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Top Skills

University Lecturing

Guest Lecturing

Social Accountability

Certifications

Banking license (de novo)

System Operator Certification (SOC)

Global Talent endorsement (signed by co-founders and execs from DEEL, CurrencyCloud, Rails, etc)

Honors-Awards

Multiple International FinTech Awards

Multiple International Venture Capital Awards

Global Talent recognition



Slava Solodkiy

AI I Founder & CEO / Chief Product Officer
London, England, United Kingdom



Summary

Slava Solodkiy is a seasoned fintech and crypto entrepreneur with 12+ years of leadership in digital banking and product strategy, and 5+ years at the forefront of blockchain/crypto innovation.

A distinguished fintech founder, investor, and published author with unique, first-hand experience in building, licensing, and operating a regulated international bank. Possesses deep expertise in the architecture of digital banking, cross-border payments, AML/sanctions compliance, and digital identity systems. Actively engaged with global regulators, including the US FinCEN innovation group, and has conducted extensive research and writing on CBDCs, network states, and govtech. A trusted thought leader invited to lecture at Wharton and INSEAD, now based in the UK and focused on contributing to the design of secure, efficient, and inclusive public digital infrastructure.

He is the founder and former CEO/CPO of ArivalBank.com, an award-winning digital bank for SMEs that he built from the ground up – securing a U.S. banking license (IFE-065 in 2021) and raising over \$25#million in funding. Under his product vision, Arival scaled to serve clients in 26 countries with 60+ employees and \$150M+ AUM, earning accolades like Finovate’s “Best of Show” and Tearsheet’s “Best SMB Digital Banking” awards. Slava is also an accomplished venture investor – as Managing Partner of SREDA.VC he led 20+ fintech investments across the US, Europe, and Asia, achieving 9 successful exits (including SumUp and digital banks like Simple, Moven, Fidor) and garnering recognition as a Top 35 global fintech investor by Institutional Investor (2016–2018). With experience spanning Singapore, the USA, and now London, Slava combines product leadership, regulatory savvy, and global vision. He holds a UK Global Talent Visa and France’s Passport Talent, reflecting his international impact. Currently he is focused on frontier domains – AI infrastructure, digital identity, CBDCs, and other emerging tech – bringing a “learn-by-doing” ethos to every role. Slava’s rare blend of creative innovation and compliance expertise positions him as

an ideal leader for organizations driving the future of finance and technology.

Experience

Solodkiy.cv

head of curiosity | learning by doing
April 2023 - Present (2 years 4 months)
London Area, United Kingdom

A hands-on AI practitioner, mentor, advisor and investor, currently focused on applying generative AI to solve fundamental challenges in digital identity, govtech, and AI infrastructure. Active Research & Strategic Exploration of AI:

- Following the Arival exit (led the in-house development of a full-stack platform—encompassing core banking, middleware, and AI-driven compliance systems), a self-directed period of deep research and hands-on experimentation ("learning-by-doing") was initiated to explore the next wave of transformative technologies.

- This period was not a sabbatical, but a focused effort to build foundational knowledge in new domains.

- Current primary focus areas include: Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) & Stablecoins, Digital Identity & GovTech, AI Infrastructure & Data Centers, and Applied AI across various sectors.

- This research has culminated in the authoring of multiple books exploring the future of justice, finance, and identity in the AI era, including Rethinking Justice in the Metastate Era of AI and Following the Money: A Journey Through Shadow Banking and Power Games.

- Recent engagements: CLOS (LA-based AI platform for remote content creation, 1M+ users), Libermans Co (talent equity platform innovating VC by investing in people), URSA.ai (autonomous robotics for waste management), Exactly.ai (UK – AI for design, raised £4M), and Hive.bio (biotech/mental health startup) - in each, I often takes on an advisor or mentor role, providing product strategy guidance and global investor connections.

ANNA Money

Early investor in five digital banks
December 2022 - January 2024 (1 year 2 months)
London Area, United Kingdom

the rare distinction of investing in five early neobanks that went on to successful exits: (through Life.SREDA VC) I backed Simple (acquired by BBVA), Moven (acquired by Varo Money), Fidor Bank (acquired by BPCE),

Rocketbank (acquired by Open bank), and later on - Anna.money (UK fintech app for SMEs).

Arival Bank

Founder & CEO / Chief Product Officer

December 2017 - February 2023 (5 years 3 months)

Los Angeles, California, United States

Built a crypto-friendly digital bank for SMEs with operations in the US, Europe, and Asia. Drove the entire product strategy and delivery from scratch: built in-house all core systems (front-end, middleware, core banking, compliance).

Achieved a U.S. banking license in Puerto Rico (OCIF, NYC Fed Reserve district) – one of the first new licenses granted in 2021. Grew Arival from 3 co-founders to 60+ employees globally, attracting \$25M+ in funding over Seed to Series A rounds.

□ Product Vision & Growth: Defined the fintech bank's niche (underbanked international SMEs) and oversaw development of ArivalOS platform, integrating 3rd-party fintech services for banking, payments, etc. Scaled to 500+ business (b2b2c) clients across 26 countries with zero marketing spend, reaching \$150M+ in AUM and \$1B+ in transaction volume.

□ Regulatory & Compliance Leadership: Pioneered advanced compliance tech ("compliance-as-a-service") that impressed U.S. regulators. Invited by FinCEN to showcase Arival's compliance innovation. Co-led Arival's inclusion in FinCEN's innovation program, demonstrating regtech solutions to 20+ top regulators. Served as Board Director of Arival Bank International Corp ensuring full regulatory compliance.

□ Partnerships & Crypto Integration: Forged key partnerships (e.g. Railsbank for global accounts, Synapse & Cross River Bank in the US). Expanded services to include crypto-friendly features – integrated custody and crypto transaction infrastructure (Fireblocks, CryptoAPI, Gemini, etc.), making Arival a preferred bank for exchanges, crypto ATMs, and digital asset startups.

□ Achievements & Exit: Led Arival to win multiple industry awards: Finovate Asia "Best of Show" (2018) and Tearsheet Challenger Award (2020) for Best Digital Banking Strategy, among others (London Design Award 2018, FintechInn 2018). In 2022, Arival attracted acquisition interest from a Decacorn, and transitioned out of day-to-day roles in 2023 (retaining minority equity).

InspirAsia Accelerator

Founder & CEO

October 2015 - January 2021 (5 years 4 months)

Singapore

Launched InspirAsia, one of Southeast Asia's first fintech & blockchain startup accelerators (based in Singapore). Provided co-working, mentorship, and funding to early-stage startups:

- Ecosystem Impact: Grew into a top-ranked program in the region (ranked #1–#2 fintech accelerator in Singapore from 2015–2019). Incubated startups in payments, regtech, crypto, and AI, helping ventures like Osome (AI accounting) and DataDepot/BASIS ID (KYC/AML startup acquired by ZignSec) to launch and scale.

- Global Connectivity: Partnered with universities (INSEAD, Wharton) to host student interns and global startup exchanges. Hosted prominent mentors – e.g., Vitalik Buterin (Ethereum co-founder) engaged with startups at InspirAsia in 2016.

- Community & Recognition: Members of Singapore FinTech Association; organized major industry hackathons and workshops (including with the Monetary Authority of Singapore and global banks). Slava's accelerator efforts contributed to Singapore's rise as a fintech innovation hub, earning him a spot in EY's Top 100 FinTech ecosystem builders in Asia.

BASIS ID, now a part of ZignSec

Compliance Expert (Early investor, advisor and mentor)

December 2017 - May 2019 (1 year 6 months)

Estonia

Renowned as a compliance expert. Member of FinCEN's Innovation Council (contributing to US anti-financial-crime tech discussions). First investor/advisor in Basis ID (digital identity/KYC startup, acquired 2020) and co-founder of A.ID (compliance-as-a-service platform, acquired in 2021). These roles highlight Slava's credibility in regulated fintech – from obtaining a US bank charter to advising regtech ventures. Beyond banking, Slava has co-founded A.ID and helped (as an early investor, mentor and advisor) drive the acquisition of Basis ID by a Swedish Nasdaq-listed firm.

IBM

IBM WorldWire Project | Stellar

January 2018 - March 2019 (1 year 3 months)

Singapore

- January 3-5, 2018, London: Ilya Perekopsky and Pavel Durov re Telegram ICO (Arival's investor injected \$5m), TON.

- January 5-7, 2018, Singapore: Vitalik Buterin (Ethereum) with Han in Singapore, in Arival and InspirAsia office (cross-border settlements and Arival).

- November 12-13, 2018 - Arival invited to join IBM WW (correspondent relationships) project
- January-February, 2019: contract with IBM WW initiative, working group, brainstorming.
- March 21, 2019: I met in person in Singapore with Jed McCaleb from Stellar (ex-Ripple), co-founder, during IBM WW launch event on Money2020 Asia.
- March 22, 2019: meeting with blockchain and digital identity bestseller author David Birch (The Currency Cold War; Money in the Metaverse; Beyond Babylon, Beyond Bitcoin; Identity is the New Money), and start of our long and productive partnership and cooperation.

SumUp

Series B led-investor

August 2014 - August 2018 (4 years 1 month)

Berlin, Germany

Life.SREDA

Founder & Managing Partner

September 2012 - April 2018 (5 years 8 months)

Singapore

Founded and led SREDA.VC (Singapore), one of Asia's first fintech-focused venture capital funds. As Managing Partner, Slava steered the fund's investment strategy, deal sourcing, and portfolio management, focusing on fintech and later blockchain. Key achievements:

- Pioneering Fintech Investments: Executed 20+ early-stage deals across the US, EU, and Asia, including digital banking pioneers: Simple (USA's first neobank, acquired by BBVA), Moven (NYC, acquired by Varo), Fidor Bank (Germany, crypto-friendly bank acquired by BPCE), Rocketbank (Russia, acquired by Otkritie). Achieved multiple high-profile exits (e.g. Simple \$117M acquisition). Also backed fintech enablers like SumUp (led Series B in 2014; now a decacorn POS provider).

- Global Recognition: Named among the "Top 35 Most Influential FinTech Investors" globally for three consecutive years, and a top fintech influencer in Europe (Institutional Investor & EY rankings). Life.SREDA's thought leadership – Slava published the acclaimed annual fintech report "Money of the Future" (50k+ readers) – positioned the fund at the forefront of industry trends.

- Industry Leadership: Co-launched the "Banking on Blockchain" initiative (fund concept in 2016) in partnership with noted fintech leaders (Simon Taylor, Chris Skinner). Organized global fintech events – e.g., a 2012 conference

headlined by Sir Richard Branson and fintech founders – to catalyze the ecosystem. Under Slava’s leadership, Life.SREDA became a bridge between established banks and fintech startups, and even secured a capital markets services license from MAS (Singapore) to manage fintech investments under regulatory oversight.

Ethereum Foundation

Banking on Blockchain I Ethereum, 11:F5

April 2016 - September 2016 (6 months)

London Area, United Kingdom

□ April 2016: launching ‘Banking on Blockchain’ initiative with Simon Taylor (11:F5), David Brear (11:F5), Chris Skinner and Tomas Labenbauer (Fidor):

- <https://www.dealstreetasia.com/stories/42445-lifesreda-blockchain-42445>

- <https://thefinanser.com/2016/04/the-100m-start-up-blockchain-fund>

- <https://www.finsmes.com/2018/01/fintech-venture-capital-firm-life-sreda-vc-to-raise-third-based-on-blockchain-fund.html>

- <https://news.bitcoin.com/million-blockchain-fund-smaller-banks/>

- <https://venturebeat.com/business/life-sreda-launches-global-fund-for-banks-to-invest-in-blockchain-startups/>

- <https://www.bankingexchange.com/news-feed/item/6203-chris-skinner-provocative-without-the-rant>

□ June 2016: Vitalik Buterin visiting me, SREDA.VC and InspirAsia Accelerator in Singapore - public talk, workshops, etc

(InspiAsia launched several other events too later on:

<https://www.dealstreetasia.com/stories/russia-hosts-its-largest-blockchain-and-fintech-hackathon-54080>

<https://news.bitcoin.com/innopolis-city-blockchain-hackathon/>)

□ September 2016: With Matthias Kroener (Fidor, crypto-friendly and licensed bank in Germany), Blythe Masters (Digital Asset Holdings, FNZ) and Sopnendu Mohanty (Monetary Authority of Singapore, MAS) in NYC: presenting Singapore for the US Fintech community

Fidor Bank AG

VC investment and JV launch

November 2013 - April 2015 (1 year 6 months)

Munich, Bavaria, Germany

Fidor is one of the first ever crypto-friendly [1] and licensed [2] digital banks in the world (together with Simple and Moven), located in Munich, Germany. (InspiAsia launched several blockchain events too later on:
<https://www.dealstreetasia.com/stories/russia-hosts-its-largest-blockchain-and-fintech-hackathon-54080>
<https://news.bitcoin.com/innopolis-city-blockchain-hackathon/>)

Anthemis Group

Limited Partner

September 2013 - April 2015 (1 year 8 months)

London Area, United Kingdom

Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK)

Head of product, Navalny Card (Nansen.ID)

January 2012 - December 2012 (1 year)

Moscow, Russia

Head of AML-product and head of fintech-project 'Navalny Card' with Alexei Navalny, Vladimir Ashurkov, Anna Veduta, and Anti-Corruption Foundation (FBK). His innovative "Navalny Card" fintech campaign (2012) received international recognition and was shortlisted at Cannes Lions for its social impact in anti-corruption finance.

Product & Marketing Leadership (Pre-2015): Held senior product and marketing roles in leading banks and telcos in Russia, including serving as Marketing Director at Russian Standard Bank (at age 25) under billionaire Rustam Tariko. Launched innovative card products and forged partnerships (e.g., early discussions with Pavel Durov of Telegram on fintech integrations in 2013).

He also earned marketing accolades earlier in his career, including EFFIE "Brand of the Year" Awards in 2010 and 2012 for financial marketing campaigns.

Academic & Public Service Awards: Recipient of a research grant from British Petroleum & MGIMO University (2008) for work on place marketing – an early testament to his analytical skills.

Education

The Wharton School

Lectures, public talks and mentorship @ INSEAD, NUS, SMU, UCL, etc, Entrepreneurship/Entrepreneurial Studies · (September 2012)

