



Position: ATMIA believes that in all free economies the right of citizens to choose to use cash to pay for goods and services should never be taken away from them.

“Despite the rise of plastic cards and electronic money transfers, cash is still the most important kind of money in the world.”
Money: A History (2nd edition) by the British Museum Press (2007)

“As at end June 2009, there were 1 billion banknotes in circulation worth \$48.1 billion. This is equivalent to 47 banknotes worth \$2,200 for every Australian.”
Reserve Bank of Australia (2009 Annual Report)

“The value of banknotes in circulation increased by 7 per cent in 2013/14, slightly above the long-term growth rate of 6 per cent.”
Reserve Bank of Australia (2014 Annual Report)

“Cash means currency in circulation in the form of notes and coins. It is characteristically more liquid than the other means of payment; that is, it can be used in shorter-term, lower-cost economic transactions.”
Banco Central de la República Argentina (April 2015)

Facts and forecasts

The proven longevity and popularity of cash as public money testifies to the enduring success of this simple-to-use technology. Having been in use for twenty-seven centuries, cash today still represents over 80% of global retail payment transactions.

Global demand for cash is rising, as shown by both currency-in-circulation data and by worldwide cash withdrawal volumes at ATMs: “Retail Banking Research (RBR) is forecasting that annual cash withdrawal volumes worldwide will grow by an average of 7.9% per year between 2013 and 2019 - well ahead of GDP growth over the same period.” (RBR¹, 12th April 2015). This predicted cash withdrawal volume growth rate of 7.9% up to the year 2019 compares very favorably to the forecasted global growth in 2015–16 of between 3.5 -3.7 % (International Monetary Fund, World Economic Outlook Update, January 2015).

¹ Retail Banking Research is a strategic research and consulting firm with three decades of experience in retail banking, banking automation and payment systems (see <http://www.rbrlondon.com>).

The Right to Choose Cash

The choice for citizens to pay for goods and services in the way they find most convenient as consumers remains part of economic freedom.

Cash is popular because it is simple-to-use, always works and is universally accepted. For there to be genuine economic freedom, citizens should be free to choose the form of money they wish to use to pay for goods and services. Choosing to use cash has been there virtually since the invention of money. Why should government agencies or private businesses make that choice of payment method *for* citizens, on their behalf? Why would a country take away that fundamental economic freedom to choose? That would run counter to the principles of democracy and free economics.

Since cash is a form of public money, issued by central banks, it represents instant trust between buyer and seller in all situations, without the need for any mediation through a third-party, privately-owned system to guarantee the transaction. It is therefore not surprising that the world sees cash as publicly issued trust.

Furthermore, using cash promotes budgeting discipline within households, enabling citizens to live within their means, in that “you can’t spend what you don’t have”. In the same way, the widespread practice of parents providing pocket-money to their children teaches the younger generation to spend up to the limit of the amount they’ve been allocated. This is an important form of financial control inherent to cash.

For all these reasons, ATMIA accepts that it is a basic economic freedom for citizens in free economies to choose their most trusted, efficient and convenient form of payment for goods and services, whether that be cash or other forms of money or a combination of both.

About ATMIA

The ATM Industry Association (www.atmia.com) is a non-profit trade association serving all businesses and groups in the ATM industry. The association is made up of just under 5,000 members in 65 countries. We currently represent well over 1.5 million ATMs internationally. For more information go to – www.atmia.com. ATMs provide a global electronic infrastructure of about 2.5 million terminals to distribute cash and other services to millions of cardholders and account holders.