, Morgan Stanley's newly appointed Head of Digital Assets Strategy announced that the bank is building its own Bitcoin custody solution, moving away from third-party providers. The firm has described internally as mission-critical, underscoring the importance the firm places on operational control and risk management for client digital assets.

### Implications:

- ① **Wall Street's Race to Own the Digital Asset Back Office:** Morgan Stanley joins a rapidly accelerating wave of federal charter applications as eleven companies filed for or received OCC national trust bank charter approvals in just 83 days from December 2025 through March 2026, including Circle, Ripple, BitGo and Stripe's Bridge subsidiary. The competition is no longer for trading volume, but for control of custody, settlement, and fiduciary services for tokenized assets. Those tokenized assets can be seen as positions analogous to today's clearinghouses and custodial banks that support long-duration, operationally embedded business lines.
- ② **Vertically Integrated Crypto Value Chain:** Morgan Stanley is constructing a comprehensive digital asset infrastructure stack including a proprietary digital wallet for custody and now a national trust bank for fiduciary services, staking, and institutional custody. The bank plans to end its reliance on third-party technology providers and operate entirely on its own custody and exchange infrastructure later in 2026.

**Morgan Stanley's simultaneous OCC charter application and in-house custody buildout represent one of the stronger indications to date that some large financial institutions are integrating digital asset infrastructure into broader business operations. The transition from third-party reliance to proprietary custody, staking, and trading positions Morgan Stanley to compete directly with crypto-native custodians while bringing the regulatory credibility and client scale that only a global investment bank can offer.**

*Source: Bloomberg. Morgan Stanley Applies for Bank Charter to Custody Crypto Assets. February 27, 2026.*

## 3. SOL: SoFi Became the First U.S. Chartered Bank to Support Solana Deposits February 27th, 2026

SoFi announced that its 13.7 million customers can now buy, sell, hold, and deposit SOL directly within the SoFi banking app using the Solana network. What makes this different from how other banks have offered crypto is the on-chain component. SoFi generates unique Solana deposit addresses tied to each user's account, so customers can transfer SOL from external wallets (like Coinbase Wallet) directly into SoFi's federally regulated bank account. The tokens settle natively on-chain before appearing in the user's dashboard alongside their checking, savings, and investment accounts.

**Three Key Implications for Investors:**

- ① **First Bridge Between a U.S. Bank Charter and a Public Blockchain at Scale:** Most banks that have offered crypto access do so through brokerage-style structures where customers buy price exposure but assets do not move on-chain. SoFi connected its federally supervised banking infrastructure directly to the Solana blockchain, allowing real wallet-to-wallet transfers that settle on-chain in seconds. This sets a regulatory and operational precedent that other nationally chartered banks will likely follow, potentially opening the door for institutions to eventually offer similar on-chain deposit functionality.
- ② **Mainstream Retail On-Ramp Accelerates Solana Network Adoption:** SoFi dramatically lowers the barrier to entry for non-crypto-native users by putting SOL deposits inside the same interface 13.7 million people already use for checking and savings. This is a different kind of adoption than exchange signups because these are banking customers who may encounter Solana for the first time within a trusted, FDIC-insured environment (though digital assets themselves are not FDIC-insured). For Solana's ecosystem, this injects a large new user base that could drive transaction volume, staking participation, and demand for tokenized products already available on the network.
- ③ **Institutional Usage Signals for Solana's Network Infrastructure:** SoFi's selection of Solana for its initial on-chain deposit integration reflects the network's operating characteristics that may be relevant for certain retail banking use cases, including relatively fast transaction confirmation times and low transaction costs, which can support everyday-sized transfers. The integration highlights Solana's use by a regulated financial institution for a specific production application, while ongoing network upgrades such as Alpenglow and Firedancer are intended to enhance throughput and settlement performance over time.

**Together, these developments illustrate how Solana is being evaluated beyond decentralized finance applications, as financial institutions explore public blockchain networks for payments and settlement-related functionality. SoFi's implementation provides a reference point for how other chartered banks may assess potential interactions with public blockchains, subject to regulatory considerations, implementation outcomes, and evolving network performance.**

*Source: BelnCrypto. U.S. Bank SoFi Enables Solana Deposits. February 27, 2026.*

## 4. XRP: XRPL Exceeds Solana in Reported Real-World Asset Tokenization Value as Institutional and Sovereign Use Cases Expand

February 2026

Several developments in February highlight increased institutional and sovereign activity on the XRP Ledger (XRPL) related to tokenized real-world assets ("RWA"). On February 3rd, Billiton Diamond and tokenization firm Ctrl Alt announced the on-chain representation of more than \$280 million in certified polished diamonds in the UAE, using Ripple's custody technology to secure the underlying physical assets and the XRPL to mint tokens associated with individual stones. Each token is linked to inventory and certification data, creating a verifiable on-chain record of asset attributes and ownership history. Broader platform rollout and any secondary market activity remain subject to regulatory approval from Dubai's Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority ("VARA"), with support from the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre ("DMCC").

By February 11th, data from RWA.xyz indicated that the XRPL had exceeded Solana in reported on-chain real-world asset tokenization value (excluding stablecoins), reaching approximately \$1.756 billion compared to Solana's \$1.682 billion at that time. Recent growth has been concentrated in "represented assets," where tokenized interests are recorded within controlled, issuer-managed structures rather than broadly distributed to retail holders. This structure aligns with certain approaches commonly used in institutional market settings and reflects how some asset owners are exploring tokenization within existing governance and compliance frameworks.

On February 20th, the Dubai Land Department (“DLD”) and Ctrl Alt launched Phase Two of Dubai’s Real Estate Tokenization Project, introducing a regulated resale framework for approximately \$5 million in tokenized property. Roughly 7.8 million tokens tied to ten Dubai properties are eligible for controlled resale, with transactions recorded on the XRPL and supported by Ripple Custody. The tokens are linked to official title deeds and synchronized with Dubai’s land registry. This initiative is part of Dubai’s stated roadmap to tokenize up to \$16 billion, or approximately 7%, of its real estate market by 2033, subject to regulatory approvals and implementation outcomes. As of February, Ctrl Alt reported more than \$850 million in tokenized assets across real estate, private credit, funds, and commodities utilizing XRPL infrastructure.

#### Implications:

- ① **XRPL’s “Controls First, Venues Later” Approach Is Differentiating Their Tokenization with Institutional Capital:** The distinction between XRPL’s and Solana’s RWA profiles helps illustrate differing use cases emphases across public blockchain networks. Solana exhibits higher level of distributed assets, holder count (285,007 vs. 22), and transfer volume (\$2.18 billion vs. \$10 million over 30 days), metrics often associated with broader retail participation and active secondary trading environments. In contrast, XRPL’s reported tokenization activity is more concentrated in represented assets held within controlled, issuer-managed structures that resemble certain elements of regulated market infrastructure. This pattern is sometimes observed in institutional adoption cycles, where firms begin by recording high-value assets on a shared ledger for lifecycle management and reconciliation under strict access controls, before considering to expand distribution and secondary trading once the compliance frameworks are established. The \$280 million diamond tokenization reflects this approach, with physical stones remaining in secure UAE vaults while their digital representations are managed on-chain, and any secondary market trading to follow pending Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (“VARA”) approval. This highlights how XRPL is being utilized in institutional tokenization use cases that emphasize governance, participant gating, and operational controls.
- ② **Dubai’s Government-Backed Real Estate Tokenization Highlights Sovereign-Led Deployment and the UAE’s Role in XRPL-Based Commodity Tokenization:** February’s developments highlight the UAE, and Dubai specifically, as one of the more active jurisdictions exploring government-backed Ripple-powered real-world asset tokenization. The \$280 million diamond tokenization initiative with Billiton Diamond, supported by the Dubai Multi Commodities Centre (DMCC), illustrates how XRPL can be used to represent high-value physical commodities on-chain, with certification data and provenance information recorded alongside tokenized representation. The Dubai Land Department’s (DLD) Phase Two launch is notable, not only for its initial \$5 million in tokenized property but for what it represents: a government entity integrating blockchain-based ownership records with its official land registry. Dubai’s stated \$16 billion tokenization roadmap by 2033 is one of the most ambitious public-sector blockchain initiatives globally. These efforts illustrate how governments are evaluating blockchain-based infrastructure to support regulated resale frameworks for fractional property interests. The selection of XRPL as the underlying infrastructure, utilizing XRP and secured by Ripple Custody, positions the network as a component within Dubai’s broader real estate tokenization efforts. Deloitte projects that up to \$4 trillion in real estate could be tokenized globally by 2035, and Dubai’s pilot initiatives may inform how other cities assess the potential role of blockchain technology in property registration and tokenization programs.
- ③ **Ripple Custody and Protocol-Level Compliance Highlight a Differentiated Institutional Moat:** A common thread across all three February developments is the use of Ripple Custody as the security layer supporting high-value physical assets moving on-chain. This enterprise-grade custody infrastructure, combined with XRPL’s recently activated protocol-level compliance features—including PermissionedDomains for credential-gated access, Token Escrow for conditional settlement, and the Permissioned DEX for controlled institutional trading creates an integrated, end-to-end institutional stack that many competing platforms do not offer. Unlike platforms where compliance functions are primarily handled at the application layer, XRPL embeds these controls natively into the blockchain architecture. Combined with the Ctrl Alt’s reported \$850 million in total tokenized assets, the XRPL is supporting a growing set of real-world institutional deployments that collectively illustrate its positioning as infrastructure designed for regulated tokenized finance spanning diamonds, real estate, private credit, funds, and commodities.

**February’s XRP Ledger and Ripple ecosystem developments reflect increased institutional engagement. In our opinion, the combination of compliance-grade on-chain trading infrastructure, reported RWA growth relative to other networks, and ecosystem expansion supported by both crypto-native and traditional finance entities highlights XRPL as one of the most complete platforms for regulated tokenized finance in the market.**

*Sources: CoinDesk. Dubai Unveils Secondary Market for \$5 Million Tokenized Real Estate via XRP Ledger. February 20, 2026; CryptoSlate. XRP Ledger Surpasses Solana in RWA Tokenization Value. February 2026; Deloitte Insights. Tokenized Real Estate: Financial Services Industry Predictions 2025.*

## Conclusion

February 2026 delivered some of the clearest indications to date that digital assets are increasingly moving a new investment category into broader financial infrastructure. Morgan Stanley's simultaneous OCC charter application and in-house custody buildout suggested that the largest global banks are moving toward building, rather than outsourcing, their digital asset operations. Harvard's first Ethereum investment, building on its existing Bitcoin ETF position to create a diversified \$352 million crypto allocation, illustrated how large institutional allocators may be evolving from single-asset exposure to multi-asset digital asset strategies within a broader portfolio context. SoFi's milestone as the first U.S. chartered bank to support direct Solana on-chain deposits bridged the gap between public blockchains and regulated banking for 13.7 million customers, providing a reference point that other nationally chartered banks may evaluate. And on the XRP Ledger, \$280 million in diamond tokenization, a government-backed real estate secondary market in Dubai, and a 276% increase in represented asset value coincided with XRPL exceeding Solana in total RWA tokenization value (as reported at the time), highlighting the network's "controls first, venues later" approach to institutional adoption. These developments collectively underscore that 2026 is shaping up as a year of institutional infrastructure buildout, with the largest financial institutions, university endowments, and sovereign governments constructing custody, compliance, and settlement layers that could influence how digital assets operate at scale over time.

*For informational purposes only and does not constitute an offer to sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy any security. The views and opinions expressed are those of Kevin Kelly, portfolio manager of several Amplify's digital asset-focused ETFs, as of the date indicated, and are subject to change. These views should not be construed as investment advice. Consult your financial professional for guidance specific to your situation.*

**Carefully consider the Fund's investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses before investing. This and other information can be found in the Fund's statutory and summary prospectuses, which may be obtained at [AmplifyETFs.com](https://www.amplifyetfs.com). Read the prospectus carefully before investing.**

*Investing involves risk, including the possible loss of principal. Investments in blockchain technology and digital assets are subject to a variety of risks, including high volatility, lack of regulation, cybersecurity incidents, theft or loss, developmental risk, and the potential for competing platforms or technologies.*

DAM-COM-0326

*The technology is new and many uses may be untested. Investments concentrated in a single industry, such as blockchain, may exhibit higher volatility and be more vulnerable to factors affecting that industry.*

*Exposure to cryptocurrencies is highly speculative and may be subject to extreme volatility and risk of total loss. Investors should be prepared to lose their entire investment. The regulatory and tax treatment of digital assets and cryptocurrencies is uncertain and evolving.*

*Amplify ETFs are distributed by Foreside Fund Services, LLC.*