



# The Bitcoin Generation:

## Gen Z's Digital Revolt Against the Dollar

### A Generational Shift

In May 2010, a man spent 10,000 Bitcoin in exchange for two large pizzas. What was approximately \$41 then is worth over \$1 billion now ([bitcointalk.org](http://bitcointalk.org)). While this may seem astronomical in hindsight, it marked a pivotal moment in financial history. Bitcoin evolved from what many dismissed as “magic internet money” into a currency with real-world utility.

Though only sixteen years old, Bitcoin has already redefined what many believe money can be: decentralized, transparent, and digital-first. At its core, Bitcoin is “an electronic payment system based on cryptographic proof [a mathematical verification process] instead of trust” (Nakamoto), as its anonymous creator, Satoshi Nakamoto, wrote in the original whitepaper, a document outlining how Bitcoin works.

Bitcoin is a direct response to a broken system that Gen Z no longer trusts to act in their best interest. Bitcoin isn't just a trend, it's a response. Faced with inflation, banking distrust, and a hyper-digital world, Gen Z sees cryptocurrency as a hedge, a protest, and the future. Understanding this generational shift is essential for anyone seeking to navigate the next era of money.

This article will explore three of the major pressures Gen Z is reacting to:

- Distrust Due to Inflation
- The Broken Banking System
- A New Digital Norm

### Distrust Due to Inflation

Gen Z has come of age during one of the most unstable economic stretches in recent history. Inflation, an increase in prices and a decrease in money's purchasing power, is the root of Gen Z's instability and institutional distrust. *Figure 1.* shows just how much Gen Z has endured through elevated inflation rates.

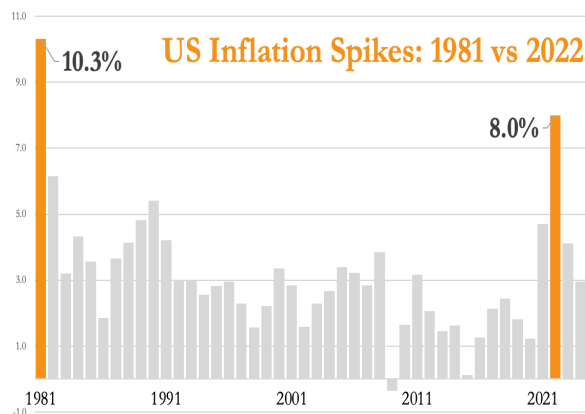


Figure 1. *U.S. Yearly Inflation Rates (1981-2024).*  
Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that in 2022, inflation surged to 8.0%, a 40-year high. This economic instability has shaped Gen Z's

relationship with money. Psychologists Strathman et al. (1994) found that early exposure to financial stress leads to more future-oriented financial behavior. In other words, growing up in economic uncertainty makes young people more likely to seek out secure, forward-looking options.

The damage runs deeper than numbers on a chart. Inflation disincentivizes saving, warps investment behavior, and fosters a short-term mindset, or what economists call a low time preference. This effect is especially powerful among young people, who are still financially malleable. With rising costs and unstable currency value, Gen Z has little reason to believe that traditional finance habits will secure their future.

As Austrian economist and advisor to El Salvador, Saifedean Ammous, writes in *The Bitcoin Standard*, “Whenever a government has started on the path of inflating the money supply, there is no escaping the negative consequences” (Ammous 118).

Inflation is a slow, invisible tax that compounds over time. It quietly eats away at savings, weakens financial incentives to save for the future, and diminishes trust in the value of the dollar itself. For many in Gen Z, this constant erosion of value has shifted how they think about money entirely. Inflation has made staying in the system feel riskier than stepping out.

### **Bitcoin: A Hedge Against Inflation**

If inflation is the problem, scarcity, a term that describes how finite something is, is the answer. Unlike fiat currencies, which are issued by government and can be printed indefinitely, Bitcoin has a hard cap: there will only ever be 21 million coins. This built-in scarcity makes Bitcoin a form of sound money, a term economists use for money that retains its value over time. The contrast becomes ever more striking when comparing Bitcoin’s fixed supply to the trillions of U.S. dollars in circulation, as shown in *Figure 2*.

## **Supply Cap: Bitcoin vs the Dollar**

**Bitcoin:**  
21 Million

**U.S. Dollar:**  
2.3 Trillion

Figure 2. *Bitcoin’s fixed supply (21 million) compared to the U.S. dollar’s circulating supply (~2.3 trillion).*

*Source: Bitcoin.org; U.S. Currency Education Program*

Sound money cannot be quietly devalued, inflated away, or politically manipulated. Bitcoin’s issuance schedule, one new Bitcoin roughly every 10 minutes, is public, mathematical, and immune to agenda-driven decisions. In a system where central banks can expand the money supply overnight, Bitcoin offers what fiat cannot: long-term financial stability and predictability.

“There is no risk of inflation with cryptocurrencies. The number of units in each cryptocurrency in circulation is fixed”  
– Bhilawadikar & Gorg 390

This scarcity is what leads many to call Bitcoin “digital gold.” It is portable, borderless, and divisible. A 2023 peer-reviewed study in *Nature Humanities and Social Sciences Communications* explains the reasoning behind Gen Z’s adoption amid inflation, concluding, “Young adults view Bitcoin as a rational alternative to a monetary system they perceive as outdated, politicized, or exclusionary” (Nature, 2023).

Bitcoin offers a refuge to store value outside of the traditional financial system. It’s a hedge against inflation and a rejection against a structure Gen Z no longer trusts.

### **The Broken Banking System**

For Gen Z, distrust in the banking system isn’t just inherited, it’s personal. This generation grew

up watching the 2008 financial crisis unfold: billion-dollar banks were bailed out, but families lost homes, jobs, savings, and stability. In the years since, they've witnessed regional banks collapse, accounts freeze without warning, and hidden fees eat away at already limited funds. The message has been clear: when the system breaks, it protects the powerful, not the people.



Figure 3. “Chase Burning” by Alex Schaefer.  
Source: Raychleadele.tumblr.com.

This pattern of betrayal has left a lasting impression. According to a 2022 peer-reviewed study, this “distrust in traditional financial institutions significantly increases the likelihood of adopting decentralized alternatives such as cryptocurrency” (Faqih and Jaradat, 6). In simple terms, Gen Z doesn’t view banks as trustworthy guardians of their money. The more they experience institutional instability, the more they look for ways to opt out.

Bitcoin answers this distrust by removing the need to trust the system in the first place. Its blockchain is public, its rules are encoded in transparent algorithms, and its transactions are verified by a decentralized network, meaning no one entity or third-party controls it.

The result is more than a shift in strategy, it’s a shift in trust.

Bitcoin didn’t appear out of nowhere. As Weber puts it in the *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, “Bitcoin can be interpreted as a populist form of money that emerged from a deep-seated distrust in central banks and financial elites following the crisis.” That distrust hasn’t faded; it’s only grown deeper. For many, the search for something outside the system is more personal than financial.

### Bitcoin: A Protest Against the System

Rather than fixing the broken banking system, Bitcoin walks away from it entirely. Created during the 2008 financial crisis, Bitcoin was an answer, an exit. A way to opt out of a system built on banks, centralized control, and regulations that protect institutions more than people. A way to move money without gatekeepers, late fees, or frozen accounts. Every part of the design is built to challenge the core assumptions of centralized finance.

It replaces trust with transparency. Every transaction is verified by a decentralized network and recorded on a public ledger for anyone to see. There’s no central authority, no approval process, and no single entity, institution, or nation that can shut it down.

A 2023 peer-reviewed study surveyed young adults why they adopt Bitcoin, as shown in Figure 4.

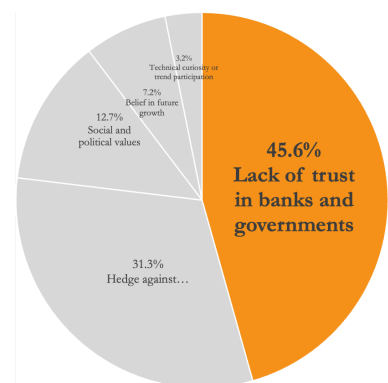


Figure 4. Gen Z Motivations for Adopting Bitcoin  
Source: Nature Humanities and Social Sciences Communications, 2023.



Distrust in traditional finance is the leading reason Gen Z adopts Bitcoin, more than inflation, profit, or even ideology. This signals a deeper shift: the appeal of Bitcoin is about escape. Bitcoin doesn't require permission, and it doesn't ask for forgiveness. It can't freeze your account, reverse your transaction, or deny you access. Where banks can quietly close accounts and governments can restrict flows of money, Bitcoin remains open to all.

That openness is more than a technical feature, it's a statement. For many in Gen Z, choosing Bitcoin is more than innovation, it reflects deeper values: independence, ownership, and control. It's a peaceful protest, verified one block at a time, against a system that was never built to serve them.

### A New Digital Norm

From smartphones in their hands at a young age to Venmo in high school, Gen Z has never known a world without instant connection. For them, money isn't something you carry. It's something you tap, scan, or send.

They're used to managing money through apps, not tellers. Instant transfers, peer-to-peer payments, and 24/7 access aren't luxuries, they're the bare minimum. So when banks take five business days to process a transfer or require a phone call to approve a payment, the system is obviously outdated.



Figure 5. *Conceptual Artwork of Bitcoin floating in air.*  
Source: Dreamstime.com

A 2023 Forbes survey found that “78% of Gen Z say they’d stop shopping at a store that doesn’t accept digital wallets.” In other words, if a business, or a financial institution, can’t keep up with expectations, Gen Z moves on.

### Bitcoin: A Vision for the Future

Bitcoin exceeds every Gen Z digital expectation. It’s global, always on, and doesn’t rely on banks or middlemen to function. It was built for the internet, not retrofitted to survive in it.

As published in the *International Journal of Management and Humanities*, “For Generation Z, cryptocurrency represents the next natural evolution of digital finance, aligned with their desire for autonomy, speed, and control (Jain and Jain, 2023). The authors emphasize that this shift mirrors the rest of Gen Z’s digital life: borderless, permissionless, and instant.

Bitcoin lets people hold and move their money without permission. There’s no branch to visit, no hours of operation, and no one who can freeze or reverse a transaction. And with tools like the Lightning Network, Bitcoin is becoming faster, cheaper, and more scalable than most people realize.

For Gen Z, the Bitcoin ecosystem feels both radical and inevitable. It aligns with the world they’ve grown up in, one built on transparency, autonomy, and instant connection.

### Conclusion: A Paradigm Shift

This generation isn’t waiting for the system to change; they’re building a new one.

Gen Z has watched inflation eat away savings, banks collapse under their own weight, and outdated institutions struggle to keep up. They aren’t just reacting to the cracks in the system, they’re moving toward something better. Something safer. Something sounder. Bitcoin isn’t an investment trend or a tech experiment, it’s a complete rethinking of money itself: scarce,

decentralized, transparent, and unshakably independent.

And it's not coming, it's already here.

The shift is happening block by block, wallet by wallet, peer to peer.

Bitcoin is no longer a question of *if*; it's a question of *how soon*. For a generation raised on speed, access, and ownership, the future of money doesn't look like the past. It looks like Bitcoin.

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Race Young is an accounting student at Brigham Young University, a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ, and the current CFO of a custom homebuilding company. Whether he's leading multi-million dollar budgets, building new systems in Python, or diving into philosophical questions about purpose and truth, Race brings clarity, discipline, and a deep hunger for growth to everything he does. He believes business is a stewardship, learning is a lifelong calling, and faith is the foundation that guides it all. Guided by vision and grounded in faith, Race is determined to shape a future where innovation, integrity, and discipleship move hand in hand.