



DAILY NEWS AT SIBOS

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MANAGING DIRECTOR AND
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Tanya Andreasyan
tanya.andreasyan@fintechfutures.com
+44 (0)20 7551 9010

EDITOR
Paul Hindle
paul.hindle@fintechfutures.com

REPORTERS
Tyler Pathe
tyler.pathe@fintechfutures.com
Cameron Emanuel-Burns
cameron.emanuel-burns@fintechfutures.com

HEAD OF SALES
Sam Hutton
sam.hutton@fintechfutures.com
+44 208 052 0434

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT MANAGER
Kate Stevenson
kate.stevenson@fintechfutures.com
+44 782 593 0099

HEAD OF MARKETING
Rebecca Nolan
rebecca.nolan@fintechfutures.com

MARKETING MANAGER
Robert Mitchell
robert.mitchell@fintechfutures.com

FIND US ONLINE
www.fintechfutures.com

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Save the date!

We're excited to announce that the Banking Tech Awards USA will return for 2026.

The **Banking Tech Awards USA** offer categories for banks, financial institutions, software providers, teams and individuals to enter. Nominations will open in late 2025.

The awards ceremony is set to take place on **May 28, 2026** and will be held at **583 Park Avenue**, New York

To learn more about the awards and see the full list of categories, visit bankingtechawardsusa.com

Find out more



Editor's note



The festival of finance that is Sibos is back in Europe once again this year, with delegates from across the world set to gather at Messe Frankfurt in Germany for four days full of informative panels, collaborative innovation and networking.

And as always, the team at FinTech Futures has been hard at work to bring you this year's *Daily News at Sibos* magazine.

The theme of Sibos 2025 is "the next frontiers of global finance", with the conference aiming to shine a light on the latest technologies revolutionising the financial ecosystem, as well as how companies can work to boost connectivity, interoperability, and resilience to navigate industry changes.

This supplement aims to explore this theme with a feast of insights and discussion covering topics including the rise of stablecoins, the future of digital payments, and how generative and agentic AI continue to transform the industry and what's next on the horizon.

The magazine features insights from a number of regular FinTech Futures columnists. Dr Leda Glyptis, NED and author, gives us some insight into Sibos' flagship 'Future of Value' debate, which this year will focus on the rise of stablecoins.

Banking technology consultant Dharmesh Mistry takes a look at how the combination of near-zero cost payments,

agentic banking, and quantum-accelerated AI will enable companies to fundamentally re-imagine the banking experience.

NMD+ founder Dave Wallace dives into the shift from AI-assisted to AI-native finance, and Unconventional Ventures founder and author Theodora Lau discusses how AI is effectively becoming the new operating system that will power the next generation of banks.

FinTech Futures reporter Tyler Pathe takes a look at how AI agents communicate with each other and the latest developments with the technology, and he also interviews Richard Ullenius, VP Global Banking and Channels at CSG, to discuss how leaders in corporate and institutional banking are intensifying efforts to modernise their tech stacks.

Fintech product leader Jas Shah discusses what's next for AI in financial services and its key transformation areas, FinTech Futures reporter Cameron Emanuel-Burns explores the latest developments with blockchain technology and its use for cross-border payments, and fintech entrepreneur and author Christer Holloman details how banks are going about building out their digital asset infrastructures.

We hope you enjoy this year's magazine, and as ever, be sure to [check out our website for all the latest Sibos news](#).

Editor, Paul Hindle

Stripe partners Paradigm on Tempo blockchain for stablecoins



Stripe has teamed up with Silicon Valley-based crypto investment firm Paradigm to develop Tempo, offering a Layer-1 blockchain specifically designed for stablecoins and real-world payment applications.

The project is being led by Paradigm co-founder and managing partner Matt Huang, with added technical contributions from Anthropic, Coupang, Deutsche Bank, Lead Bank, Mercury, Nubank, OpenAI, Revolut, Shopify, Standard Chartered and Visa, among others.

In a blog post announcing the launch, Huang reveals that Tempo will “tackle real-world use cases including global payments and payroll, remittances, tokenized deposits for 24/7 settlement, embedded financial accounts, microtransactions, agent payments, and more”.

He says that Tempo will “complement existing crypto infrastructure and be a conduit for many large enterprises to come onchain, increasing adoption of crypto tools and infrastructure”.

Tempo enters a private testnet phase as of this month, with a public timeline of the official launch yet to be announced.

Although incubated by Stripe and Paradigm, Tempo will operate as a standalone company, with a full-time team currently comprising 15 employees.

The chain enters a private testnet phase as of this month, with a public timeline of the official launch yet to be announced.

In a separate statement posted to X, Stripe CEO

Patrick Collison explains how Tempo will benefit from a built-in stablecoin automated market maker (AMM) to “enable platform neutrality with respect to different stablecoins”, with additional plans to transition from an “independent and diverse” validator set to permissionless validation.

The project is set to take on other rising competitors currently combining stablecoins with mainstream payments, including Circle, which introduced its Layer-1 blockchain Arc last month, and Plasma and Stable, which offer purpose-built blockchains, developed by Tether, for USDT transactions.

Stripe, which is currently valued at \$91.5 billion, has been working to develop its stablecoin payment capabilities lately, snapping up stablecoin infrastructure provider Bridge for \$1.1 billion in February, followed by a deal for crypto wallet infrastructure provider Privy in June.

Ant International, Swift, and Standard Chartered team up to trial new bank-to-wallet payment solution



Ant International, Swift, and Standard Chartered have partnered up to trial a new bank-to-wallet payment solution. Initial production trials have demonstrated successful transactions between a Standard Chartered customer account and a partner e-wallet through Alipay+, the cross-border digital payments service operated by Ant International.

The solution utilises ISO 20022 financial messaging

standards and leverages Swift’s global payments infrastructure. Swift’s network of over 11,500 financial institutions across more than 200 countries and territories enables the solution to connect to around 1.7 billion user accounts on the 36 global digital wallets within the Alipay+ ecosystem.

This development builds upon existing collaboration initiatives between the organisations. Recently, Ant International and Standard Chartered announced a partnership to enhance foreign exchange and treasury management

capabilities by combining their Falcon and SCALE services into a new FX management solution.

In addition, the Chinese fintech company established a partnership with BNP Paribas last year to strengthen the French banking group’s cross-border payment capabilities for its European merchants and consumers. Through this collaboration, BNP Paribas engaged Alipay+ services and began exploring tokenised deposit technologies for global treasury management.

Airwallex acquires billing platform OpenPay



Cross-border payments fintech Airwallex has expanded its acquisition strategy by purchasing San Francisco-based billing platform OpenPay for an undisclosed sum.

OpenPay, led by CEO Lance Co Ting Keh, provides a Software-as-a-Service platform that offers subscription management, payment orchestration, and revenue analytics. Since its founding in 2023, OpenPay has developed several automated features, including smart payment routing and AI-powered retention tools, along with a subscription management system based on actual

product usage rather than seat-based pricing. The company has secured clients such as Helius, Thinkster, and Indigo.

Airwallex plans to integrate OpenPay’s billing and analytics features for all new and existing customers by Q4 2025.

Airwallex will integrate OpenPay’s billing and analytics capabilities into its platform, making these features available to both new and existing customers in Q4 2025. Airwallex states that this integration will

position it to “compete directly” with established services like Stripe Billing and Recurly.

Valued at over \$6.2 billion, Airwallex offers a suite of financial products, including expense management, bill payments, corporate cards, money transfers, multi-currency accounts, and payment plugins. The fintech serves more than 150,000 businesses worldwide, including Bolt, Qantas, and Xero.

Earlier this year, the company snapped up CTIN Pay in Vietnam in March, a subsidiary of Post Telecommunications and Informatics Joint Stock Company, to acquire the firm’s Vietnamese payment licence. The company also received Australian Financial Services Licence approval in July 2024 and entered the Latin American market in 2023 through its purchase of Mexican payment service provider MexPago.

The death of legacy banking and the rise of “single brain” banks

By Dharmesh Mistry, banking technology consultant and FinTech Futures editorial contributor

Banking is on the cusp of a seismic shift, and the tremors will be felt across the globe.

For decades, the industry has operated on a foundational architecture that, while robust, is now showing its age. This isn't just about incremental change; it's about a fundamental rethinking of banking. In the same way the internet has fundamentally changed how we share and communicate information, the way we manage and transact money is about to change as money moves to the internet.

“In the evolving landscape of banking, the shift to near-zero cost payments is more than just a reduction in fees. It's a complete reimagining of the payment process itself.”

Dharmesh Mistry

Having spent four decades at the forefront of banking technology—from creating the single customer view in

the 90s and building the first internet/mobile banking apps to creating AR/VR banking experiences—I've seen a lot of change, but nothing quite as big or as fast as what's coming. The convergence of three major tech trends is set to disrupt the status quo, forcing a rethink of what a bank is and how it operates.

THE DAWN OF NEAR-ZERO COST PAYMENTS

Traditional payment rails are cumbersome, costly, and slow, and were built in the pre-internet era. The current system of interbank transfers and card networks is built on a legacy framework that was never designed for a truly global, connected, real-time economy. However, as the world moves toward stablecoins and digital currencies, we are on the verge of near-zero cost payments. This shift isn't just an efficiency play; it's a game-changer that will break down the barriers of cross-border transactions and enable new business models.

In the evolving landscape of banking, the shift to near-zero cost payments is more than just a reduction in fees. It's a complete reimagining of the payment process itself. It's about moving money to the internet and hence a

fundamental rewiring of the rails. This will lead to money being streamed, not sent in discrete ‘lumps’ because it's the only way it can be done cost effectively. This is the reason we get salaries paid monthly not daily, why we pay utility bills monthly not based on consumption.

The transition to stablecoins and digital currencies, built on efficient distributed ledgers, is the catalyst for change. These technologies dismantle the friction points of traditional payment systems, eliminating the need for expensive intermediaries and slow settlement cycles. What emerges is a world where value can flow continuously, in real time, and at a cost so low it becomes negligible.

This new reality will dismantle traditional billing models. Why should we be bound by monthly or quarterly invoicing for services we consume by the second? The notion of “streaming money” allows for a direct, proportional relationship between consumption and payment. Imagine paying for electricity as it's used, a continuous trickle of digital currency flowing from your wallet to the utility provider based on real-time meter readings. The same logic applies to content and

media: why purchase an entire book when you only want to pay for the pages you actually read?

This on-demand, granular payment model unlocks a new dimension of efficiency and personalisation. It allows for dynamic pricing, reduces bad debt, and puts the power back in the hands of the consumer. This is a profound shift from a static, invoice-based world to a dynamic, real-time, and value-for-value economy.

AI AND THE RISE OF AGENTIC BANKING

Looking to the future, the formidable barriers to entry for banking will not be torn down by deregulation alone, but by the relentless progression of technology. The rise of multi-agent systems and what is being termed “vibe coding”—the ability for AI to understand and codify the nuanced “vibe” or strategic intent of an organisation—will fundamentally change the game. We are moving towards a reality where a single visionary with a powerful laptop could orchestrate the

creation of a fully compliant and operational bank.

This new kind of banking will be powered by a network of intelligent, collaborating agents that function as a “single brain” network. This collective intelligence will move beyond simple automation to become a proactive, anticipatory partner for customers. One agent could be a dedicated compliance officer, continuously monitoring regulations and ensuring adherence. Another could be a real-time risk manager, and another a personalised customer service agent.

This ecosystem of collaborating agents, all aligned with the founder's initial “vibe”, will handle the fine details of banking, from KYC to ledger reconciliation, making the traditional, siloed departments of today's institutions obsolete.

This incredible reduction in operational overhead and personnel unlocks a new competitive dynamic. The key to success for these new “one-person banks” (although initially it will be small teams, maybe up to 15 people) will

not be capital or scale, but a crystal-clear sense of purpose. What makes you different? What unique problem are you solving for a specific group of people? This is where the magic happens.

“This new kind of banking will be powered by a network of intelligent, collaborating agents that function as a “single brain” network.”

Dharmesh Mistry

These new players will thrive by identifying a niche—a very specific customer segment or financial need—and serving it perfectly. But these will not be the local, geographically constrained niche banks of the past. Enabled by near-zero cost payments and a global digital footprint, their niche will be global in its reach. They will be “niche on focus, not

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on opportunity", targeting a specific need for a global audience, whether it's a bank for digital nomads, a platform for sustainable agriculture finance, or a micro-lending service for creative artists.

This fusion of hyper-focus and global scale, all driven by a single brain system, will be the true differentiator in the age of agentic banking. Each of these banks could be running on exactly the same underlying components, they are just differentiated by their focus.

QUANTUM-ACCELERATED AI

While AI is the engine of this transformation, quantum computing is the fuel that will accelerate it beyond imagination. Quantum computers, with their ability to perform complex calculations at unprecedented speeds, will unlock the full potential of AI in finance. This won't just be about better credit scoring models; it will be about simulating financial scenarios on a massive scale, allowing for real-time risk assessment, personalised portfolio management, and dynamic fraud detection that is far beyond the capabilities of today's systems. A bank could simulate the impact of a global economic event on millions of customer portfolios in seconds, allowing them to provide personalised advice and even take pre-emptive action.

The true power of quantum is in its ability to handle complexity that is beyond that possible for classical computers. Monte Carlo simulations for portfolio risk, for example, which can take days or weeks to run, could be completed in minutes.

This quantum leap in computational speed allows AI to move from a reactive tool to a truly predictive one. It can detect intricate, multi-layered fraud patterns that are currently invisible to human analysts and even to today's machine learning algorithms.

Furthermore, it enables a level of hyper-personalisation never before seen. By simulating millions of potential future market outcomes for an individual's specific financial situation, quantum-accelerated AI can generate a bespoke financial plan, trading strategy, or product that is optimised for their unique risk tolerance and goals. This ability to model and predict with such precision will give early adopters an unassailable advantage, creating a new divide between the quantum-enabled and the rest.

WHAT THIS MEANS FOR YOU

If you're at a traditional bank: Stop trying to digitise your legacy architecture. Start planning your quantum-agentic-DeFi replacement. This is not a managed transition, it's a start from scratch project.

If you're a fintech entrepreneur: Think bigger. Don't build another neobank. Build a single brain bank for a global niche you understand better than anyone else.

If you're an investor: The next wave of fintech unicorns won't be horizontal platforms. They'll be vertical specialists powered by quantum-accelerated AI, serving global niches with surgical precision.

If you're a regulator: Get ready. The bank of the future looks nothing like the bank of today, and your frameworks need to evolve accordingly.

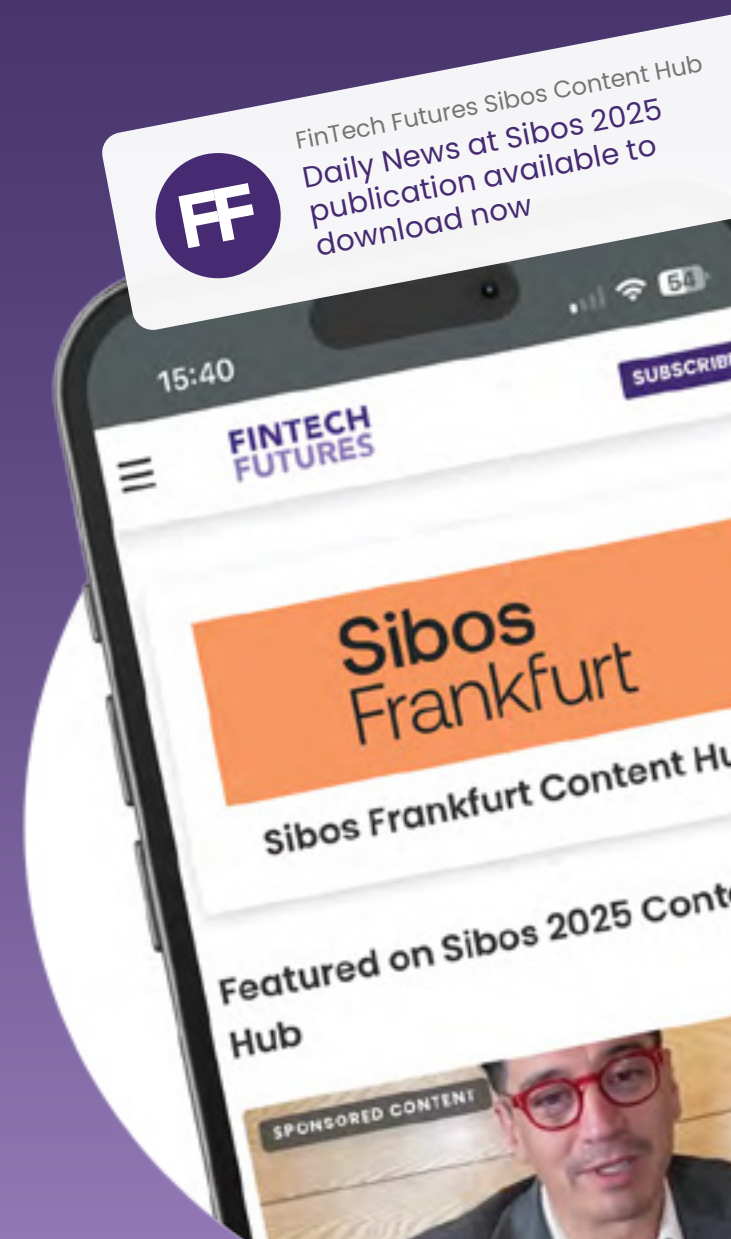
The banking industry stands at a crossroads. While these three trends—near-zero cost payments, agentic banking, and quantum-accelerated AI—are arguably the most disruptive, they are not the only ones. The decentralisation of finance (DeFi), the rise of embedded finance, and the increasing sophistication of customer data analytics are all adding to the pressure on traditional models. Further, while they are disruptive technologies on their own, the combination of these technologies is the real disruptor. The future belongs not to those who incrementally improve their legacy systems, but to those who embrace these powerful forces and fundamentally re-imagine the very nature of banking. On a scale much bigger than the fintech market, I truly believe there could be a growth in banking providers.

The time for visioning is over. The time for building next-generation banks has begun.



Dharmesh Mistry has been in banking for more than 30 years and has been at the

forefront of banking technology and innovation. From the very first internet and mobile banking apps to artificial intelligence (AI) and virtual reality (VR). He has been on both sides of the fence and he's not afraid to share his opinions. He is an entrepreneur, investor and mentor in proptech and fintech. Follow Dharmesh on [X @dharmeshmistry](#) and listen to the [Demystify](#) podcast he co-hosts with [Dave Wallace](#).



AI agents and the new language of digital finance

By Tyler Pathe, Reporter, FinTech Futures

“Why is it people leave money in accounts that earn no interest?” asks author, advisor and commentator Dave Birch, speaking to *FinTech Futures* on the estimated £290 billion currently sitting idle in UK bank accounts, according to the latest Bank of England figures. “Well, essentially, it’s because they have better things to do... but bots don’t.”

“Your AI could spend all day looking around, moving your money to earn more interest, or checking which card gets you the best reward at checkout,” Birch says. “It wouldn’t get bored.”

“Clearly, I don’t sit at the Waitrose checkout weighing up rewards across five different credit cards, because I’m a normal person,” he continues. “It’s mad to think about anyone doing that because we don’t have flows like that in our thinking. But when you start talking about bots talking with other bots, it’s not mad at all.”

In this article, *FinTech Futures* explores the future of agent-to-agent (A2A) communications, including the increasingly critical role of data, the concept of an agent arbiter and the latest developments in the industry that are finally enabling AI agents to share.

“Your AI could spend all day looking around, moving your money to earn more interest, or checking which card gets you the best reward at checkout.”

Dave Birch

BOT BANKING

Birch recalls having lunch with a friend, a treasurer of a large company, who suddenly jumped up to a message on his phone: “Oh my God, I’m supposed to get €25 million by one o’clock.”

“That’s exactly what a company AI will be talking to a bank AI about,” Birch says of the example. “The company AI will already know the purchase is coming, it’ll know how much, and it’ll decide instantly whether to buy now, hedge, or wait, and it’ll be able to pre-emptively communicate that with the bank AI.”

But he says seamless A2A communication demands the same amount of trust needed for regulated activities: “When the agent shows up at the bank and says, ‘I’m authorised to act on behalf of this

company’, how do you verify that? Where’s the private key?”

For this, he envisions a system where agents present verifiable credentials, or cryptographically signed certificates that prove they’re acting with legitimate authority. “If someone tells you they’re a lawyer, we check the suit, the office. But bots can’t do that. They need the correct certification with a public key - something they can challenge and verify.”

THE NEW DIGITAL CREDENTIAL

Google Cloud is among those actively exploring this idea of agent identifiability, having debuted its A2A protocol in April 2025. In a similar effort to the model context protocol released by Anthropic last year, Google Cloud has endeavours to create a standard specifically set on how different agents, built by different vendors or on a different framework, can communicate and share information with each other.

The US tech giant achieves this using two complementary agents: a task-issuing client agent and a task-executing remote agent. The client agent’s responsibility is to formulate and issue tasks,

whereas the remote agent focuses on providing the right information and performing requested actions, either immediately or over a long-term cycle.

“A key feature of the protocol is the agent card,” Stuart Moncada, Google Cloud’s head of product, cloud AI agents and search, tells *FinTech Futures*. “Each agent will maintain an agent card that says, these are the skills that I’m good at, this is what I can do.”

“Agents are able to discover and share capabilities that they have, so that other agents can collaborate, and exchange and divide work,” he continues.

Discussing the challenges being addressed by the protocol, Moncada places fragmentation at the top of the list.

“There are a lot of different technology platforms and ecosystems where agents operate in isolation. This naturally creates a silo, because they can’t cross those boundaries and communicate with each other,” Moncada says.

For those boundaries to be crossed, he says the protocol is built on top of existing open standards like HTTP and JSON to ensure agent interoperability and ease of integration.

“Agents are able to discover and share capabilities that they have, so that other agents can collaborate, and exchange and divide work.”

Stuart Moncada

“We want to make it very easy for developers to adopt,” he says, pointing to Google Cloud’s new Agent Development Kit (ADK) as an added example of this, which offers an open-source framework for building agents on the Vertex AI platform.

“You have to look at the entire context of where you’re building agents and where you’re deploying them,”

Moncada says in discussing security. “This problem of secure collaboration is part of what the A2A protocol is meant to tackle, by having authentication mechanisms to secure information and data being shared, with access control and authentication as a part of it.”

With contextual agent applicability in mind, Google Cloud expands on the protocol with its Agent Engine. Moncada describes the engine as “a very open runtime, where you could run an agent and you have capabilities to manage elements like memory and session”.

His comments build a picture of a secure agent ecosystem where the A2A protocol, Google Cloud ADK and Agent Engine work in harmony together at each stage of what he calls the “agent building toolchain”. As for future developments to expect from Google Cloud in this space, Moncada concludes: “We’re continuing to invest in the developer features and additional languages for the A2A protocol.”

TEAM PLAYERS

Google Cloud initially worked with 50 industry partners to come up with the open framework, a figure that has now more than doubled to include Microsoft, Amazon Web Services and MongoDB.

“When you have multiple agents talking together, they need to exchange messages effectively, and they have to do it securely,” Max Marcon, director of product management at MongoDB, tells *FinTech Futures*. He points to data unification as one of the most important elements of allowing this to happen.

“For example, different agents may need to access different types of databases, so everything needs to be consolidated into a single layer data estate, which would also make the job easier for developers,” he explains.

Marcon describes this data unification practice as a fundamental aspect of getting agents to share information effectively, highlighting the added benefits this will bring to the paper chain of conversations between agents.

“This is already critical with humans, but when you have an army of autonomous agents that make autonomous choices on behalf of a user, it’s really important to be able to get the full picture if something goes wrong.”

He says this picture is currently being filled by increased experimentation among financial institutions with the concept of an agent arbiter, which draws parallels with Google Cloud’s two-agent approach. Marcon explains how this lead agent could act as a mediator between autonomous agents, dictating correct actions and choices.

“When you have multiple agents talking together, they need to exchange messages effectively, and they have to do it securely

Max Marcon

“It’s like a soccer team,” adds Boris Bialek, VP of industry solutions at MongoDB. “One player just playing a game with one single goalkeeper does not work. You need the whole crew, with the arbiter acting as a midfielder, architecting the whole game.”

“Good agents need access to a broad set of data,” Bialek comments. “To achieve this, you need to desilo out of the old mainframes, whatever legacy systems you have. Agent capabilities will evolve, but if data is not well structured and curated, you will be toast.”

THE AI AGENT REVOLUTION AWAITS

These conversations with industry experts underline the AI agent-driven revolution that is ultimately destined to sweep over the world of finance as we know it. Yet despite the promise of AI agents, and of A2A communications, all

agree that the technology is still very much in its first evolution, with Bailek stating that this communication is only currently happening in “a very basic, very fundamental way”.

For early birds seeking to catch the worm, understanding multi-agent structure and the data they disseminate is key. Innovators should seize the calm before the storm by making A2A communications a key focal point of their strategy, because although convincing consumers and businesses to delegate meaningful financial decisions to AI remains an ongoing challenge, when that psychological barrier falls, we’ll witness a fundamental shift in how money moves, how wealth accumulates and how financial institutions serve their customers.

In this new and quickly emerging future, the leading position won’t belong to those with the most capital or the longest history, but to those who most effectively harness the power of AI agents to make money work smarter, not harder.



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Keyhole surgery for modern banking transformation

By Tyler Pathe, Reporter, FinTech Futures

Business banking giants have spent decades perfecting their financial expertise, yet in the face of rising digital transformation challenges, many across the sector remain firmly anchored in manual processes with bulky legacy systems.

"The banks that have come furthest in terms of transformation are those who take a very customer-centric approach as an organisation before they think about the products themselves," Richard Ullenius, vice president of global banking and channels at CSG, tells *FinTech Futures* ahead of Sibos 2025 in Frankfurt, Germany.

THE REALITY OF BUSINESS BANKING

FinTech Futures met with Ullenius to discuss how agile leaders in corporate and institutional banking are intensifying efforts to modernise their capabilities while preserving substantial investments. During the conversation, he highlighted the stark contrast between retail banking's digital advances and the surprisingly old-fashioned operations in business banking.

Processes like "product bundling, pricing, ordering, fulfilment, and even sometimes billing, all continue to suffer very manual processes," he explains, citing a customer example where paper-based deal sheets required hard-coding into mainframes. The result is poor

customer experience, higher costs than needed and more complicated risk and regulatory management.

This approach is "massively labour-intensive, super slow, error-prone like hell," he notes, stating that while this thorough but time-intensive approach has served banks well for decades, today's business customers expect significantly faster turnaround times.

“The banks that have come furthest in terms of transformation are those who take a very customer-centric approach.”

Richard Ullenius

For Ullenius, several key pressures are now causing business banks to shift strategy in an effort to maintain a competitive market share. Evolving customer expectations are a given, but these are increasingly accompanied by emerging regulatory requirements that demand better data management, such as the Digital Operational Resilience Act, which came into effect for European institutions in January this year.

On top of this, competition from the challengers is heating up, with participants like

Tide, OakNorth, Monzo and Starling all making significant advancements that are set to ultimately diminish the long-inherent profitability of institutional operations.

THE COST TO SERVE CHALLENGE

However, there is still a promising opportunity for established banks to claw back a sizeable slice of market share, which Ullenius says can only be achieved by combining their deep industry expertise with new approaches to technology.

Banks can sharpen their competitive edge by first addressing their "cost to serve," which he defines as "the cost the bank has to service a particular customer, not just the personnel responding to the request, but everything in the bank coming together to service that customer."

Surprisingly, most banks lack real-time visibility into these costs. "I haven't met one single bank that can tell that with precision in real time," Ullenius shares. Instead, they rely on "a team of 10 to 15 really smart people with big Excel sheets" to calculate customer profitability.

When asked how banks can overhaul legacy processes and better identify this specific cost, Ullenius, who boasts extensive experience in both banking and telecommunications transformations, points to a three-step course of action for digital-savvy leaders to pursue.

A THOUGHTFUL THREE-STEP PLAN OF ACTION

First, he emphasises the importance of a customer-centric approach: "Unless you put the customer at the heart of what you're doing, you're constantly sitting back in the ivory tower developing stuff that you're hoping your customers are going to want."

This shift in perspective enables banks to develop solutions that address specific customer needs rather than simply pushing products. "What is it that the customer actually needs in their financing life that we have an opportunity to help them with?" is the question banks should be asking themselves, according to Ullenius.

Secondly, he advocates a data driven approach but cautions against boiling the ocean by simply pooling all data into data lakes. "It's not about putting all your data in a data lake and thinking that's going to give you actionable data in real time to solve this product problem," he explains.

Instead, every bank should take a pragmatic approach and "focus on the top three product use cases that are going to make you stand out to your customer," he explains. "Decide which data streams you need for that, decide how you're going to transform those so that they're actually usable."

He shares how one bank initially wanted to tackle 300 use cases simultaneously. His team advised them to start with high-impact scenarios only: "We are now going through the process of proving three use cases that

will have a big impact for one particular customer segment." This approach creates quick wins and helps to bring the customers and the organisation with you on the transformation, creating a flywheel effect.

Lastly, and to the benefit of risky "rip and replace" projects, Ullenius advocates for a thoughtful, layered transformation approach, that surrounds existing systems with new platforms. "Leave core banking systems in place," he advises the industry, highlighting the use of APIs to incorporate lightweight applications around existing infrastructures. Leveraging the strength of legacy systems built up over decades while embracing overall banking capabilities by layering in new capabilities on top enables a 'best of both worlds' approach.

“Focus on the top three product use cases that are going to make you stand out to your customer.”

Richard Ullenius

This approach, which Ullenius likens to keyhole surgery, will enable banks to deploy new technologies in record time, further accelerating agility and business development to differentiate them in the market – a transformation approach that carries much less risk, at higher pace, often self-funded and with quick wins for customers.

A REAL DEALMAKER

Perhaps most importantly, this three-step course of action will enhance the trusted relationships that have always been banking's cornerstone, allowing relationship managers to "bring products together from different parts of the bank" in real-time customer meetings, as described by Ullenius.

"This would get banks as close as they could possibly get to challengers like Tide, OakNorth and Monzo, but on the corporate side," he explains. "If banks come equipped with this very modern approach to do those deals, negotiations can be sealed in a matter of hours instead of weeks. That's a massively different experience for all involved."

As banks navigate this transformation journey, CSG offers a practical path forward based on over four decades of experience in complex digital transformations across industries.

At Sibos 2025, banking leaders can explore how CSG's layered approach enables institutions to modernise deal management, enhance pricing capabilities and streamline customer experiences without replacing core systems.

This methodology - focusing on high-impact use cases first - allows banks to prove business value quickly while delivering the digital experiences customers increasingly demand, ultimately helping financial institutions blend their trusted advisor status with the technological agility needed to thrive and succeed in today's competitive landscape.

Stablecoins and the future of value

By Dr Leda Glyptis, NED and author

Another year, another Sibos. And I don't know about you, but I am excited.

There's just something about Sibos. The movers, shakers, decision-makers and operators are all there, and although abstract debates are had... and strategic horizons are scanned... the tenor of the conversation is always different because the people in the room are the ones who will need to operationalise whatever we are talking about, be it ISO 20022 or CBDCs.

So, when they ask, *"Is this something I need to pay attention to, or another fad... because I am kind of busy here"*... it matters.

And we expect to be asked exactly that in this year's Future of Value debate on 30 September. The flagship Inntribe session is back focusing on stablecoins this year, but the spirit of our engagement remains the same as always. To quote Innes Macleod: "We expect people to come to the session with a lot of questions. We hope they leave with better questions."

We will stage a debate. We will hold a conversation. Do we have all the answers? I mean... does anyone? But if there is a line-up that stands a chance of having them, well... all I can say is: join us on the day. You won't regret it.

Because I have questions, as you would expect. And I have

“ Whether you see stablecoins as the currency of the entire digital asset space, a stepping stone to a larger transformation or the transformation itself, you probably can't afford to ignore this.

Leda Glyptis

a hell of a line-up to ask them to. And I don't know what their answers will be, but I know it will be interesting. And I expect I will be smarter by the end. And what more can you ask for?

If you are not already eyeballs-deep in stablecoins, you will still have noticed that the topic is de rigueur right now. It's actually hard to escape.

And you would be absolutely forgiven if you found yourself thinking 'here we go again'. Another gazillion-dollar opportunity. Another set of glossy reports issued by people who will never write a line of code or talk to a regulator. Another wave of hyperbole on social media before the next thing hits.

And yet the folks who've been working in this space for a while will tell you that you can't afford to ignore this one.

And it feels like they are right this time.

Whether you see stablecoins as the currency of the entire digital asset space, a

stepping stone to a larger transformation or the transformation itself, you probably can't afford to ignore this. Because, arguably, this is no longer about crypto at all but rather a new set of tools for corporate treasurers and CFOs, bankers and operators: this is about the next iteration of the real economy.

Or is it?

Because if that's the case, why is every T+2 conversation taking place in every office right now *not* including stablecoins in the solution set?

Because it could.

And, arguably, it should.

I don't know about you, but this is a hell of a meaningful use case with a brilliant tech-problem fit... while some of the use cases I see around payments or custody can only be described as... yawn. Faster horses, using incredibly exciting technology to gain marginal operating advantage and, although there's nothing wrong with that... I applaud it,

I agree with it, I support it. But... you know... also yawn.

Do it. But don't talk to me about it. Not on the Future of Value stage. If you have scored some incremental operational uplift, well done you, but there's no need to call the papers.

So why are we here?

Arguably exactly because we have the technology to solve a burning industry problem differently and yet we don't.

So why don't we?

Is it because your organisations' risk appetite remains as ravenous as it's always been? (Narrator: it is not ravenous at all.)

Is it because the maturity stablecoin conversations have reached is still constrained to its own part of the market? Not small. Not self-referential as such. But not exactly universal.

Yet. Maybe their corner of the market will be what the whole market looks like in 10 or 20 years.

And maybe it will not.

'We've been here before' say the cynics.

And they are not wrong. And they are not right.

'What happened to CBDCs anyway?' say the exhausted adoption-ready enthusiasts. 'Pick a lane'.

Are things evolving, changing or just proliferating and all the things will be happening at once

for a time and then are the breaks?

Or is the hesitation because, once we start going down the stablecoin route, we'd better have answers for the big questions:

What happens to monetary sovereignty?

What are the trade-offs we are making around money movement in a world that is more decentralised and more destabilised than it's been in a while?

Who controls programmable money?

Who loses in all this?

And where does all this... and all the other stuff you are dealing with (from T+2 and AI to DORA and digital identity)... meet? Is there a plan? (Narrator: there is no plan.)

“ So we need to be informed, we need to be engaged, we need to use the access, agency and authority our positions convey to be part of the conversation.

Leda Glyptis

Is there a vision of what the digital economy could look like?

Fintech and Digital Transformation, available to order [here](#), and Bankers Like Us: Dispatches from an Industry in Transition, available to order [here](#).

All opinions are her own. You can't have them – but you are welcome to debate and comment!

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From AI-assisted to AI-native finance

By Dave Wallace, founder, NMD+

The financial services industry is on the cusp of a transformation as significant as the shift from branch banking to the internet. The transition to AI-native finance is not a matter of if, but when, and understanding its implications is crucial for the future of the industry.

Over the last decade, artificial intelligence has crept into the sector, first in the form of fraud detection models, credit scoring enhancements, and customer service user experiences. These have been useful and, in some cases, critical, but they remain fundamentally *AI-assisted*. The business model, decision-making frameworks, and customer interactions are still largely human-led, with AI playing a supporting role.

“**Today’s financial services use AI to enhance human-led processes, but the future belongs to systems where AI makes decisions, manages products, and achieves outcomes autonomously.**”

Dave Wallace

What comes next will look very different. In an *AI-native* financial world, AI will not be an accessory but the architecture. Products and services will be conceived, designed, and operated with AI at the centre,

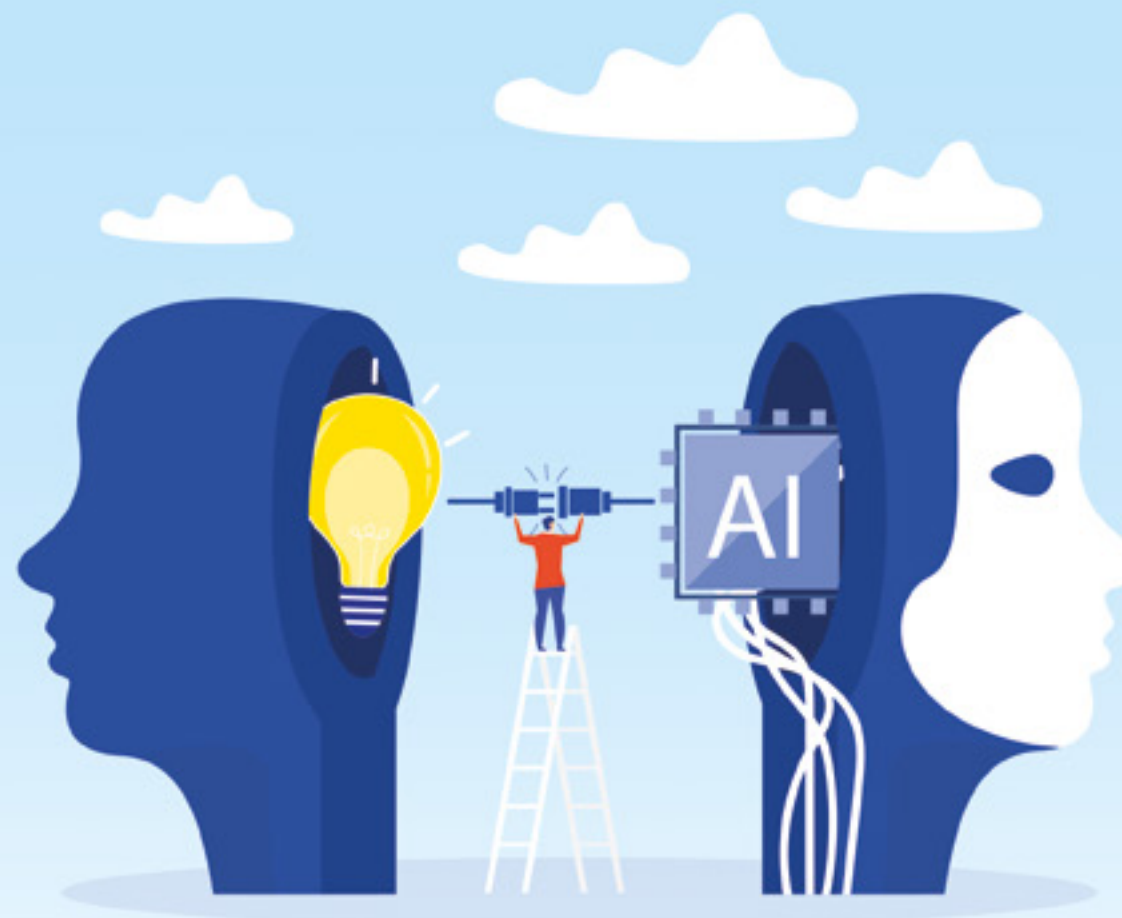
capable of autonomous decision-making, adaptation, and optimisation in real time. This will not be about doing old things faster. It will be about doing completely new things that were hitherto impossible. In this new paradigm, AI is not just a tool to enhance human-led processes but the primary driver of financial operations.

Imagine a world where your bank account optimises itself. It moves savings to the highest-yield account, refinances loans when rates drop, and invests spare cash, all without your input. This is the promise of AI-native finance, a transformation as profound as the shift from landlines to smartphones.

Today’s financial services use AI to enhance human-led processes, but the future belongs to systems where AI makes decisions, manages products, and achieves outcomes autonomously.

This is about reimagining finance for a new era, not upgrading old systems.

AI-assisted finance is the present form of finance. Now, AI is layered onto existing processes to improve efficiency, accuracy, or customer experience. The underlying workflows and regulatory models remain unchanged. For example, banks use AI to supplement traditional bureau data with alternative data, improving inclusion without rewriting credit policy. Chatbots and virtual assistants handle basic account queries



and transactions. Robo-advisers provide portfolio recommendations based on user inputs, with human oversight.

These systems work within the constraints of legacy infrastructure. Human actions trigger them: a transaction, a credit request, a customer query. AI’s role is reactive.

AI is boxed in by outdated processes and regulatory assumptions. It improves efficiency but does not fundamentally change the economics of banking, and it still relies on human governance at every step.

easy to justify on a cost-benefit basis. But they are also the limit of what legacy mindsets and systems can deliver.

AI-native financial systems are not an evolution of existing products; they are a reinvention of what those products are.

AI will characterise AI-native finance as the primary decision-maker, with human oversight existing but not directing every action. They will be continuous learning systems that evolve with every transaction, have real-time personalisation where products and pricing adjust dynamically to changing circumstances, and autonomously negotiate. Customer-facing AI agents will negotiate directly with bank AI agents on terms, rates, and products.

Imagine you have a personal AI agent whose mandate is to optimise your financial life. For example, moving savings to the highest-yield account, refinancing debt when rates drop, investing surplus cash instantly, and ensuring your portfolio is aligned with your values. It can work across multiple providers without you lifting a finger.

In corporate banking, AI agents will automatically forecast cash flow, execute hedges, and arrange supply chain finance. All in real time. Products will emerge where their pricing changes minute by minute based on market conditions, customer

behaviour, and risk signals.

Here, AI is not a feature within the product. **AI is the product.**

Moving to AI-native finance will demand more than swapping in more intelligent algorithms. The foundations will include cloud-native architectures designed to handle AI workloads, with scalable compute and storage for real-time decision-making. Limitless, streaming data infrastructure will process data continuously rather than in overnight batches. Synthetic data generation will train models without breaching privacy rules, enabling faster iteration. Interoperability standards will allow customer AI agents and bank AI agents to communicate securely. Hybrid AI models will combine large language models for reasoning with classical symbolic AI for precision and compliance. Embedded compliance will build explainability and audit trails into the AI layer.

The regulatory model for AI-assisted finance assumes a human-led process that AI supports. That assumption fails in an AI-native world, where autonomous systems may be making millions of micro-decisions a day.

Key questions arise: Who is responsible when an AI agent makes a bad call? How do you ensure dynamic, hyper-personalised pricing does not cross into bias and discrimination? Could interconnected AI agents

“**AI-native financial systems are not an evolution of existing products; they are a reinvention of what those products are.**”

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For many institutions, AI-assisted solutions are the safe and obvious choice. They are characterised by being low regulatory risk, minimally disruptive to operations, and

trigger systemic risks by acting in synchrony?

So, we are likely to see the rise of regulator agents; AI systems deployed by regulators to monitor and audit financial AI in real time. Policy movements are already underway. The UK, for instance, is building flexible AI sandboxes for financial services. The FCA is launching a “supercharged sandbox” specifically for this purpose, letting banks experiment with Nvidia’s AI tech in a controlled, supervised environment.

Regulators worldwide will need to transition from policing *processes* to policing *outcomes* in an AI-native world. This shift is not just a suggestion, but a necessity to ensure the safety and fairness of the financial landscape.

In an AI-native world, a bank is not simply a seller of products but an orchestrator of financial outcomes. This has profound implications. If customer AI agents can switch providers instantly, loyalty will collapse unless providers offer genuine differentiation. AI advisers might charge based on the savings or gains they deliver, not on assets under management. Banks could become AI platforms, hosting third-party financial agents. AI will relentlessly strip out inefficiencies, reducing some traditional revenue streams to zero.

The competitive advantage shifts from product design to speed of adaptation.

The path to AI-native finance is not without risks. Black box decision-making can undermine trust if customers cannot understand why AI acts as it does.

Systemic synchronisation risk emerges if AI agents learn similar strategies and may all act in the same way at the same time, destabilising markets.

Ethical drift may occur if AI optimises for compliance loopholes, meeting the letter

“ Financial institutions must evolve from seeing AI as a tool to seeing it as a colleague, and eventually as an autonomous business unit.

Dave Wallace

but not the spirit of regulation. Autonomous systems could create new cybersecurity attack surfaces with higher stakes. Customers may resist handing over complete control to an AI, even if it outperforms human decision-making. Trust, transparency, and demonstrable benefit will be essential for adoption.

The journey from AI-assisted to AI-native finance will be staged.

The process starts with augmentation. Optimising workflows through AI for onboarding, document processing, and fraud detection. Next, AI-native products will be developed in controlled environments, starting with AI-managed investment portfolios for select customer segments.

Finally, banks’ revenue streams and operating models will be transformed to align with AI-native principles.

This transition will require a profound cultural shift.

Financial institutions must evolve from seeing AI as a tool to seeing it as a colleague, and eventually as an autonomous business unit. It will also require a skills transformation: AI ethicists, AI product managers, prompt engineers, and data governance leaders will be as central to the bank of the future as risk managers and compliance officers are today.

Fast-forward a decade, and the competitive map of finance could look very different.

AI-native neobanks could potentially operate with almost no human operational layer, focusing humans on high-trust relationship roles. Cross-industry AI ecosystems may emerge where a customer’s AI agent manages finance, energy, travel, and healthcare holistically. Embedded finance may go beyond merchant payment integration to fully embedded, autonomous financial orchestration within other industries’ AI platforms. The winners will be those who build for adaptability and evolution, not those who merely have the “best” AI at a single point in time.

The move from AI-assisted to AI-native finance is more than an upgrade; it is a rewiring of the financial system. In AI-assisted finance, humans still drive, and AI sits in the passenger seat. In AI-native finance, AI is the driver, humans set the destination, and the car learns every road, every shortcut, and every hazard as it travels.

The banks and financial institutions that embrace this shift will design products and systems for autonomy, adaptability, and continuous learning from day one. Those that don’t will remain stuck with a horse-and-cart-engine hybrid, wondering why the rest of the world has driven off and left them behind.



Dave Wallace is a user experience and marketing professional who has

spent the last 25 years helping financial services companies design, launch and evolve digital customer experiences.

He is a passionate customer advocate and champion and a successful entrepreneur. Follow him on [X @davejwallace](#) and listen to the [Demystify](#) podcast he co-hosts.

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Regulation in payments: Regulatory compliance as an opportunity

By Katja Lehr, Managing Director of EMEA Payments and Commerce Solutions at JP Morgan Payments

The payments industry has been undergoing years of significant transformation. In this context, regulation and policy guidance have been pivotal in driving some of the most innovative developments in payments both in Europe and globally.

By establishing supportive and flexible frameworks, including robust risk mitigation guidelines and adequate standards, regulators can foster an open and competitive market. This encourages innovation while maintaining the integrity, resilience, and security of the financial system, ultimately benefiting all stakeholders involved.

As innovation in the payments sector continues to accelerate, there is a pressing need for regulation that intercepts the evolution of the industry, in a forward-looking but also future-proof manner. This involves anticipating emerging trends and challenges, engaging with industry stakeholders, and crafting policies that are adaptable to unforeseen changes.

The coordination of these regulatory efforts at an international level will become more important than ever, as cross-border payments are surging and the global economy becomes increasingly intertwined. Such a proactive approach to regulation can

ensure that the payments industry remains dynamic and competitive, enabling an environment where new solutions can flourish.

The ultimate objective is for payment service users to access services and products that meet their evolving needs. For treasurers, this translates into opportunities for smarter, faster, more agile, and secure payment solutions, optimised liquidity management, enhanced forecasting capabilities, and risk mitigation through compliance.

RECENT AND UPCOMING DEVELOPMENTS

The demand for seamless, more secure, and convenient payment solutions has been growing across all customer types, industries, and transaction flows, prompting both regulatory and technological evolution to keep pace.

• Instant payments:

The UK's Faster Payments Service (FPS) is a prime example of regulation-driven innovation, allowing near-instantaneous transactions. The European Union's Instant Payments Regulation, adopted in 2024, mandates euro instant payments, offering potential benefits like improved real-time cash management, faster payouts, and better forecasting. Beyond the UK and EU, instant

“As innovation in the payments sector continues to accelerate, there is a pressing need for regulation that intercepts the evolution of the industry, in a forward-looking but also future-proof manner.”

Katja Lehr

payments are on the rise around the world, with several countries implementing these payment systems as the foundational retail payment infrastructure of the future.

• Cross-border payments:

As the global economy becomes increasingly interconnected, cross-border payments have become a high priority for governments, businesses, and individuals alike. The Financial Stability Board's G20 Cross-Border Roadmap aims to enhance cross-border payments by 2027, with the purpose of making them faster, cheaper, more accessible, and transparent.

These objectives are pursued focusing on key areas such as interoperability, legal frameworks, and data exchange. In this perspective, several jurisdictions are undertaking bilateral and multilateral efforts to interlink their instant payment systems, to bring the benefits achieved domestically into the cross-border space. Project Nexus, an initiative by the Bank for International Settlements Innovation Hub, seeks to introduce a blueprint for global interoperability by connecting domestic instant payment systems for 60-second cross-border transfers.

• Distributed ledger technology (DLT) and digital assets:

Stablecoins and tokenised deposits are gaining popularity, combining the benefits of DLT with the reliability of traditional systems.

The Markets in Crypto-Assets Regulation (MiCAR) establishes a European framework for crypto-assets, fostering innovation and market trust.

• PSD3 and open banking:

As digital payments have become the new normal in the last decade, attracting new players to the market for payments, the European Union is updating and harmonising its foundational payments framework to enhance consumer protection, fraud prevention, and open banking. The new PSD3 and PSR1 acts will address institutional and functional components, reinforcing the European Banking Authority's competencies.

• Digital identity and EU digital wallets:

The European Digital Identity Regulation establishes a framework for pan-European digital identities and wallets, creating opportunities for financial institutions in areas like customer onboarding, payments, and stablecoins.

• The Single Currency Package:

This legislative proposal establishes a digital euro, offering a secure and inclusive public payment solution. It serves as a catalyst for digital payments while preserving the use of cash.

Altogether, these regulatory and industry initiatives aim to lay the foundations for a new era of payments.

“ **Transforming compliance through cross-functional collaboration can unlock new value, increasing customer trust and ensuring that standards are met across all markets.** ”

Katja Lehr

REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AS AN OPPORTUNITY GENERATOR

In today's world, payments and treasury teams must deal with a variety of challenges, from ever-evolving fraud and cyber threats to intensified competition, technology transformation, and a fast-changing macroeconomic and political dynamic which requires upgrading global operations management.

While regulatory compliance might be hard to navigate and resource-absorbing, a change in how we approach it offers an opportunity to deal with these challenges in new ways. Transforming compliance through cross-functional collaboration can unlock new value, increasing customer trust and ensuring that standards are met across all markets.

Moreover, compliance requirements can inform the development of new products

and solutions catering to each treasury team's unique needs, as well as external partnerships with banks, other Payment Service Providers (PSPs), and fintechs. For payment professionals, viewing regulation as an opportunity rather than a constraint becomes a strategic priority to lead ambidextrous organisations, able to run current payment products and services the right way while developing more efficient, transparent, and secure payment solutions for the future. By leveraging regulatory frameworks, financial professionals can drive their organisations towards greater innovation and competitiveness, positioning themselves at the forefront of the payments industry and delivering value at scale.

On the other hand, the ever-faster evolution of payments requires regulators to adjust

and expand their action into new territories (for example, entering the space of retail payment solutions with the development of a digital euro). In this perspective, a close collaboration with banks and PSPs - who are tasked with implementing regulatory change and own the relationship with the users of payment services - is crucial for policymakers to develop regulatory frameworks which are informed by market data and insights. Partnering with market players can also help regulators focus their efforts on sustainable and fit-for-purpose change, maximising the potential of new regulation to achieve key policy objectives.

A mindset change from cost to strategic investment and an enhanced partnership between regulators and the market to design and deliver change. These are the two key ingredients to convert regulatory compliance into a driving force for payments transformation, able to unlock unprecedented value for the entire ecosystem.

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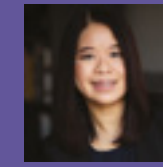
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Building tomorrow's banks today: How AI is becoming the operating system for financial services

By Theodora Lau, founder, Unconventional Ventures



Theodora Lau is the founder of Unconventional Ventures, a public speaker, and an advisor. She is

the author of *Banking on (Artificial) Intelligence* (2025) and co-author of *The Metaverse Economy* (2023) and *Beyond Good* (2021). She is also the host of *One Vision*, a podcast

on fintech and innovation. She was named one of American Banker's Most Influential Women in FinTech in 2023. She is also a regular contributor and commentator for top industry events and publications, including BBC News and Finovate. All opinions are her own. Follow Theodora on [X \(@psb_dc\)](#) and [LinkedIn \(Theodora Lau\)](#). Visit our [website](#) for more of her articles.

Remember 2007? Not for the financial crisis that was brewing, but for a device that almost seemed trivial at the time: a phone with a full touchscreen and no keyboard. Steve Jobs stood on stage and introduced the iPhone — three revolutionary products embedded in one device: a widescreen iPod with touch controls, a communications device, and a mobile phone.

While it was hugely popular — I lined up for it on the first day — it was also dismissed by some in the industry. Yet, within a decade, that singular moment had upended not only how we communicate, but how we live and how we work. It transformed how we bank, how we serve customers, and how we think about money movement. Mobile banking went from novelty to necessity. Fintech start-ups, enabled by the new mobile-first world, began unbundling bank services one by one.

“In an AI-powered world, data isn't just an asset. It is a competitive advantage — the primary means of value creation.”

Theodora Lau

Simply put, the iPhone did not just change banking — it created new industry verticals and fundamentally changed what banking could be.

Are we facing a similar inflection point with artificial intelligence (AI)?

AI AS THE NEW OPERATING SYSTEM

Some might say AI is the new oil — referring to the ability of the technology to transform data into insights that drive innovation. Others treat it as another tool in the tech stack — to be used to streamline operations here and optimise customer service there.

But it can be much more. Imagine what an operating system does: it manages system resources, enables applications to run, handles the flow of data between the machine and external devices, and protects the system and user data, just to name a few functions.

Now consider what AI is already doing in some organisations: orchestrating data flows, connecting siloed departments, streamlining operational processes, and monitoring data access and usage patterns in real time.

Remember the days when the primary bank is the centre of a consumer's financial universe? That world is long gone. Today's banking ecosystem looks more like a tube map — with fintechs, big tech, data providers, and

AI companies occupying key interchange stations of the network. These are not just vendors; rather, they are co-creators of the new banking experience.

Just as the iOS has enabled new ecosystem of apps and services that we could not have imagined — from ride hailing to mobile banking — AI as an operating system will enable new financial services and experiences that we have yet to conceive, if only we are willing to rethink our architecture instead of just bolting AI as another layer on top of our existing legacy.

THE DATA IMPERATIVE

Imagine this: A customer of nearly three decades at a major global bank still maintains three separate bank accounts, three ATM cards, and three online banking logins. And the bank bills them every year for a safety deposit box at a bank branch — with the records kept in a handwritten ledger kept in a tin box. Three decades of relationship data, disconnected.

This is not a story. But a real-life experience.

My own experience. And a missed opportunity.

In an AI-powered world, data isn't just an asset. It is a competitive advantage — the primary means of value creation. Every disconnected system, every data silo, every manual process isn't just inefficiency — it's competitive disadvantage that compounds daily.

The organisations that will thrive won't be those with the most data — but those who can orchestrate it most effectively to create value.

BEYOND DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION

We have spent the past decade on digital transformation — creating digital versions of analogue processes, online forms that mirror paper applications, and mobile apps that replicate, well, branch transactions.

We might have digitised banking. But we have not transformed it.

It is not about how AI can improve our current processes; rather, it's about what processes should exist in the AI-native bank. What might lending look like if we were to design it from scratch, with AI at the core?

What would customer service look like? Hopefully not a chatbot

that reads scripts, but AI that understands context, anticipates your needs before you ask, and yes, orchestrates services across the entire partner ecosystem.

The new banking OS.

“It is not about how AI can improve our current processes; rather, it's about what processes should exist in the AI-native bank.”

Theodora Lau

BUILDING TOMORROW'S BANKS TODAY

Getting there will require us to reimagine data as a living, breathing, and ever-evolving ecosystem. Every customer interaction, every transaction, every external signal — all orchestrated by AI to create value. Not just for the bank, but for the consumer.

How then can we best enable partners to create and be successful — as part of our new ecosystem, much like Apple's thriving app store platform, which enables developers and entrepreneurs access to an expanding universe of iPhone users? The platform thinking approach is sticky not because of the mobile device itself; rather, it's the services powered by a vast ecosystem of mobile apps,

media, and accessories in a tightly integrated environment which drives user engagement and loyalty.

Imagine a bank that not only extends student loans to medical students, but connects graduates with practicing doctors, helps secure loans for new practices, and provides wealth management services as their careers evolve.

Or a bank that connects homeowners with contractors in the construction industry, provides free personalised plans to renovate and future-proof their homes to make it more sustainable, provides advice on financing, and connects homeowners with reliable installers to put in the upgrades. Taking it one step further, imagine the bank automatically adjusting (lowering) the interest rate for the mortgage financing after the upgrades for the homes are complete.

Tomorrow's winners are not necessarily going to be the incumbents that can adopt technology the fastest; rather, it will be those who recognise that technology isn't just a tool, but a new lens through which banking services can be transformed.

Ultimately, it's about having the imagination and courage to build a new future rather than defending the past. Because the future is already here. And it's time to build new applications that will define the new OS — and banking's new chapter.

How banks are building the digital asset backbone of finance

By Christer Holloman, author and entrepreneur

The conversation around digital assets in the C-suites of global banks has shifted. For years, the question was speculative: why experiment with blockchain? That question has now been replaced with something more pragmatic and urgent: how to industrialize it at scale.

To explore this transformation, I met with executives who are building the foundations of tomorrow's financial system: Artem Korenyuk, who leads Citi's Enterprise Digital Assets team; Nelli Zaltsman, Executive Director and Head of Platform Settlement Solutions at Kinexys by JP Morgan; and Roger Bayston, Head of Digital Assets at Franklin Templeton. Their collective message was consistent. Digital assets are no longer experiments. They are becoming the financial plumbing of the future.

FROM SPECULATION TO STRATEGY

Korenyuk framed Citi's approach as enterprise-wide rather than siloed. He explained that the objective is to build a foundational platform underpinning every business line, built on reusability and scalability. Customers should interact with digital assets as seamlessly as they do with any other Citi product.

Zaltsman followed by noting that the most pressing gap for clients JP Morgan is solving is liquidity. Without advanced payment rails integrated with digital assets, she said, "you're missing half of the equation". She pointed to programmable

“ Much of the early hype around blockchain focused on cost reduction and process improvements, but the bigger prize lies in unlocking entirely new forms of value.

Christer Holloman

settlement, just-in-time funding, and de-risking transactions as key areas where the bank is delivering value.

Bayston, for his part, emphasised that Franklin Templeton sees digital assets as an infrastructure upgrade. "We've updated our transfer agency systems using blockchain. That means instant settlement and new features like intraday yield. We're proving you can breathe new life into core products by putting them on-chain," he said.

UNLOCKING NEW FORMS OF VALUE

What became clear in the discussion is that efficiency, while critical, is only the beginning. Much of the early hype around blockchain focused on cost reduction and process improvements, but the bigger prize lies in unlocking entirely new forms of value. Bayston pointed to fractionalisation, asking what it would look like if clients could own a fraction of a sports team or another non-traditional asset they felt emotionally attached to. Tokenisation, he argued, expands the investment universe far beyond traditional securities.

Korenyuk highlighted interoperability, stressing Citi's work on industry-wide initiatives

like the Regulated Liability Network. True value, he said, will only come when cash, securities, and collateral move seamlessly across ecosystems.

Zaltsman underscored programmability, explaining how clients can now automate treasury functions, moving liquidity across jurisdictions in real time, reducing borrowing needs, and unlocking capital that was previously trapped.

OVERCOMING CULTURAL AND REGULATORY BARRIERS

Each executive was candid about the challenges of making this shift. For Citi, Korenyuk said the key was governance. From the start, they built a dedicated framework that combined blockchain specialists with seasoned bankers and risk professionals. "You can't scale MVPs, you need institutional-grade infrastructure," he stressed.

At Kinexys by JP Morgan, Zaltsman described the cultural hurdle of separating technology from speculation. Educating the bank that tokenised deposits are not stablecoins and ensuring consistency across departments was critical to win internal buy-in.

Bayston highlighted regulation as the single biggest barrier his team faced. "That changed dramatically this year," he

explained, noting that the focus has now shifted to commercialisation and scaling products like Benji into new markets and use cases.

PLATFORMS IN ACTION

The conversation turned practical when each leader outlined flagship initiatives already in market. Citi's approach is anchored by the Citi Integrated Digital Asset Platform (CIDAP), a foundational, enterprise-wide platform that serves as the "middleware" for all of the firm's digital asset initiatives. As Korenyuk explains, CIDAP was built on the core principle of reusability, ensuring that foundational capabilities like tokenisation, custody, and blockchain connectivity are built once and can be leveraged by any business line. This accelerates time-to-market and prevents duplicative effort. A critical design feature is its integration with existing client systems. The goal, Korenyuk notes, is for customers to "interact with digital assets without impacting the way they interact with Citi and our products and services today". This platform-first strategy is the engine behind live products like Citi Token Services, which enables 24/7 cash mobility for institutional clients, and a series of digital debt issuances.

Franklin Templeton has focused on upgrading core market infrastructure, using a money market fund as a test case. Their product, Benji, is a tokenised US government money market fund that represents shares as a token in a digital wallet rather than in a traditional brokerage account. Bayston explains that this is more than a simple change in format; it's an update of the underlying transfer agency infrastructure to use blockchain technology. This upgrade unlocks powerful new features. First is near-instantaneous transferability of shares, as fast as a new block is added to the chain. Second is a novel "intraday yield" feature, which calculates and delivers yield based on the precise number of seconds an investor

holds the token, a significant departure from the traditional 24-hour accrual model. This has unlocked new markets, particularly in crypto-native derivatives where Benji is being adopted as a yield-bearing alternative to stablecoins for collateral.

“ The discussion underscored that the era of digital asset tourism is over. Banks that continue to tinker at the margins risk irrelevance.

Christer Holloman

JP Morgan's Kinexys is a dedicated business unit for all blockchain-related activities, organised into four core segments: payments, assets, information, and research and development. As Nelli Zaltsman details, the payments arm is focused on providing advanced, blockchain-based payment rails to facilitate liquidity in both the digital asset market and traditional institutional landscape. A cornerstone product is the blockchain deposit account, which offers clients 24/7 availability and programmability, which can be used to rebalance liquidity between global jurisdictions near-instantaneously, as well as settle commercial transactions, including synchronised payments for digital assets being settled on blockchains outside Kinexys. This is complemented by the JPMD deposit token, currently in pilot, which is also a key part of their interoperability strategy. The Kinexys Digital Assets division is a tokenisation platform supporting applications for intraday repo, digital debt issuance, and the Tokenised Collateral Network (TCN), which enables the rapid deployment and retrieval of collateral. The entire ecosystem is designed to de-risk settlement and provide clients with the benefit of "just-in-time funding", allowing funds to remain in interest-bearing

accounts until the moment they are needed.

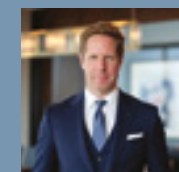
THE NEXT FRONTIERS OF GLOBAL FINANCE

When asked about the near-term future, all three leaders pointed to opportunities that go beyond incremental gains. Zaltsman sees the real-world asset market as pivotal, predicting that tokenisation will struggle to scale without stronger liquidity and payment optionality, which Kinexys by JP Morgan is intent on providing.

Korenyuk emphasised the acceleration of tokenised securities, where programmability can transform the entire trade lifecycle. Bayston highlighted collateral markets as a fast-moving frontier, recalling that only two years ago he did not expect money funds to be widely used as collateral; today, it is becoming mainstream.

The discussion underscored that the era of digital asset tourism is over. Banks that continue to tinker at the margins risk irrelevance. Leaders are building enterprise platforms, educating their organisations, and scaling live products. The lessons from Citi, JP Morgan, and Franklin Templeton are clear: build once and reuse everywhere, treat governance and education as first-class investments, and look beyond efficiency to entirely new markets and product categories.

The race is no longer about if digital assets will matter, but who will control the infrastructure of the next financial era.



Christer Holloman has been writing about finance and technology since 2012,

first for Sky News and later as the author of five books published by Wiley and Pearson. His most recent book is the Amazon bestseller, *How Banks Innovate*. He holds an MBA from the University of Oxford and is a popular keynote speaker.

AI is already disrupting financial services, but there's more to come

By Jas Shah, fintech product leader

You cannot go anywhere without seeing some mention of AI in this day and age.

You could argue fintech has an even greater concentration of companies 'using' AI than any other sector. And I say 'using' because there are different levels when it comes to the leveraging of AI.

There's no doubt AI is disrupting financial services (FS). In fact, rules and knowledge-based decision-making systems, a form of narrow AI, have been around for decades. I helped build a couple in the early part of my career.

The decision-making horizontal is just one of the key transformation areas. There are a few others that map neatly to the challenges they face, and the power this new age of AI models brings.

STRENGTHS OF AI IN FINANCIAL SERVICES

Before looking at the transformation horizontals, let's first look at the strengths of AI in FS. At its heart, AI gives financial services four superpowers that traditional systems could only approximate:

1. Prediction at scale – From fraud detection to credit scoring to churn modelling, AI thrives on making sense of patterns in messy, high-volume data.

2. Pattern recognition – It can surface correlations and anomalies across millions of transactions or market signals in real time; the kind of thing no human analyst (or only the genius-level human analysts) could ever see.

3. Fast generation – This goes beyond analysis. AI can create investment reports, marketing copy, customer

communications, or even wireframes or draft code for new products faster than humans.

4. Automation with intelligence – Unlike rigid rule-based processes, AI learns and adapts. The more data it ingests, the sharper its recommendations and the more efficiently it executes tasks.

These strengths map directly to the biggest challenges FS firms face: massive and fragmented data sets, complex manual processes, high-stakes decision-making, and ever-rising customer expectations. Which brings us neatly to the four front-to-back transformation horizontals where AI's impact is most visible today (although I'm starting this list backend to frontend).

FOUR KEY TRANSFORMATION HORIZONTALS

1. Data processing

Every financial services organisation is, at its core, a data company. The problem is most of them are *bad* at handling it. From customer interactions to market movements to regulatory filings, data is messy, siloed, and often out of date. Many firms don't even know which data points are powering critical functions, a kind of *data ignorance*.

AI is turning this weakness into an opportunity:

- Automating the capture of structured and unstructured data.
- Spotting anomalies and suggesting cleansing steps.
- Surfacing hidden trends in existing structures.
- Dynamically building APIs to normalise disparate feeds.

Example: Instead of waiting months for engineers to build an API integration with a new data vendor, AI can ingest multiple formats and generate a working, standardised API layer in days, speeding up embedded finance conversations and onboarding new sources.

2. Process optimisation

Financial processes are riddled with manual steps, from reviewing loan applications to reconciling reports to testing changes across interconnected systems. These bottlenecks slow innovation and introduce errors.

AI applied here means:

- Automating reconciliations, reporting, and regulatory assessments.
- Generating financial statements that adhere to accounting standards.
- Running instant impact analysis when one system change affects dozens of others.

Example: At a large bank, a tweak to a bond valuation model can trigger a months-long test cycle across dependent systems. An AI-driven impact engine could instantly map those dependencies and highlight risks, cutting testing times dramatically.

“ Every financial organisation is, at its core, a data company. The problem is most of them are bad at handling it.

Jas Shah

3. Decision-making

Every FS product hides a decision engine: approving credit, allocating assets, flagging fraud, or setting dynamic interest rates. These systems are complex, and historically they've been slow to evolve.

AI's impact is transformative:

- Analysing broader data sets for risk assessment.

- Detecting fraud patterns in real time.
- Optimising portfolios and surfacing new investment opportunities.
- Constantly refining underwriting and pricing models.

Example: A wealth management platform using expert rules today could plug in predictive AI models tomorrow to anticipate the impact of political events on portfolios — adjusting positions before market shifts hit.

4. Customer experience

The visible frontier of AI is the customer interface. People now expect seamless, personalised, 24/7 service, and AI is increasingly the engine delivering it.

What it looks like:

- Smarter chatbots and virtual assistants reducing wait times.
- Hyper-personalised recommendations based on real-time data.
- Translating complex disclosures (like mortgage KFI) into plain language.
- Analysing in-app behaviour to decide which features stay and which get cut.

Example: A retail bank could spot that a customer browsing mortgage rates has the financial profile to pre-qualify, run eligibility automatically, and present a mortgage-in-principle within the app, complete with a simplified explanation of the fine print.

“What’s clear from looking across these horizontals is that AI in financial services is still in its early innings.”

Jas Shah

TRANSFORMATION HORIZONTALS RANKED

There’s only so much value you can get across in a short article, so what I’ve outlined might be a recap rather than mind-blowing insight, but with the key transformation areas, there’s a reason I’ve alluded to front-to-back AI innovation.

Because when I look at the transformational impact of AI in FS in those key areas, there’s been *some* innovation in the front (CX and decision-making), but there’s still a long way to go across the board, and in certain cases (the backend), we’ve barely scratched the surface.

So here’s that list but ranked from ‘use cases seen but some more to come’ to ‘barely scratched the surface’.

1. Customer experience (most visible innovation so far)

We’ve seen AI-powered chatbots, personalised nudges, automated financial advice, and smarter onboarding journeys make their way into production. Granted it’s not at a huge scale, but big organisations like Stripe are using AI for payment page optimisation, directly facing off to merchants and improving CX.

2. Decision-making (lots of innovation historically)

Credit scoring, fraud detection, and portfolio optimisation have all been turbocharged by AI. Many fintechs are building their IP directly around smarter decision engines. That said, regulation, explainability, and integration with legacy core systems still hold this back from its full potential.

3. Data processing (lots more innovation to come)

Despite all the hype, most FS firms still struggle with the basics. Lots of fragmented systems with poor data quality, and lack of consistent governance. AI’s potential here is enormous, from cleansing and normalising to dynamically building APIs, but most projects are still in pilot mode. Until firms fix their data foundations, everything else is built on shaky ground.

4. Process optimisation (barely scratched the surface)

Some progress has been made in automating reconciliation, regulatory reporting, and impact analysis, but it’s often patchy, implemented at departmental level rather than across organisations. The next leap will be end-to-end intelligent automation that reduces months-long workflows to days. We’re not there yet.

LOOKING AHEAD

What’s clear from looking across these horizontals is that AI in financial services is still in its early innings. The frontend has seen some exciting wins: smoother onboarding, smarter decision engines, and more personalised customer journeys. But those are just the visible tip of the iceberg.

The real transformation will come when AI digs deeper into the foundations of FS. When data flows seamlessly across organisations. When processes are optimised end-to-end rather than patched department by department. When decision systems aren’t just automated but adaptive, explainable, and trusted.

That shift won’t happen overnight. It requires cultural change, new governance models, and a willingness to move beyond the hype into the harder, messier work of integration. But the prize is enormous: faster innovation cycles, more resilient infrastructure, and financial products that actually anticipate and serve customer needs in real time.

So yes, AI has already made its mark. But in many ways, **we’ve barely scratched the surface.**

The next wave of innovation in financial services won’t be about slapping an AI badge on a chatbot. It will be about reimagining the entire value chain, from the back office to the customer’s pocket.

And for those building in fintech today, that means the most exciting work is still to come.



a product specialist, starting out in tier 1 financial institutions and going

Jas Shah has been developing products in FS for nearly 20 years, initially as an engineer and predominantly as

on to help build challenger banks and PFM apps, scaling an SME lender as their Chief Product Officer, and continuing to advise and provide hands on expertise for organisations looking to create innovative products. Follow Jas on [X @jas_shah](#) and [LinkedIn \(Jas Shah\)](#), and subscribe to his bi-weekly newsletter, [Fintech: Under the Hood](#).

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To find out more, talk to:

Sam Hutton

Head of Sales

sam.hutton@fintechfutures.com

+44 208 052 0434

Kate Stevenson

Business Development Manager

kate.stevenson@fintechfutures.com

+44 782 593 0099

Orchestrating the new economy: Ecosystems' interoperability will define tomorrow's banking

By Mahesh Kini, Global Head of Cash Management, Standard Chartered

In recent years, the global economy has become increasingly interconnected, powered by data-rich, AI-driven solutions that have raised expectations for “always-on”, real-time ways of doing business.

Multinationals now demand instant treasury visibility and intelligent liquidity optimisation, enabled by ever faster and more complex digital cross-border operations. In this context, tomorrow's banking is being defined by players that are able to orchestrate the various ecosystems that underpin the new economy. Each of these ecosystems is an intricate tapestry connecting banks, fintechs, regulators and corporates across geographies, creating the infrastructure on which global commerce now depends.

Over the past decade, the technical foundations for this shift have largely been put in place. The rise of API banking, instant payments and more recently, blockchain-based tokenised settlements and deposits in more mature markets are enabling “always-on” treasury operations and real time cross-border transactions, paving the way for the rise of a wide range of innovative treasury management use cases.

Technology and data analytics capabilities are now widely available. Many regulators and industry bodies are setting up sandboxes to test, conceptualise

and deliver new solutions. However, various markets and various stakeholders are, understandably, at different stages in the journey.

While fintechs and other start-ups have injected speed and fresh thinking, the responsibility for solving the hard problems still sits with the banking industry. International banks are key catalysts because they deeply understand regulation, run critical infrastructure and, in collaboration with fintechs and industry bodies, can convene coalitions across markets.

FROM INNOVATION TO OPERATIONAL REALITY
The last decade has been a period of rapid technical delivery. Innovations such as tokenised settlements, digital assets and cross-border blockchain-based payment networks have progressed from pilot concepts to replicable, production-scale applications.

At the same time, the global rollout of ISO 20022 is creating a shared, structured and interoperable data language, laying the foundation for a common, advanced financial language that enables interoperability across ecosystems. This shift supports better liquidity management and reduces friction in cross-border payments, making them safer and more efficient. The impact is already visible in multilateral ISO 20022-native

interbank networks like Partior's platform, which has completed euro-denominated cross-border transactions between Hong Kong and Singapore in a live production environment. Banks are also modernising their core infrastructure to be compatible with and power these new capabilities.

The challenge now is to get these ecosystems to scale globally. Notably, recent pilots of tokenised settlements in the Singapore dollar (SGD) and Hong Kong dollar (HKD), carried out within regulatory sandboxes such as the Monetary Authority of Singapore's Project Guardian and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority's Project Ensemble, are already demonstrating the possibility of “always-on” treasury operations for corporates, while facilitating real-time cross-border transactions.

On the other hand, digital assets now encompass tokenised payments, deposits and trade finance assets, while custody solutions for corporate and institutional clients have been launched in key financial centres such as the UK and Luxembourg.

Regulatory advances continue to gather pace, with multiple bilateral and multilateral pilots – many coordinated under the Bank for International Settlements' (BIS) innovation initiatives – actively exploring how tokenised money and

assets can interoperate across jurisdictions. For instance, Project Mariana has trialled the use of wholesale central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) for cross-border settlement using decentralised finance protocols between France, Singapore and Switzerland, while Project Agorá is bringing together central and commercial banks to test how tokenised deposits and central bank money can transact on a common ledger. Together, these regulatory and industry-led efforts are paving the way for scalable and more trusted digital asset markets.

“ **The challenge now is to get these ecosystems to scale globally.**

Mahesh Kini

THE VISIBLE SPEED BUMPS
Yet despite these advances, the main barriers to interoperability are no longer technological – they are institutional and structural. Even when systems can connect, regulatory, legal and data governance variations create significant friction.

This isn't just a case of adapting to new technology. Data governance, policies and laws across jurisdictions add further complexity – from variations in privacy rules

between markets, to sovereignty requirements for local data storage, to the security implications of transmitting real-time transaction data across borders.

The journey from ‘just in case’ to ‘just in time’ treasury management requires accuracy in cash forecasting and the management of accounts receivables and payables as well as sufficient intraday liquidity and advanced cash management systems connected to banking payment platforms via API. While a growing number of companies are considering these upgrades, adoption has been gradual, and progress is unfolding at very different speeds.

Finally, the cultural and operational mindset of the industry must shift from traditional bilateral correspondent banking relationships to multilateral platforms where multiple banks and fintechs collaborate in real time to conceptualise, test and introduce solutions that form the blueprint for tomorrow's banking relationships. This demands not only constant infrastructure evolution, but also a deeper shift in how institutions view cooperation and competition.

Overcoming these barriers will require the industry to balance convergence and competition, moving from closed, proprietary systems to shared, trusted and transparent frameworks. Institutions with deep expertise

across multiple ecosystems are well placed to act as orchestrators and catalysts, connecting diverse players – from nimble fintech innovators to specialist banks – in ways that create value for all.

THE BLUEPRINT FOR TOMORROW'S BANKING

The technology is ready, but the decisive work now lies in aligning laws, standards and trust so that today's thriving ecosystems can operate more efficiently, effectively and securely. Accelerating legal and regulatory alignment across jurisdictions, introducing common data-sharing frameworks that protect privacy and security and ensuring a universal common language for diverse financial ecosystems to talk to each other will be the “tide that lifts all boats”.

The institutions that will define the next phase of global banking will be those that strengthen every network they connect to, adapt to the evolving demands of their clients and support industry-wide collaboration to drive seamless, safe and efficient connectivity of banking ecosystems. By acting as catalysts and facilitators, they will create a more resilient and efficient global financial system – one that reflects both the complexity of today's markets and the bright possibilities of tomorrow.

How blockchain is unlocking borderless transactions

By Cameron Emanuel-Burns, Reporter, FinTech Futures

As we approach this year's Sibos conference, the industry's attention is focused on the latest innovations on the horizon for financial services and which technologies are continuing to revolutionise the industry.

While blockchain technology gained prominence through cryptocurrencies and digital assets, its applications have expanded considerably since its emergence in the late 2000s. The technology has increasingly demonstrated value in facilitating faster, more secure transactions through decentralised systems.

Cross-border payments represent one of blockchain's most promising growth areas. Financial institutions are avidly exploring blockchain-based solutions to address longstanding challenges in international transfers - issues stemming from the inherent complexity of moving money across different countries, currencies, and regulatory frameworks.

In this article, FinTech Futures examines the intersection of blockchain technology and cross-border payments. We consult industry experts to forecast future developments and identify the most significant barriers currently limiting blockchain adoption in international payment systems.

BLOCKCHAIN BENEFITS FOR CROSS-BORDER TRANSACTIONS

A key advantage of blockchain when it comes to international payments is reduced transaction

costs. As Vibhor Narang, head of cash structured solutions development for the UK and Europe at Standard Chartered, explains: "A blockchain transaction is a peer-to-peer transfer on a single shared ledger, which brings the cost down to a small network fee, often just pennies."

“Blockchain is making cross-border payments faster, more cost-effective, and transparent.”

Kent Henderson

Moreover, cross-border payments that historically took days can now be authorised and settled within minutes using blockchain. Rather than utilising banking networks, blockchain creates direct payment corridors that eliminates the need for multiple intermediaries. Its decentralised nature also enables 24/7 availability.

According to Kent Henderson, VP of product management at Mangopay: "Blockchain is making cross-border payments faster, more cost-effective, and transparent. These qualities are essential to global platforms processing thousands to hundreds of millions of transactions per year."

"These payments are also increasing trust and transparency for international

payments. Stablecoins, in particular, are solving the issue of volatility experienced on most coins. Meanwhile, blockchain offers opportunities through smart contracts, which execute based on certain events occurring (e.g. a seller receiving a payment once a delivery company has verified that the goods are being shipped)", continues Henderson.

IMPACT ON GLOBAL FINANCIAL INCLUSION

Recent data suggests nearly 70% of the world's population has access to the internet. However, despite this, a significant portion remains unbanked or underbanked.

A significant positive impact blockchain may have is reducing the gap between emerging markets and established ones, thanks to its ability to open financial services to anyone with an internet connection.

"I'm optimistic that in the future, blockchain will support the growth of international commerce by lowering barriers for small businesses and entrepreneurs to sell across borders. For many, access to stable digital currencies means not only saving on transaction costs but also plugging directly into global commerce in a way that was previously out of reach," says Henderson.

Looking at Europe in particular, Henderson states: "It has become a magnet for workers building livelihoods in ride-hailing, delivery, and other platform jobs. Many of these workers lose a

significant share of their earnings to platform payout fees or high-cost remittances. Blockchain and stablecoins can help by cutting those costs and speeding things up. For a workforce that's already digitally native, this can help Europe match opportunity with financial inclusion."

Henderson notes that regions looking to promote financial inclusion are becoming "hotbeds of payments innovation", highlighting the uptake in mobile money services in Africa and the rapid adoption of digital wallets in Asia as evidence of how technology can "unlock new ways of participating in the economy".

OBSTACLES TO ADOPTION

Despite the potential and advantages of integrating blockchain payments as a global standard, only 4% of the global population are engaging with blockchain, according to statistics from Demandsage.

"Scalability, interoperability, and varying regulatory and legal frameworks, across various jurisdictions, are being addressed to bolster the integration of this technology. Yet, adoption in the banking sector remains slow," explains Narang.

Standard Chartered is currently looking to bridge this gap by "harmonising standards, piloting new models with regulatory authorities, and championing transparent, risk-management solutions", continues Narang.

For Henderson, regulation remains the biggest obstacle hindering mainstream adoption. "It is not only about governing blockchain technologies responsibly, but also about building trust in the system. For example, the US has taken steps to regulate stablecoin issuers by requiring proof of reserves, reassuring users that the digital assets they hold are properly backed. That kind of regulatory clarity is needed more widely if blockchain is to scale."

FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

As is often the case within the fintech space, technology innovation is happening on a daily basis.

Narang describes how Standard Chartered's collaboration with Singapore-based fintech Partior has yielded significant results. Last year, the bank completed Euro-denominated cross-border transactions between Hong Kong and Singapore, making it the first Euro settlement bank to utilise Partior's global unified ledger infrastructure. According to Narang, this achievement "brings us closer to our goal of providing real time, 24/7 flows at scale for corporates and financial institutions".

“I'm optimistic that in the future, blockchain will support the growth of international commerce by lowering barriers for small businesses and entrepreneurs to sell across borders.”

Kent Henderson

In addition, Standard Chartered recently partnered with Ant International to complete the first blockchain-based settlements in Singapore dollars and Hong Kong dollars through Ant's Whale platform. This development was described at the time as a "significant step forward towards instant and 24/7 treasury management". The collaboration between the British banking institution and Ant International on blockchain cross-border settlement technology dates back to 2018, when the Chinese company initiated a remittance solution with Standard Chartered.

Meanwhile, Henderson predicts that "programmable wallets are set to be one of the most transformative applications of blockchain in payments". These wallets extend beyond simple fund storage to serve as infrastructure that is capable of automating complex multi-party payment processes. This allows platforms to "route payments instantly and securely, removing many of the delays and costs associated with legacy systems", says Henderson.

Another space where blockchain wallets show promise is in currency conversion. Henderson adds that "a programmable wallet infrastructure enables platforms to control when and how FX takes place, reducing fees and providing far greater transparency".

CONCLUSION

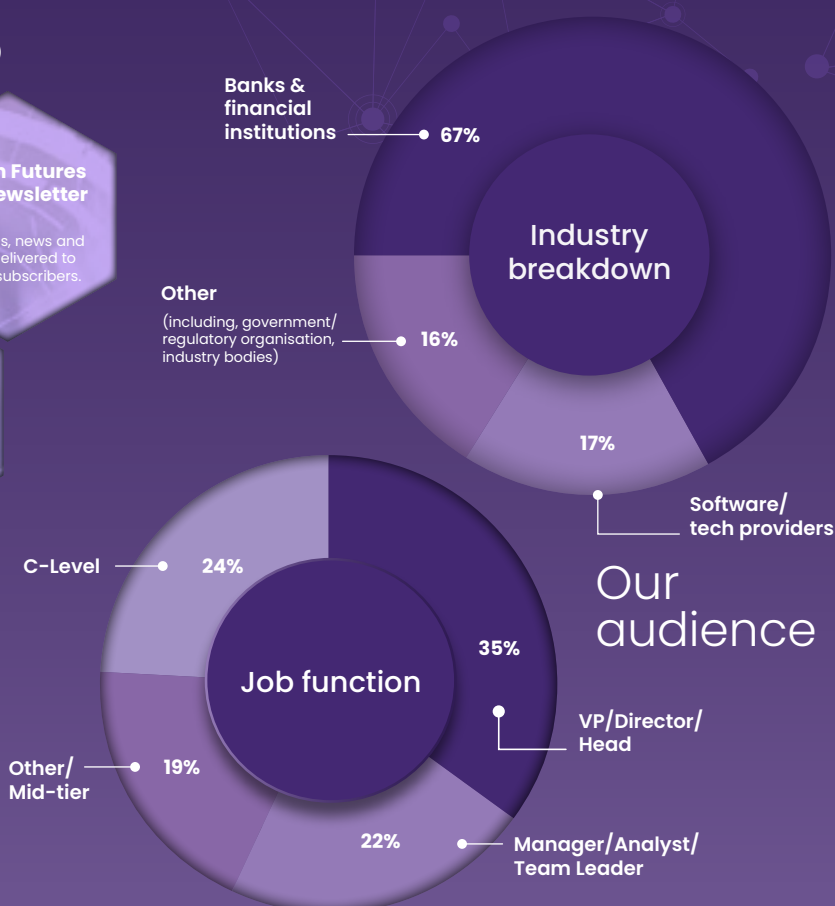
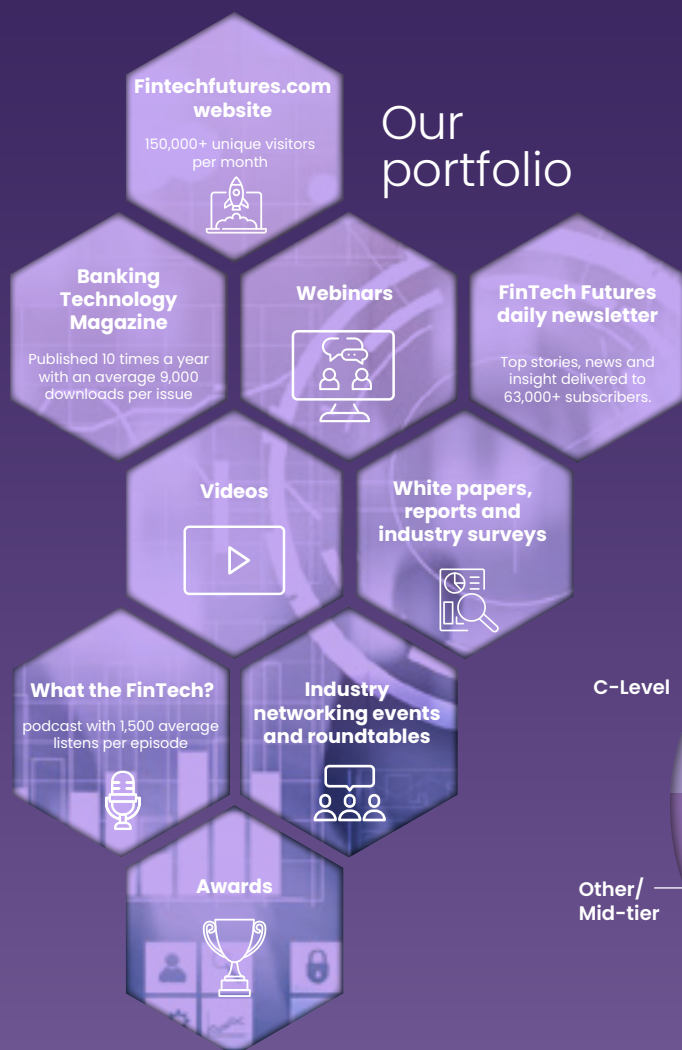
Blockchain technology offers a number of potential advantages for cross-border payments, including faster international transfers and reduced costs, but also key is its ability to provide financial access to underserved populations.

Whether it's helping small businesses conduct international trade, helping migrant workers send money back home to their families, or mitigating currency fluctuations in emerging markets, this technology has significant potential.

However, for blockchain to effectively challenge established payment systems, more collaboration is needed worldwide to further develop and test the technology while global regulators need to establish clear guidelines for businesses.

As Narang states, moving forward, collaboration between major banks and financial institutions will be essential for "driving responsible innovation to establish secure, interoperable networks that are shaping the future of payments".

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Sam Hutton

Head of Sales

sam.hutton@fintechfutures.com

+44 208 052 0434

Kate Stevenson

Business Development Manager

kate.stevenson@fintechfutures.com

+44 782 593 0099