



Dear Partners,

We hope each of you is entering Q4 on a strong note. In our prior GP's Quarterly letter, we descended on Private Markets Structure, reviewing the Private Credit 'semi-liquid' fund frenzy, investor alignment, and as an antidote to the narrative of private markets structural breakdowns – highlighted Tide Rock's hold-co approach to investing in the lower-middle markets. The feedback from the letter was overwhelmingly positive, leading to interesting RIA-GP conversations and introductions across the Private Markets.

As always, we hope you'll stick around and forward this letter to GPs and colleagues that may find our commentary timely. We've built a nice queue of GP perspectives and stories to share in the coming quarters and welcome additional feedback – please email crestedge@crestcapadv.com if you'd like to contribute thoughts or have your firm featured in an upcoming quarterly letter.

CRESTEDGE IMPACT

During the quarter, Crest Capital made several GP introductions to Multi-Family Offices in the Hightower network, which advanced discussions for the broader Hightower platform. On this topic, we're excited to feature Trimontium Capital Solutions in this quarterly issue, and cannot thank Vlado Spasov and Bally Sangar enough for contributing to this issue.

CREST CAPITAL DEALS & NEWS

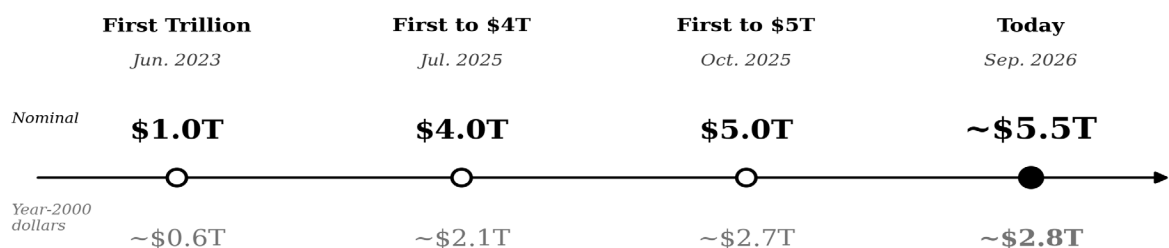
A colleague and friend of Crest Capital, Ian Goldberg of London-based VC firm, Venrex Investment Management, recently closed an \$18m Series A round into Integral Privacy Technologies. Integral, led by Shubh Sinha and John Kuhn, is building the data-privacy infrastructure layer for a world where AI continuously consumes real world proprietary data, and we're excited for the company's journey ahead. Congratulations to Ian and the Venrex team, and we look forward to following the future for Ian, Venrex and Integral Privacy Technologies.

FAILURES OF THE IMAGINATION IN THE PUBLIC MARKETS

In every boom cycle, the market produces a number that many capital allocators decide is simply too big. In June 2023, that number was NVIDIA at \$1 trillion. In July 2025, it was \$4 trillion, and only three months later, \$5 trillion. At the time of this writing, NVIDIA is worth roughly \$5.7 trillion, about 8% of the S&P 500, and the headlines have moved from celebration to vertigo. MarketWatch ran "Nvidia is getting too big, and that's a problem" this August.¹ while others argued that a 10x return from here would require a "pipe dream".² One common objection is that NVIDIA's nominal scale itself limits the prospect of further outsized appreciation. That objection may reflect more than valuation analysis: large numbers can influence how investors

perceive what is economically possible. The implicit argument is that NVIDIA must be too large because \$5.7 trillion *feels* unprecedented. We call this the **Big Number Discount**: psychologically limiting upside potential because its nominal value is large and unfamiliar, rather than accounting for actual cash flows which may support it. It is a failure of imagination some allocators don't realize they're making, and it starts with treating the dollar as a fixed unit of measurement.

In our view, the first problem is the perception of purchasing power. Many investors treat the dollar as if it is an inch, but it isn't one. As measured by CPI, it took \$187 in 2025 to buy what \$100 bought in 2000. Inflation is the one adjustment that genuinely restates value in comparable terms: in year-2000 dollars, NVIDIA's \$5.5 trillion is closer to \$2.8 trillion. Still incredibly large, but a different number from the one driving the headlines.



NVIDIA Market-Cap Milestones: Nominal vs. Year-2000 Dollars

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, CPI-U. Each milestone deflated using the CPI ratio for the year reached; 2026 uses the latest available index.

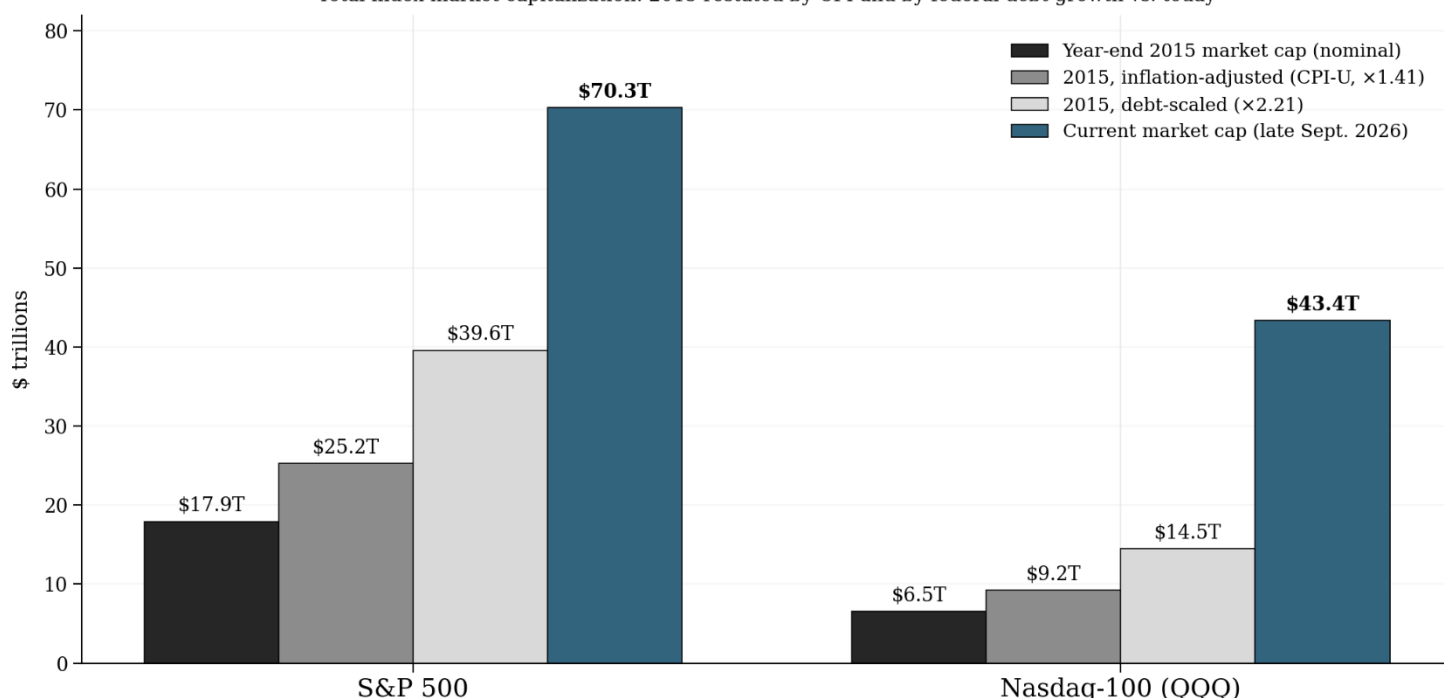
The second layer to this problem is the quantity of dollars itself. Total U.S. public debt was roughly \$5.7 trillion in 2000. It crossed \$40 trillion on August 18, 2026, after growing by about a trillion dollars every five months since August 2025.¹ Over the same period, M2 money supply grew roughly fivefold to a record \$23.3 trillion.² When the government spends far more than it collects, and the banking system and the Federal Reserve absorb much of that borrowing, new dollars enter circulation faster than the economy produces new goods, services and assets. Each existing dollar becomes a smaller claim on a pool of real things that has not grown nearly as fast. CPI captures only part of that dilution, because it measures a basket of consumer goods. New dollars do not spread evenly through the economy. Much of the money lands first in financial markets and on the balance sheets of asset holders, where it bids up what is scarce: equities, real estate, private businesses and gold. That is why a dollar can look relatively stable at the grocery store while losing ground quickly against a share of a business. Measured against scarce assets rather than consumer prices, the dollar has lost far more value than CPI suggests. This is not a mechanical formula, and debt growth alone does not justify any single valuation. It does mean the yardstick investors use to judge "too big" has been shrinking, and a trillion dollars today is a much smaller economic claim than the one most investors built their instincts around. Consider 2015's index valuations, adjusted for inflation and the debt, versus today's valuations:

¹ U.S. Department of the Treasury, Debt to the Penny: total public debt outstanding of \$40.05 trillion on Aug. 18, 2026.

² Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System, H.6 Money Stock Measures: M2 of \$23,342.8 billion, Aug. 2026.

2015 Index Valuations Through Adjusted Monetary Lenses

Total index market capitalization: 2015 restated by CPI and by federal debt growth vs. today



Sources: S&P 500 via S&P/Charts (12/31/2015) and FinHacker (9/25/2026); Nasdaq-100 via SlickCharts (current); 2015 Nasdaq-100 value implied from index level change (4,593 to 30,409). BLS CPI-U; U.S. Treasury total public debt FY2015 (\$18.12T) to Aug. 18, 2026 (\$40.05T). Debt scaling is monetary context, not a price deflator.

At year-end 2015, Apple, Alphabet, Microsoft, Amazon and Meta, plus NVIDIA, then an \$18 billion chipmaker, were worth a combined \$2.18 trillion.³ Adjusted for CPI inflation, that is \$3.09 trillion in today's dollars, the like-for-like real starting point. Scaled to the growth in federal debt, it becomes \$4.83 trillion; that figure is not a price-adjusted value, only an illustration of how much the pool of dollar claims has expanded. Measured against the debt-scaled figure, the group's combined value has grown nearly 4x in eleven years.⁴

So what does this mean for underwriting? To be clear, our argument is not that NVIDIA must be cheap. It is that absolute market capitalization is not itself a valuation methodology. Some concerns about size are legitimate: index concentration, vendor-financing circularity and customers building their own chips all deserve real diligence. "It's already too big" is not, in our view, one of them. NVIDIA just reported roughly \$96 billion of quarterly sales and \$59.7 billion of earnings.⁵ The right questions are how durable demand is, how much market share NVIDIA can defend, where margins go from here and what multiple the resulting cash flows deserve. In our view, market cap is the output of that work, not the premise.

Since the turn of the century, the dollar has lost nearly half its purchasing power, federal debt has grown roughly sevenfold and M2 has reached an all-time high. Against that backdrop, the next "impossible" number is likely to arrive sooner than consensus expects. It is our belief that

³ Year-end 2015 and September 28, 2026 market capitalizations per CompaniesMarketCap

⁴ The inflation adjustment uses BLS CPI-U from 2015 to 2026. The debt scaling applies the ratio of U.S. total public debt outstanding at FY2015 year-end (\$18.12T) to August 18, 2026 (\$40.05T), per U.S. Treasury. Debt scaling shows how much the pool of dollar claims has grown and is not a formal price deflator.

⁵ MarketWatch, "Nvidia is getting too big, and that's a problem," Aug. 27, 2026

allocators who dismiss exceptional businesses because of nominal size alone are making the most expensive kind of error: a failure of imagination.

FAILURE OF THE IMAGINATION IN THE PRIVATE MARKETS

If public investors struggle to imagine a \$5 trillion company, private-market investors may struggle with something quieter: imagining capital in any shape other than traditional buyout, venture investing or direct lending. Over the last decade, private capital has organized itself into product boxes. Direct lenders write five-to-seven-year senior loans, buyout funds buy control and hedge funds provide short-dated liquidity. Meanwhile, banks keep retreating from whole verticals under regulatory pressure, and a growing volume of assets sits in finite-life vehicles that need liquidity on a schedule the market doesn't care about. When a good business's problem doesn't fit the box, most capital providers don't solve it; they pass. That is the private-market failure of imagination, and it's where special situations managers have the opportunity to earn their returns.

Enter Trimontium Capital Solutions. Founder Vlado Spasov was born in Plovdiv, Bulgaria, known to the Romans as Trimontium, or the 'city of three hills'. Hidden underneath the city's main street rests a stadium that once seated over 30,000 Romans during the Hadrian reign, dating back to 117 AD. Every day, thousands of people walk over one of the defining structures in the Roman Balkans without ever seeing it. Growing up in communist Bulgaria, Spasov tested into the elite-youth class and was channeled into the state's rigorous math and science system training future state-run enterprise leaders. Then the Iron Curtain fell, and a generation of Bulgaria's brightest were suddenly free to go West. What followed for Spasov was an apprenticeship in learning where the market makes mistakes. Over seven years at Citi, in Leveraged Finance in New York and Institutional Recovery Management in London, Spasov worked through the wreckage of roughly \$600 billion of toxic assets, cataloguing every failed covenant and mispriced risk for later. He went on to Fortress, helped build Ares' special situations platform and stood up the European arm of Blackstone's Strategic Opportunities Fund in 2018. He then led Capital Solutions at DWS before founding Trimontium in 2024. The philosophy he carried out of those workouts is simple:⁶

“Don’t lose a dollar of principal, and only once that’s secured, chase every dollar of upside.” – Vlado Spasov, Founder of Trimontium Capital Solutions

Trimontium is a capital solutions platform, not a fund built around a single product or mandate. It invests across the capital structure and asset classes, so it can go wherever the financing gap opens. A situation in need of a take-private transaction, a NAV facility and a leveraged loan combined into one structure is exactly where Trimontium can go. Tight deadlines that knock out slower competitors are an opportunity for the firm rather than a problem. And, for a platform that leverages creativity, imagination, and flexibility when seeking returns, discipline is just as important

⁶ Trimontium Capital, responses to the Crest Capital Advisors questionnaire, September 2026.

as the creativity. Trimontium sees more than 700 opportunities a year and believes it's deal discipline is where alpha may be created. Its test for complexity is blunt, Spasov suggests, writing "if the complexity is in the problem, we can price it; if it's in what we're being shown, we can't". Spasov describes the job as first-principles thinking, structural creativity, calm under imperfect information and disciplined underwriting.⁷

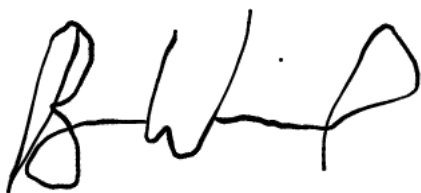
Warner Bros. Discovery (WBD) shows the approach in practice. For roughly two years, WBD reportedly explored an outright sale of its film and TV music library, and a sale never happened.⁸ The problem wasn't the asset; The catalog spans nearly a century of copyrights and more than 400,000 compositions and cues, including music from *Harry Potter*, *Friends* and *Game of Thrones*.⁹ The problem was the box. WBD wanted capital to reduce its debt, but it didn't want to give up control of music woven into its most valuable franchises. Where the market saw a stalled auction, Spasov saw a structuring problem. The answer, announced in January 2025, was an off-balance-sheet preferred equity joint venture with the music-rights specialist Cutting Edge Group. WBD kept creative and operational control, Cutting Edge co-manages the catalog, and the deal was reported at more than \$1 billion, making it one of the largest music-rights transactions ever. The seller got liquidity without a sale, and investors got exposure to a century of trophy royalties on structured terms. Neither outcome was available to anyone who could only picture a loan or a sale.

In public markets, a failure of imagination can be as simple as refusing to believe a number can get bigger. In private markets, this can be refusing to believe a problem can be solved in any shape other than the one capital allocators are used to. Trimontium's Managing Director, Yaroslav Syzonov's mantra captures the difference, writing "Grow the whole pie, don't take a bigger slice of a fixed one,".

FEEDBACK

We welcome your feedback and ideas, including how it can be improved. If you find these materials insightful, would like to contribute a topic for us to write about, please do not hesitate to reach out to our team at crestcapital@crestcapadv.com.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'RW', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ryan Weisenberg, *Crest Capital Advisors*

⁷ Sinead Cruise, "Blackstone Alumni Forge Hybrid Capital Challenger," *Bloomberg Going Private*, Sept. 18, 2026.

⁸ *Financial Times*, as republished by Cutting Edge Group; Digital Music News, Jan. 31, 2025.

⁹ Warner Bros. Discovery and Cutting Edge Group, joint press release, PR Newswire, Jan. 31, 2025.

Thank you.



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