

## A new Dimension in online chess?

Online chess explores uncharted territory by using cryptocurrency as prizemoney.

The famous [FICS](#) (free internet chess server) probably was the forerunner in online chess back in the early 90ies when there wasn't even a graphical user interface. Soon chess was comfortably played with a mouse with features such as „premove“ in different chess variants and any possible timecontrol. It became clear, that the internet and chess had a loveaffair.

```
Connect Using C:\Dokumente und Einstellungen\Administrator\Eigene Dateien\Thief\riovaido.COM
Loading Helper
Loading C:\Programme\Thief 1.22\timeseal.exe Freechess.org 5000
Loading C:\Programme\Thief 1.22\timeseal.exe Freechess.org 5000 Successful
Creating TSIInput Input Thread
Creating TSIInput Input Thread Successful
Connected to Helper

      Welcome to
      FICS
      =====
      freechess.org ---- 69.36.243.188
      =====
      (Login screen designed by Alefith)

***** Welcome to the Free Internet Chess Server at freechess.org *****

Webpage: http://www.freechess.org
Head admin : Chessty  Complaints to : complaints@freechess.org
Server location: freechess.org  Server version : 1.25.20

If you are not a registered player, enter guest or a unique ID.
(If your return key does not work, use cntrl-J)
```

From FICS evolved the [ICC](#), probably the first commercial chess server, which extended the functionality even further and still is the playground for the majority of GM's.

This span greater controversies over the re-use of code of a free-for-all server for a commercial project. FICS still provides its service without charging any fees and relies on donations.

The [chessbase server](#) followed and nowadays regular chess software often includes online accounts.

As soon as online tournaments were played for prizemoney cheating became a major concern.

Even some Grandmasters were tempted to use computer assistance to improve their chances and now every major chess server has a crew for cheating detection, which seems to work more or less.

Maybe partly because cheating detection in online chess is even harder than in regular over-the-board tournaments, these online tournaments with substantial prizemoney are rather seldom.

But the fundamental detriment for such tournaments certainly was and is the contradiction of online anonymity, where players don't hesitate to choose handles such as „I\_love\_DD“ or simply „supergod“ and the need for identity verification, when it comes to paying out the prizes.

Suddenly players had to back their handles with real emailaddresses, real names and real banking data.

As much as chess and the internet have a love affair, as bad online anonymity and real world payments fit together.

But this may no longer be true.

Maybe FICS is now a frontrunner again, because they setup a [series of four Blitztournaments](#) and will do the payout for the winners also by anonymous means.

This works by using a [cryptocurrency](#) similar to [Bitcoin](#), where accountnumbers aren't connected to identities anyway.

Precisely their currency of choice is „[Nxt](#)“, which it's growing community depicts as „2<sup>nd</sup> generation cryptocoin“, as it doesn't rely on massive computing power and power consumption like the Bitcoin-network. „It's green Nxt“ they say, because the networks can be powered by 4-watt-consuming [Raspberrry Pi's](#).

Apart from this it provides anonymous payments similar to Bitcoin and transactions don't take longer than a few minutes. The use of cryptocurrency in online gaming in general might increase dramatically. There might be legal concerns due to the different nature of payments but since Bitcoin reached the real world these things have been mostly worked out.



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The Nxt community sponsors now these four tournaments as a testrun and charges no registration fee. Registration on FICS is free as always.

Prizemoney in chess is scarce anyway, especially for amateurs and therefore this might be an attractive new model.