



IIMC CASE RESEARCH CENTRE (IIMCCRC)

INDRANIL BOSE, SUPARNA DHAR

JANUARY 2020

SECURING IOT USING BLOCKCHAIN AND ZERO TRUST: BLOCK ARMOUR'S DILEMMA

It was 11:15 am on the 24th of July, 2019. Narayan Neelakantan, Co-Founder and CEO of Block Armour was in his Mumbai office. He was talking to Floyd DCosta, another Co-Founder of Block Armour located in Singapore, over the phone. They were discussing an innovative new feature for the IoT Armour product that Abhijit Dhongade, Co-Founder and CTO of Block Armour, had suggested. Neelakantan, DCosta and Dhongade had gathered deep technology expertise along with decades of collective experience in the field of cybersecurity. With the digital business and internet of things (IoT) gaining market traction, they perceived the need for holistic solutions for cybersecurity. With the vision of building cutting edge next-generation cybersecurity products using emerging technology, they co-founded Block Armour in 2017.

Dhongade attended the RSAC conference in Singapore the previous week. He was an expert in information security technology and yearned to apply latest technology developments to Block Armour products. The innovative information security products demonstrated at the conference and the thought-provoking discussions had kindled Dhongade's mind. He was fascinated by the concept of zero knowledge proofs authentication¹. He ideated a feature for IoT Armour around the concept. He shared his idea with Neelakantan, who was also an ace in the field of information security technology. The technologist in Neelakantan was excited with Dhongade's idea. The entrepreneur in Neelakantan was apprehensive that the feature, though reminiscent of technological innovation, would not appeal to their customers at present. What should they do – shelve the idea or take a leap of faith?

¹ <https://www.rsaconference.com/industry-topics/presentation/zeroknowledge-zk-proofsprivacypreserving-authentication>

Prof. Indranil Bose of the Indian Institute of Management Calcutta and Suparna Dhar developed this case study as the basis for class discussion rather than to illustrate the effective or ineffective running of an organization.