#17 - What's Faster than Fast? - Real-Time Payments and FedNow

Soundcloud link

Host: Matt Longacre,
Guest: Joey Samowitz, Senior Analyst, Policy, Conference of State Bank Supervisors

 Timestamps

2:05 - The Journey of a Check in the 20th Century
6:05 - How 9/11 Stopped Your Check from Flying Commercial
8:33 - How Does Money Move Today?
10:24 - What's a Real-Time Gross Settlement System?
11:25 - What's a Deferred Net Settlement System?
12:52 - Are there any Real-Time Payment Systems Today?
14:15 - Why Create a New System if one Already Exists?
16:18 - What's in it for the Consumer?
17:38 - Who is for FedNow? Who is Opposed?
18:57 - How did the Federal Reserve Gather Feedback for FedNow?

Intro

Paying someone feels so simple nowadays, right?

Whenever I go out to dinner with friends and we need to split the check, they just tell me to “Venmo them” or “Paypal them” or “Zelle them” (Okay, nobody’s ever actually told me to Zelle them, but you get my point).
And even the old, "slow" systems seem faster! When I get a check, my bank lets me snap a photo of it and deposit it.

But even though the transaction kind of feels instant, it’s still anything but. When I add that check to my account, it says “Pending.” And the bank tells me to hang onto that check for a couple days in case something goes wrong.

It turns out that, behind the scenes, there’s a vast system of machinery working to make sure the little bits and bytes of data on my phone represent real transactions.

They want to be sure that everyone actually has the money they say they have and that the money is getting safely from bank A to bank B. That process can still take a while to complete.

In recent years, there’s been a new obsession with something called “Real-Time Payments.” It’s the idea that all this should be able to happen (the movement of the money, the confirmation that person A has the funds, the deposit into person B’s account) instantaneously.

Today, I talk to an expert who knows more about the hard work going into making payments faster. We talk about how checks cleared before, where we are today, and what new and innovative “Real-Time Payments systems” mean for the future.

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Podcast Length
21:19

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