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General

1. Are you in general agreement with the payment system gaps and opportunities identified in the "Payment System Improvement Public Consultation Paper"? Please explain, if desired.

Yes. Biggest gaps are international and real time (near real time)

1i. What other gaps or opportunities not mentioned in the paper could be addressed to make improvements to the U.S. payment system?

N/A

2. Are you in general agreement with the desired outcomes for payment system improvements over the next 10 years? Please explain, if desired.

Yes. Biggest opportunities are international and real time (near real time)

2i. What other outcomes should be pursued?

None

3. In what ways should the Federal Reserve Banks help improve the payment system as an operator, leader, and/or catalyst?

Leader of standards, coordination efforts, evolution of payment technologies

Ubiquitous near-real-time payments

4. In discussions with industry participants, some have stated that implementing a system for near-real-time payments with the features described in the second desired outcome (ubiquitous participation; sender doesn't need to know the bank account number of the recipient; confirmation of good funds is made at the initiation of the payment; sender and receiver receive timely notification that the payment has been made; funds debited from the payer and made available in near real time to the payee) will require coordinated action by a public authority or industry group. Others have stated that current payment services are evolving toward this outcome and no special action by a public authority or industry group is required.

4i. Which of these perspectives is more accurate, and why?

I agree with the former not the later. We do need someone to lead the effort. Most existing/emerging attempts are pieced together based on existing, antiquated infrastructure (ACH or Card Network rails) that has its own limitations.

4ii. What other perspective(s) should be considered?

N/A

5. The second desired outcome articulates features that are desirable for a near-real time payments system. They include:

- a. Ubiquitous participation
- b. Sender doesn't need to know the bank account number of the recipient
- c. Confirmation of good funds is made at the initiation of the payment
- d. Sender and receiver receive timely notification that the payment has been made
- e. Funds debited from the payer and made available in near real time to the payee

5i. Do you agree that these are important features of a U.S. near real-time system? Please explain, if desired.

Yes.

5ii. What other characteristics or features are important for a U.S. near real-time system?

None. I think this list of desirable outcomes/features would close existing gaps

6. Near-real-time payments with the features described in the second desired outcome could be provided several different ways, including but not limited to:
- a. Creating a separate wire transfer-like system for near-real-time payments that leverages the relevant processes, features, and infrastructure already established for existing wire transfer systems. This option may require a new front-end mechanism or new rules that would provide near-real-time confirmation of good funds and timely notification of payments to end users and their financial institutions.
 - b. Linking together existing limited-participation networks so that a sender in one network could make a payment to a receiver in another network seamlessly. This option may require common standards and rules and a centralized directory for routing payments across networks.
 - c. Modifying the ACH to speed up settlement. This option may require a new front-end mechanism or new network rules that would provide near-real-time confirmation of good funds and timely notification of payments to end users and their financial institutions. Payments would be settled periodically during the day.
 - d. Enhancing the debit card networks to enable ubiquitous near-real-time payments.
 - e. Implementing an entirely new payment system with the features described in the second desired outcome above.

6i. What would be the most effective way for the U.S. payment system to deliver ubiquitous near-real-time payments, including options that are not listed above?

Option e. Most of the other options are antiquated platforms that have severe limitations. Why build on old infrastructure vs. clean slate approach.

6ii. What are the likely pros and cons or costs and benefits of each option? What rule or regulation changes are needed to implement faster payments within existing payment processing channels?

See 6i above

6iii. Is it sufficient for a solution to be limited to near-real-time authorization and confirmation that good funds are on their way, or must end user funds availability and/or interbank settlement take place in near-real time as well?

Preferable that the settlement take place at the same time. Otherwise, we risk running into the issues that exist today with Debit and Credit Card functionality (holds, expiring holds, understanding authorization/hold amount before the transaction commences, etc).

6iv. Which payment scenarios are most and least suitable for near real-time payments? (B2B, P2P, P2B, POS, etc.)

None.

7. Some industry participants have said that efforts to make check payments easier to use, such as by enabling fully electronic payment orders and/or by speeding up electronic check return information, will incrementally benefit the payment system. Others argue the resources needed to implement these efforts will delay a shift to near-real-time payments, which will ultimately be more beneficial to the payment system. Which of these perspectives do you agree with, and why?

Focus on payments is more important. Once better payment solutions are available, strategies for completely eliminating check usage can be enacted.

8. How will near-real-time payments affect fraud issues that exist with today's payment systems, if at all?

Near real-time payments will eliminate some existing fraud issues and create new ones

8i. Will near-real-time payments create new fraud risks? If yes, please elaborate on those risks.

Yes. Speed will make it easier to commit fraud. Participation standards (including international) may make it easier to trace and recover

9. To what extent would a ubiquitous near-real-time system bring about pivotal change to mobile payments?

It will not be pivotal. I believe the major issues holding up mobile include the communications protocol, security issues, ease of use (or existing lack thereof), etc

10. What would be the implication if the industry and/or the Federal Reserve Banks do not take any action to implement faster payments?

More of these "workaround" type solutions using antiquated, existing infrastructure will continue to emerge

10i. What is the cost, including the opportunity cost, of not implementing faster payments in the United States?

None.

11. To what extent will the industry need to modernize core processing and other backend systems to support near-real-time payments?

Obviously there will be some new core infrastructure requirements, but they are not insurmountable.

11i. What is the likely timeframe for any such modernization?

Difficult to speculate but perhaps 1-3 years?

12. Some industry participants suggest that a new, centralized directory containing account numbers and routing information for businesses and/or consumers, to which every bank and other service providers are linked, will enable more electronic payments. A sender using this directory would not need to know the account or routing information of the receiver.

12i. What are the merits and drawbacks of this suggestion?

Fraud/security (depending on the way it is designed). Are there other identifying means for sending information other than account number (e.g. e-mail address)?

12ii. What is the feasibility of this suggestion?

Feasible. To protect account information, however, another unique key should be used for identifying individual accounts for sending/receiving payments.

Electronification

13. Some industry participants say that check use is an enduring part of the U.S. payment system and that moving away from checks more aggressively would be too disruptive for certain end users.

13i. Is accelerated migration from checks to electronic payment methods a high-priority desired outcome for the U.S. payment system? (Accelerated means faster than the current trend of gradual migration.) Please explain, if desired.

Yes.

13ii. Should the Federal Reserve Banks establish a target for the percent of noncash payments to be initiated via electronic means, by a specific date? For example: "By the year 2018, 95% of all noncash payments will be made via electronic means." If Yes, what is the appropriate target level and date?

Yes. Complete elimination by a certain date

14. Business-to-business payments have remained largely paper-based due to difficulties with handling remittance information. Consumer bill payments also are heavily paper-based due to the lack of comfort some consumers have with electronic alternatives. In addition, many small businesses have not adopted ACH for recurring payments due to technical challenges and/or cost constraints. The payment industry has multiple efforts underway to address these issues.

14i. To what extent are these efforts resulting in migration from checks to other payment types?

Not fast enough.

14ii. What other barriers need to be addressed to accelerate migration of these payments?

N/A

14iii. What other tactics, including incentives, will effectively persuade businesses and consumers to migrate to electronic payments?

Make it easy, penalize paper processing

14iv. Which industry bodies should be responsible for developing and/or implementing these tactics?

Cross-border Payments

15. To what extent would the broader adoption of the XML-based ISO 20022 payment message standards in the United States facilitate electrification of business payments and/or cross-border payments?

N/A

16. What strategies and tactics do you think will help move the industry toward desired outcome four - consumers and businesses have greater choice in making convenient, cost-effective, and timely cross-border payments?

N/A

Safety

17. Payment security encompasses a broad range of issues including authentication of the parties involved in the transaction, the security of payment databases, the security of software and devices used by end users to access payment systems, and security of the infrastructure carrying payment messages.

17i. Among the issues listed above, or others, what are the key threats to payment system security today and in the future?

N/A

17ii. Which of these threats are not adequately being addressed?

N/A

17iii. What operational or technology changes could be implemented to further mitigate cyber threats?

N/A

18. What type of information on threat awareness and incident response activities would be useful for the industry?

N/A

18i. How should this information be made available?

N/A

19. What future payment standards would materially improve payment security?

N/A

19i. What are the obstacles to the adoption of security-related payment standards?

Conflicts with ease of use. Cost.

20. What collaborative actions should the Federal Reserve Banks take with the industry to promote the security of the payment system from end to end?

Seek input from industry security experts. Seek input from financial institutions.

21. Please share any additional perspectives on U.S. payment system improvements.

