

AI STARTUP

AI X BITCOIN

RODEO

EDITION 02 - CALL FOR PAPERS & SESSION PROPOSALS

Built for builders who ship.

One day. One room. Full stack.

AI Startup Rodeo brings full-stack AI developers, Bitcoin builders, founders, and operators into one downtown Austin room for technical talks, builder-grade demos, implementation case studies, and practical conversation.

DATE Friday, October 30, 2026

TIME 8:00 AM - 5:00 PM

VENUE Q Branch - The Texas Embassy

ADDRESS 200 E 6th Street, Suite 310, Austin, TX 78701

Less keynote. More demo.

AI agents - Full-stack AI - MCP security - Agent guardrails - LLM cost optimization - Bitcoin - Lightning payments

What we are looking for

We are looking for sessions from people building, operating, and learning from real AI and Bitcoin systems. The strongest proposals teach something concrete, expose meaningful tradeoffs, and give attendees ideas they can apply when they return to their own work.

Technical talks, implementation case studies, and live demos should anchor the day. Slides may support a session, but they should not be the session.

Strong proposals usually include

- A real implementation, architecture, workflow, or product.
- Specific technical or operating lessons, including what failed.
- A working demo, architecture walkthrough, technical artifact, or concrete case study.
- Clear takeaways for a defined audience and experience level.
- Honest constraints around reliability, security, cost, and adoption.

Who should submit

- Full-stack AI developers, platform engineers, security practitioners, and data teams.
- Bitcoin and Lightning developers, wallet builders, infrastructure teams, and protocol contributors.
- Technical founders, indie hackers, product builders, operators, and developer-tool teams.
- Researchers or educators who can translate work into practical builder takeaways.

Session formats

- **Builder or operator talk / implementation case study:** 20-25 minutes plus Q&A.
- **Live demo / product walkthrough:** 10-15 minutes.
- **Lightning talk:** 5-8 minutes focused on one idea or working artifact.
- **Operator panel / curated conversation:** 30-40 minutes plus Q&A. Panel slots are limited and may be curated by the organizers.

The 2026 program accepts talks, demos, lightning talks, and curated conversations only.

Final durations may be adjusted to fit the one-day program. The organizing team will coordinate any changes with accepted speakers.

Full-stack AI

Practical systems, workflows, and production lessons for building AI-enabled software.

AI-assisted product development

- Vibe coding with discipline: planning, prompting, testing, review, and safe iteration.
- AI-accelerated workflows for product, engineering, operations, and support.
- From prototype to production: hardening AI-generated or AI-assisted software.
- Developer tools and interfaces that help teams build faster without losing control.

Agents, tools, and orchestration

- Agent architecture, planning, tool use, memory, and multi-step workflows.
- Model Context Protocol (MCP): practical integrations, trust boundaries, and security.
- Human-in-the-loop workflows and deciding when autonomy is appropriate.
- Multi-agent systems, handoffs, validation, and workflow coordination.

Data, retrieval, and application architecture

- RAG, hybrid search, reranking, citations, and retrieval quality.
- Structured outputs, APIs, databases, semantic layers, and knowledge systems.
- Full-stack AI applications: frontend, backend, auth, data, models, and deployment.
- Streaming, real-time workflows, and integration with existing systems.

Evaluation, guardrails, and production operations

- Agent guardrails, prompt injection defenses, and safe tool execution.
- Offline and online evaluation, red teaming, regression testing, and drift monitoring.
- Observability, tracing, failure analysis, incident response, and operator tooling.
- LLM cost optimization: routing, caching, batching, model selection, and budgets.

Topics are illustrative, not exhaustive. Specificity and practical value matter more than matching a label exactly.

Bitcoin, Lightning, and AI x Bitcoin

Infrastructure, payments, and business models for software that can act, transact, and coordinate.

Bitcoin and Lightning builder topics

- Lightning payments, micropayments, streaming payments, and payment APIs.
- Wallet architecture, key management, custody tradeoffs, and developer experience.
- Bitcoin infrastructure, nodes, services, interoperability, and operational reliability.
- Integrating Bitcoin payments into applications, products, and developer workflows.
- Security, privacy, fraud controls, and safe transaction design.

Where AI and Bitcoin converge

- Agent-to-agent and machine-to-machine payments.
- Autonomous or semi-autonomous wallets with permissions, policies, and guardrails.
- Pay-per-call, pay-per-token, pay-per-task, and other usage-based models.
- Micropayments for data, models, compute, content, and digital services.
- Identity, authorization, accountability, and settlement for autonomous software.
- New products and markets enabled by programmable payments and AI workflows.

Startup and operator execution

- Finding product-market fit for AI, Bitcoin, or AI x Bitcoin products.
- Distribution, pricing, monetization, and developer-first go-to-market.
- Build-versus-buy decisions, capital efficiency, and infrastructure cost control.
- From first prototype to reliable product, customers, and repeatable adoption.
- Founder and operator lessons: what worked, what broke, and what changed after launch.

We especially value proposals that connect technical design to an actual user, workflow, payment, or business outcome.

Beginner through advanced

Every proposal should name its intended audience and describe what attendees should already know.

Beginner

Goal: help attendees get productive quickly with safe, immediately usable patterns.

- Add a first AI feature to a web application.
- Use AI-assisted coding safely and review generated work.
- Build a first agent or tool-calling workflow.
- Understand MCP, retrieval, evaluations, and guardrails at an introductory level.
- Add a first Bitcoin or Lightning payment flow to an application.

Intermediate

Goal: ship complete systems and understand implementation tradeoffs.

- Build and deploy a full-stack AI application end to end.
- Design RAG, tool-calling, and agent workflows that work beyond a demo.
- Implement evaluation, observability, security controls, and cost management.
- Integrate Lightning, wallet functionality, or programmable payments into a product.
- Connect AI workflows to real payments, users, and operating systems.

Advanced

Goal: address reliability, scale, safety, and difficult production constraints.

- Advanced agent orchestration, memory, permissions, validation, and failure recovery.
- Multi-model routing, inference infrastructure, and cost-aware system design.
- Adversarial evaluation, red teaming, incident response, and trust boundaries.
- Scalable Bitcoin and Lightning infrastructure, transaction safety, and reliability.
- Autonomous payments, machine commerce, policy-controlled wallets, and settlement systems.

A beginner session should still be substantive. An advanced session should still be understandable and teachable.

What each proposal should demonstrate

Builder or operator talk / implementation case study - 20-25 minutes plus Q&A

- A clear thesis and target audience.
- A tight narrative grounded in a real system, decision, product, or case study.
- Architecture, code, metrics, artifacts, or a meaningful demo where appropriate.
- Concrete takeaways attendees can apply after the event.

Live demo / product walkthrough - 10-15 minutes

- What is working, who it is for, and what problem it addresses.
- What the audience will see and learn.
- Required A/V, hardware, connectivity, accounts, and demo dependencies.
- Minimal slides. The working system should be the center of the session.
- A fallback plan for network, model, API, or live-service failures.

Lightning talk - 5-8 minutes

- One focused idea, lesson, technique, or working artifact.
- A clear opening, one central point, and a concise takeaway.
- Evidence, code, a demo, or an example that supports the claim.

Panel / curated conversation - 30-40 minutes plus Q&A

- A focused theme and 5-7 guiding questions.
- Proposed panelists or the kinds of operators needed for a balanced discussion.
- Why the conversation matters now and what the audience will learn.
- Specificity and firsthand experience rather than broad predictions or generic hot takes.

Panel slots are limited. The organizers may combine related proposals or invite additional participants.

What to include

Send a proposal that is specific enough to review, not a full speaker packet. Accepted speakers will be asked for a rundown and remaining production details.

- 1 **Title** - concise and specific.
- 2 **Session format** - builder or operator talk, live demo, lightning talk, or panel / curated conversation.
- 3 **Audience, level, and prerequisites** - beginner, intermediate, or advanced; developer, founder, operator, or mixed audience; plus one line on what attendees should already know.
- 4 **Abstract** - 150-300 words explaining the session, why it matters, and three concrete takeaways. Lightning talks may be shorter.
- 5 **Evidence or demo plan** - describe the code, architecture, metrics, artifacts, product behavior, or case-study evidence that will support the session.
- 6 **Speaker bio** - 75-150 words, plus relevant links.
- 7 **Affiliations and product references** - disclose any company or product connected to the proposal.
- 8 **Optional supporting material** - repository, paper, preprint, slides, prior recording, or short demo video.

Live demo proposals should also include A/V, hardware, connectivity, accounts, dependencies, and a fallback plan.

Review criteria

- Fit with the AI x Bitcoin builder focus.
- Clarity, specificity, and practical value.
- Originality and firsthand experience.
- Feasibility within the proposed format and one-day program.
- Engagement through a demo, working artifact, technical evidence, or well-structured discussion.
- Balance across topics, levels, backgrounds, and perspectives.

Supporting papers and videos

Papers, preprints, technical write-ups, repositories, and prior recordings are welcome as supporting material. Acceptance is based on the proposed session's value to attendees; this is not a proceedings-publication model.

Builder-first, not sales-first

Content expectations

- **No sales pitches.** Products and tools may be referenced when they are necessary to teach the material, but the session must stand on its educational value.
- **Use safe demo data.** Do not expose real credentials, private datasets, customer information, private keys, wallet seeds, or sensitive infrastructure details.
- **Respect permissions and consent.** Obtain approval before showing customer systems, user data, private code, or third-party material.
- **Be honest about limits.** Clearly distinguish working production behavior from prototypes, simulations, benchmarks, or planned capabilities.
- **Follow the Code of Conduct.** Accepted speakers and participants must follow the event Code of Conduct supplied with acceptance materials.

CFP timeline

- **CFP opens:** Tuesday, August 18, 2026.
- **Submission deadline:** Friday, October 9, 2026, three weeks before the event.
- **Notifications:** Friday, October 16, 2026, two weeks before the event.
- Accepted sessions may be announced on a rolling basis.
- The schedule is subject to change as the one-day program is finalized.

How to submit

Email your proposal to the address below. Include the items listed under What to include. Program questions use the same inbox.

EMAIL	program@aistartuprodeo.com
DEADLINE	Friday, October 9, 2026
WEBSITE	aistartuprodeo.com
EVENT	Friday, October 30, 2026, 8:00 AM-5:00 PM
VENUE	Q Branch - The Texas Embassy, 200 E 6th Street, Suite 310, Austin, TX 78701

Ship what is next.