

## **Abstract**

In 2021, the popularity of non-fungible tokens or NFTs exploded as sales reached over \$17.7 billion (Non-fungible.com, 2021). An NFT represents a unique digital asset that cannot be replicated and is verifiable on a blockchain. One reason behind the growth is due to the virtual communities built around NFT projects. Despite this exponential growth, there is no literature on the communities that facilitated this massive growth. This project aimed to examine how NFT projects on the Cardano blockchain built trust with their community by conducting semi-structured in-depth interviews with cNFT project teams. Drawing from the commitment-trust theory, this study analyzes how developers and community managers build and sustain trust with their communities. This research asks two questions. First, how do NFT project teams, specifically within Cardano blockchain (cNFTs), build trust within virtual communities? Second, what strategies, mechanisms, and/or tactics do NFT project teams implement to manage trust in their virtual communities? To answer these questions, semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted to learn about creators' or community managers' experience building and sustaining trust. There were six themes on how NFT project teams built and managed trust: let the community know the people behind the team, be online and active, collaborate with other projects and respected members in the NFT space, manage the community's expectations of the project, honestly communicate and be transparent, and build a strong track record.