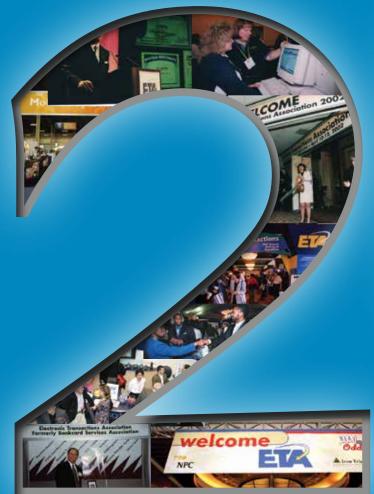
# TRANSASSOCIATION THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE VEGACTIONS ASSOCIATION



**ETA Celebrates a Quarter Century Serving the Payments Industry** 

Milestones brought to you by IRIS CRM



#### **ALSO INSIDE:**

The State of Cryptocurrency **PAGE 18** 

**Mid-Year Advocacy Update** PAGE 9

**Ethereum's Vinay Gupta PAGE 32** 

# Each Click is a Residual Payment.



Authorize. Net has paid out more residual payments than any other payment gateway. Contact us to learn why.

Call 1.866.437.0491 or visit www.authorize.net





# NON-CASH PAYMENT SOLUTIONS AVAILABLE ANYTIME, ANYWHERE

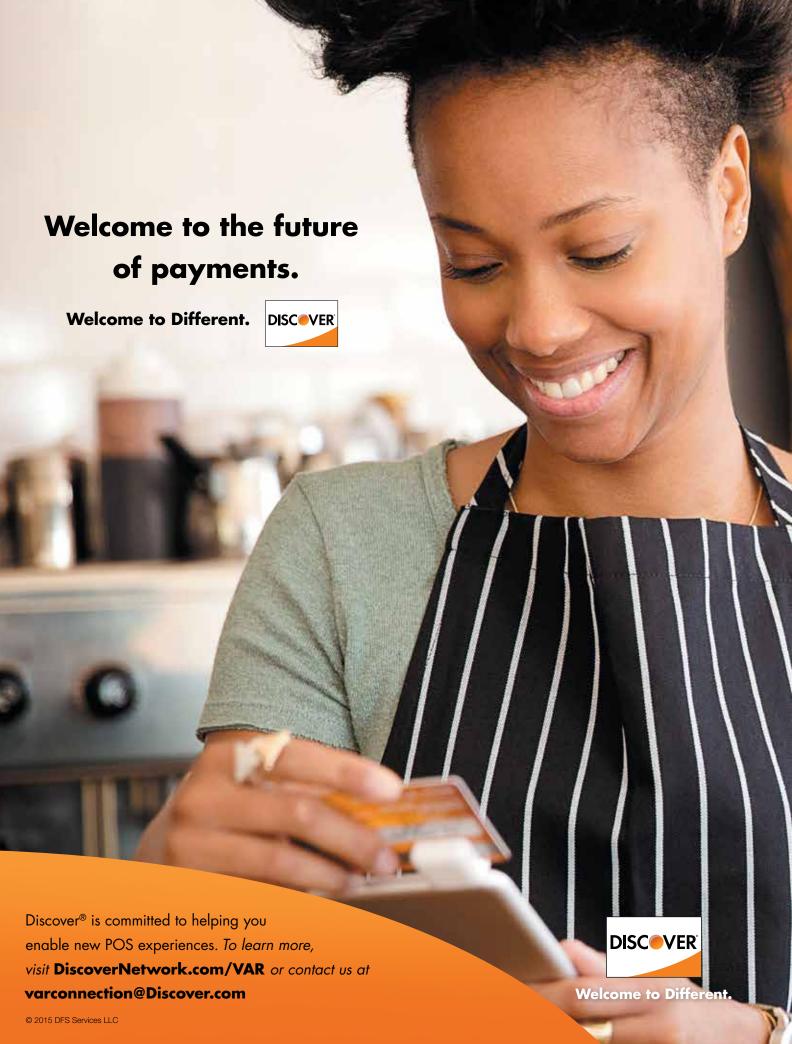
As a leader in the payments industry, our mission is to forge partnerships through our innovative, reliable and secure payment solutions. We deliver value-added products and services and process over 50 billion dollars in transaction volume annually. These customized solutions reach more than 400,000 merchant businesses, in a variety of industries and sizes worldwide.

Our strong infrastructure and state-of-the-art payment platforms ensure safe and secure payment transactions, allowing us to provide the most advanced payment options needed in the market today.

- > Card Processing Services
- > Smart Mobile Payments
- > Fraud & Security Prevention
- > Risk Management
- > Accelerated Funding
- > Integrated Solutions

- > E-commerce Solutions
- > Cash Advancements
- > Online Payment Acceptance
- > Recurring Billing
- > Merchant Reporting
- > Gift and Loyalty

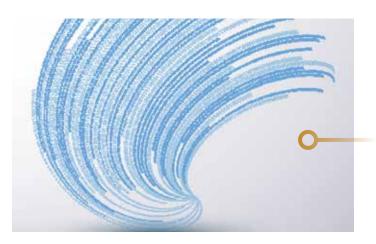
Smart partnerships build success.



# contents







#### features

#### 11 25 Years of ETA Excellence

By Ed McKinley and Josephine Rossi

During the past quarter century, ETA has grown from a small group of like-minded professionals to the leading global organization connecting and advocating for the payments community. Hear from past presidents as they share their personal reflections on the growth and future of ETA and its members.

Milestones brought to you by IRIS CRM

#### 18 Slow Road to Consumer Adoption

By Julie Ritzer Ross

While investors are clearly enthused about Bitcoin, statistics show that U.S. consumers are not. With a still shaky reputation and less-than-compelling incentives, the cryptocurrency has years to go before mainstream acceptance is possible, say experts.

### 24 Transaction Trends Exclusive CE Series: Finding Bitcoin

By Ed McKinley

Although the industry has yet to strike Bitcoin gold, payments professionals should learn how it works and benefits retailers, and become familiar with its potential outside of payments. Overstock.com accepts the cryptocurrency and offers a fascinating potential use case example. After you read the article, be sure to take the online quiz to earn two CE credits!

#### departments

- 4 @ETA Announcements and ideas from ETA's CEO Jason Oxman
- 6 Intelligence Vital facts and stats from the electronic payments world
- 9 Politics & Policy Timely political, economic, and advocacy updates affecting your business
- 29 Comments

Thoughts on cyber liability and exposures across the payments industry

- 31 Ad Index
- **People** Vinay Gupta explains "smart contracts" and introduces "ether," a cryptocurrency used on a of transaction processing network.

#### **Electronic Transactions Association**

1101 16th Street NW, Suite 402 Washington, DC 20036 202/828.2635 www.electran.org

**ETA CEO** Jason Oxman

**COO** Pamela Furneaux

**Director, Education and Professional Development** Rori Ferensic

**Director, Membership and Marketing** Del Baker Robertson

**Director, Communications** Meghan Cieslak

**SVP, Government Relations** Scott Talbott

**Director, Industry Affairs** Amy Zirkle

Publishing office:

**Content Communicators LLC** 

PO Box 223056 Chantilly, VA 20153 703/662.5828

**Subscriptions: 202/677.7411** 

**Editor** 

Josephine Rossi

**Editorial/Production Associate** 

Christine Umbrell

Art Director Janelle Welch

#### **Contributing Writers**

Ed McKinley, Kevin Mendizabal, Julie Ritzer Ross, Josephine Rossi, and Scott Talbott

#### **Advertising Sales**

#### Linda Baker

Advertising Sales Manager Phone: 703/964.1240, ext. 13 Fax: 866/466.9187

Lbaker@conferencemanagers.com

#### **Alison Bashian**

Phone: 800/335.7500 Fax: 440/232.0398 alisonb@bashian.com

#### **Editorial Policy:**



The Electronic Transactions Association, founded in 1990, is a not-for-profit organization representing entities who provide transaction services between merchants and settlement banks and others involved in the electronic transactions

industry. Our purpose is to provide leadership in the industry through education, advocacy, and the exchange of information.

The magazine acts as a moderator without approving, disapproving, or guaranteeing the validity or accuracy of any data, claim, or opinion appearing under a byline or obtained or quoted from an acknowledged source. The opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect the official view of the Electronic Transactions Association. Also, appearance of advertisements and new product or service information does not constitute an endorsement of products or services featured by the Association. This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is provided and disseminated with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal or other professional services. If legal advice and other expert assistance are required, the services of a competent professional should be sought.

*Transaction Trends* (ISSN 1939-1595) is the official publication, published six times annually, of the Electronic Transactions Association, 1101 16th St. N.W., Suite 402, Washington, DC 20036; 800/695-5509 or 202/828-2635; 202/828-2639 fax. POSTMASTER: **Send address changes to the address noted above.** 

Copyright © 2015 The Electronic Transactions Association. All Rights Reserved, including World Rights and Electronic Rights. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission from the publisher, nor may any part of this publication be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or copied by mechanical photocopying, recording, or other means, now or hereafter invented, without permission of the publisher.



#### **Celebrating 25 Years of Payments**

n 1990, ETA was founded by a group of 20 payments professionals looking to develop a credible voice within the industry. In the 25 years since our founding, ETA has grown alongside the payments industry. We now represent more than 500 of the largest and most successful ISOs, acquirers, processors, and financial institutions, as well as the largest mobile network op-

erators, technology companies, equipment manufacturers, security providers, and apps companies. As we celebrate this milestone anniversary, I'd like to thank you for your commitment to advancing our industry. Let's take a look at what ETA is doing to ensure your success.

Since our inception, ETA has led the growth, development, and success of the payments industry. ETA offers cutting-edge news and information; facilitates business expansion and connections; provides industry information,



education, and certification; and advocates on issues critical to our members' success. When it comes to fighting for your business and looking out for your bottom line, no other organization comes close to matching the value provided through ETA.

In the past year, ETA gained additional momentum in our relentless pursuit of industry growth. We have added dozens of new member companies, broken attendance records at our two signature annual events, expanded our advocacy initiatives, produced even more educational resources, and added new staff to serve our growing membership.

As we continue to engage our expanding stakeholders, we are adding new events and networking opportunities. In addition to hosting the largest global payments event, TRANSACT, ETA curates a series of policy days, briefing our members along with regulators, lawmakers, and other industry players with upto-the-minute intelligence on the most pressing issues in payments.

ETA is the leading organization advocating for the payments community. At a time of unprecedented change in the payments industry, ETA's government relations efforts are enormously important to our industry. Federal and state policymakers have a huge impact on how we do business. With the launch of our new political action committee—ETAPAC—and the addition of a seasoned government affairs team in Washington, we've added new tools to our arsenal and increased our reach on Capitol Hill.

Further, we act as your personal public relations office, keeping the industry, the clients you serve, and the public at large informed about payments security and technology. I'm constantly working with national media to educate and advocate on the issues important to us.

ETA keeps you on the cutting edge of payments. Our professional development programs include ETA University, which covers the latest developments, issues, and regulations relating to the electronic processing industry. ETA webinars provide interactive and media-rich presentations on current topics in the electronic payments industry. And the ETA Certified Payments Professional program provides the top-level of certification in our industry.

Everything we do at ETA is done with you, our members, in mind. We're proud of how far ETA and our industry have come over the past 25 years. We look forward to continuing our mission, serving you as the voice of payments. Thank you for your continued support.

Jason Oxman Chief Executive Officer Electronic Transactions Association



Whether it's mastering the latest innovations in payments or networking with decision-makers, only one event brings the future into ultimate focus. The 2015 ETA Strategic Leadership Forum.

With hundreds of the highest level of payment industry professionals, SLF is the exclusive annual gathering that speaks your language. Cut through the noise and gain insight from your peers while you shape the industry's future together. **Attendance is limited; register today to secure your space.** 



October 13-15, 2015 Scottsdale, AZ JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa www.electran.org/slf15

#### INTELLIGENCE



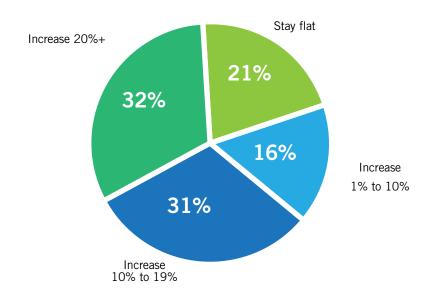
#### **Mobile Online Shopping Will Hit** \$217 Billion by 2019

For every dollar spent through mobile proximity payments, \$19 is spent through mobile browsers and apps, according to a press release on new research from Javelin, which estimates the mobile e-commerce market will reach \$217 billion in the next four years.

Fifty-one percent of mobile consumers are purchasing physical goods, the only product type on mobile devices to grow significantly from 2013 purchasing levels, according to the release. Javelin attributes the increase in physical-goods purchases over digital goods as "an indication of consumers' growing comfort with the mobile phone as a buying channel." Other products purchased through mobile phones and included in the release were games and music (38 percent each), apps (37 percent), and ringtones (18 percent).

#### Infographic

Projected Increase in Digital-Channel Fraud Prevention Spend Through 2016



Note: Based on interviews with 26 fraud executives from 19 North American financial institutions that have more than \$50 billion in assets

Source: Aite Group research, 2015

#### White Paper Points to **Evolving E-Commerce Merchant Fraud**

Despite careful vetting, stringent underwriting, and ongoing risk monitoring, the payments industry is still falling victim to online fraudsters, according to a new educational white paper recently released by Control Scan and EverCompliant.

Rather than hiding their illegal activities, merchants are now "creating an ecosystem of unreported ecommerce," according to the white paper. "In this new scenario, the site the [merchant service provider] MSP knows about serves as a storefront to which payments are funneled, effectively masking the nefarious sales activity taking place on one or more associated yet undisclosed websites."

The activity, known as "online transaction laundering" or "undisclosed aggregation," implicates MSPs in "brand-damaging e-commerce activity they don't know how to detect, let alone prevent." The white paper goes on to explain that the two firms made a number of discoveries in their research, including:

- On average, five unknown websites exist for every known website examined. Further, an average of 3 percent of those unknown sites contain high-risk content as well as e-commerce environments, indicating the presence of transaction laundering
- In one transaction laundering instance, a payment facilitator discovered 70 unreported websites associated with a single, seemingly legitimate fundraising website. Twenty of the 70 unreported sites were supporting payment transactions for illicit pornography.
- In a separate example, investigations discovered a high-volume nutraceutical merchant had an extended ecosystem of 33 websites conducting transaction laundering.



Whether it's learning the latest about payment technologies or increasing your business's profitability, only one event brings the future into ultimate focus. The 2015 ETA Strategic Leadership Forum.

Created by and for the highest level of payment industry executives, SLF is the premier annual gathering that speaks your language. Tap into the insight of hundreds of leaders, share ideas and chart the course of the industry together. **Attendance is limited; register today to secure your space.** 



October 13-15, 2015 Scottsdale, AZ JW Marriott Scottsdale Camelback Inn Resort & Spa www.electran.org/slf15

#### INTELLIGENCE

#### **Prepaid Card Usage on the Rise**

The use of general-purpose reloadable (GPR) prepaid cards is up, particularly among the unbanked, according to research released by the Pew Charitable Trusts. Approximately 23 million U.S. adults currently use prepaid cards regularly.

"Our data shows that the unbanked use their prepaid cards like checking accounts, reloading them more frequently, and registering them more often. In contrast, people with bank accounts use the cards more like an ancillary financial product in that they load funds on a card, spend it down, and then buy another one," Susan Weinstock, director of Pew's consumer banking project, said in the press release.

Pew commissioned Social Sciences Research Solutions to field the survey, which reached 587 respondents who use a prepaid card at least once a month. Other highlights from the report include the following:

 Between 2012 and 2014, prepaid card use increased by 50 percent. The release cited "increased adoption among consumers with bank accounts, many of whom purchased their prepaid cards at a bank or credit union," as the main factor. These consumers "tend to have



higher incomes and are more demographically similar to the general U.S. population than unbanked prepaid card users."

- More than 80 percent of unbanked prepaid cardholders have annual household incomes below \$50,000.
   About one third have incomes under \$15,000 per year.
- Consumers—especially the unbanked—"use the cards to help control spending, stay out of debt, and avoid overdraft fees."
- Most cardholders use their cards to "control their spending in part by not having the ability to exceed their balances."
- Many cardholders who are covered by liability protections for unauthorized use do not know it.

#### Fast Fact

By the end of the year, "5 percent of the base of 600-650 million NFC-equipped phones will be used at least once a month to make contactless in-store payments at retail outlets."

Source: Deloitte, TMT Predictions 2015

#### Retail and Government Most Likely Breached, Say Americans

More than one third of U.S. adults believe that personal data held by a retailer or a government agency will likely be stolen within the next year, according to survey results released by Unisys Corporation and Lieberman Research Group.

The "U.S. Security Insights" survey was based on an April 2015 online survey of 1,016 adults globally and was weighted according to U.S. Census Bureau data for U.S. projectability.

The survey asked consumers about breach likelihood when their personal data is held by seven types of organizations—airlines, banking/finance, government, health care, retail, telecommunications, and utilities: Forty-four percent of U.S. respondents said a breach was likely if the data is held by a retailer; 39 percent said a breach was likely if data is held by government agencies; and 35 percent said it was likely if the data is held by telecommunications companies.

In a press release, Unisys said that media publicity of cyberattacks has "increased concern among consumers about the safety of their personal data held by various organizations—especially those in the retail sector where breaches have hit consumers most directly. The survey results may also reflect concerns about the country's general readiness to combat cyber threats."

U.S. respondents had more confidence in banks and health-care organizations to protect their data. Twenty-four percent said a breach of their personal data held by a bank was likely in the next year, and 44 percent said such a breach was unlikely. For health-care organizations, 28 percent said a breach was likely, and 41 percent said it was unlikely.

The release also reported that U.S. respondents had the lowest levels of general concern among the 12 countries surveyed. Those in the Netherlands and Germany were twice as likely as Americans to believe a breach of their personal data was likely.



Cybersecurity, patent reform, and regulatory advances among recent ETA advocacy initiatives

#### Mid-Year Update

#### By Scott Talbott

s the world's largest payments industry trade association, ETA is the industry voice, heard both in Washington and in state capital cities nationwide.

Having an advocate in politics is crucial for businesses of all sizes. At a time of unprecedented change in the payments industry, ETA's government relations efforts are enormously important to your business. Federal and state policymakers have a huge impact on how we do business. And this influence is only growing stronger.

Here are some highlights of our recent advocacy initiatives, and a preview of what's in store for the payments industry.

#### Cybersecurity

ETA has been the voice of reason during recent discussions on cybersecurity:

- ETA CEO Jason Oxman testified before the House Financial Services Committee to express ETA's support for uniform national data breach standards. Other witnesses included several major players in Washington, D.C. This is the second year in a row that ETA has testified before Congress.
- Oxman also briefed the Congressional Payments Technology Caucus. The Caucus, the brainchild of ETA, meets quarterly to discuss issues facing the payments industry. A companion Caucus has been formed in the Senate.
- ETA continues to press Congress in support of the creation of a uniform national standard for breach notification. Five bills have been introduced to create a national standard. ETA will continue to press for passage, using direct lobbying and grassroots action.
- ETA strongly supports removing restrictions and allowing private companies and the government to share information

about cyberthreats. The House passed two bills, and the Senate bill is awaiting floor time. ETA will continue to press for information sharing legislation.

#### **Operation Chokepoint**

ETA continues to lead the charge against Operation Chokepoint (OCP). Several notable events have occurred:

- Three bills have been introduced to limit regulators' ability to engage in OCP. Two bills prohibit it outright, and one prohibits any dollars from being spent on OCP.
- ETA will continue the fight during the second half of 2015, keeping the pressure up and using the soon-to-be-updated "ETA Guidelines on Merchant and ISO Underwriting and Risk Monitoring" as an example of how best to reduce and eliminate fraud.

#### **Patent Reform**

ETA is supportive of patent reform legislation that has been introduced in the House of Representatives, H.R. 9.

H.R. 9 makes a number of procedural reforms to increase transparency in legal disputes over patents. Additionally, H.R. 9 strengthens the patent process, which encourages more innovation. A companion bill has been reported out of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

#### **Regulatory Advances**

Recent regulatory activity may affect payments professionals on a number of fronts.

Prepaid Cards: The Consumer Financial Protection Bureau (CFPB) released an 870-page proposal to regulate general reloadable prepaid cards. The proposal would create heavy regulatory burdens on mission-critical features of prepaid cards, including overdraft, and confuse consumers with disclosure requirements. The proposal also attempts to regulate peer-to-peer

lending, mobile transactions, and Bitcoin. ETA submitted comments in March; the final rule is expected in early 2016.

Cybersecurity Standards: ETA submitted comments in response to the Department of Commerce Internet Policy Task Force's request for comments to identify substantive cybersecurity issues. ETA commented that any standard must be technology-neutral, and that businesses must be given the freedom to respond to individual security challenges.

Data Collection Costs: Recently, CFPB issued an order to three financial services providers to gather and submit approximately 60 data elements about the overdraft program services each company provides to depository institutions and the configurations of those services. ETA sent a letter to CFPB suggesting that it avoid imposing undue cost on industry, prejudging the value of overdraft protection, or otherwise impacting the ability of financial institutions to provide responsible overdraft services. Additionally, ETA expressed concern that CFPB's order may establish a burdensome and costly precedent for industry and ultimately consumers.

Disbursement of Student Funds: ETA submitted comments to the Department of Education on its proposed rules related to providing additional protections for students receiving federal funds. ETA's letter argues that the adoption of additional, complex requirements will confuse students, increase costs for schools, and limit the incentive for financial services providers to develop and provide cost-effective and convenient services for students. ETA also expressed concerns about the scope of the proposal.

#### State and International Activity

ETA has been busy working with national and state legislators on several important

issues. Here are some of the key regionspecific efforts during 2015:

Washington State: The Department of Revenue is taxing interchange as if it were revenue to processors. ETA opposes this effort and is scheduling another meeting with the Washington State Department of Revenue to express concern about the application of the business and occupation tax to processors' interchange volume.

Texas/Alabama/Oregon: These three states are examining ways to limit or ban virtual payments cards, used to reimburse doctors. ETA weighed in against the measures and worked to defeat them, and utilized our grassroots network to generate more than 100 contacts to members of the Texas legislature.

**Illinois:** ETA joined with a coalition to oppose a bill in Illinois to greatly expand data breach notification requirements. The overly broad law would require notification if any consumer data was stolen. The bill passed the Illinois state legislature, and ETA is working with the governor's office to amend or veto it.

Puerto Rico: ETA pushed back against Puerto Rico's new 2 percent tax on money transfers. We are helping individual ETA member companies request extensions of the time to be subject to the new tax, and leading an effort to repeal the tax or carve out affected ETA members.

Cuba: Last December, President Obama took steps to normalize relations with Cuba, including allowing U.S. payments companies to do business in Cuba. ETA is working with the Departments of State, Commerce, and Treasury to assist in the implementation.

#### **Upcoming Advocacy Events**

ETA will host its first Executive Fly-In September 16-17 in Washington, D.C. So far, more than 40 ETA member company executives have signed up to meet with policymakers and discuss issues facing the payments industry, including Operation Chokepoint, prepaid cards, and cybersecurity issues. All ETA members are welcome to join us in Washington. Register at http://bit.ly/1gq43SJ.

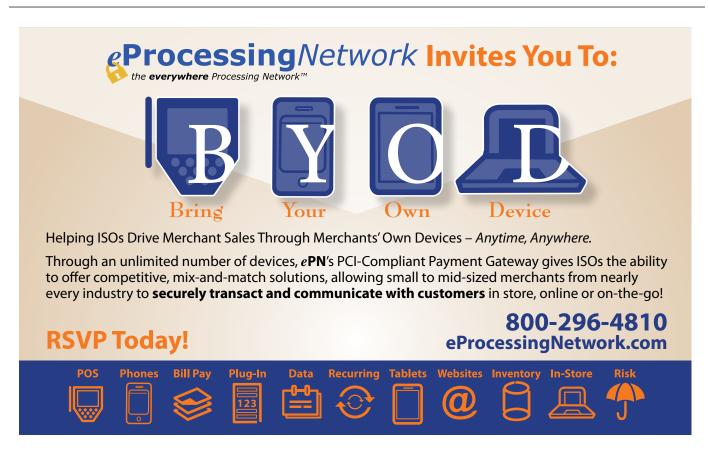
ETA will continue to host Regional Policy Days, designed to bring together policymakers and ETA members in a region to discuss policy issues facing the industry. We are currently planning events in Los Angeles and Baltimore.

We regularly hold D.C. Policy Briefings to help educate Congress, regulators, and law enforcement, as well as forums to discuss major issues facing our industry. ETA recently held events focusing on online small business lending and payments security, for example.

#### **Get Involved**

Politics is not a spectator sport, so we encourage you to get involved with ETA as its represents the payments industry. Our political grassroots program, ETA Voice of Payments, gives you the tools necessary to ensure elected officials hear the voices of their constituents on issues of importance to the \$5 trillion payment processing industry. Please visit http://voiceofpayments. org/ and start participating today. TT

Scott Talbott is senior vice president of government affairs for ETA. For more information, contact Grant Carlson, government affairs coordinator, at 202/828.2635.





#### Past presidents reflect on a quarter century of advancing payments

By Ed McKinley and Josephine Rossi

wenty-five. In numerology it suggests a sound, rational thinking and keen insight. Major League Baseball teams reserve it for the uniforms of homerun kings like Mark McGwire and Barry Bonds. And for the payments industry, it's the number of years that the Electronic Transactions Association and its predecessor, the Bankcard Services Association, have been serving the profession.

In that quarter of a century, the trade group has grown from a small band of independent sales organization executives into an international payments association with 550 member companies that include acquirers, processors, financial institutions, card brands, security experts, technology companies, and more. Together, these member companies form the backbone of a vital industry.

"Electronic payments is the engine of the economy," says Holli Targan, a former ETA president and payments attorney and partner at Jaffe Raitt Heuer & Weiss. "Nothing happens without payments."

The association contributes to that industry through education, advocacy, and the exchange of information, Targan continues. "What ETA uniquely provides is a







'community' for the industry. The networking at its functions fuels the whole industry."

#### **Building Business**

Although 2015 marks ETA's silver anniversary, the origins of the organization go back even further. In 1988, some ISOs got together in Chicago and agreed to invest \$1,500 each to start an organization—the Bankcard Services Association (BSA)—that could promote independent acquirers and give them a credible voice.

In 1990, BSA held its first charter meeting in Denver. The founders also were ready for a convention that year. "I was there for the very first one," says Chuck Bertzloff, who was ETA president in the mid 1990s and CEO of Cardservice International. "I walked in and there were five card tables and maybe 20 people." Vendors included a company that made ribbons for printers and a couple of imprinter companies, he recalls.

For several years thereafter, the ISOs held their annual meeting in conjunction with the American Bankers Association convention. The ISO show convened just before or after the bankers' gathering, often in the same hotel, according to Charlie Creamer, president of Midwest Transaction Group and ETA president in 2000.

For a while BSA sponsored the opening session of the bankers' show at a cost of \$25,000. "That was a big deal back then," Bertzloff says of the sponsorship fee, "but it brought instant recognition and a little bit of respect for the acquiring business."

Still, the bank convention catered to issuers—not acquirers-and ISOs found they weren't doing much business at the show, Bertzloff continues. ISOs felt their show would remain the "little brother riding on the coattails" of the banking industry unless they broke off on their own, says Creamer, which is exactly what they did. At about the same time, in 1996, they also changed the name of the organization from the Bankcard Services Association to the Electronic Transactions Association to reflect its interest in all types of electronic payments.

"It turned out to be one of the brightest things the association has done in its history," Creamer says of the name change and the independent conference. "It enabled us to become the lead vehicle for the industry."

#### **Forming Alliances**

Soon, ETA began to garner attention from Visa and MasterCard. Many of the association's officers credit Linda Perry, formerly of Visa, and Gerritt Kerkstra, formerly of MasterCard, with demonstrating to the card



#### **Celebrate Your Payments Success** and Win!

To mark its quarter-century milestone, ETA is showcasing outstanding **#ETAMember** companies throughout the month of August!

How does your organization embody all that ETA stands for-payments success, connectivity, leadership, solutions, security, innovation, promotion, advancement, advocacy, education, and more? Share your story on social media for a chance to win a complimentary registration to TRANSACT 16!

FTA will select two winners—the most creative. and the most shared. Any member in good standing is eligible to participate. To enter, post your tweets, selfies, videos, and blog posts, including the hashtag #ETAMember. ETA will promote your successes by spotlighting submissions on ETA's YouTube channel, Twitter feed, Facebook page, blog, and more!

Start sharing your **#ETAMember** story today; submissions will be accepted through August 31. Blog posts and videos can be sent to Meghan Cieslak at mcieslak@electran.org.

brands that the ISOs were coming of age.

Later, ETA leaders began carving out a relationship for ISOs with Discover Financial Services. At the time, the card brand deployed a large sales force to call on merchants. "They were seen as a competitor," says Creamer, who had formed a relationship with Discover when the Michigan Retailers Association, the ISO where he was executive vice president, became Discover's first reseller. Those ties with Discover helped bring some of the card brand's executives together with leading ISOs to discuss their businesses. "It worked," he noted of the new era of partnership.

The time also came to make the association itself more professionally independent. That meant discontinuing









its relationship with a company that managed a number of small trade groups and instead hiring a full-time staff working exclusively for ETA members. The transformation came while Mary Gerdts, CEO of POST Integrations, was serving as president.

One of the changes was hiring Carla Balakgie as ETA managing director in 2003. She built a staff and stayed on the job until leaving as CEO in 2012. The new staff needed a place to work, so ETA also established its headquarters office. The nation's capital was the logical location because the moment also was right for the association to intensify its lobbying and education efforts among legislators and their staffs, says Jim Plappert, CEO of ACH Payment Solutions and a former ETA president.

While the organization was bringing structure to the staff, it was doing the same with the board, says Diane Vogt Faro, president of National Benefit Programs who served as ETA president and was a former First Data executive and former CEO of Chase Merchant Services. In the early days, the association solicited members to join the board. Before too long, board positions were so highly regarded that the opportunity to serve became

#### The Road Ahead for ETA: Q&A With CEO Jason Oxman

#### How is ETA engaging both long-time and new members across the changing payments landscape?

**A:** in 2015, we are implementing the most dynamic changes in the history of electronic payments. From mobile payments to biometrics, new technologies are literally changing the face of commerce. Payments is an industry that embraces disruption, and industry leaders and new entrants alike must rapidly adopt new technology to address evolving consumer and merchant needs. Through ETA events, like ETA Strategic Leadership Forum, ETA Policy Days, TRANSACT, and our new pop-up events in Atlanta, New York, and other payments hubs, we are connecting long-time leaders and new industry entrants. Further, ETA brings vital insights though educational programs including webinars, ETA University courses, and ETA CPP certification program, as well as through the original, data-driven content in our Transactions Trends publications. And given that our industry is heavily regulated at the

state and federal level, all of our members benefit from our political advocacy, which we've greatly expanded to meet rising government scrutiny.

#### Will there will be a cashless society, and how will that affect ETA members?

**A:** Today, 70 percent of payments activity is electronic, and that number is on the rise. In the past couple of years, the point of sale has evolved so significantly that now anyone can pay electronically for anything, anywhere. We know that electronic payments are secure, reliable, and convenient. Software and hardware advancements mean that the POS can travel with a merchant to any location, and mobile technology makes electronic payments more convenient and accessible to consumers. Cash and checks have been around a very long time, and their share of overall payments volume continues to decline as electronic payments expand. I expect that consumers will continue to choose the safety and convenience

of electronic payments, particularly as new technology makes electronic commerce more rewarding than ever.

### Why "TRANSACT," and where is it headed?

A: In 2014, ETA rebranded our annual tradeshow to "TRANSACT" to reflect our industry's evolution. ETA has always put on an exciting show that was the destination for acquirers, processers, card brands, and equipment manufacturers, and as our industry expands to include new technology companies and payments startups, our annual tradeshow is growing, too. TRANSACT I5 was our largest event in ETA history, and included innovators in mobile, apps, contactless, P2P, integrated rewards, and more. TRANSACT reflects the high-level business connections and networking that only happens at our signature annual event. TRANSACT will continue to be the platform for payments industry leaders and new technology startups alike to grow their business.



#### Milestones and Memories

25 years and more than 500 member companies later, ETA is keeping pace with an exploding commerce market, revolutionary enabling technologies, and a thriving profession.

Milestones brought to you by RIS CRM



#### 1950

First Diners Club cards used in **New York City** restaurants.

#### 1951

Franklin National Bank offers first bank credit card.

#### 1966

MasterCard starts as an association of banks.

#### 1970

Magnetic stripe standards are established.

#### 1971

First Data begins processing bankcard transactions.

Visa starts as an association of banks.



#### 1996

#### BSA membership surpasses 50; named changed to Electronic **Transactions Association.**

American Express joins advisory council.

Visa tests chip-loaded cards.

ISOs begin selling web-based merchant services.

#### 1997

ETA Annual Meeting is established as a stand-alone event, no longer in conjunction with the ABA.

Transaction Trends launches, and ETA's first website goes live.

Merchant Acquiring Committee (MAC) forms.



Microsoft Corp. and First Data Corp. introduce online bill payment.

#### 2005

ETA establishes a Washingtonbased advocacy function.



#### 2006

**Annual Meeting** held in Las Vegas: record-setting 3,382 attendees, 185 exhibitors.

**ETA Compliance** Day is launched.

Signature and PIN debit cards account for 57% of card transactions.

#### 2007

"Cards are going to be there. If anything is a threat to cards, it's the mobile phone." -Ed Labry, first recipient

of ETA's Distinguished Payments Professional Award, in June interview with Transaction Trends

#### 2008

ETAU deploys first online course.

ETA launches a webinar product line on key compliance issues and emerging opportunities.

PayPal has 68 million active accounts.

Visa and MasterCard have approximately 350 interchange categories.

#### 2009

Electronic payments account for more than half of all payments by dollar volume and more than two thirds of all noncash payments.

NACHA joins the advisory council.

ETA releases first proprietary research product: "Economic Indicators Report."

Bitcoin vO.I released

Sources: ETA internal records and interviews; Transaction Trends June 2007, April 2010, July 2012; "History of the Card Payments System," MasterCard Woldwide; New York Times, March 21, 1995; news.microsoft.com; en.unionpay.com; bitcoinwiki.com; Apple.com

#### 1982

First ISO launches: Amcor, founded by Paul Green.



#### 1989

Several ISOs meet in Chicago to collaborate on improving industry business practices.

#### 1990

BSA, ETA's precursor, holds its official charter meeting in Denver, and later hosts its first Annual Meeting in San Diego with 36 attendees.



#### 1993

First trade show held at Mid-Year Meeting: 14 exhibitors.

Visa joins BSA's advisory council.

261 ISOs are registered with Visa.

#### 1995

MasterCard joins the advisory council.

#### 1999

Membership surpasses I50.

#### 2000

ETA hosts Mid-Year Meeting and 10th Anniversary celebration in Chicago: I,5I2 attendees, 75 exhibitors.

Discover Financial Services joins the advisory council.

E-Sign legislation is approved.

#### 2001

Membership surpasses 300.

#### 2002

Chinese government establishes China Union-Pay bankcard association.



#### 2003

National headquarters opens in Washington, DC. First Strategic Leadership Networking Forum (SLNF) replaces Mid-Year Meeting and welcomes 512 attendees. SLNF panel session

serves as a catalyst for development of PCI Data Security Council.

ETAU delivers first course at Annual Meeting.

Electronic payments exceeds paper checks in number of transactions.

#### 2004

ETA publishes first encyclopedia of industry terminology.

#### 2010

ETA celebrates its 20th anniversary.



#### **2011**

ETA launches ETA CPP certification program.

#### 2013

"The traditional definition that we've used to describe business segments may be changing, [but] ISOs are still a very important piece of the payments infra**structure."** – Jason Oxman in his first interview with

Transaction Trends as ETA's CEO

ETA registers its first in-house lobbyist.

ETA membership surpasses 500 companies globally.

#### 2014

ETA rebrands the Annual Meeting & Expo to TRANSACT: 4,000 attendees.

Apple Pay launches.

#### 2015

Oxman testifies before the House Financial Services Committee.

More than I,000 payments professionals hold the ETA CPP credential.

ETA launches TRANSACT TECH.







competitive. Aspiring board members were required to complete comprehensive questionnaires, turn in resumes, and submit to interviews before they could qualify, say former officers.

Meanwhile, ETA continued to broaden its reach by bringing major banks into the association as members, says Faro. "The organization needed to change and grow," to represent more aspects of the industry, she says. "We didn't have financial organizations in the fold." Bringing them into ETA could enhance the standing of ISOs with them, she notes, and that's why she and other leaders began discussions with the banking community to convince banks to join the association. "You knew these people, and you started talking to them about ETA," Faro says. "It didn't happen overnight."

By 2007, ETA found itself busily and successfully combatting legislation to control interchange rates, says Jim Baumgartner, a former Moneris CEO who was ETA president at the time. "We spent a lot of time advocating the free market over price controls."

The Strategic Leadership and Networking Forum (known now simply as the Strategic Leadership Forum) was formed to unite the industry's top executives for presentations and networking. The first meeting was held in Palm Beach, Florida, and 375 professionals attended. At the same time, the association continued to refine the classes taught at ETA University, says Baumgartner, and in 2008, deployed its first online course as well as a webinar product line on key compliance issues and emerging business opportunities.

#### **Lending a Voice**

Strong financials, combined with a driven staff, clear sense of direction, and growing reputation with the card brands

and on Capitol Hill, allowed ETA to continue expanding its capabilities and reach, according to Nick Baxter, chief risk officer at First National Bank of Nebraska and former ETA president. "We were able to represent the views of our membership effectively."

During 2008 and 2009, ETA established the Certified Payments Professional credential, or ETA CPP, to raise the acquiring industry's prestige, promote professionalism, equip members of the industry with a knowledge of the business, and assure merchants that their acquirers are qualified. "We pushed for that," Targan says of establishing the certification. Candidates obtain the credential by passing an exam and can maintain it with continuing education credits, she notes.

About the same time, the organization also launched the Voice of Payments advocacy portal to ramp up ETA's ability to advocate for the industry and inform the industry of what was happening in Washington. The Durbin Amendment was at issue then, and the industry needed an advocate in Washington, says Targan, adding that "ETA stepped up and became that voice."

The association also started the Investment Community Forum in response to increased interest in payments companies among private equity and venture capital firms, Targan notes. "So we brought that community together with ETA membership for the first time for education and networking," she says.

But soon the potential for disruption seemingly threatened the industry as tech companies began exploring payments as a sideline. ETA's board responded by embracing the supposed interlopers and inviting them into the association, says Eddie Myers, a former president of OpenEdge who was ETA president in 2012. "We coined a term while I was president—expanding the tent," he





#### ETA-Then and Now

Check out ETA's new video to hear more from past presidents on the hot industry topics during their tenure and where they predict the industry is headed in the next five years. Visit http://bit.ly/IJsIACB.









says. That meant finding ways to serve that new constituency, while continuing to do a good job for the established players—striving for what he calls "value-based success."

Efforts to court the tech companies succeeded, and ETA brought in 60 new members in six months, including such giants as Apple, Google, AT&T, PayPal, and Samsung. To engage the tech companies in the organization quickly, ETA placed some of them on the presidential advisory board, says Kim Fitzsimmons, U.S. president of Chase Commerce Solutions, who was ETA president in 2013 and 2014. "They're big companies with a lot to say," she says.

To help bring in the tech companies, the association needed a CEO who could address the new tech opportunities in payments, which included new approaches to the point of sales and software-enabled payments, Myers explains. That's when ETA hired Jason Oxman as CEO. "Hindsight's 20-20," Myers says. "You can see what a great job Jason's done. The association is stronger now than it has ever been." Shortly thereafter, ETA also started ETA PAC, a political action committee that supports candidates who back legislation the association favors, Fitzsimmons says.

The Electronic Transactions Association has united diverse companies and diverse personalities for the common good. ETA's membership has always shown a gratifying capacity to work cooperatively, Myers maintains. "For a very entrepreneurial industry, I've always been amazed by how the leadership of the association comes together... to look at the big picture," he says. **TT** 

*Ed McKinley is a contributing writer to* Transaction Trends. Reach him at edmckinley773@yahoo.com.

Josephine Rossi is editor of Transaction Trends. Reach her at jrossi@contentcommunicators.com.

#### **ETA** is Proud to Celebrate 25 Years of Advancing the Payments Industry

ETA thanks its members for their continued support!



**ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS ASSOCIATION Advancing Payments Technology** 

Thank You to our Generous 25th Anniversary Timeline Sponsor:





# Slow Road to Consumer Adoption

#### Investors may be racing to Bitcoin, but for consumers it's more like a stroll

here's no denying that record investment appears to be buoying the digital currency ecosystem. The first brought \$229 million of capital to Bitcoin startups, according to the "State of Bitcoin Q1 2015" report published by global Bitcoin news source CoinDesk. All-time venture capital investment in the digital currency is up by 51 percent since the end of 2014 and now stands at \$676 million. And, after considerable volatility, the price of Bitcoin has stabilized, at about \$250.

That's the good news. The less than positive news is the onslaught of data pointing to Bitcoin's failure to gain consumer acceptance as a viable form of tender, at least in the United States.

First, consumers need to be aware of it. Sixty-four percent of respondents to the "Bitcoin U.S. Sentiment Survey," published earlier this year by Bitcoin think tank Coin Center, were "not familiar at all" with the digital currency. Of the 51 percent of consumers who were familiar, a whopping 83 percent never used it, and only slightly more than half

(51 percent) believed it has some usefulness.

Equally telling are findings from CoinDesk's recently released "Who Really Uses Bitcoin?" study of more than 4,000 consumers from around the world—42 percent of them in the United States. Results indicate acceptance can hardly be characterized as mainstream: Of the 3,515 study participants who have used Bitcoin, 32 percent did so as an investment. Far fewer (301 individuals queried) used it as a "day-to-day currency," and only 116 used it to "cover lowcost remittances." More than one third (35 percent) have



Bonus Audio Content: ETA members can login to listen to "Digital Currency - Changing the Payments Ecosystem" from TRANSACT 15. Visit <a href="http://bit.ly/1LTaFGr">http://bit.ly/1LTaFGr</a>.



never purchased goods and services with their Bitcoin.

Additionally, even those Bitcoin users do not appear to be heavily invested in it. Sixty-three percent own 10 or fewer Bitcoin, according to CoinDesk. A more modest 21 percent own 11 to 50 Bitcoin, and 6 percent own 51 to 100. Less than 10 percent have more than 100 Bitcoin.

"Investors are clearly interested in Bitcoin, but for consumers, the impetus just isn't there yet," says Matthew Wong, an analyst with CBC Insights.

Statistics tell the tale here, too. Nearly half (46 percent) of respondents to the Coin Center survey believe Bitcoin is used more for "crime, fraud, or extortion" than for legal transfers and investing. About 16 percent of those queried "strongly believe" the digital currency is associated with crime, compared to just 3 percent who believe it is used mostly for legitimate transactions.

"Bitcoin isn't a consumer product at this point," asserts Rick Oglesby, head of research, Double Diamond Payments Research. "It's appealing to speculators hoping to make a profit on fluctuations in the currency value. It's appealing to certain market niches where other means for fulfilling a transaction are not viable. But it's also an unregulated currency with limited acceptance, significant value fluctuations, and a multistep purchasing process. Without the protections afforded by other means, it isn't compelling for the average consumer."

Wong and other sources say Bitcoin's origins in illegal activities—read, Silk Road—and negative coverage in the media continue to impede its attainment of mainstream status. "For the everyday consumer, the reputation of Bitcoin being an illegal enterprise or a Ponzi scheme still lingers," concedes Bojan Simic, chief technology officer of HYPR Corp., a provider of biometric authentication

In an April 16 Techcrunch blog, David Berger, CEO of the Digital Currency Council, concurred. He said it is "unfortunate but true" that while entrepreneurs and venture capitalists have been focused on the technology of digital currency, the media—and in turn, the public—has concentrated on "bad actors building criminal or negligent enterprises."

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) also is publicly discussing the inherent risks of utilizing Bitcoin, which doesn't help the matter, Wong points out. In a June 22 advisory released on www.ftc.gov, the FTC's Office of Technology Research and Investigation warns that in addition to being volatile, virtual currencies "aren't reversible and don't have the same legal protections as some traditional payment methods; once you hit 'send,' you can't get your money back unless the seller agrees." According to the advisory, the FTC has received "hundreds of complaints" involving Bitcoin and other virtual currencies," with the two most common complaints pertaining to online merchants that deliver products late or not at all, and merchants that insist on issuing refunds as store credit rather than currency.

#### **Turning the Corner**

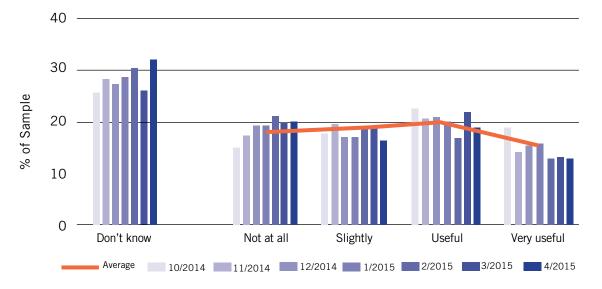
Some industry observers believe greater merchant acceptance of digital currencies will spur consumers in the United States to put aside their negative perceptions. (By some estimates, upward of 100,000 merchants-including heavy-hitters like Microsoft and Expedia—recognize Bitcoin as a form of payment. See page 24 for insights on Overstock.com's acceptance model). Others think the seemingly growing number of Bitcoin wallets being "opened" is an indicator of progress: Bitcoin wallet provider CoinBase claims to have 2.3 million Bitcoin wallets in circulation, and the CoinDesk report says one million new Bitcoin wallets were created during the first quarter

of this year, representing a quarter-over-quarter growth rate of 14 percent. The total number of blockchain wallets surpassed 3 million in February, and CoinDesk forecasts that there will be 12 million Bitcoin wallets open around the world by the end of the year.

Still, assertions like these are the exceptions, not the rule. Just because consumers are obtaining Bitcoin wallets does not necessarily mean they are enthusiastic, consistent digital currency users rather than one-off customers, according to Nathalie Reinelt, an analyst with Aite Group.

#### **Future Usefulness**

Q. Given what you know, how useful or not useful do you think Bitcoin will be in the future?



Source: Coin Center, "Bitcoin Public Sentiment Survey," 2015

#### **Bitcoin Boom in Greece?**

Probably not. The debt crisis in Greece and temporary closure of its banks will not have a significant an impact on consumer adoption of Bitcoin or other cryptocurrencies, say some experts.

"We all would like to believe that any alternative to the Euro would become much more famous in Greece because of the capital controls now in place," says P. Carl Mullan, operator of the Digital Currency Intelligence Authority (DTIA), a company that tracks the movement of funds through non bank digital currency products. "It just seems natural that those in Greece would seek to use any liquid and valuable alternative rather than government money. However, there hasn't been any overwhelming surge in Bitcoin use, and we don't see Greeks running out to accept other currencies of value."

This is not surprising, he says, given that when the Greek government seized funds from large bank accounts several months ago, there was a "massive increase" in Bitcoin software downloads, but seemingly minimal use. As of early to mid-July,



there had been no significant bump in software downloads or use.

The fact that very few Greek merchants accept Bitcoin (four or five, by most estimates) limits consumers' option to adopt it, says Lee Gibson Grant, a consultant with Coinstructors, which offers cryptocurrency and token design services. He also attributes the lack of interest to the fact that capital controls have limited the number of digital currency exchanges available to serve the nation's population. At present, only

one such exchange exists, he says.

But consumers may come around to Bitcoin if the currency controls remain in force for an extended period of time, says James Angel, associate professor of finance at Georgetown University's McDonough School of Business. "May" is the operative word here if history is any indication. "Longlasting currency controls in Iceland did not lead to a Bitcoin-based economy, and the attempt to launch an Icelandic alternative coin called 'auroracoin' failed," he says.

She says the number of active wallets and the volume of currency being converted to Bitcoin is a better barometer of progress—and neither measure indicates any overwhelming activity.

"As for merchants, their move into Bitcoin proves nothing because they lose nothing by choosing to accept it," says P. Carl Mullan, operator of the Digital Currency Intelligence Authority (DTIA), a company that tracks the movement of funds through non bank digital currency products. "They get a release from chargeback liability, they can immediately convert to fiat currency and avoid potential currency volatility, and they pay lower transaction fees. What's not to like? It's a different story for consumers.'

One major change that must occur if U.S. consumers are to embrace digital currency: It needs to do "something existing bank accounts and payment products do not," says Mullan.

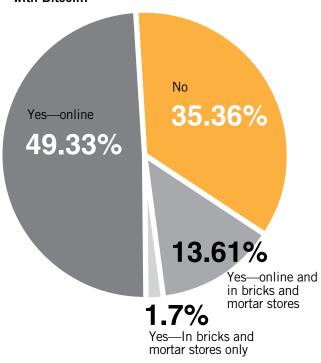
This is not the case elsewhere in the world, where consumers are much more apt to embrace Bitcoin because the financial system in their nation is broken and there is no trust in the government. "For whatever reason, they need an alternative to conventional bank products," Mullan observes. "Some have no access to banks, and for some banks are just too expensive."

In Russia, Mullan explains, many rural towns have no bank or ATM, but every town has a post office. Consequently, WebMoney, an electronic currency and online payment system that sells Bitcoin, cut a deal to work through the country's post office to handle the exchange of rubles for digital currency.

"Digital currency brings something to the equation that people can't get from banks," Mullan continues. For example, it affords residents of countries in which PayPal does not operate a means of conducting business online. It also allows individuals in countries where the government plans to freeze bank accounts to hold on to their money (i.e., by converting it to Bitcoin or something similar). In South America, it is common for companies that sell products in the United States but cannot accept U.S. funds, to

#### **How Bitcoin Users Shop**

Q: Have you paid for products or services with Bitcoin?



Source: CoinDesk, "Who Really Uses Bitcoin?" 2015

#### **Motivations for Owning Bitcoin**

Motivation	Responses
As a currency to use for low-cost remittance	116
As a currency to use on a day-to-day basis	301
As a lucrative trading tool	200
As an investment (hoping it will appreciate in value)	1,138
Because I'm fed up with the banks/ government controlling my money	729
Because of its underlying blockchain technology	514
Because of the business opportunities created	377
For privacy reasons	139
Personal reasons	1

Source: CoinDesk, "Who Really Uses Bitcoin?" 2015

convert monies earned into Bitcoin. In China, Bitcoin is a popular vehicle for bribing government officials.

"Where there is a real need to avoid regulated and supervised bank and money transmitting laws, people choose the next best thing—digital currency," says Mullan.

He adds that industry players in the U.S. might take a page from the global use case book by attempting to make digital currency more available to the unbanked, as well as by touting it as an easier way to make micropayments. At least three states—New York, New Hampshire, and Utah—have undertaken initiatives to expand the digital currency use case; all are working on bills to include Bitcoin as an approved payment mechanism for miscellaneous fees, taxes, dog licenses, and more. "This is mostly because governments are realizing how much they, too, are spending on credit card fees," asserts Michael Vogel, CEO of Netcoins, a Bitcoin startup that enables merchants to sell Bitcoin to consumers in-store.

Removing some of the stigma and fear of the unknown surrounding Bitcoin should also help, says Jerry Brito, executive director of Coin Center. He advocates for educational outreach by entities that deal in Bitcoin and Bitcoin products, such as wallets, and by merchants that accept digital currency. Vogel concurs: "It's important to point out that Bitcoin itself has never been hacked, and that the state of digital currency is such that banks and governments are beginning to openly embrace it."

For example, in early May, Goldman Sachs and IDG Capital inked a deal that will inject \$50 million worth of funding into Circle Internet Financial, a startup company whose plan to improve customer payments involves bringing Bitcoin into the mainstream. Two weeks later, New York State's Department of Financial Services granted the first license to a Bitcoin exchange called iBit. The license allows iBit to open legally to customers across the country. iBit was granted a trust company charter, giving it bank-like status and making it the first regulated Bitcoin exchange in the United States.

"Some of the hesitancy around Bitcoin is that consumers haven't had a chance to actually try it out; this is one reason that Bitcoin ATMs are increasing in popularity," Vogel notes. "Some of the retailers we work with are finding that just selling Bitcoin in-store for consumers to try is a great way to break the ice, attract new customers, and increase spin-off sales."

Clearly, Bitcoin has potential with U.S. consumers, but true acceptance will take several more years. "Bitcoin is a high-potential solution," Oglesby concludes. "But in the U.S., there is a long road ahead if that potential is to be realized." **TT** 

Julie Ritzer Ross is a contributing writer for Transaction Trends. Reach her at jritzerross@gmail.com.

#### The Cayan Agent and ISO Program

the Cayan Agent and ISO program is designed for agents at any level in their career. Whether you're new to the payments industry or a seasoned veteran, the Cayan Agent and ISO program is customized to your experience and requirements. We've helped thousands of new agents start their careers while also empowering experienced agents to maximize their portfolios' potential. Here's how we do it:

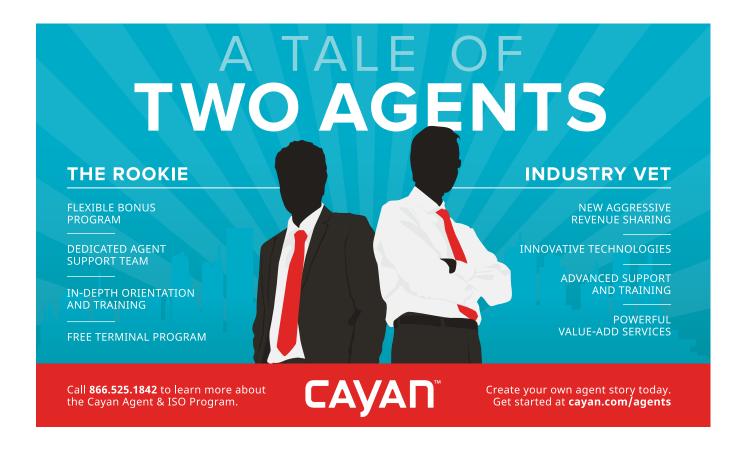
#### Easy progress for rookies

Getting started in payments may seem daunting, but Cayan makes it easy. We provide the necessary training, support and tools to help you learn everything you need to know to build a career as an independent sales agent. You can easily learn the industry with our comprehensive orientation and weekly trainings delivered from our skilled agent support team. We provide upfront bonuses, including signing and monthly performance bonuses, plus a free terminal program to help you start your business. Our goal is to help you to succeed in the industry and we're here for you every step of the way.

#### Tailor programs for veterans

For more than a decade, we've offered a highly competitive program for the agent community. We recently refined and enhanced our program offerings to cater to experienced payment professionals even more. With our new aggressive revenue sharing models, we allow you to select the compensation plan that works best for you. We ensure that your compensation meets your financial objectives and will maximize your portfolio's potential.

We provide access to a suite of innovative technologies, including EMV, mobile payments and POS solutions, to ensure that you have the latest technologies to keep your merchants ahead of the curve. With Cayan's program, you also have the ability to sell payment solutions beyond processing, such as gift and loyalty programs, working capital, check programs and more. We understand the industry is ever-changing and that you have to keep up with its trends in order to be successful. We provide advanced training and support so you're prepared for whatever the future holds.





# Finding Bitcoin



By Ed McKinley

he payments industry has yet to discover a way to capitalize on Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies, but observers advise keeping a watchful eye on the relatively new market. While biding their time, industry professionals can learn how digital currency works, find out how it benefits retailers, discard myths surrounding its place in society, and become familiar with its potential outside of payments.



#### **Earn ETA CPP Continuing Education Credits**

Throughout 2015, Transaction Trends will provide readers with executive summaries of ETA whitepapers and industry thought leadership. Read this article, then visit http://bit.ly/1GYeuIE to test your knowledge and earn 2 ETA CPP CE credits per quiz!



"Wait and see," counsels Jared Drieling, business intelligence manager for The Strawhecker Group, a consulting firm to merchant acquirers. "Keep informed and get educated about its advantages and disadvantages before putting together a roadmap around Bitcoin acceptance." That could include conversations with startups and could even go so far as studying the pricing of pilot tests with Bitcoin processors, such as BitPay and Coinbase, he notes.

Observation trumps action because not enough merchants and not enough consumers have formed the habit of using virtual currencies, according to Sid Singh, president of OpenEdge, an acquirer and processor that's a division of Global Payments. The company's 100,000 merchants in 60 verticals—ranging from dentist's offices to self-storage facilities—aren't showing much interest in cryptocurrencies. "It's too early. I don't think ISOs will be losing business if they don't support it, but they should keep it on their radar," says Singh.

#### **Separating Fact From Fiction**

Misunderstanding and misconceptions about digital currency abound, according to Drieling. He uncovered many of those falsities while researching and writing a white paper called "Bitcoin and Virtual Currency—Hype or Necessity?" He based the 43-page study on secondary research and analysis of the many sources available on the subject.

In one misunderstanding, many regard Bitcoin as an underground currency, possibly because of its early reputation as a vehicle for drug deals and money laundering. These days, a lengthy list of respected companies accept Bitcoin, including Microsoft, Dell, Dish Network, Expedia, Intuit, Overstock.com and TigerDirect. The 10 biggest companies that accept Bitcoin have combined annual revenue of nearly \$180 billion, says Drieling.

Media emphasis on the anonymity of Bitcoin transactions also has given rise to the mistaken impression that Bitcoin operates as an underground currency, he continues. Bitcoin transactions aren't really anonymous, because they're all recorded in the public ledger called the blockchain. Bitcoin miners use a technical mathematical process to validate all of the transactions.

Bitcoin's volatility hasn't done any favors for its reputation, either, Drieling adds. The exchange rate for the virtual currency has fluctuated wildly at times, and the well-publicized troubles of the Mt. Gox Bitcoin exchange contribute to the uncertainty.

Drieling's research also revealed semantics problems among payments professionals, with definition of terms adding to the confusion. He found agreement in some quarters that "virtual currency" serves as an umbrella term that applies to the entire sector, including loyalty points and online gaming currencies. The words "cryptocurrency" and "digital currency" fit Bitcoin and other vehicles that users can exchange for dollars and other national currencies, he says.

What about the notion among payments executives who are wary of the cryptocurrency's possible potential to disrupt mainstream payments? "I can't view it as ever being able to displace traditional incumbents," Drieling

## "I CAN'T VIEW [BIT INCUMBENTS."

–JARED DRIELING

counters. "It's not gaining significant traction among merchants." Besides, a new way of paying that succeeds, such as PayPal, doesn't doom the established electronic payments system.

One of the founding principles of cryptocurrenices could prove mythological, too. Many Bitcoin enthusiasts embrace the supposed libertarian nature of a currency that's untouched by government. But cryptocurrencies have run afoul of state regulations, says Adam Atlas, a Montreal-based payments attorney who specializes in payments and practices in the United States and Canada. "Any ISO looking to engage with a Bitcoin business should ask the business if it has sorted out its MSB (money services business) status under state and federal law. If the business is an MSB, then it requires

certain federal and state licensing, which most Bitcoin businesses do not have at this stage. The ISO should ask whether or not the entity has such licenses."

#### **Jumping In**

Despite the concerns, some payments industry players are forging ahead with cryptocurrency relationships. Global Payments, PayPal's Braintree affiliate, and Digital River, a payments gateway, have all signed referral agreements with Bitcoin processors, says Drieling. They are not directly competing with Bitcoin but are facilitating acceptance of Bitcoin as another payment method for consumers.

The referral arrangement enables payments companies to test Bitcoin without making a big investment, says Singh, whose position at OpenEdge gives him direct experience with Global Payments' relationship with a Bitcoin processor. "If we were to process Bitcoins on our own systems, it would be a significant undertaking."

Not enough merchants bring up the possibility of Bitcoin acceptance to make the tech investment in insourcing worthwhile, Singh adds. "We've seen very limited interest in the option of Bitcoins."

But one retailer, Overstock.com, has gotten a lot of press for its decision to accept and even tout Bitcoins. The company began taking Bitcoins Jan. 9, 2014, and it claims it was the first major retailer to do so.

Retailers could develop Bitcoin acceptance software inhouse, but Overstock.com instead works with Bitcoin processor Coinbase, says Judd Bagley, director of communications. "It's remarkably easy to do using one of a few companies that have already done the work."

Though it's not apparent to customers, they're actually sending their Bitcoins to Coinbase, not to Overstock.com. The shopper first creates a free Coinbase account. Coinbase then converts the Bitcoins into dollars and sends them to Overstock.com. "It's very inexpensive to do," says Bagley. "I can't think of many reasons a retailer would not want to do this."

Overstock.com's analysis shows Bitcoin shoppers have

been likely to return for subsequent purchases, an important factor considering that the profit from a shopper's first purchase rarely covers the \$25 cost of acquiring that customer. "You're tapping into a segment of the market that's very loyal," says Bagley. "They appreciate it when retailers adopt the technology. They get on Reddit and on news blogs, and they tell everybody about it."

The average Overstock.com order comes to about \$170, but Bitcoin shoppers tend to spend \$200 and up, Bagley says. International Bitcoin users spend substantially more, with orders sometimes totaling thousands of dollars.

Although Overstock.com expected Bitcoin shoppers to buy "computer geek stuff," company research shows their most popular purchases, by a wide margin, have been bed sheets, Bagley says. That's followed by appliances, living room furniture, area rugs, men's watches, computers, cell phone accessories, and men's fragrances.

#### Moving Beyond Retail

Overstock.com is a retailing giant, but its optimism about Bitcoin could carry over to small and medium-sized merchants, Bagley suggests. Any retailer with thin margins would like to avoid the 2 percent to 3 percent fees on card transactions, he said. The security of Bitcoin transactions also appeals to merchants that are spending money to prevent fraud, according to Bagley.

Bitcoin acceptance probably works best for retailers with websites and shopping carts, Bagley adds. Taking Bitcoins at the point of sale would require special hardware that might cost too much for some small merchants.

But the future of Bitcoin payments might not reside solely or even predominantly in retailing, according to Drieling. He sees potential for cryptocurrency in peer-to-peer and business-to-business payments. In both realms, there's no need to use a Bitcoin processor as an intermediary, so the only cost is for translating Bitcoins into dollars. The conversion is sometimes free but can cost as much as 1 percent, he adds. The potential for Bitcoin in B2B transactions appears huge, Drieling notes, because businesses are still using paper checks for about half of their B2B purchases.

International remittance is another area with huge potential for Bitcoin payments. Western Union and MoneyGram currently charge between 9 percent and 15 percent for those transfers of funds, while the cost of converting Bitcoin into national currencies to send funds abroad wouldn't exceed 1 percent, according to Drieling.

Bitcoin technology also can play a non payments role. Cryptocurrency technology underlies the Overstock.com cryptobonds that the company began offering to institutional investors in June, Bagley says. As with accepting Bitcoins for purchases, Overstock.com claims to be the first company to offer cryptobonds. What's more, the company considers its cryptobonds a preliminary move in its bid to create an alternative stock market based on Bitcoin technology, Bagley says. It would entail converting shares of public companies into digital

# CEPTING BITCOINS FOR

tokens and trading them, he says. Overstock.com is awaiting regulatory approval to continue with the stock market project.

And Overstock.com's not alone in seeing potential for Bitcoin beyond payments. Because the entire transaction history of Bitcoin can be traced back to its inception through analyzing the blockchain, it's possible to verify the transfer of ownership of any asset whose value is represented in Bitcoin, says Drieling. That makes Bitcoin technology a good vehicle for a home mortgage, he adds.

Then there's the possibility of "smart contracts." Suppose someone with a less-than-sterling credit history wants a car loan. If the borrower's email address fails to send payment in Bitcoins on the appointed day of the month to an address designated by the lender, the system could lock the borrower out of the car, Drieling says.

In another area, identity management, a Bitcoin address and public key could replace paper or plastic driver's licenses, passports, and other documents that are easily lost, stolen, or forged, says Drieling. The Bitcoin cryptography would confirm that the person in question is who he or she claims to be.

Although Bitcoin could bring significant change, it has yet to do so. In the meantime most members of the payments industry should content themselves with waiting and learning, experts agree. "It could take two or three years," says Singh. "It may even take longer." TT

*Ed McKinley is a contributing writer to* Transaction Trends. Reach him at edmckinley773@yahoo.com.

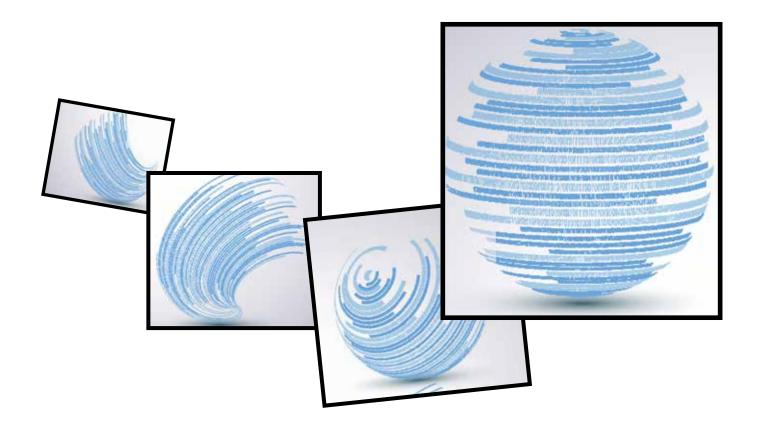
#### FREEDOM TO CHOOSE

With the largest support network in the industry, Apriva's POS solutions give companies of all sizes the freedom to choose the devices and processors that work best for their business. By connecting to all major wireless carriers, more than 35 payment processors, over 40 hardware providers, plus robust API/mobile integration, Apriva empowers your merchants to sell anything, anywhere.





#### **COMMENTS**



#### The Cyber Snowball Effect

Thoughts on liability and potential exposures across the payments industry By Kevin Mendizabal

ybersecurity is one of the most talked about topics in the payments business, and in the general public. While many discussions have focused on security, the issues of preparedness, response, and financial impact in the event of a breach have yet to achieve the same sense of urgency.

Without a consistent holistic message communicated to companies with this exposure, it is easy to see how confusing the topic of cyber liability can be. This confusion stems from, and evolves into, additional misinformation, leaving words without any meaningful context. By dissecting a comprehensive cyber liability policy, however, we can clarify the definitions of these terms, understand the exposures, and gain insight on additional potential liabilities within payments.

To demystify the complexities of cyber liability and how it compounds other liabilities, let's take a look at why it even exists in the first place when so many other insurance policies are readily available.

#### What's the Cost?

One of the easiest ways to clarify what is covered by any insurance policy is to read what is not covered, or the exclusions. Because of

this, an individual can receive proposals for policies for the same type of coverage, have yet drastically different terms. Before cyber liability became as prevalent as it is today, cyber-related claims would be (and still are) filed against other policies where it may not have been the intent of the carrier to cover them. Most carriers have language now excluding cyber-related claims, essentially clarifying that cyber coverage can only be obtained with a separate policy. Although these policies have been available for more than 15 years, companies have been incorrectly filing cyber claims under policies that do not cover those types of claims, a costly error. Some examples of this include Schnucks, P.F. Chang's, and Sony, all of which filed their breach claims under a general liability policy, and as a result, had to deal with the costs of subsequent legal battles with their insurance carriers. This is equivalent to an accountant getting sued by his client, due to an error on his part, and filing a claim against his health insurance.

A comprehensive cyber liability policy will cover two types of costs, first and third party. The first party is the named insured, and the third party is someone other than the named insured claiming damages from the first party.









## The First BLE Portable Printing Solution for the Payment Processing Industry





Star Micronics **SM-L200** is the industry's first Bluetooth Low Energy portable printer compatible with all iOS devices supporting BLE technology.

- 2 Inch Portable Printer
- Compact and Lightweight Design
- Bluetooth (BLE)/USB Connections
- Backlit LED Display
- Optional Magnetic Stripe Reader
- Convenient 5V PC or Smartphone Charging

Join the mobile revolution now! Integrate Star by calling 855-809-2010



Star Micronics America, Inc. 1-855-809-2010 sales@starmicronics.com





#### **COMMENTS**

PCI fines, notification, audit, forensics, and reissuing fees are some first-party costs most familiar to payments professionals. Other costs within this scope include lost revenue, operating expenses, cyber-extortion, counsel, and public relations. Some well-known cyber-extortion stories include Nokia, Domino's, and Code Spaces, which was put out of business in a matter of hours. Code Spaces was a SaaS (software as a service) company that fell victim to a cryptolocker that demanded a large sum of money in exchange for the password to grant access back to its own control panel. The hacker thwarted Code Spaces's attempts to circumvent the demands, and as a result, deleted all of the company's data and backups. Because of the ensuing refunds and lost customers, Code Spaces was financially unable to continue operating and was forced to close its doors within 12 hours.

Now let's examine third-party liability. Take a payments service provider (PSP) or merchant who has just suffered a breach and whose systems are encrypted by ransomware. Not only will the company have to deal with its first-party costs due to the ransomware, but the merchant or PSP can now be held liable for costs of any disruptions to its customers. This is how third-party liability can stem from a firstparty event. The issuing banks' lost revenue as a result of the Home Depot breach is an example of this.

Of course, cyber liability insurance will always be needed to cover third-party liability or first-party costs not assumed by the acquirer. Properly communicating to merchants what is indemnified also is a major liability. If a merchant is mistakenly under the impression that it has breach insurance through its processor, and is subsequently billed for nonindemnified fees, not only could a lawsuit or class action result, but also potentially regulatory fines as well.

#### Who's Liable?

As easily as a first-party event can lead to third-party liability, the cyber snowball can get even bigger and lead to financial disaster for the acquirer.

When I first began underwriting banks, I rarely received a request for cyber liability coverage. As the years progressed, the number of reported breaches became more common. As a result, almost every bank requested a cyber policy. Of course, the sector heavily regulated, and banks want to protect themselves. But if an institution is fully aware of its exposures and does not have the right measures and proper policies in place, it also has a management liability issue.

Financial institutions without management liability insurance (coverage for individual directors, officers, and company) likely have a tough time finding an executive willing to work there or serve on the board. If a company is unable to indemnify its executives, those individuals can be held personally liable, putting their personal assets at risk. (In this case, the policy would cover any losses the company could not.) Management liability includes any acts defined as "mismanagement," including unfavorable terms on a joint venture, suits from a competitor, regulatory actions, and lack of proper insurance or not requiring business partners to be

#### In addition to cyber and management liability, payments companies should have several other lines of liability coverage in place, including professional.

properly insured. For example, take an uninsured ISO that suffers a breach and is unable to pay the ensuing legal costs and judgment. Because liability suits tend to trickle up until deep pockets are found, in this case, a processor or vendor could be held liable for the ISO's actions.

The Gucci counterfeiting lawsuit is an example. The designer sued everyone from the merchant all the way up to the sponsor bank. This is exactly why a vendor or bank will typically require proof of proper and sufficient insurance coverage, in addition to being named as an additional insured (technically for vicarious liability). Not doing so opens up the vendor to liability not only for the initial judgment, but also by a major shareholder for mismanagement—not requiring the reseller to be insured.

In addition to cyber and management liability, payments companies should have several other lines of liability coverage in place, including professional. Cyber, management, and professional liability tend to have the most severe losses.

Professional liability (errors and omissions) is the cousin of cyber

liability, and many carriers package these two lines together. The easiest way to understand professional liability is to think of the exposure from a service offered in exchange for compensation. This is why an ISO reselling processing services is underwritten as a processor—the ISO is selling services on the processor's behalf. Further, to the previous example, this is why an agreement between a vendor and reseller will have language requiring the vendor as an additional insured. By doing this, the vendor is covered in the event it is named in a suit for the reseller's actions.

I frequently have reviewed contracts that do not contain any sort of insurance requirements. Moreover, of the vendor and sponsor bank contracts that did have requirements, the language rarely is specific to the payments business. This is how a mountain is made from a molehill. Would you have a contractor replace your roof if he was uninsured or if his insurance didn't cover the services he was performing? Again, not having any of these checks and balances in place creates the management liability issue as previously explained.

It is easy to see how one oversight can evolve into a multi-million dollar catastrophe. However, with insurance, counsel, and well-written contracts, in addition to requirements in place for resellers or those sponsored, a lot of these issues can be avoided. Much like the insurance business, the payments business can be hard to understand if you're not directly involved. However, the payments industry is unique because it has some of the greatest minds, from both an entrepreneurial and technical standpoint, operating efficiently in a self-regulated environment. That combination can not only achieve immense value, but also help to protect those interests, from the merchant all the way up to the sponsor banks. **TT** 

Kevin Mendizabal is the director of financial institutions at Frates Insurance & Risk Management. He also is a member of the ETA Risk and Fraud Committee. Reach him at kevin.mendizabal@ fratesinsurance.com.

#### **ADVERTISERS INDEX**

Company	Page	Phone	Web
Apriva	27	480-421-1275	www.apriva.com
Authorize.Net	C2	425-586-6000	www.authorize.net
Cayan	23	866-525-1842	www.cayan.com
Discover Network US	2	800-347-2000	www.discovernetwork.com
eProcessing Network	10	805-551-7411	www.eprocessingnetwork.com
EVO Payments Intl.	1	800-227-3794	www.EVOpayments.com
IRIS CRM	C4	888-870-9978	iriscrm.com
Magtek, Inc.	C3	562-546-6603	www.magtek.com
Star Micronics	29	800-782-7632	www.starmicronics.com
USA ePay	30	866-812-3729	www.usaepay.com

#### **PEOPLE**



### Vinay Gupta

Vinay Gupta is a release coordinator for Ethereum, a next-generation computing platform that enables anyone to tap decentralized networks and leverage blockchain technology. He believes the not-for-profit foundation's "smart contracts" will fundamentally change the way we do business and make payments. Here, he discusses how smart contracts are altering the terrain of commerce by helping computers communicate with each other through shared databases and a cryptocurrency called ether.

#### What's ether?

Ether is a token that's used for allocating resources on a new kind of transaction processing network called Ethereum. Ether's a little like Bitcoin, except that it represents computing power instead of financial value. The mining technology is called Dagger. Ethereum implements a model called the smart contract, which has been around in theory for about 20 years. We're finally bringing the theory to practice. A smart contract is basically a computer program that can make decisions and allocate resources.

#### How would you explain the enthusiasm for smart contracts?

A lot of people see smart contracts as a way of radically reducing transaction costs. A good example of this is a futures contract. Say you're buying a plane ticket, and what you really want is to pay \$4.50 for [the airline] to hold that price for you for 24 hours while you sort out your hotel and all the rest of your arrangements. A futures contract could do that.

Smart contracts can take things that are essential to the function of business and bring them down in scale to where ordinary people can use them—or businesses can use them in a fully automated manner.

#### **Isn't Ethereum removing contracts** from the legal system to put control into private hands?

No, not at all. Bitcoin has a very strong libertarian cultural heritage. The Ethereum community is largely politically neutral or slightly left-leaning computer science researchers. We have a fundamentally academic outlook on this.

What we have is a global network for transaction exchanges without having to go through a whole bunch of regulatory steps along the way. It's like the way radio works. There's local regulation on what you can do with radio, but radio itself is a universal medium that everybody shares. If, for example, Germany were to ban the use of software for coordinating car sharing, it wouldn't mean they were attacking Ethereum. It's one specific use case they thought should be illegal. We don't see this as an abrogation of state power.

#### Are smart contracts transactions?

Very much so. If you have a futures contract, the transaction is that I give you some money in exchange for holding something. If at the end of the process, I pay you the rest of the money and you fail to give me the thing you are holding, then you've breached the contract.

#### Would currency be translated into ether for the transactions?

We expect people to sell ether in exchange for dollars or pounds. People are doing that, but we certainly don't do that. Brokers do that.

#### **Does Ethereum charge customers for** creating smart contracts?

There are fees paid in ether for uploading stuff into the network. But the fees don't go to us. They're redistributed inside the network to the people who are providing computers for the

network to run on. We don't take a dime of that.

Ethereum is open-source. It's software that any of your readers can download and run. It really is intended to be used by everybody in the world. We're producing this stuff in the hope that it will make a better world.

#### What's the real significance of Ethereum?

Blockchains are the next big shift in the way we use computers. The first one was databases of the 1970s, the second was the wide-scale computer networking in the 1980s and 1990s. We've been relatively static since '93 or '94, when the Internet really dug in. Bitcoin and Ethereum are fundamentally new things.

#### **How can companies benefit?**

Their databases just don't interoperate. There's almost no way of getting an understanding of the world out of one computer and into another. All of that additional complexity makes it really difficult and expensive.

Blockchains give us the potential for businesses to smoothly, cleanly interoperate because instead of every organization having its own database, they have a shared database and they're working together.

We haven't seen a fundamental breakthrough in companies' ability to work together since email, the telephone, or the fax machine. Our expectation is that we'll have somewhere between hundreds of thousands and a few million users before the end of this year. **TT** 

—Ed McKinley





#### SELL MORE. SAFER. FASTER. ANYWHERE.

#### PROTECT YOUR BRAND

Secure payment transactions, increase convenience, enhance customer experience, prevent data breaches, identify counterfeit cards, stop card fraud and speed up your check-out process.

#### FLEXIBLE FUNCTIONALITY AND CONNECTIVITY

Point-of-Service PIN entry devices deliver one point of transaction for multiple options.

#### **DynaPro**

**Traditional transactions with integrated Secure Card Reader** Authenticator, PIN, EMV contact/contactless and optional NFC, signature capture, and privacy shield.

#### DynaPro Mini

Made for mobile, pay-at-the-table transactions with integrated Secure Card Reader Authenticator, PIN and EMV chip.

Call today!

**MagTek Retail Solutions Team** 562-546-6400

Learn how you can protect your POS transactions.







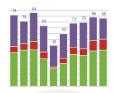
#### NO RISK. FREE 30-DAY TRIAL.

## A CRM & ERP TAILORED TO THE PAYMENT INDUSTRY!

#### Compatible with First Data and Vantiv ISOs



MPA Boarding



Transaction Data



Electronic Signature



Residual Calculations



Helpdesk Tickets



CRM Integrated Dialer

IRIS CRM bridges the gap between your sales and operations teams.

Work Together.
Grow Together.



