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Programmanus av Steve Hankey

ALANNA LESLIE: Hi, I'm Alanna Leslie and welcome to Newsreel World...

Today we're off to: Kenya, Russia and Trinidad & Tobago...

But first...

NFTs, or Non-Fungible Tokens, are digital only assets, such as images or videos, that come with a token that proves ownership.

Over 44 billion dollars were invested into NFTs via cryptocurrencies last year, according to the blockchain data company Chain-alysis.

But there are many critics highlighting the huge instability of their value as well as their environmental impact.

To tell us more, Emily Finch has this report...

Emily Finch: There's no doubt that NFTs are big business - and they're getting bigger. But how much do people here on the streets of London know about them?

Isaac Green: "I know they are non-fungible tokens, like that's their name but...I guess it's kind of like digital art?"

Isabel Lineman: "So it's this strange thing of owning something, but it's also available to everyone."

William Deane: “I think it's got a code or something inside it, and it means that you're the only person who can own that thing.”

Emily Finch: To find out a little more, I've been speaking to tech journalist Hussein Kesvani. So what exactly is an NFT?

Hussein Kesvani: It's an image or a digital symbol, which you'll usually see online, and will kind of have like a code attached to it. And that code will be like a uniquely generated code. So when people talk about the NFT, they're not talking about the image or just the image, they're also talking about that unique code as well.

Emily Finch: So the unique digital code is the most important part of an NFT, and that's stored, along with information on who owns it - on a blockchain.

A blockchain is described as a 'ledger', a digital book where account transactions are recorded. When you buy an NFT, your ownership is recorded in this ledger, making the image yours.

But why would someone buy an NFT over buying a piece of artwork that you can hang at home? Hussein again.

Hussein Kesvani: So on the internet, things can be copied very quickly, things can be shared very quickly. They can be downloaded very quickly. The idea of like owning one thing and no one else can have it, is really valuable and like desirable for some people.

Emily Finch: Hussein believes that NFTs are popular because they allow people to own something on the internet that won't disappear in a few years. But it has its critics.

Some people believe that it's a bubble which could burst as the value of cryptocurrencies are unstable and people are spending vast sums on an image which can be easily replicated.

There are also worries that NFTs are harmful to the environment.

Hussein Kesvani: That strip of code next to an image is generated by a lot of computers that require a lot of energy in order to function and as they require more energy obviously this takes more toll on the environment in terms of carbon emissions.

Emily Finch: I've also been speaking to 12-year-old Benjamin Ahmed from London who's behind a popular collection of NFTs.

Benjamin Ahmed: My collection is called Weird Whales, and it consists of 3,350 pixel whales mimicking the famous CryptoPunks collection, and they come in four different formats: Normal, Zombie, Ape and Alien. The collection cost around \$300 to build and so far has traded around five million dollars.

Emily Finch: So how do you respond to critics of NFTs?

Benjamin Ahmed: At the start of every major shift or revolution, there's always critics. Over the next few years, we'll start to see the real use-cases of NFTs and they're not just pictures, they can be passports, they can be airline tickets. They can be anything digital. And that's what makes NFTs great.

Emily Finch: I'm Emily Finch, reporting from London, for Newsreel World.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Emily

ALANNA LESLIE: Five mountain bongos have been released into a sanctuary in Kenya, in a move that's seen as a milestone in the fight for the animals' survival.

The chestnut-coloured mountain bongo is one of the largest forest antelopes in the world and is considered critically endangered. A recent wildlife census in Kenya counted just 96 of them remaining in the wild.

The five animals released into the Mawingu mountain bongo sanctuary are descendants of a herd from the US and are part of a global breeding programme to try and ensure the bongo's survival.

ALANNA LESLIE: The international hacktivist group Anonymous has declared cyber-war on Russia in retaliation for its invasion of Ukraine.

The group has launched a series of cyber-attacks since the invasion in February. On one occasion it hacked into a number of streaming services and TV News channels in Russia to broadcast footage of the conflict.

Anonymous says it has also remotely accessed several printers in Russia to print out thousands of “anti-propaganda” messages saying that Putin and the Kremlin are lying about the war.

ALANNA LESLIE: That’s Hakuna Matata by American Lofi artist Purrple Cat.

It’s from an album “curated” by one of Disney’s original characters: Minnie Mouse.

Low-fidelity music, or lo-fi, is recorded with intentional imperfections like misplayed notes or environmental noises like turning pages or raindrops.

It’s mainly instrumental and its slow, dream-like pace supposedly triggers the parts of the brain that help with focus.

ALANNA LESLIE: A scheme on the Caribbean island of Trinidad is using surfing as a means of offering young people with less access to opportunities in life the chance to be mentored and have some relief from difficult home environments.

Sterling Johnson visited the programme, called Waves for Hope, and has this report...

We should say that it was very windy on the day Sterling visited

Sterling Henderson: In 2021 the twin island republic of Trinidad & Tobago located at the southern end of the Caribbean archipelago, saw 448 homicides in a population of 1.4 million people.

Being mere miles off the South American Coast, it is a trans-shipment point for guns and drugs.

Fishing villages are particularly vulnerable as they act as informal points of entry

Waves for Hope was founded in the small, seaside fishing village of Balandra on the North East coast of Trinidad by husband and wife team Chris Dennis and Swiss born Manuela Giger.

Chris, a retired champion professional surfer says the ocean plays a big part in what they do.

Chris Dennis: Learning to ride waves instead of learning to fight them. It's kind of like the challenges you would have in your life. Sometimes you have to learn to ride them rather than trying to fight up with them all the time.

Sterling Henderson: Manuela says the program is the first of its kind in the Caribbean:

Manuela: Surf therapy is practised all over the world. Here in Trinidad, even in the Caribbean, we are the first and only one so far.

We got our training in South Africa. In South Africa there's an organisation called Race for Change and they're kinda the leaders in surf therapy.

Sterling Henderson: Manuela says there are other services they offer to the local community.

Manuela: Homework support for like the last two years with children from the community. Now that school is online, I make sure those children have devices, they know how to use them.

Sterling Henderson: Two surfers attending the programme recently won two of the four scholarships awarded to Trinidad & Tobago by the International Surfing Association. The scholarship provides financial support to the winners with awards ranging from 100 to 1,000 US dollars for each participant.

Here's Keon talking about why he thinks he won his scholarship and what he's going to do with the money:

Vox: Well, I'm actually going to fix my broken tablets. I might get some, couple of new boards.

Sterling Henderson: And Manuela says there is proof surf therapy works to make the youth feel happier and boost their emotional support.

Manuela: When we start the programme, we do a... we run a survey with each participant like a pre-test, as we call it.

And when we finish the programme, we run the same survey and then we have data to compare and the whole survey is around their mental health, their coping skills, do they feel connected to people. Do they feel like they have somebody to talk to, do they feel they have social support and all of that.

So with those data that we collect we run like a whole evaluation report. And so far, we've seen an improvement in their overall well-being - from like the beginning and then six months after. So we could really say we have numbers supporting that what we do actually works.

Sterling Henderson: Reporting for Newsreel World from the twin island republic of Trinidad & Tobago, I am Sterling Henderson.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Sterling. That's all from me today. Speak to you soon, bye!