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Venture Capital Firm a16z Crypto Backs Poseidon's Decentralized AI Data Platform

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Andreessen Horowitz's crypto-focused investment arm, a16z Crypto, recently led a \$15 million seed funding round for Poseidon, a decentralized artificial intelligence (AI) data layer designed to transform how training data is accessed and monetized for robotics and AI models. The announcement, shared via email on Tuesday, emphasizes Poseidon's goal of creating a "traceable, enforceable and monetizable" system for AI training data.

Poseidon was developed within Story, an intellectual property (IP) protocol also backed by a16z. Story's mission is to turn IP into programmable assets that can be licensed and managed through smart contracts, self-executing contracts on blockchain technology. This synergy aims to enable secure and transparent management of IP in the digital economy.

Chris Dixon, managing partner at a16z Crypto, highlighted the urgency behind Poseidon's creation: "AI foundation models have already exhausted the most easily accessible training data." Foundation models are large AI systems built using vast datasets. Dixon added that Poseidon's decentralized data infrastructure intends to build "a new economic foundation for the internet," rewarding content creators and data providers for contributing the diverse inputs necessary for next-generation AI development.

The rise of generative AI, which creates content like text, images, and code based on its training, relies heavily on massive datasets, often compiled from publicly available sources on the internet. However, many of these datasets include copyrighted materials, which raises significant concerns over unauthorized use. Creators and artists argue that their works are being exploited commercially without proper licensing or compensation, sparking legal disputes across the industry.

This ongoing tension underscores how emerging blockchain technology can address some of AI's biggest challenges. By decentralizing data storage and access, blockchain allows for more secure, privacy-conscious sharing of information while enabling multiple stakeholders to participate in training large AI models. It creates an ecosystem where data ownership and usage rights are clearly defined and enforceable.

Moreover, by developing diverse and controlled datasets, platforms like Poseidon open new avenues for monetization. Creators can finally be compensated for the commercial use of their work, which not only incentivizes the sharing of high-quality data but also aligns with fair copyright practices.

Poseidon represents a promising intersection of AI and blockchain technologies, seeking to reshape the digital landscape by empowering data contributors and fostering a more transparent, equitable system for AI training.