Regulating the New Cashless World

Kevin V. Tu
Associate Professor of Law
University of New Mexico School of Law
How Will Regulators Keep Up Payments Evolution?

- Law and regulation lags behind new technology and innovative business models
- Critical analysis of common regulatory response to innovation can provide lessons to facilitate development of an efficient and appropriately-scaled legal and regulatory system
Example: U.S. Money Transmitter Laws

● Generally, regulate the business of receiving money or value for the purpose of transferring it to another place or location

● Imposes licensing, bonding, reporting and other requirements

● Generally, no explicit exemptions that clearly remove new and emerging payment products from regulation
Uncertain Scope

- Many payment innovations simply were not contemplated at the time of enactment

- Unclear whether and how existing regulations apply to payment innovation
Typical Regulatory Response: Early Stage

- Silence
- Guidance (informal and formal) focused narrowly on whether existing regulation applies – often based on plain language
Person A

$\rightarrow$ Person B
(Money Transmitter)

Person B

$\rightarrow$ Person C
Deficiencies

- Fails to consider unique characteristics
  - Regulatory requirements under existing law may be ill-suited for extension
  - Purpose of existing regulation may not be advanced (or implicated to the same degree)
Deficiencies

- Fails to develop a consistent and comprehensive regulatory framework
  - Response is limited to discrete issues that fall within the ambit of a particular regulatory body’s purview
  - Response therefore is developed in a “regulatory silo”
Payment Innovations Touch On Many Regulatory Issues

- Consumer Protection
- Anti-Money Laundering
- Use of Payment System for Other Criminal Activities
- Data Security and Privacy
- Safety and Soundness
- Tax
- Securities and Investments
- Monetary Policy
Takeaway #1

- Regulators and legislators must learn about the functionality of payment innovations and recognize any unique attributes
  - “One-size-fits-all” regulation is often problematic
  - Do not be afraid of engaging industry
Takeaway #2

- Regulators and legislators should take a more holistic and comprehensive approach to developing regulation
  - Considering the extension of existing laws and regulatory frameworks should only be the starting point
  - The purpose/intent of existing laws and regulations can provide valuable guidance, but don’t be afraid to think outside the box.
Takeaway #3

- Developing regulation for payments innovation requires cross-communication and collaboration amongst all interested parties and regulatory bodies.

  - Developing consistent and cohesive regulation requires: (1) identification of the wide-range of regulatory considerations raised by payment innovations; and (2) engagement of all interested parties.
Questions?