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# Digital Asset Treasuries

**AUTHORS**
Angelo Chan, 8C Management
Nicole Moran, Cornerstone Research
Pawel Bednarek, Cornerstone Research

## THE EMERGENCE OF THE DIGITAL ASSET TREASURY

The corporate treasury function traditionally involves ensuring liquidity for operations and managing financial risk to the corporation. Since 2020, however, a corporate strategy—known as digital asset treasury (DAT)—has emerged among companies traded in the public markets.[1] DAT companies are characterized by the accumulation of digital assets—primarily Bitcoin—on corporate balance sheets, treating the digital assets as a store of value rather than as transactional currency or other small incidental holdings.

While early adoption was largely driven by Bitcoin mining operators (e.g., Marathon Digital, Riot Platforms), which accumulated assets as a direct product of mining operations, the landscape has since expanded beyond companies whose core business relates to digital assets. One of the first such companies to establish a DAT strategy was the software company MicroStrategy (renamed to Strategy Inc.), which announced its treasury allocation to Bitcoin on August 11, 2020.[2] Large DAT companies now include entities that purchase Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies through the open market rather than through mining operations. These entities often use equity and debt capital markets to raise money to buy digital assets for their DATs. Even traditionally mining-focused firms like Marathon Digital (renamed to MARA Holdings) have begun raising capital to purchase Bitcoin.[3]

> *In this article, we analyze the mechanics and market structure of DATs at corporations using public U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings and price data.*

In this article, we analyze the mechanics and market structure of DATs at corporations using public U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) filings and price data. We begin by examining empirical market structure trends—quantifying the sector's concentration and documenting exponentially rising corporate interest in DATs using evidence from SEC Form 8-K filings. We then discuss different types of DAT companies, define and assess the "mNAV premium," and demonstrate how some companies utilize capital markets in ways that passive investment vehicles could not. We then contrast this active strategy with the Grayscale Bitcoin Trust, which emerged in 2015.

## CONCENTRATION AND GROWTH TRENDS

To evaluate the adoption of DATs, we analyzed 8-K filings from June 2020 through December 2025. These 8-K filings are the standard mechanism for public companies to disclose major events to their shareholders, such as leadership changes, acquisitions, or, in this case, strategic shifts in treasury management.[4] Tracking explicit mentions of "Digital Asset Treasury," as shown by the teal line in Figure 1, reveals an exponential rise in the mention of DATs in 8-K filings, accelerating in late 2024.[5]

As of early 2026, a single entity (Strategy Inc.) holds 63% of the total Bitcoin held by public companies, while the top five hold 78%, and the top ten account for 85%.[6] Notwithstanding this concentration, the increase in 8-K mentions of DATs suggests an expansion in the adoption of DAT-related activity among public companies. As of December 2025, the total number of mentions of DATs in 8-K filings exceeded 400.

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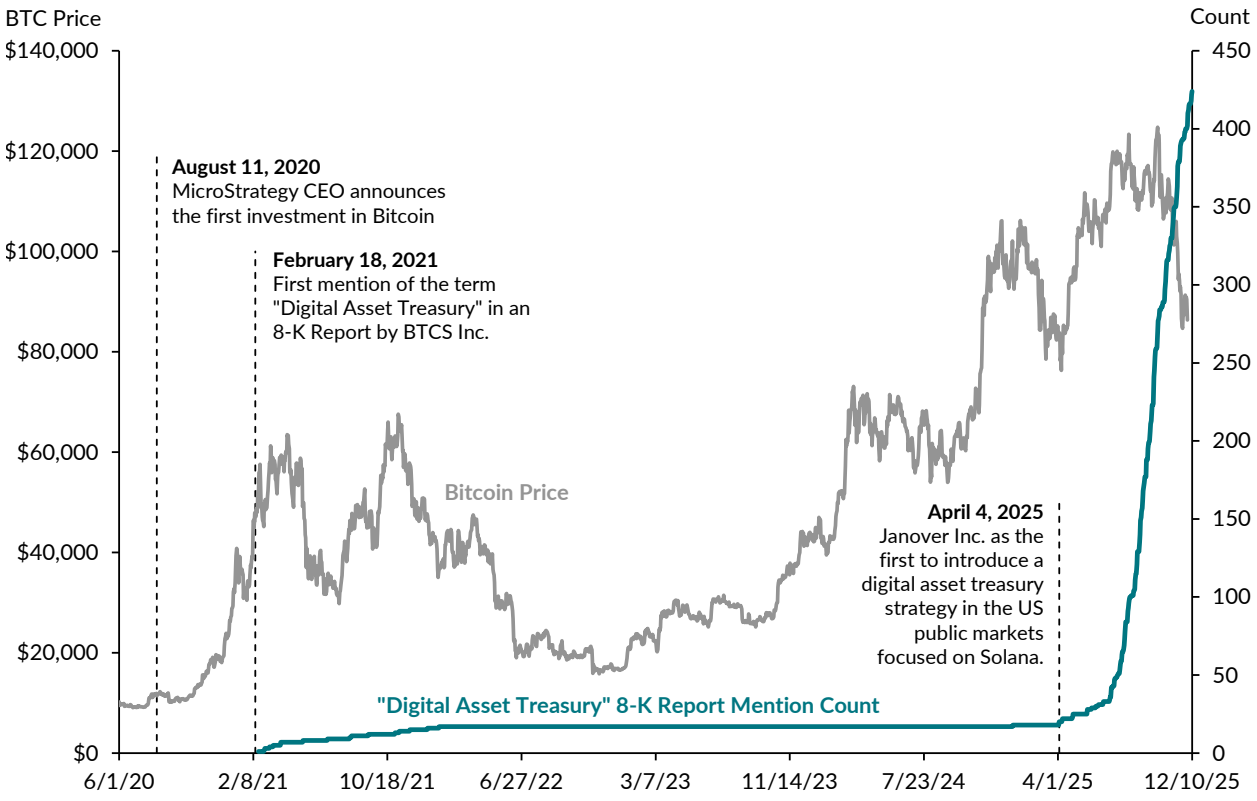
The sharp acceleration in 8-K mentions beginning in late 2024 reflects not only an increase in adoption but also an expansion in the diversity of assets held within these corporate treasuries. For example, Janover (renamed to DeFi Development Corp.) was the first to introduce a Solana-focused DAT in April 2025.

**Figure 1: Count of "Digital Asset Treasury" Mentions in 8-K Filings**
6/1/20–12/10/25




Source: CoinMarketCap; U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission EDGAR Database

As of early March 2026, while Bitcoin remains the dominant treasury asset with total holdings by public companies of $78.24 billion, substantial capital has been deployed into Ethereum ($12.76 billion) and Solana ($1.54 billion), alongside positions in other digital assets (see Figure 2).

> *80%*
> *Of total DAT value held in Bitcoin, though allocations to other assets are gradually increasing.*

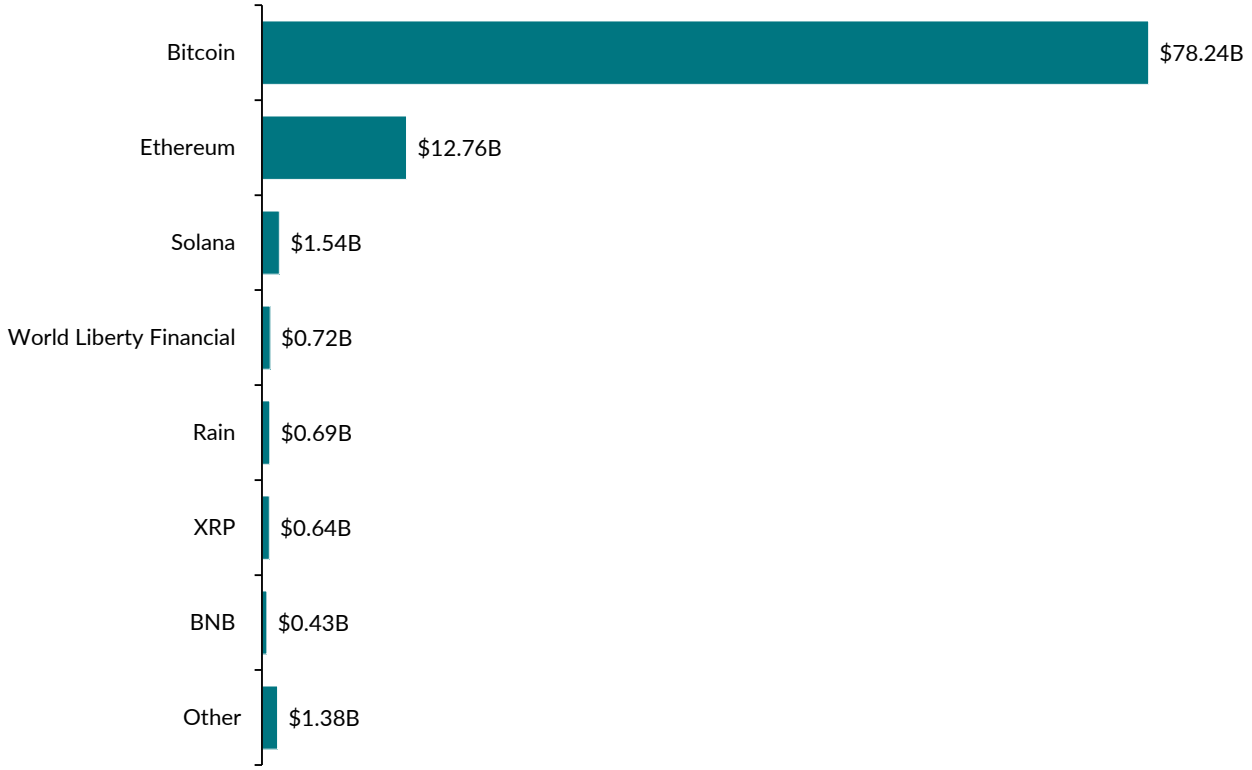
## TYPES OF DAT COMPANIES

The DAT company universe can generally be categorized into three high-level operational models, each characterized by differing strategic objectives and capital allocation policies:

1. Digital asset businesses: Firms that accumulate and use digital assets as part of their primary operations (e.g., Bitcoin miners, digital asset trading platforms, etc.).
2. Strategic (majority) treasury allocators: Firms that have formally adopted digital asset accumulation as a primary driver of shareholder value. The strategy includes the use of capital markets to raise fiat currency to purchase digital assets.[7]
3. Minority treasury allocators: Firms that operate a business (outside of the DAT) that serves as the primary driver of shareholder value, with only a small portion of treasury reserves allocated to digital assets.

The next section focuses on firms that are strategic (majority) treasury allocators and describes the phenomenon involving the share price of such companies trading at a premium (or discount) to the value of their digital asset holdings.

**Figure 2: Holdings Breakdown of Public DAT Companies**
3/6/26




Source: CoinGecko

## MNAV PREMIUM AS A FINANCING TOOL

The market valuation of a DAT is often measured as an "mNAV ratio." For example, Strategy Inc. is capitalized through a mix of common equity, preferred stock, and convertible debt, and as such, the mNAV ratio is calculated by taking its enterprise value (EV) divided by the market value of its digital asset holdings:[8]

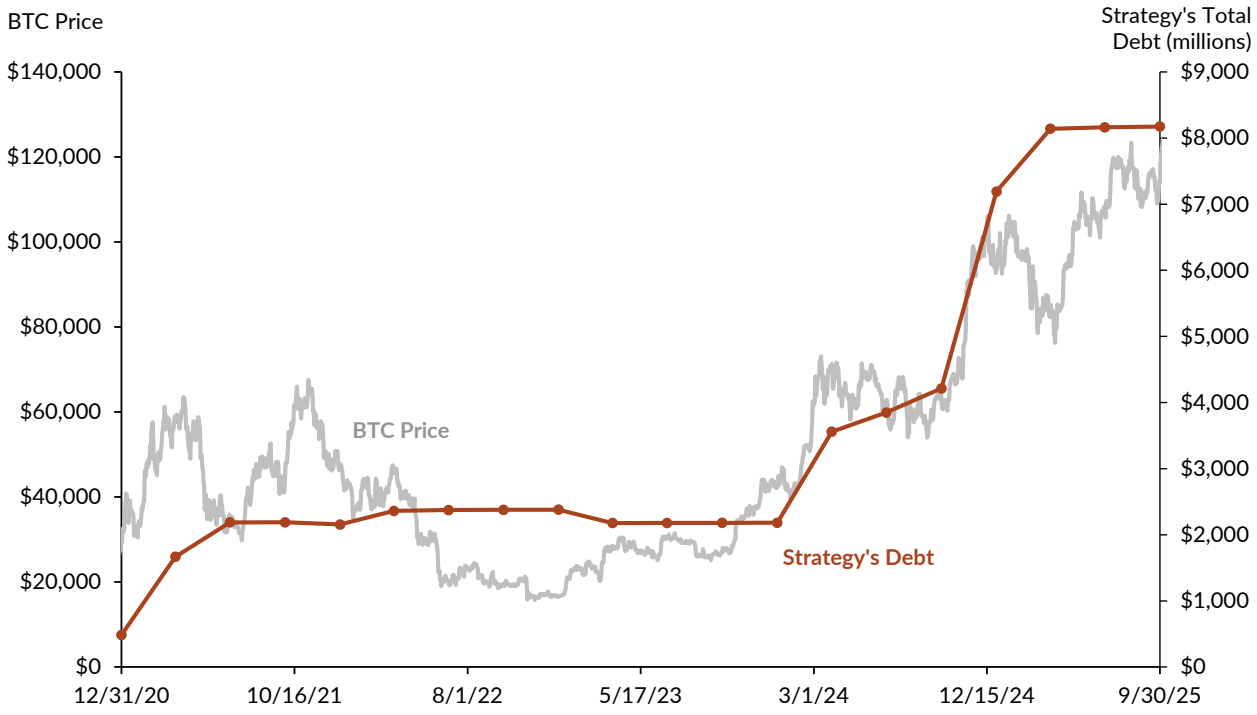
$$\text{mNAV} = \frac{\text{Enterprise Value}}{\text{Digital Asset Holdings}}$$

$$= \frac{\text{Market Cap.} + \text{Debt} + \text{Preferred Stock} - \text{Cash}}{\text{Digital Asset Holdings}}$$

When a company trades at a premium (mNAV > 1.0), the market values the company more than the value of its digital asset holdings, which, in turn, enables the company to raise capital at a valuation higher than the cost of the underlying digital assets. For example, the company can issue equity or convertible debt at a premium and use the proceeds to acquire Bitcoin. Since the capital is raised at a premium, the amount of Bitcoin acquired exceeds the shareholder dilution, thereby increasing the "Bitcoin yield." The resulting increase in Bitcoin holdings per share theoretically supports the stock price, sustaining the premium and allowing the cycle to repeat.

Figure 3 illustrates the relationship between Strategy Inc.'s total debt load (red line) against the price of Bitcoin (grey line). Note that debt issuance is not linear: it increases during periods of Bitcoin price appreciation. During bull markets, the implied volatility of the company's equity spikes, allowing the treasury to issue convertible bonds with high optionality value but low interest coupons (since the call option embedded in a convertible is worth more when volatility is high). In effect, the company sells volatility to bond investors to fund asset accumulation.

**Figure 3: Bitcoin Price vs. Strategy Inc.'s Debt**
12/31/20–9/30/25




Source: LSEG Workspace; CoinMarketCap

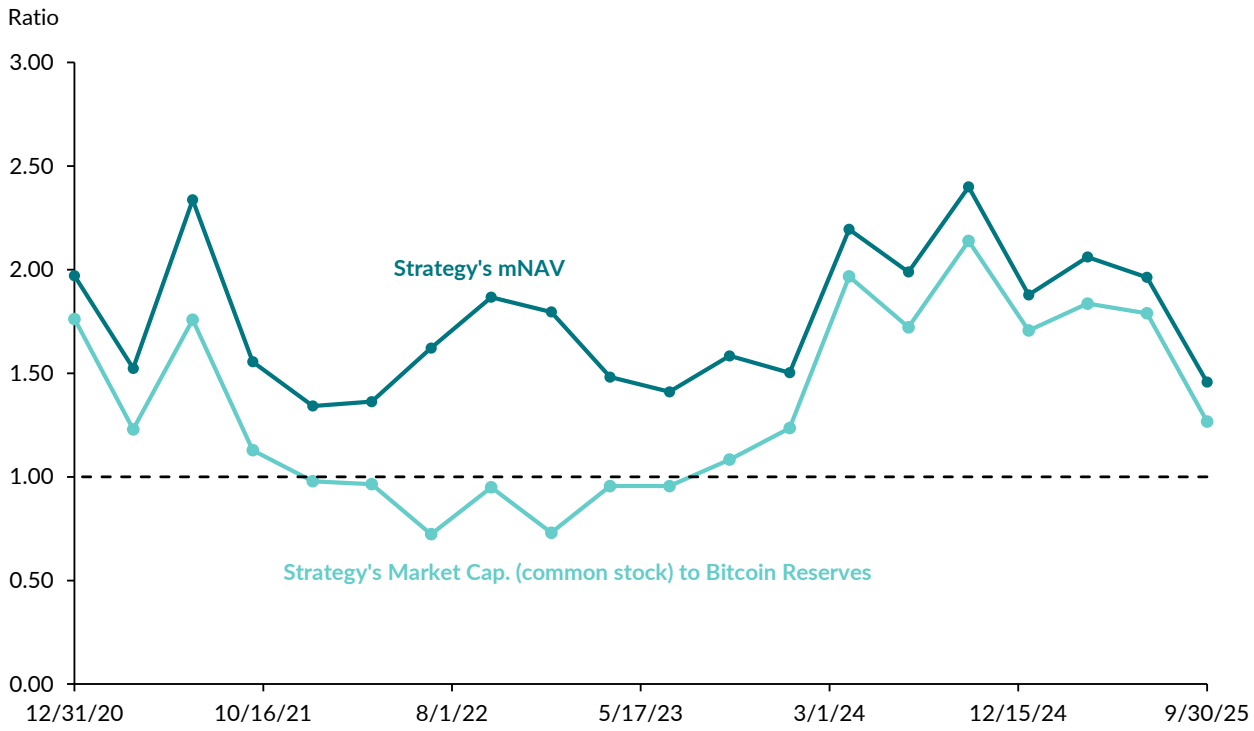
The mNAV ratio informs how a DAT company can raise capital, with the threshold of 1.0 serving as a *boundary condition*. When the ratio persists above one (mNAV > 1.0), the company can raise capital to purchase Bitcoin, creating a cycle of growth in Bitcoin holdings per share. Conversely, if the ratio falls below one (mNAV < 1.0), new issuance becomes dilutive per share.

As a company increases its leverage—typically via debt and convertible issuance—its equity-to-reserves ratio (i.e., Market Capitalization / Digital Asset Holdings) naturally compresses and can fall below 1.0 even while the enterprise as a whole (i.e., taking into account debt, preferred stock, and cash), reflected by the mNAV, trades at a premium.

This divergence is illustrated in Figure 4. The light blue line (Equity-to-Reserves) is below the darker blue line (mNAV) throughout the period. Importantly, the added leverage makes the equity a levered residual claim on the Bitcoin reserves, increasing its beta and volatility compared to the underlying asset—Bitcoin itself.[9] While Strategy Inc. historically has maintained an mNAV above one, oscillating between 1.3 and 2.5, it recently moved closer to 1.0.[10]

Should the mNAV ratio drop below 1.0, the optimal capital allocation strategy may shift. In a discount environment, a beneficial action for a treasury is not to accumulate assets, but rather shift to liability management or share repurchases. By retiring equity at a discount to NAV—funded either via operating cash flows or the sale of digital asset holdings—the company can monetize the discount between its share price and the spot price of the digital assets held in its treasury. This operational optionality (i.e., the ability to pivot between issuance and buybacks) can distinguish DAT companies from other vehicles, including passive trusts.

**Figure 4: Strategy Inc.'s mNAV and Equity-to-Reserves Ratio**
12/31/20–9/30/25




Source: LSEG Workspace; Strategy Inc.; CoinMarketCap

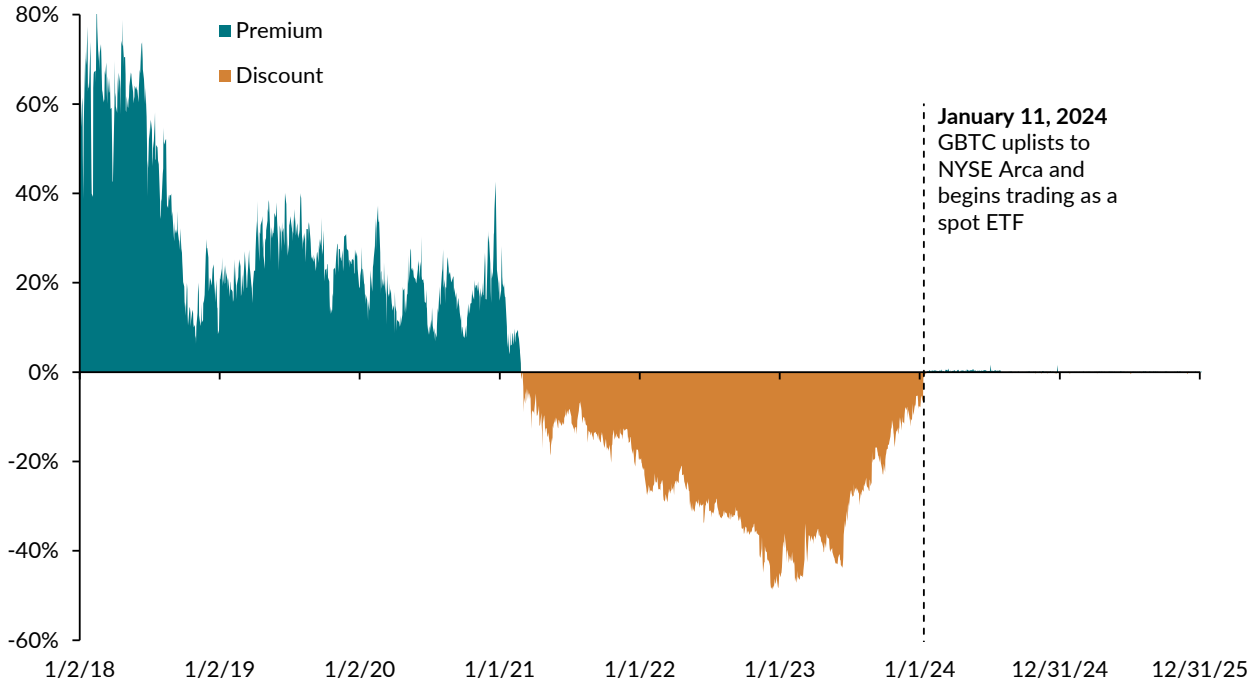
## LESSONS FROM THE GBTC TRADE

To understand why mNAV premiums in DAT companies can persist, it helps to examine a historical example: the Grayscale Bitcoin Trust (GBTC) prior to its conversion to an exchange-traded fund (ETF). GBTC functioned as a closed-end vehicle that held Bitcoin but, crucially, lacked a redemption mechanism for most of its history.

Between 2015 and early 2021, GBTC provided Bitcoin exposure without direct ownership. High interest and limited alternatives caused the trust to trade at a significant NAV premium. This pricing discrepancy enabled a leveraged arbitrage trading strategy: firms borrowed Bitcoin to create shares at NAV, then sold them on the secondary market after a lock-up period to capture the premium.[11]

By February 2021, this leveraged arbitrage strategy collapsed because the NAV premium inverted into a discount (i.e., the traded market value was lower than the NAV), reaching as much as a 48% discount to NAV in late December 2022.[12] Unlike an operating company, GBTC lacked a mechanism to repurchase shares or liquidate assets due to its structure. Consequently, arbitrageurs were trapped in illiquid positions. As shown in Figure 5, this discount persisted until GBTC converted to a spot Bitcoin ETF in January 2024.[13]

**Figure 5: GBTC Premium/Discount to NAV**
1/2/18–12/31/25




Source: LSEG Workspace, U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission EDGAR Database

Note: Premium/discount is calculated as $Price/NAV - 1$. NAV is derived from Bitcoin holdings per SEC filings (Forms 10-K/10-Q) and adjusted for daily management fees (2.0% pre-January 11, 2024, and 1.5% thereafter). Bitcoin pricing is sourced from the Fidelity Bitcoin Index (.FIDBTCP) at the 4:00 PM ET market close. Calculation accounts for the 10% Bitcoin-per-share reduction from the July 31, 2024, Mini Trust (BTC) spin-off to maintain continuity with adjusted price feeds. January 11, 2024, marks the conversion to a Spot ETF and NYSE Arca uplisting. *See* Grayscale Bitcoin Trust, Form 8-K, filed January 12, 2024 (Accession No. 0000950170-24-004265).

## CONCLUSION

DATs continue to be an emerging area and represent a shift in the use of treasuries for some companies. As evidenced by the mention of "Digital Asset Treasury" in 8-K filings, the rise of DATs began to accelerate notably in mid-2025. As the digital asset ecosystem continually evolves, the expansion of DATs merits analysis as equity markets and digital assets intermingle.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHORS

**Angelo Chan** is a managing director at 8C Management. Mr. Chan is a financial markets expert specializing in both digital assets and traditional financial instruments. He has extensive expertise in matters involving complex financial instruments and financing structures related to disputes, regulatory challenges, fraud investigations, and bankruptcies.

**Nicole M. Moran** is a vice president at Cornerstone Research. Dr. Moran specializes in commodity futures and options markets. She coheads Cornerstone Research's FinTech, blockchain, and cryptocurrency practice. Dr. Moran has extensive expertise in derivative markets, for both exchange-traded and over-the-counter products that involve allegations of market manipulation and antitrust.

**Pawel Bednarek** is an associate at Cornerstone Research. Dr. Bednarek provides financial and economic analysis for commercial litigation and regulatory proceedings. He specializes in matters involving FinTech, blockchain, and cryptocurrency, as well as issues related to market manipulation and market microstructure.

## ENDNOTES

1 See Figure 1. While the concept of allocating corporate funds to purchase cryptocurrencies was popularized by MicroStrategy in 2020, BTCS Inc. filed the first 8-K explicitly using the term "Digital Asset Treasury" on February 18, 2021.

2 "MicroStrategy Adopts Bitcoin as Primary Treasury Reserve Asset," Exhibit 99.1, August 11, 2020, https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1050446/000119312520215604/d921849dex991.htm. *See also* MicroStrategy Incorporated, Form 8-K, filed September 11, 2020, https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1050446/000119312520244732/d937119d8k.htm ("On September 11, 2020, the Board of Directors (the 'Board') of MicroStrategy Incorporated (the 'Company') adopted a new Treasury Reserve Policy (the 'Policy') that updated the Company's treasury management and capital allocation strategies. Under the new Policy, treasury reserve assets will consist of (i) cash, cash equivalents, and short-term investments ('Cash Assets') held by the Company that exceed working capital needs and (ii) bitcoin held by the Company, with bitcoin serving as the primary treasury reserve asset on an ongoing basis, subject to market conditions and anticipated needs of the business for Cash Assets, including future potential share repurchase activity. As a result of this new Policy, the Company's holdings of bitcoin may increase beyond the $250 million investment that the Company disclosed on August 11, 2020.").

3 *See* "MARA Purchases $100 Million of Bitcoin," *MARA*, July 25, 2024, https://ir.mara.com/news-events/press-releases/detail/1363/mara-purchases-100-million-of-bitcoin ("MARA . . . today announced that it has purchased $100 million of bitcoin and currently holds over 20,000 BTC on its balance sheet. Furthermore, effective immediately, MARA will adopt a full HODL [(a strategy of holding crypto assets long-term, rather than selling; derived from "Hold On for Dear Life")] approach towards its bitcoin treasury policy, retaining all bitcoin mined in its operations, and will periodically make strategic open market purchases. 'Adopting a full HODL strategy reflects our confidence in the long-term value of bitcoin,' said Fred Thiel, MARA's chairman and CEO. 'We believe bitcoin is the world's best treasury reserve asset and support the idea of sovereign wealth funds holding it. We encourage governments and corporations to all hold bitcoin as a reserve asset.'"). *See also* "Bitcoin Miner MARA Starts Massive $2B Stock Sale Plan to Buy More BTC," *CoinDesk*, March 29, 2025, https://www.coindesk.com/markets/2025/03/29/bitcoin-miner-mara-starts-massive-usd2b-at-the-market-stock-sale-plan-to-buy-more-btc ("Bitcoin mining company MARA Holdings (MARA) is launching a fresh $2 billion stock

offering to buy more bitcoin, continuing its plan of buying BTC in the open market through capital raise while sticking to its 'Hodl' strategy.").

4 *See, e.g.*, Sneha Solanki, "Understanding Form 8-K," *Thomson Reuters*, https://legal.thomsonreuters.com/blog/understanding-form-8-k/.

5 The start of this trend coincides with the issuance of FASB ASU 2023-08 in December 2023. Prior to this standard, digital assets were classified as "indefinite-lived intangible assets" (under ASC 350), requiring companies to book permanent impairment charges for any price drop while prohibiting the recognition of gains until the asset was sold. The new standard mandates Fair Value accounting, requiring companies to mark their digital asset holdings to market price at the end of each reporting period. *See* "Intangibles—Goodwill and Other—Crypto Assets (Subtopic 350-60)," *FASB*, p. 4, https://www.fasb.org/page/ShowPdf?path=ASU%202023-08.pdf. *See also* "8.4 Digital assets," *PwC*, September 15, 2025, https://viewpoint.pwc.com/dt/us/en/pwc/accounting_guides/business_combination/business_combination__28_US/chapter_8_accounting_US/85_financial_stateme_US.html.

6 Based on BitcoinTreasuries.net data as of March 6, 2026. *See* "Publicly Traded Bitcoin Treasury Companies," *BitcoinTreasuries.net*, https://bitcointreasuries.net/.

7 *See, e.g.*, "Michael Saylor's Bitcoin Flywheel Explained," *Strategic Intelligence*, February 12, 2025, https://finance.yahoo.com/news/michael-saylor-bitcoin-flywheel-explained-170526683.html ("[B]ecause of MicroStrategy's premium to NAV, when it raises money via ATM to buy more Bitcoin, the Bitcoin-per-share actually increases. The generated 'Bitcoin yield' justifies its premium to investors and creates a positive feedback loop. MicroStrategy achieved a Bitcoin yield of 74% across 2024 and is targeting a minimum of 15% for 2025. Put concisely by Michael Saylor on CNBC: 'We sold $1.5 billion worth of stock backed by $500 million worth of Bitcoin. We bought back $1.5 billion of Bitcoin. We captured nearly a billion-dollar gain in the arbitrage.'").

8 Strategy Inc. defines mNAV as the "[m]ultiple of the BTC Reserve, calculated by dividing Enterprise Value by the BTC Reserve." *See* "MSTR," *Strategy Inc.*, https://www.strategy.com/.

9 See, e.g., "What Is Strategy (MSTR)? Bitcoin's Largest Corporate Investor," *CoinGecko*, October 14, 2025, https://www.coingecko.com/learn/what-is-strategy-mstr-microstrategy-bitcoin-corporate-holder ("Strategy's stock price tends to follow Bitcoin's price trend very closely, but with increased volatility. . . . Compared to BTC, MSTR tends to have a beta of ~2. 'Beta' measures how volatile a stock is compared to the overall market or another asset. So if Bitcoin goes up 10%, the price of MSTR tends to go up by 20% (2x of BTC because it has a beta of 2).").

10 Strategy Inc. self-reported an mNAV of 1.03 on January 5, 2026. *See* "MSTR," *Strategy Inc.*, https://www.strategy.com/.

11 *See, e.g.*, Katie Greifeld and Vildana Hajric, "Bitcoin's Biggest Trade Goes From Hero Creator to Widow Maker," *Bloomberg*, December 20, 2022, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-12-20/grayscale-gbtc-arbitrage-trade-goes-from-hero-creator-to-widow-maker.

12 Ben Strack, "Grayscale Trust Discounts Keep Shrinking — Here's Why," *Blockworks*, November 10, 2023, https://blockworks.co/news/grayscale-gbtc-ethe-discounts.

13 Katie Greifeld, "End of An Era: Grayscale's Once Double-Digit Bitcoin Fund Discount Evaporates," *Bloomberg*, February 2, 2024, https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2024-02-02/grayscale-s-gbtc-once-double-digit-bitcoin-fund-discount-has-closed-etf.