

## # Who You Gno – On the Record with Dongwon Shin

\*Who You Gno is intended to shine a light on the builders, contributors, and generally brilliant humans behind the tech. We're excited to kick off this series with Dongwon Shin, the founder of one of Gno.land's longest-contributing teams, Onbloc.\*

Dongwon Shin is co-founder and CEO of [Onbloc](https://onbloc.xyz/), a South Korea-based blockchain software company that builds key infrastructure and tooling for Gno.land. On their journey with Gno since late 2021, Dongwon and his team are among our most active gnomes embodying the values of the project: hardworking, passionate, honest, and humble, to name a few. You may already be familiar with Onbloc's projects Adena, Gnoscans, and Gnoswap. In this interview, we'll get the latest updates on these, hear about Dongwon the person, and what motivates him to be a gnome. Check it out.

### ## Dongwon's life before coding

It's a cold November morning in Seoul, and Dongwon is in the office early after sleeping just a few hours. Speaking to him from Dubai, where "cool" is 30 °C, it's -1 °C in Korea. "I hope you're keeping warm," I smile, "Yeah," he laughs, "it's not too bad." Dongwon's been in the industry since 2015 when web3 was still called "crypto," ICOs were selling snake oil, and his compatriots were busy paying above the market price for bitcoin in a phenomenon called the "Kimchi premium."

At the time, he was traveling the world as a professional e-sports gamer which saw him leaving Korea and living in San Francisco and L.A. for several years. "I had lots of tournaments to compete in, so I had to travel to many other countries," he says, "while traveling, I learned about other cultures and people, and new experiences. It was really eye-opening, you know, it really helped make me who I am today."

And who is Dongwon today? Ambitious, driven, and one of the kindest, most genuine people you could ever meet. "I like challenges, and I'm very competitive," he says. "I can't just do regular jobs. I get bored quickly, so I need to find something very competitive and hard that makes me stressed." I point out that he's in the right place, and he laughs. He explains that he used to spend an entire week, sometimes two, learning a game before a tournament, almost around the clock. "I had to put everything I have into winning that game, right?" He views working in web3 the same way.

## ## The intersection between e-gaming and blockchain

Dongwon is clearly comfortable on the cutting edge in emerging industries that “are often looked down on,” like e-gaming and crypto. He takes great satisfaction in how they’ve both grown. “My parents were saying, “Just go study,” while I was playing games, but e-sports has grown a lot. Right now, the industry is really big, and it’s kind of the same with crypto.” He adds, “I like getting in early when other people are not interested and finding an opportunity there.”

When looking to retire as a professional gamer, he found his home right away in web3, working with a blockchain consultant and the sports and entertainment-focused Chiliz project, before launching his own blockchain consulting and development firm. “I didn’t think I was going to be just a regular employee for a big company. So I wanted to start my own business,” he says.

## ## Getting to Gno... Gno.land

How did Dongwon hear about Gno.land? “My co-founder, Peter, and I were long-time followers of the Cosmos ecosystem, and we found out that Jae was working on a new project called Gno.land in late 2021. We really liked the vision behind Gno.land, why he started, and what he wants to achieve. We value transparency, fairness, and censorship resistance, so we read all the documentation and his initial code base and decided we should be part of his new initiative. We started Onbloc in early 2022.”

Dongwon didn’t know Jae personally, but he felt strongly aligned with his vision and what Gno.land aims to achieve. Also, his reputation as the founder of Tendermint and Cosmos preceded him. Dongwon’s co-founder, Peter, was also working on a project called Lunagram, a Cosmos wallet integrated with Telegram. Peter had fond memories of Jae, being very supportive of experimental projects, including his own, in the early days of Cosmos.

## ## Building tools... Adena, Gnoscan, Gnoswap

Onbloc has since become Gno.land’s most prolific contributor, launching the [Gnoscan](<https://gnoscan.io/>) block explorer and the [Adena](<https://adena.app/>) wallet, as well as creating tutorials and blogs to help onboard developers to Gno, and creating Gno.land’s first AMM DEX Gnoswap, the beta version of which is estimated for December this year. “Currently, the team is focused on developing Gnoswap, integrating the realms and APIs with the interface, enhancing the swap function and liquidity pools, and some additional features. We expect to launch the beta in about a month, so we’re quite excited!”

As for Adena, the defacto Gno.land wallet, “It’s already production-ready, but we want to improve our UX, and UI to provide more secure ways of using a web3 wallet.” To achieve this, Onbloc is adding a feature called Air-Gap which allows the wallet to be used in an offline environment, without the user needing to import their keys to Adena. “They can just use Adena as a broadcaster,” Dongwon explains. “I think this kind of feature is needed for enhancing security and educating people to use noncustodial products in a secure way.”

Onbloc is also a [Q4 2023 grantee](<https://test3.gno.land/r/gnoland/blog:p/funding-program-23q3>) and will develop core Gno.land infrastructure in preparation for mainnet. “We are working on three key features,” Dongwon explains. “The first is contract interaction. So it’s a way for a realm to interact with other realms. The second is porting essential Go packages to Gno, and the third is a multi-node testnet.” All in addition to Onbloc’s continued efforts on Gnoswap, Gnoscans, and Adena. “You’re keeping busy, then?” I ask. “All our hands are full now,” he laughs.

I ask what he does in his free time and – in fact – whether he has any. “Not much,” he jokes, “but I like spending time with my son and playing board games together. He’s seven years old, and we are like friends.” Dongwon also likes to unwind by reading books when his son is asleep. One of his favorites is *\*The Secret\**; he was “really inspired by the concept” when he was younger. I ask if he sees it working in his daily life and whether he believes he manifests what he wants into existence, “Definitely,” he replies without hesitation.

## ## Dongwon’s conviction in Gno.land

Not only is Dongwon working night and day, but he has bootstrapped his team from his own pocket to go all in on Gno.land. What makes his conviction so strong? “I truly believe that the Gno.land blockchain is the next generation of the blockchain industry. Gno.land is trying to invite web2 developers into web3 and providing all these Gopher developer-friendly tools so they don’t need to learn a new language to get into the ecosystem. GnoVM, Tendermint2, everything is so transparent and simple.”

He believes Gno.land will be “one of the greatest experiments in the crypto industry” thanks to its fair rewards and contribution-based governance. “I’m really excited about this initiative, and all our team members are well-aligned to support this vision. We want to do our part to achieve the success of Gno.land.”

I thank him for his time and ask if there's anything he would like to add. He pauses for a moment and then says, "If you're building a dApp or looking for a new opportunity in a new ecosystem, I think this is your chance. I hope to see great developers and teams getting into Gno.land. Let's make this ecosystem great together."

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