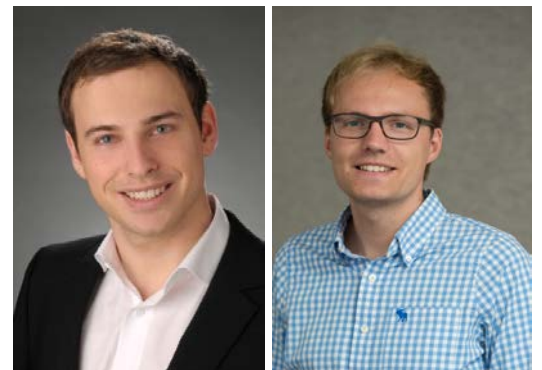




## “Blockchain is the toolkit for realizing our vision of a shared economy.”

### Jean-Luc Bourquin and Anselm Pilz

*The two St. Gallen alumni (MEcon and MiQEF, 2017) are among the first employees of the rapidly growing company Deon Digital AG. The Zürich-based startup develops software for smart contracts, utilizing blockchain (i.e., distributed ledger) technology. How do they help companies reinvent their business models and compete in the digital world? Their work starts with understanding client needs and provides solutions based on data analytics and business modeling.*



#### **Why did you choose to start with a software company? How can economists add value on the technological front?**

We are passionate about creating smart software solutions that digitize an increasingly complex economy. Economists are good in understanding client needs and analyzing data, developing new solutions and communicating with clients, i.e., working as a business engineer or product manager. Because of the hype around blockchain technology, several projects with questionable business value appeared. A good knowledge of economic and social matters is very helpful in separating the wheat from the chaff.

#### **Tell us more about the vision of your work on the shared economy. How do you benefit from your MEcon and MiQEF degrees?**

Deon Digital’s vision of a shared economy is about “tearing down walls” not only within, but also between organizations: letting information, ideas and transactions flow freely. The training in MEcon and MiQEF has helped us to understand the relationships and processes between the market participants. The mathematical foundations of our studies are a big plus when analyzing and mastering complex systems.

#### **How can distributed ledger technologies (DLT) be useful in a decentralized economy?**

Blockchain is the toolkit for realizing our vision of a shared economy. The technology offers decentralization, digitally secured access and a guarantee for preventing value forgery (history cannot be changed) and avoiding serious technical glitches (i.e., double spending). Hence, DLT is a natural candidate for becoming an underlying infrastructure for digital contracts.



**You are looking at the future value of the internet. How will digitalization change future business models?**

Modern business needs formalized trust. A firm is an assembly of contracts. To put it differently, “contracts are business”. In the world of disconnected services, companies lose by not earning revenues on potential synergies between separate business models. We created a solution where the contract itself can be read both by humans and machines. Deon’s technology is the coordination layer that regulates prices, ownership, access and contracts.

**What is your advice to MEcon and MiQEF students who are interested in a digital business career? What are the projects at Deon Digital that might be an opportunity for students?**

Focus on the area that is interesting for you and keep learning! The MEcon and MiQEF curriculum provides a lot of freedom. Many courses are a perfect entry point into data analytics. Programming your quant homework could be the first step. To complement your studies, you might use free web-tutorials to improve your skills. Understanding behavioral and economic implications is vital if you design and implement ecosystems. For example, Deon Digital works with Daimler to set up a new standard for future mobility systems.

Visit [www.deondigital.com](http://www.deondigital.com) for more information. Get in touch with us, we are hiring! Write to [anselm.pilz@deondigital.com](mailto:anselm.pilz@deondigital.com) or [jean-luc.bourquin@deondigital.ch](mailto:jean-luc.bourquin@deondigital.ch).