



Position: While cash remains the overwhelming global payment method of choice for humanity, ATMIA believes cash requires special recognition by regulators as the people's public source of money.

“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)

“Money is coined liberty.” Fedor Dostoevsky, Russian novelist (1821-81)¹

Facts and forecasts

The proven longevity and popularity of cash as public money testifies to the enduring success of this simple-to-use technology: despite being around for twenty-seven centuries, cash today still represents 85% 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: “RBR is forecasting that annual cash withdrawal volumes worldwide will grow by an average of 7.9% per year between 2011 and 2017 - well ahead of GDP growth over the same period.” (RBR, 14th May 2013). This predicted cash withdrawal volume growth rate of 7.9% compares very favorably to the average annual actual GDP growth rate between 2003-2011 of 2.7% (World Bank).

ATMs are the main distribution channel for cash in modern economies. Due to growth in demand for cash and other services at the ATM, the installed base is forecast by RBR to treble from 2000, when there were 1 million machines, to 3 million ATMs by 2015. At the same time, the total number of global monthly cash withdrawals is set to rise from 2.8 billion in 2000 to over 8.6 billion by 2015, which represents a staggering 103.2 billion cash withdrawals per annum.

The underlying principles of cash

But it is not just the longevity and continuing popularity of cash which underlie its critical role in society and the economy. It is its nature as a public source of money. Cash is produced and governed by central banks accountable both to the government's fiscal policies and systems and to the electorate.

¹ *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (1996):255.

In addition, cash represents instant trust because cash exchanges between buyer and seller don't require the mediation of a third-party system. Cash always works - instantly. The world sees cash as publicly minted trust.

The role of cash as public money, part of the social contract between a population and its elected government, contrasts with electronic and plastic forms of money and credit which tend to be governed by for-profit commercial organizations, for example, the dominant global card associations.

In public discussions about payments, regulators should never lose sight of the fact that cash is part of the commonwealth of society and should be wary at all times of vested, commercial interests informing stakeholders conducting campaigns to eradicate cash.

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.