Want bitcoin exposure? You do not need a second job managing it

Veröffentlicht am 23. August 2026

Dovile Silenskyte
Director, Digital Assets Research

Wichtige Erkenntnisse

- Direct bitcoin ownership transfers custody, cybersecurity and protocol monitoring responsibilities to the investor, creating operational risks that do not enhance the asset's expected return or diversification benefits.
- Recent hardware wallet incidents highlight that self-custody does not eliminate custody risk, while forks and protocol upgrades can add complex decisions around security, liquidity, tax and competing networks.
- For investors seeking bitcoin exposure without the operational burden, WisdomTree Physical Bitcoin ETP (BTCW) offers a professionally managed structure that separates the portfolio allocation decision from the mechanics of custody and navigating protocol changes.

Bitcoin is an investment. Managing private keys, hardware wallets and protocol upgrades does not have to become a second job. That distinction matters more as bitcoin moves deeper into institutional portfolios.

The case for self-custody is well understood. Bitcoin lets investors own an asset without relying on a bank, broker or other intermediary. For some users, that sovereignty is the entire point. Fair enough. However, investors should separate ideology from portfolio construction.

If the objective is exposure to bitcoin's investment characteristics, does an investor really need to become their own custodian, cybersecurity team and protocol specialist? For most, the answer is no. WisdomTree Physical Bitcoin ETP (BTCW) offers a cleaner division of labour: the investor makes the allocation decision, specialists handle the operational plumbing.

Owning bitcoin directly means owning the operational headache

Buying bitcoin is easy. Holding it securely for years is harder. Direct ownership gives the investor an extraordinary list of responsibilities:

- Generate and store private keys.
- Protect recovery phrases.
- Maintain hardware and firmware.

- Execute transactions correctly.
- Build inheritance procedures.
- Monitor protocol developments.

Make a mistake and there is no helpdesk, no administrator, no central authority to fix it. That is sovereignty. It is also a massive operational risk that investor is not being compensated for taking.

Bitcoin evolves, and investors then have decisions to make

Bitcoin is resistant to change by design, but not immune to it. Soft forks introduce backward-compatible upgrades, yet can still require updates across wallets, infrastructure and other supporting systems. Hard forks are more disruptive. If the blockchain splits, investors may find themselves holding economic rights across multiple competing networks.

That raises immediate questions:

- Which chain do you support?
- Is the new asset secure?
- Does it have liquidity?
- Can it be claimed safely?
- Hold or sell?
- What are tax, custody and operational consequences?

Bitcoin's history offers plenty of examples, and August 2026 ones are shown in the table below.

Figure 1: Bitcoin protocol changes can create decisions for self-custody investors

Protocol change	What happened	Decisions for self-custody investors
Soft fork: BIP 110	Proposed one-year limit on arbitrary data embedding. Support remained well below the required threshold and the minority chain stalled after two blocks.	• Software: which node implementation to run. • Transactions: whether to transact while competing chains exist. • Security: without replay protection, transactions may be valid on both chains.

Hard fork: eCash	Drivechain-enabled fork. Bitcoin holders receive corresponding eCash while retaining their bitcoin.	• Claim: claim or ignore the forked asset? • Portfolio: hold or sell? • Operations: is there wallet support and sufficient liquidity? • Tax: what are the potential tax consequences?

Source: WisdomTree. 19 August 2026.

Inside an exchange-traded product (ETP), much of this analysis sits with the issuer, custodian and specialist providers, who assess protocol changes and apply the product's documented fork policy. Investors should never assume every forked asset will be distributed or sold as policies differ by product and geography. That is the point of a professional wrapper: rules are set in advance and responsibilities are allocated.

“Not your keys, not your coins” cuts both ways

Finish the sentence: your keys, your problem. Self-custody does not eliminate risk; it relocates it onto the investor. Lose the recovery phrase and bitcoin may be gone permanently. Expose the key and it disappears. Mishandle a transaction and there is no cancellation process.

Hardware wallets narrow certain attack surfaces. They are not magic boxes.

Figure 2: Self-custody can expose investors to multiple forms of security risk

Incident	What failed?	Investor impact	Risks illustrated
Coldcard firmware flaw, July – August 2026	A 2021 build error made wallet seeds predictable.	Nearly US $120m of bitcoin stolen from more than 5,000 addresses.	Asset security: a technical vulnerability can compromise self-custodied bitcoin even when the investor uses dedicated hardware.
Trezor shipping partner breach, August 2026	A fulfilment provider was compromised; private keys were not compromised.	Details of nearly 14,000 customers exposed, creating phishing, fraud and physical-security risks.	Personal security: custody infrastructure can expose investors even without compromising their bitcoin keys.

Source: WisdomTree. 19 August 2026.

Note the above shown two security incidents. No private key at Trezor was compromised, yet linking names and home addresses to bitcoin ownership creates phishing, fraud and physical-security risk. And the Coldcard flaw sat undetected for five years.

Self-custody removes the custodian. It does not remove custody risk.

Bitcoin can be innovative. The implementation can be boring

An investment committee weighing a 1%, 3% or 5% allocation is asking whether bitcoin improves portfolio outcomes, not whether it should build an in-house crypto custody and security operation.

Hardware maintenance does not raise bitcoin's expected return. Memorising recovery procedures does not improve diversification. Spending a weekend analysing a fork does not generate alpha. These are operational jobs, not investment decisions. A well-structured, physically backed Bitcoin ETP lets investors hand them to people paid to do them.

Important Information

Marketing communications issued in the European Economic Area ("EEA") & Switzerland: This document has been issued and approved by WisdomTree Ireland Limited, which is authorised and regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland.

Marketing communications issued injurisdictions outside of the EEA, except Switzerland: This document has been issued and approved by WisdomTree UK Limited or Atlantic House Investments Limited, which are both authorised and regulated by the United Kingdom Financial Conduct Authority.

WisdomTree Ireland Limited, WisdomTree UK Limited and Atlantic House Investments Limited are referred to as "WisdomTree" (as applicable) throughout. Our Conflicts of Interest Policy and Inventory are available on request.

This marketing communication is intended for all investors; however, the WisdomTree products described in this document and related materials may be restricted in certain jurisdictions and may only be available to particular categories of investors in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Where a product is not authorised or its distribution is restricted in your jurisdiction, it is the responsibility of any person or entity in possession of this information to inform themselves of, and comply with, all relevant restrictions. Before making any investment, investors should seek appropriate legal, regulatory, tax and investment advice to assess the suitability and implications of investing in these products. Information about WisdomTree products is available at wisdomtree.eu. WisdomTree does not offer investment advice tailored to individual circumstances. Past performance is not a reliable indicator of future performance. Any historical performance included in this document may be based on back testing. Back testing is the process of evaluating an investment strategy by applying it to historical data to simulate what the performance of such strategy would have been. Back tested performance is purely hypothetical and is provided in this document solely for informational purposes. Back tested data does not represent actual performance and should not be interpreted as an indication of actual or future performance. The value of any investment may be affected by exchange rate movements. Any decision to invest should be based on the information contained in the appropriate prospectus and after seeking independent investment, tax and legal advice. The content of this document does not constitute investment advice nor an offer for sale nor a solicitation of an offer to buy any product or make any investment.

This marketing communication should be read in conjunction with the relevant WisdomTree products' Prospectus, Key Investor Information Document ("KIID"), Key Information Document ("PRIIPS KID") as relevant. In particular, investors should carefully read the specific risks detailed under the section entitled 'Risk and Reward Profile' in the KIID, 'What are the risks and what could I get in return?' in PRIIPs KID and under the section entitled 'Risk Factors' in the Prospectus of the Issuer for further details of risks associated with an investment in the product(s) detailed herein. Further information regarding the WisdomTree exchange-traded product(s) detailed herein, such as a detailed list of the underlying investments and the indicative net asset value, can be obtained by visiting the WisdomTree website at (www.wisdomtree.eu).

An investment in WisdomTree exchange-traded products ("ETPs") is dependent on the performance of the underlying index, less costs, but it is not expected to match that performance precisely. An investment in WisdomTree funds is dependent on the performance of the underlying investments, less costs.

Both WisdomTree ETPs and funds involve numerous risks including among others, general market risks relating to any relevant underlying index, credit risks on the provider of index swaps utilised in ETPs, exchange rate risks, interest rate risks, inflationary risks, liquidity risks, derivatives risk and legal and regulatory risks.

The information contained in this document is not, and under no circumstances is to be construed as, an advertisement or any other step in furtherance of a public offering of shares in the United States or any province or territory thereof, where none of the issuers or their products are authorised or registered for distribution and where no prospectus of any of the issuers has been filed with any securities commission or regulatory authority. No document or information in this document should be taken, transmitted or distributed (directly or indirectly) into the United States. None of the issuers, nor any securities issued by them, have been or will be registered under the United States Securities Act of 1933 or the Investment Company Act of 1940 or qualified under any applicable state securities statutes.

This document may contain independent market commentary prepared by WisdomTree based on publicly available information. Although WisdomTree endeavours to ensure the accuracy of the content in this document, WisdomTree does not warrant or guarantee its accuracy or correctness. Any third party data providers used to source the information in this document make no warranties or representation of any kind relating to such data. Where WisdomTree has expressed its own opinions related to product or market activity, these views may change. Neither WisdomTree, nor any affiliate, nor any of their respective officers, directors, partners, or employees accepts any liability whatsoever for any direct or consequential loss arising from any use of this document or its contents.

This document may contain forward looking statements including statements regarding our belief or current expectations with regards to the performance of certain assets classes and/or sectors. Forward looking statements are subject to certain risks, uncertainties and assumptions. There can be no assurance that such statements will be accurate and actual results could differ materially from those anticipated in such statements. WisdomTree strongly recommends that you do not place undue reliance on these forward-looking statements.

WisdomTree Issuer X Limited

The products discussed in this document are issued by WisdomTree Issuer X Limited (the "Issuer"). Investors should read the prospectus of the Issuer before investing and should refer to the section of the prospectus entitled "Risk Factors" for further details of risks associated with an investment in the securities offered by the Issuer.

Securities issued by the Issuer are direct, limited recourse obligations of the Issuer alone and are not obligations of or guaranteed by any of Swissquote Bank Ltd ("Swissquote"), Coinbase Custody Trust Company LLC ("Coinbase"), BitGo Trust Company, Inc ("BitGo") any of their affiliates or anyone else or any of their affiliates. Each of Swissquote, Coinbase and BitGo disclaims all and any liability whether arising in tort, contract or otherwise which it might have in respect of this document or its contents otherwise arising in connection herewith.

The product discussed in this document is an unregulated ETP, approved to trade on certain regulated exchanges within Europe and the UK. Cryptocurrencies are a high-risk investment and may not be suitable for all types of investors. Prospective investors should be aware that the price of the underlying asset(s) by which the securities are secured can demonstrate higher volatility than other asset classes and consequently the value of the securities may be extremely volatile. You must ensure that the nature, complexity and risks associated with cryptocurrencies are suitable for your objectives in light of your circumstances and financial position.

Don't invest unless you're prepared to lose all the money you invest. This is a high-risk investment and you should not expect to be protected if something goes wrong.

Take 2 mins to learn more

The digital assets underlying WisdomTree's exchange traded products are held using secure, institutional-grade custody solutions that prevent unauthorised access or movement. Digital assets are primarily stored offline in cold wallets and their transfer requires authorisation from multiple independent parties with a redundancy of locations, communication methods and authentication devices.

Our operational processes are regularly updated to protect against evolving threats and are kept confidential for security reasons.

BTCW Index Disclaimer

COINDESK® and CoinDesk Bitcoin Benchmark London Settlement Rate (the “Index”) are trade or service marks of CoinDesk Indices, Inc. (“CDI”), the administrator of the Index, and/or its licensors. CDI or CDI's licensors own all proprietary rights in the Index.

CDI is not affiliated with WisdomTree Issuer X Limited (the “Issuer”) and does not approve, endorse, review, or recommend WisdomTree Physical Bitcoin (the “Product”). CDI does not guarantee the timeliness, accurateness, or completeness of any data or information relating to the Index and shall not be liable in any way to the Issuer, investors in or holders of the Product or other third parties in respect of the use or accuracy of the Index or any data included therein.

For Investors in Switzerland:

This document constitutes an advertisement of the financial product(s) mentioned herein.

The prospectus (in English only), a summary of the WIXL prospectus (in German, French and Italian) and the key investor information documents (KID) (in German, French and Italian) are available from WisdomTree’s website: https://www.wisdomtree.eu/en-ch/resource-library/prospectus-and-regulatory-reports

Monaco: This communication is only intended for duly registered banks and/or licensed portfolio management companies in Monaco. This communication must not be sent to the public in Monaco.

For investors in Israel:

Offering materials for the offering of the securities have not been filed with or approved or disapproved by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or any other state or federal regulatory authority, nor has any such regulatory authority passed upon or endorsed the merits of this offering or passed upon the accuracy or completeness of any offering materials. Any representation to the contrary is unlawful. The products mentioned herein have not been approved by the Israel Securities Authority and will only be distributed to Israeli residents in a manner that will not constitute “an offer to the public” under sections 15 and 15a of the Israel Securities Law, 5728-1968 (“the Securities Law”) or section 25 of the Joint Investment Trusts Law, 5754-1994 (“the Joint Investment Trusts Law “), as applicable. The products are being offered to a limited number of investors (35 investors or fewer during any given 12 month period) and/or those categories of investors listed in the First Addendum (“the Addendum”) to the Securities Law, “Sophisticated Investors”) who in each case have provided written confirmation that they qualify as Sophisticated Investors, and that they are aware of the consequences of such designation and agree thereto; in all cases under circumstances that will fall within the private placement or other exemptions of the Joint Investment Trusts Law, the Securities Law and any applicable guidelines, pronouncements or rulings issued from time to time by the Israel Securities Authority.

This prospectus or this document may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, nor be furnished to any other person other than those to whom copies have been sent. Any offeree who purchases a product is purchasing such product for its own benefit and account and not with the aim or intention of distributing or offering such product to other parties (other than, in the case of an offeree which is a Sophisticated

Investor by virtue of it being a banking corporation, portfolio manager or member of the Tel-Aviv Stock Exchange, as defined in the Addendum, where such offeree is purchasing a product for another party which is a Sophisticated Investor).

Nothing in this document should be considered investment advice or investment marketing as defined in the Regulation of Investment Counselling, Investment Marketing and Portfolio Management Law, 5755-1995. Investors are encouraged to seek competent investment counselling from a locally licensed investment counsel prior to making the investment. A recipient of this document may be required to provide confirmation that it is a Sophisticated Investor purchasing a product for its own account or, where applicable, for other Sophisticated Investors.