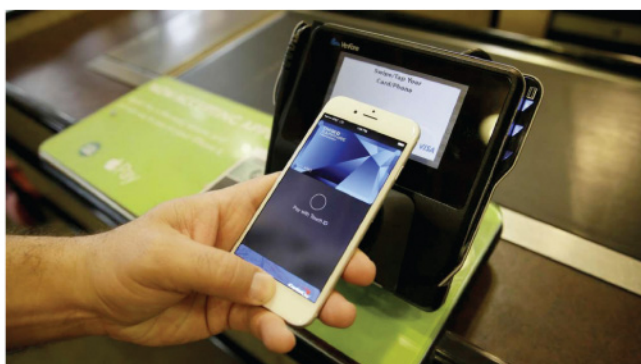


Technology In Driving Seat

The journey towards a cashless society is inevitable as technology is in driving seat and changing the way we live. Today it is odd for people to feel that most of them still walk about with coins jangling in pockets, much as ancient Anatolians did nearly three millennia ago when minted coins first appeared. Today, electronic cards have made it possible for consumers to go online and buy almost anything, from gadgets to groceries. Technologies like NFC (near field communications) are already allowing shoppers to make even small purchases using ubiquitous smartphones and other portable devices. Payment transactions have evolved from simple cash payments to bank cards and are now transforming again to encompass contactless capabilities.



With the introduction of new POS technologies, businesses of all sorts - from a neighborhood smoothie stand to a nearby farmer's market - can adapt to the cashless society. POS software and hardware providers are critical proponents of the push towards cashless, enabling businesses of all shapes and sizes to not only accept plastic, but also mobile, digital and other contactless formats that continue to grow in popularity. And more recently a new technology QR Code has added a new wave in mobile financial services (MFS) as it allows consumers to pay for anyone from a street vendor to a restaurant to a retail store and more. MFS operators globally process over a billion dollar a day, representing vital and life-sustaining transactions of over 690 million mobile money accounts.

The technology is proving to be a game changer and transit agencies no longer need to act as a currency exchange, converting money into transit dollars, which has a huge cost for the agency with infrastructure and staffing - and for the customer, they simply tap and go directly on the metro gate line or bus reader, simply using the [card] they already carry. Mastercard provided a case study showing in the London's public

transit system, where about 17 million trips per week are made using contactless payments, representing about 45 percent of trips on the Tube, ferries and buses. The technology reduced the cost of collecting fares from about 14 percent of revenue to about 9 percent. In addition, every time a PAYG transaction is validated, it takes about 300 milliseconds. In the U.S. several of the nation's leading transit systems have announced plans to convert to contactless payments or expand existing tap and go systems.

Industry experts say the next big evolutionary step has long been touted as being the arrival of alternative "virtual" or crypto currencies such as Bitcoin. IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde in a speech at the Singapore Fintech Festival last month said central banks should consider issuing digital currencies as money faces a "historic turning point." "I believe that we should consider the possibility to issue digital currency", she told the central bankers.

Mobile Phones Bring Revolution

Most Britons now pay for sandwiches, magazines and pints down the pub with nothing more than a swipe of mobile phone as a payment revolution hits Britain's highstreets. They know their mobile phones are embedded with a chip that contains credit and debit card details. For low-value items, selling for no more



than £15, all customers will have to do is wave the phone in front of the shop's sales terminal. For higher priced goods, you'll have to punch a pin number into the phone as well.

Orange has unveiled its Quick Tap service, while Google launched Google Wallet for Android phones which might soon make the traditional wallet stuffed with cards, notes and coins a thing of the past. The UK Payments Council - which represents banks and card companies - also announced it was undertaking a major