EHERE BANKING

THE CASHLESS REVOLUTION

As consumers become increasingly comfortable with mobile technology, digital wallets have become an integral part of their daily lives

he world is moving swiftly towards a cashless future, driven by the rapid adoption of digital wallets and mobile payment platforms. As technology continues to advance, traditional methods of exchanging money are giving way to a more efficient, convenient, and secure system. The rise of digital wallets is not just a trend but a transformative shift that is reshaping how people conduct transactions, manage finances, and engage in commerce. This cashless revolution is already having a profound impact on global payments, influencing economies, and shaping the future of finance.

Digital wallets, also known as e-wallets, are electronic devices or online services that allow users to store and manage their payment information digitally. These wallets enable users to make payments, transfer money, and even manage loyalty cards, all without the need for physical cash or credit cards. Some of the most popular digital wallets today include Apple Pay, Google Pay, PayPal, Samsung Pay, and Venmo. These platforms provide users with the ability to pay for goods and services with just a few taps on their smartphones, tablets, or smartwatches, making transactions faster and more convenient.

The popularity of digital wallets has surged in recent years, largely due to the widespread adoption of smartphones and the growing preference for contactless payment methods. As consumers become increasingly comfortable with mobile technology, digital wallets have become an integral part of their daily lives.

According to industry reports, the global digital wallet market is expected to grow significantly in the coming years, with some estimates suggesting that the number of digital wallet users could surpass 4.4 billion by 2025. This growth is being fueled by the convenience, security, and speed that digital wallets offer, along with the increasing integration of digital wallets into e-commerce platforms and brick-and-mortar stores.

One of the key drivers of the digital wallet revolution is the shift towards cashless societies. Many countries, particularly in Europe and Asia, have embraced this shift by promoting digital payments and reducing reliance on cash. In Sweden, for example, cash transactions now account for less than 10% of total payments, with digital wallets and card payments becoming the dominant method of exchange. Similarly, in China, mobile payment platforms like Alipay and WeChat Pay have become ubiquitous, with millions of users relying on these services for everything from grocery shopping to paying utility bills.

The growing popularity of digital wallets has had a significant impact on global payments, with businesses and consumers alike benefitting from the enhanced convenience and security they provide. For consumers, digital wallets offer a seamless and efficient way to pay for goods and services, both online and offline. Instead of carrying physical cash or cards, users can simply tap their devices at payment terminals, scan QR codes, or authorize transactions through biometric authentication, such as fingerprint or facial recognition. This level of convenience is particularly appealing in a fast-paced, digital world where time is often of the essence.

For businesses, the shift toward digital wallets has opened new opportunities to engage with customers and streamline payment processes. Many retailers have integrated digital wallet payment options into their point-of-sale systems, allowing customers to pay quickly and securely with their smartphones. Digital wallets also enable businesses to offer loyalty programs and personalized promotions, which can enhance customer engagement and drive sales. Moreover, as digital wallets continue to evolve, they are providing businesses with valuable data on consumer spending habits, enabling them to tailor their offerings and marketing strategies more effectively.

In addition to convenience, digital wallets also offer enhanced security features that help protect users' financial information. Unlike traditional payment methods, where card details are often stored on physical cards or in merchant databases, digital wallets use tokenization to encrypt payment information. This means that when a transaction is made, the user's card details are not directly shared with the merchant. Instead, a unique token is generated to complete the transaction, reducing the risk of fraud and data breaches. Furthermore, many digital wallets offer additional layers of security, such as two-factor authentication and biometric verification, ensuring that only authorized users can access their accounts.

The rise of digital wallets and mobile payments is also contributing to financial inclusion, particularly in developing economies where access to traditional banking services is limited. In regions like Africa and Southeast Asia, digital wallets have become a lifeline for millions of unbanked and underbanked individuals, providing them with access to essential financial services such as money transfers, bill payments, and microloans. Mobile payment platforms like M-Pesa in Kenya and GCash in the Philippines have revolutionized financial access in these regions, allowing users to conduct transactions without the need for a formal bank account. This has not only improved economic participation but also helped lift individuals out of poverty by providing them with tools to manage their finances more effectively.

Despite the many benefits of digital wallets, the shift towards a cashless society is not without its challenges. One of the primary concerns is the digital divide, which refers to the gap between individuals who have access to digital technologies and those who do not. While digital wallets offer great convenience for those with smartphones and internet access, a significant portion of the global population, particularly in rural and low-income areas, still lacks the necessary infrastructure to participate in the digital economy. This could exacerbate existing inequalities and leave vulnerable populations further behind in a world that increasingly relies on digital payments

Another challenge is the potential loss of privacy in a cashless society. As digital wallets and mobile payments become more prevalent, so too does the collection of data on consumer spending habits. While this data can be used to provide personalized services and improve customer experiences, it also raises concerns about how this information is stored, used, and shared. There are growing fears that increased surveillance and data breaches could compromise consumer privacy and lead to potential

abuses of power by corporations or governments. Ensuring robust data protection measures and giving consumers control over their data will be critical as the cashless revolution continues to unfold.

Moreover, the transition to a fully cashless society could present risks during times of crisis, such as natural disasters or cyberattacks, where digital payment systems may become temporarily unavailable. In such scenarios, access to physical cash can serve as a vital backup, allowing individuals to purchase essential goods and services when digital infrastructure is disrupted. Balancing the benefits of digital payments with the need for resilience in payment systems will be a key consideration for policymakers and financial institutions as they navigate this new era of commerce.



The role of Fintech in accelerating the cashless revolution

As the global economy shifts towards a cashless future, financial technology (fintech) companies have become critical drivers of innovation and transformation. Fintechs are reshaping traditional financial services by offering more efficient, accessible, and user-friendly payment solutions. These companies have helped catalyze the rise of digital wallets and mobile payments, enabling consumers and businesses to embrace the cashless revolution. Their role in fostering financial inclusion, improving security, and transforming the way money is exchanged is profound, making fintech a key pillar in the cashless future.

Fintech encompasses a broad range of technologies and platforms that leverage digital innovation to enhance financial services. From peer-to-peer payment platforms to blockchain-based currencies, fintech has significantly disrupted traditional banking and payment systems. Companies like PayPal, Square, Stripe, and TransferWise are examples of fintechs that have built entire ecosystems around digital transactions, offering customers new ways to manage, send, and receive money without relying on cash.

One of the biggest contributions of fintech to the cashless revolution is the development of seamless and low-cost payment solutions. Traditional banking systems, with their extensive networks and legacy infrastructures, are often slow to innovate and burdened by high fees. Fintech companies, on the other hand, use technology to streamline these processes, enabling instant payments, cross-border transfers, and contactless payments at a fraction of the cost. This has democratized financial services, allowing smaller businesses and individuals to access payment systems that were once out of reach due to prohibitive fees and geographic barriers.

Fintech companies have also played a crucial role in financial inclusion, particularly in developing regions where access to banking services is limited. Mobile payment platforms like M-Pesa in Kenya and Paytm in India have transformed the financial landscape in their respective countries by providing digital payment solutions to millions of previously unbanked individuals. These platforms enable users to store money, pay bills, and transfer funds through their mobile phones, bypassing the need for traditional bank accounts. By empowering people with access to financial services, fintechs are fostering economic development and improving quality of life, especially in underserved communities.

Another significant contribution of fintech to the cashless revolution is the enhancement of security and trust in digital payments. Concerns about fraud and data breaches have historically been major obstacles to the adoption of digital payments. Fintech companies have addressed these concerns by incorporating advanced security measures into their platforms. Technologies like tokenization, encryption, and multi-factor authentication protect users' financial data during transactions, significantly reducing the risk of fraud. Furthermore, the rise of blockchain and distributed ledger technologies has created new opportunities for secure and transparent payment systems, further boosting consumer confidence in cashless transactions.

In addition to security, fintech is driving innovation in user experience. Digital wallets and payment platforms developed by fintechs prioritize convenience and accessibility. Features such as one-click payments, real-time transaction notifications, and integration with other financial tools provide users with a smooth and intuitive experience. The rise of embedded finance—where financial services are seamlessly integrated into non-financial platforms—further enhances the appeal of digital payments, allowing consumers to make purchases, transfers, or investments within a single app or platform. This creates an all-in-one financial experience that aligns with the fast-paced, on-demand lifestyle of today's consumers.

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Fintechs are not only improving personal payment experiences but are also enabling businesses to thrive in a cashless economy. Small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), in particular, have benefitted from the rise of fintech solutions. Payment processors like Square and Stripe allow businesses to accept card payments, mobile payments, and online transactions without the need for traditional merchant accounts. Fintech platforms also offer financial management tools that help SMEs track revenue, manage invoices, and monitor cash flow—all essential functions for success in a cashless world.

Benefits of Cashless Conversion for Fintech Innovation

Cost-Effective – One of the most significant benefits of cashless conversion for fintech innovation is the cost-effectiveness

Real-Time
Transactions –
Cashless conversion
provides the ability to
process transactions
in real-time

Enhanced Security – Cash transactions are prone to theft and

Increased Financial Inclusion— Cashless conversion can help

increase financial inclusion

Improved Customer Experience – Cashless conversion provides a seamless and hassle-free experience for customers

fraud

Looking ahead, the role of fintech in the cashless revolution is likely to expand further as new technologies like artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning (ML), and blockchain mature. AI and ML have the potential to revolutionize payment systems by enabling more sophisticated fraud detection, personalized financial advice, and predictive analytics for better financial planning. Blockchain technology, which underpins cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin and Ethereum, could lead to the development of decentralized payment systems that operate without the need for intermediaries like banks, reducing costs and increasing transaction speed.

The rise of central bank digital currencies (CBDCs) is another area where fintech is set to play a significant role. Many central banks are exploring the possibility of issuing digital versions of their national currencies to complement or replace physical cash. Fintech companies are expected to partner with governments and financial institutions to build the infrastructure necessary to support CBDCs, including digital wallets, payment gateways, and identity verification systems. This partnership between the public and private sectors could accelerate the global shift toward a cashless economy.

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Sustainable Finance through Digital Banking

By promoting green financing options, facilitating digital transactions, and reducing the reliance on paper-based processes, digital banking platforms are at the forefront of efforts to support environmental sustainability

s the urgency of climate change and environmental degradation continues to grow, the financial sector is undergoing a significant transformation to address these global challenges. A new wave of sustainable finance is emerging, driven by digital banking innovations that not only enhance customer experiences but also contribute meaningfully to the green economy. By promoting green financing options, facilitating digital transactions, and reducing the reliance on paper-based processes, digital banking platforms are at the forefront of efforts to support environmental sustainability. This article delves deeply into how these innovations are shaping the future of banking and their critical role in fostering a sustainable, eco-friendly financial ecosystem.

Digital Wallets and Cryptocurrencies

In addition to mobile payments, digital banking platforms are exploring the role of digital currencies and cryptocurrencies in creating a more sustainable financial ecosystem. Cryptocurrencies, particularly those designed with energy efficiency in mind, can help streamline crossborder transactions without the need for intermediaries like banks. This reduction in intermediaries can cut down on the energy and resources traditionally required for money transfers, especially for international

While certain cryptocurrencies have been criticized for their environmental impact (notably Bitcoin, which uses a significant amount

E-Signatures and Paperless Branches

With the integration of e-signature technology, banks have taken paperless transactions a step further. Customers can now sign important documents, such as mortgage applications or loan agreements, entirely online without needing to print, sign, and scan physical copies. This innovation speeds up processes, enhances convenience, and significantly reduces waste. Some banks are even moving toward fully digital branches, where all customer interactions and transactions are conducted digitally.

In Qatar, several banks have adopted this approach, offering customers the ability to manage their accounts, apply for loans, and make investments entirely through mobile apps or online portals. By reducing the need for brick-and-mortar branches, these banks also reduce their carbon footprint, as fewer physical locations mean less energy consumption and fewer resources spent on infrastructure.

Green Tech Integration

While many of the innovations in sustainable finance are customerfacing, banks themselves are leveraging green technologies to make their operations more environmentally friendly. Digital banking platforms are increasingly adopting cloud computing and energyefficient data centers to cut down on their environmental impact.



Cloud-Based Banking and Al

By moving their systems to the cloud, banks are reducing the energy costs associated with traditional data centers, which require massive amounts of electricity to operate and cool servers. Cloud-based banking allows for more efficient use of resources, as banks can scale their computing power based on demand, avoiding the energy waste that occurs when systems are running at low capacity.

operations and reduce energy consumption. Al-powered systems can analyze customer behavior, identify inefficiencies, and make real-time adjustments to services, all while using less energy than traditional banking infrastructure. For example, AI can automatically manage lighting and heating in offices, reducing unnecessary energy consumption.



Additionally, banks are using artificial intelligence (AI) to optimize their



Consumer Education

One of the most exciting developments in digital banking is the use of apps to educate consumers on their environmental impact. Some digital banking platforms now offer carbon tracking tools that allow customers to see how their spending habits affect the environment. For instance, these apps can calculate the carbon emissions associated with different purchases, such as flights or car fuel, and offer suggestions on how to reduce their footprint.

Banks are also incentivizing eco-friendly behaviors through green rewards programs. These programs allow customers to earn points or cashback for making sustainable choices, such as using public transportation, supporting eco-friendly brands, or purchasing energyefficient appliances. This approach not only fosters environmental consciousness but also strengthens customer loyalty by aligning financial incentives with personal values.

As the world faces increasing environmental pressures, the financial sector has a crucial role to play in fostering sustainability. Digital banking platforms are leading the charge in this green revolution by offering innovative solutions that promote green financing, enable digital transactions, and reduce the reliance on paper-based processes. In Qatar and beyond, these technologies are helping banks not only improve their customer experience but also contribute meaningfully to the global push for a greener economy.

By adopting digital banking innovations, financial institutions are ensuring that sustainability becomes a core part of their operations. The integration of green tech, the promotion of cashless payments, and the reduction in paper waste all serve to create a financial ecosystem that is more aligned with the needs of the planet. As customers increasingly seek out eco-friendly financial options, the future of banking is likely to be shaped by this intersection of technology and sustainability.



The Rise of Green Financing

Green financing refers to financial mechanisms and products that fund projects and initiatives with a positive environmental impact. These can include renewable energy projects, sustainable infrastructure, conservation efforts, and any ventures designed to mitigate climate change and protect natural ecosystems. Traditionally, accessing such financing required significant barriers, but the rise of digital banking platforms has democratized green investments, making it easier for future

In Qatar, where sustainability is a cornerstone of the Qatar National Vision 2030, financial institutions are increasingly aligning their offerings with the country's long-term environmental goals. Digital banking is central to this alignment by offering a suite of green financial products, such as green bonds, green mortgages, and sustainabilitylinked loans, through online platforms. This has allowed individuals and businesses to directly finance environmentally friendly initiatives in sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, and waste management.

Green Bonds and Sustainable Loans: Many Qatari banks now offer digital channels through which customers can invest in green bondsdebt instruments specifically used to fund projects that reduce carbon emissions or promote sustainability. These bonds, accessible via digital banking platforms, enable investors to support wind farms, solar energy plants, or energy-efficient housing developments. Similarly, sustainability-linked loans, available through digital applications, offer better interest rates or other financial incentives to companies that meet pre-agreed environmental targets. This form of green financing is growing rapidly, with both corporate and retail clients able to access these products at their fingertips.

Eco-friendly Investment Portfolios: Digital banking platforms are also making it easier for customers to allocate funds to environmentally conscious investment portfolios. Through user-friendly apps and websites, investors can opt into mutual funds or exchange-traded funds (ETFs) that focus on companies with strong environmental, social, and governance (ESG) credentials. These tools are designed to attract both seasoned investors and younger, eco-conscious individuals who want to align their financial decisions with their personal values.

Promoting Digital Transactions

The advent of cashless payments and digital transactions has had a profound environmental impact, dramatically reducing the carbon footprint associated with physical currency production, transportation, and usage. By encouraging the widespread use of mobile wallets, contactless payments, and online banking services, digital banking platforms are significantly lowering the need for cash-based transactions and their associated environmental costs.

Carbon Footprint of Physical Currency

The traditional cash economy has a sizable environmental footprint due to the resources required for producing, distributing, and securing physical currency. The production of banknotes and coins involves energy-intensive processes, including mining metals for coins, manufacturing paper and ink for notes, and transporting these materials across countries. In addition, maintaining a cash-based financial system requires robust logistical networks for distributing currency to ATMs and retail locations, all of which contribute to carbon emissions

of electricity for mining), newer blockchain-based currencies are being developed with environmental sustainability at their core. For instance, Ethereum 2.0 uses a more efficient proof-of-stake mechanism, which consumes far less energy than Bitcoin's proof-of-work system. Digital banking platforms are exploring ways to integrate these greener cryptocurrencies, allowing users to make secure, sustainable

Paperless Banking: A Major Leap Toward Sustainability

One of the most visible and impactful contributions of digital banking to sustainability is the shift toward a paperless banking ecosystem. Traditional banking processes have long relied on paper for account statements, loan applications, checks, and countless other transactions. However, with the widespread adoption of online banking, the need for these paper-based processes has diminished, helping to reduce deforestation, energy consumption, and waste.



Digital Statements and E-Documents

Banks around the world, including those in Qatar, have transitioned to offering e-statements, digital invoices, and electronic contracts. These features allow customers to access their financial documents through their computers or mobile devices, eliminating the need for printed statements and forms. Not only does this reduce the demand for paper, but it also cuts down on the carbon emissions associated with printing, mailing, and transporting paper documents.





Sustainable banking through digital innovation



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QNB: Pioneering the Future of Digital Banking With its sights set on the future,

QNB has established itself as a leader in the digital banking sector through its unwavering commitment to innovation and customer experience. As the bank continues to evolve and adapt to the changing landscape of banking, it remains a trusted partner in its customers' financial journeys. By prioritizing digital transformation and customer satisfaction, QNB does not only secure its position as a leader in the banking industry but also ensures that it meets the diverse needs of its customers, setting the stage for a future of secure and advanced digital banking in Qatar and internationally.

"With its sights set on the future, QNB is well equipped to navigate the opportunities that lie ahead, ensuring that it continues to lead in digital banking excellence forward, and remains a cornerstone of the banking industry in the Middle East and beyond, offering its customers: tomorrow's digital banking, today"

Adel Ali Al-Malki, Senior Executive Vice President, QNB Group Retail Banking.



Award-Winning Excellence in Digital Banking

As one of the leading financial institutions in the Middle East, QNB has successfully integrated advanced technology into its operations, ensuring that customers can effortlessly manage their banking needs through a variety of digital channels. This commitment to creating a seamless banking experience is not only reflected in the services offered but also in the internationally recognized awards received over the years for its dedication to digital excellence.

QNB has garnered recognition both loacally and internationally as one of the best digital banks in Qatar and the Middle East. The bank's innovative approach has led to numerous prestigious awards, highlighting its excellence in various aspects of digital banking. Among these accolades, The Digital Banker, a globally trusted news, business intelligence and research partner to the worldwide financial services, recognized QNB as the Best Retail Bank for Digital Customer Experience in both the Middle East and Qatar. The awards underscore QNB's commitment to enhancing the customer journey by leveraging an omni-channel approach to create a user-friendly banking environment across Mobile,

Internet, and Self-service channels. Furthermore, QNB also received the Excellence in Product Marketing for its Digital services, Excellence in Omni-Channel Integration, Best Digital Wallet, and Best Private Bank at the 2024 MENA Banking Excellence Awards, which reflect the bank's comprehensive approach to digital banking, ensuring that customers receive high-quality services across all channels supported by superior marketing, and education through digital media.

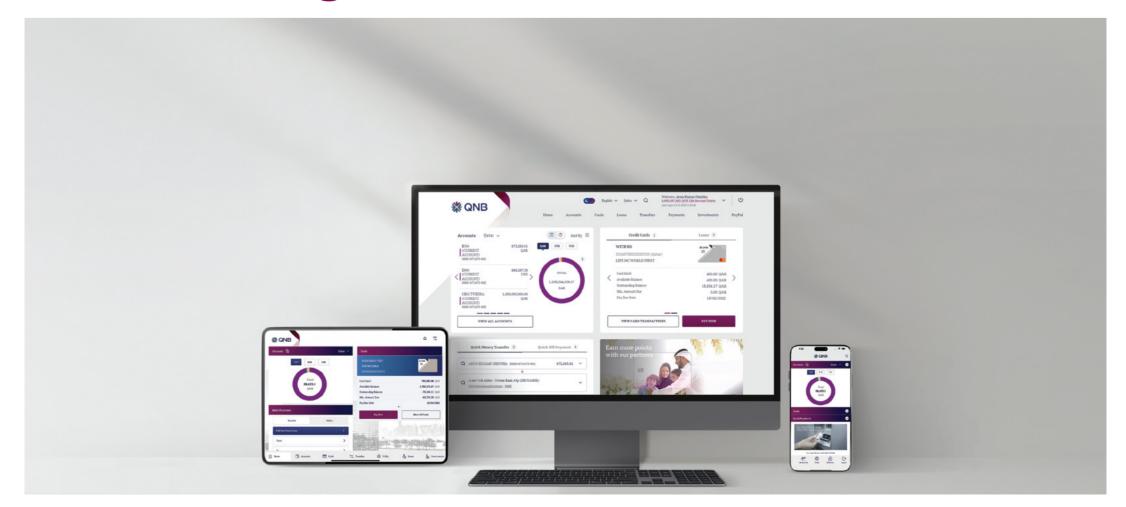
Additionally, the Qatar Digital Business Awards 2023 recognized QNB for having the Best Mobile App, further emphasizing its commitment to providing an exceptional digital experience for its customers through it is leading, back-bone channel, QNB Mobile Banking. These awards position QNB as a leader in the digital banking landscape, showcasing its ability to innovate and adapt to the ever-changing needs of its customers, and underscores the bank's financial expertise and commitment to deliver seamless customer experience being a standard in the region and beyond.







Seamless Customer Experience through QNB Mobile and Internet Banking



QNB has further enhanced its Mobile and Internet Banking platforms by introducing a new, user-friendly interface that features a seamless omnichannel design and a personalized dashboard. The newly introduced QNB Mobile and Internet Banking allows customers to personalize their favourite transactions, making it easier to access frequently used services. Additionally, customers can instantly get attested IBAN certificates and account statements with ease, streamlining the process of obtaining official banking documents on the go. The ability to instantly apply for an eLoan and request e-statements for accounts and cards adds to the efficiency of the banking experience, ensuring that customers have all the tools they need at the palm of their hands. Furthermore, QNB Mobile and Internet Banking enables users to update their personal information effortlessly, enhancing the overall user experience, without the need to visit a branch or print papers.

As part of its ongoing commitment to digital transformation, QNB has introduced a range of new features and enhancements on the QNB Mobile and Internet Banking platforms. A standout addition is the Digital Account Opening feature, which allows new customers to open accounts digitally and receive a Virtual Debit Card. This innovation simplifies the account opening process, eliminating the need for physical visits to branches and enhancing customer convenience. Customer can also instantly apply for a Virtual Card to have their Digital Account Opening experience complete. Furthermore, existing customers can now open eSaving, Saving, and Fixed Deposit accounts online, benefiting from competitive interest rates that make saving more appealing. The introduction of the Fawran service allows customers to send money to anyone within Qatar effortlessly, enhancing the bank's fund transfer capabilities. Another notable addition is the Smart Installment feature, which allows customers to manage their payments effectively, providing greater control over their financial commitments. For those traveling

abroad, QNB has introduced a Multi-Currency Travel Card, enabling seamless transactions in multiple currencies while minimizing foreign exchange fees. The bank also offers a wide range of utility payment and top-up options, allowing customers to manage their bills and services on one platform. Customers can also temporarily increase their credit card limit for their ultimate digital convenience – without any personal interaction.

QNB has a rich history of providing innovative banking services that cater to the evolving needs of its customers. Among the key services offered in the past are Global Account Access, which allows for instant transfers across international QNB accounts, making it easy for customers to conduct transactions between countries such as Qatar, Kuwait, Oman, France, and the United Kingdom. This feature is particularly advantageous for customers with international banking needs, as it simplifies the process of managing funds across borders. The QNB Locator is another invaluable tool supported with maps and augmented reality, which helps customers find the nearest Self-service machines, branches, and Life Rewards loyalty partners, ensuring that they can access banking services conveniently anytime and anywhere.

To enhance customer experience further, QNB also offers Mobile Cash and Western Union services, providing versatile options for cash transfers and international remittances. The Cash@Speed feature allows customers to access cash advances guickly, while the ATM QR functionality enables customers to access ATMs/ITMs by scanning QR codes displayed on the Self-service Machine screen with the QNB Mobile Banking app, without the presence of a physical card or interaction. In addition, customers can easily add new beneficiaries by scanning a QR code. This innovative approach not only enhances convenience but also promotes contactless transactions, aligning with the growing trend and QNB vision towards digital and cashless banking and sustainability.

Seamless Customer Experience through Self-service **Machines**

QNB boasts the largest ATM network in Qatar, with over 450 ATMs and ITMs strategically located across the country. This extensive network includes prime locations such as Hamad International Airport, where customers can withdraw foreign currency (such as USD, EUR, GBP etc.), making it a convenient option for travelers on the gateway to the world. The ITM (ATM with Video Teller) machines allows customers to interact with bank tellers securely via video calls, facilitating cash withdrawals & deposits, cheque deposits, and bill payments. This innovative service not only enhances accessibility but also provides a personal touch to banking, making it easier for customers to receive assistance when needed. The Self-service Machines offer a wide array of functions, including Bulk Cheque Deposit, which simplifies cheque processing available at QNB ATMs provide customers with multiple options for an increasingly digital world.

deposits and withdrawals, enhancing the overall banking experience. Moreover, customers can deposit cheques, pay bills, and perform prepaid top-ups for mobile and landline services at these ATMs, which adds to the convenience of banking with QNB.

In addition to its robust digital features, QNB has embraced modern communication channels through the introduction of WhatsApp Banking. This innovative service allows customers to chat with bank representatives, making it easy to request information about ATM and branch locations. By leveraging popular messaging platforms, QNB ensures that customers can access banking services and support in a manner that is both convenient and familiar. This approach demonstrates the bank's commitment to keeping pace with for customers. The contactless and physical card-less transactions—technological advancements and meeting the needs of its customers in

Seamless Contactless Payment Experience through **QNB** Pay

Pay with fitness wearables. Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Samsung Wallet, which are integrated with the QNB Mobile Banking App as well.

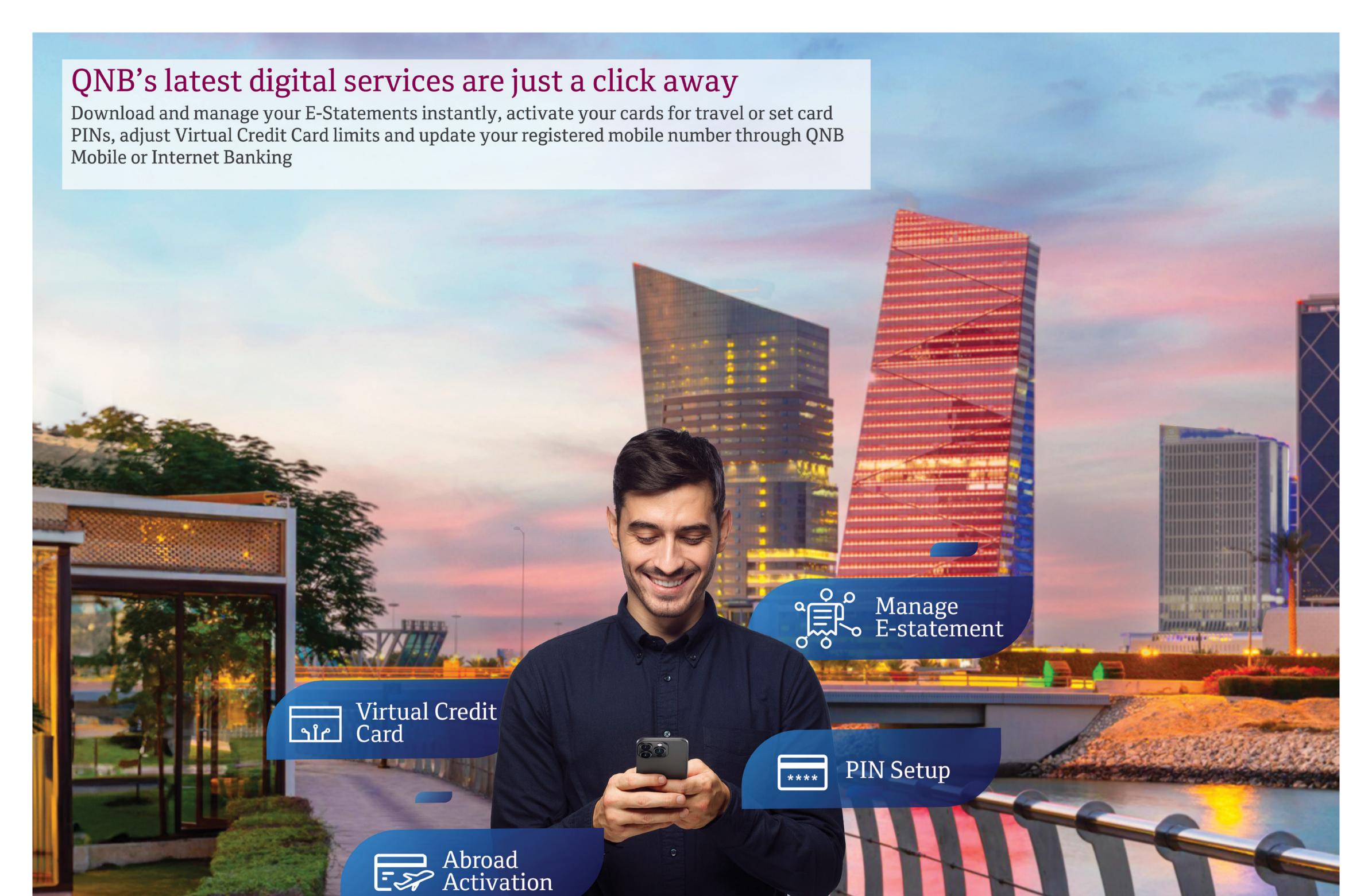
QNB offers diverse contactless solutions such as Fitbit Pay, Garmin These solutions ensure a seamless and secure payment experience for customers when using mobile and wearables.

Ensuring a Safe and Secure Banking Experience

customer's security. In an age where digital threats are increasingly sophisticated, QNB has implemented robust cyber security measures to protect customer data and transactions. The bank employs advanced encryption technologies, multi-factor authentication, device registration, biometric authentication on QNB Mobile Banking, and continuous monitoring systems to safeguard its customers. This commitment to security not only fosters customer trust but also enhances the overall banking experience by assuring customers that their financial information is safe. QNB's dedication to create a secure banking environment is a significant factor in its success and reputation as one of the leading banks in the region.

The ongoing commitment of QNB to digital innovation is evident in its comprehensive suite of services, customer-centric approach. As the bank continues to enhance its digital offerings, it remains poised to set the standard for banking excellence in Qatar and the Middle East. The integration of advanced technology into banking operations not

Another critical aspect of QNB's digital strategy is its commitment to only enhances efficiency but also fosters a more personalized and user-friendly banking experience. QNB's focus on innovation ensures that its customers can enjoy a safe, advanced, and seamless banking experience, whether they are managing their accounts online, accessing ATMs, or communicating with bank representatives through digital channels. Moreover, QNB's approach to digital transformation is rooted in understanding the unique needs of its diverse customer base. The bank recognizes that customers today seek convenience, speed, and security in their banking experiences. As such, QNB continually invests in research and development to identify the latest trends in banking technology and customer preferences. By doing so, QNB not only meets current demands but also anticipates future needs, ensuring that it remains at the forefront of digital banking solutions. This proactive approach has enabled QNB to launch features that are not only innovative but also highly relevant to its customers, positioning the bank as a leader in the competitive banking landscape.









Blockchain technology and decentralized finance (DeFi) are also poised to redefine banking. Blockchain promises faster, more secure, and transparent transactions. It can streamline everything from cross-border payments to loan issuance, reducing processing times and lowering fees. DeFi offers financial services using cryptocurrencies and blockchain technology without relying on traditional institutions. DeFi platforms enable users to borrow, lend, trade, and earn interest on digital assets, democratizing finance and promoting financial inclusion, especially in underserved regions.

Neo-banks, or digital-only banks, are further disrupting the financial sector by offering innovative services without the constraints of physical branches. Their lean, technology-driven business models allow them to deliver exceptional customer experiences at lower costs. These digital banks often cater to tech-savvy millennials and Gen Z consumers who demand convenience, transparency, and minimal fees. While neo-banks offer exciting potential, they face challenges such as regulatory scrutiny and profitability, relying on partnerships with traditional banks for essential infrastructure.

Open banking, driven by regulatory initiatives like PSD2 in Europe, requires banks to securely share customer data with third-party providers. This promotes competition and enables a more interconnected financial ecosystem. Customers benefit from personalized products and services, such as budgeting tools or more competitive loan offerings. Open banking also fosters transparency, allowing consumers to access their financial data in one place, regardless of the number of institutions they use. This creates opportunities for banks to partner with fintech companies and offer value-added services, potentially transforming their platforms into one-stop financial hubs.

Payments are evolving to become faster, more secure, and in some cases, invisible. Digital wallets, mobile payments, and real-time settlement systems are transforming the way people and businesses handle money. Countries worldwide are adopting real-time payment systems, allowing individuals and businesses to transfer money instantly, improving cash flow management and enhancing liquidity. As more devices become connected to the Internet of Things (IoT), payments will become increasingly



"invisible." Smart devices like cars, home appliances, or even wearables could automatically authorize transactions in the background, offering seamless experiences for consumers.

Digital banking also has the potential to extend financial services to previously underserved populations, particularly in developing regions where access to traditional banking infrastructure is limited. Mobile banking has become a game-changer in emerging markets, providing millions of people with access to savings accounts, credit, and payments. Digital banking services tailored to these markets can drive financial inclusion, improve economic stability, and reduce poverty. Digital platforms can assess creditworthiness using non-traditional data points, enabling small-scale lending to individuals and businesses with limited access to credit. This is empowering entrepreneurs and creating new opportunities for economic growth.

As environmental concerns grow, banks are taking a more active role in promoting sustainability through their services and operations. Digital banks are starting to integrate sustainable finance into their offerings, such as green loans, bonds, and investment portfolios that focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors. Customers are increasingly choosing financial products that align with their values, pushing banks to adopt greener practices. Digital banking also reduces the need for physical branches and paper transactions, contributing to more sustainable operations. As banks further digitize, they are likely to invest in energy-efficient data centers and adopt more environmentally friendly business practices.

While the future of digital banking is filled with opportunities, it also presents challenges. Banks must balance innovation with regulatory compliance, maintaining cybersecurity in an increasingly connected world, and ensuring that technological advances do not leave vulnerable populations behind. As banks integrate new technologies, they must comply with evolving regulations, including data protection laws and cybersecurity requirements. Regulatory frameworks will need to adapt quickly to keep pace with innovation while maintaining security and trust. With the increase in digital transactions, cybersecurity threats continue to grow. Banks must invest in advanced security measures to protect customer data and maintain trust.

In conclusion, the promise of faster payments, broader access to financial services, and greener banking practices sets the stage for a financial system that is more responsive to the needs of individuals and businesses alike. While challenges remain, the digital transformation of banking is empowering consumers, enhancing financial inclusion, and redefining how we interact with money.



Qatar tops in Global Cybersecurity Index

he National Cybersecurity Agency (NCSA) announces that Qatar has achieved a major accomplishment in the Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI) 2024, as it was classified as a "model" country at the international level in cybersecurity.

According to the index issued by the International Telecommunication Union of the UN, Qatar was placed in this classification due to its excellence in the various pillars that represent cybersecurity obligations at the state level, namely: legal, technical, regulatory, capacity development, and cooperation.

Qatar obtained full scores in the five pillars, which reflects its strong commitment to enhancing cybersecurity at the local and international levels, as well as its leading role in developing effective cybersecurity strategies.

These results confirm the importance of the continuous efforts made by the State of Qatar in providing a safe digital environment and enhancing international cooperation in confronting increasing cyber threats.

The Global Cybersecurity Index (GCI 2024) assesses national efforts through a new analysis that will contribute to a greater focus on each country's progress in terms of cybersecurity commitments and the resulting impacts.

The report places 46 countries in Tier 1, the highest of five levels, and is designated for "model" countries that demonstrate strong commitment to all five pillars of cybersecurity.





Cyber Security Strategy 2024-2030

nder the patronage of HE the Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim al-Thani, the National Cyber Security Agency launched the National Cyber Security Strategy 2024-2030 recently, in the presence of several ministers, heads of authorities, and senior officials

The National Cyber Security Strategy aims to contribute to achieving Qatar National Vision 2030 and position Qatar as a global leader in the secure adoption of emerging technologies.

In his opening remarks, HE President of the National Cyber Security Agency, Eng. Abdulrahman bin Ali Al Farahid al-Malki, expressed his pride in Qatar's recognition by the United Nations' International Telecommunication Union (ITU) as a model and pioneering nation in the field of cybersecurity, achieving the highest ranking in the Global Cybersecurity Index.

He emphasised the importance of unified efforts across both government and private sectors. "This collaborative spirit is captured in the slogan and vision of the Second National Cyber Security Strategy, which envisions a shared commitment to building trust in cyberspace, ensuring Qatar's continued progress and prosperity." He added, "We have been keen to adopt this approach during the preparation phase of this strategy. We worked closely with a broad range of organizations and coordinated intensively with working groups responsible for the preparation of the Third National Development Strategy to ensure to unified efforts in line with Qatar National Vision 2030".

He highlighted that the guiding principles of the National Cyber Security Strategy are based on values of Shared Responsibility, Risk Based Approach, Results Oriented, Individual Human Rights, Economic Prosperity and Coordination and Collaboration. These principles form the backbone for achieving national cybersecurity and provide necessary direction for guidance and implementation.

He further added that the Second National Cyber Security Strategy serves as a roadmap to address evolving cyber challenges and

focuses on building strong foundations for co-operation and collaboration locally, regionally, and internationally.

Al-Malki reaffirmed the National Cyber Security Agency's commitment to providing a secure cyberspace that benefits all individuals and organisations across Qatar, supports sustainable national development, and maintains Qatar's position as a leader in cybersecurity, both regionally and internationally.

During the ceremony, Director of National Cyber Governance and Assurance Affairs at the National Cyber Security Agency, Engineer Dana Yousef al-Abdulla, provided an in-depth overview of the strategy's objectives and its comprehensive development process. She outlined the risks, opportunities, and vision that underpin the National Cyber Security Strategy 2024–2030, and emphasised its crucial role in achieving the objectives of Qatar National Vision 2030.

The National Cyber Security Strategy outlines five key pillars, the first of which is Cyber Security and Resilience in the Qatar Ecosystem that focuses on enhancing the security and resilience of Qatar's cyber environment, with particular emphasis on critical national infrastructure and based on evolving cyber risks while aligning with national priorities.

The second pillar is Legislation, Regulations, and Law Enforcement that aims to develop national legal and regulatory frameworks, governance models and operational approaches.

The third one is Thriving, Innovative, and Data-Driven Economy that supports the development of national cybersecurity capabilities through research, development, and innovation across both public and private sectors. It also promotes investments for fostering a dynamic electronic industry.



The fourth pillar is Cyber Culture and Workforce Talent Development that seeks to cultivate a qualified cybersecurity workforce and embed cybersecurity awareness throughout society.

The fifth pillar on International Cooperation and Trusted Partners, aims to play an active role in international collaboration and cyber diplomacy, enhancing cooperation at both regional and global levels for a secure and resilient cyberspace.

The National Cyber Security Strategy 2024–2030 represents a comprehensive, resilient, and forward-looking framework. As cybersecurity emerges as one of the most significant challenges of our time, this strategy addresses its critical role in safeguarding national security and shaping the everyday lives of individuals.

The Rise of Neo-banks

eo-banks, which function without physical branches and rely on cutting-edge technology, are reshaping the banking experience. These digital-only institutions have quickly become popular, particularly among tech-savvy millennials and Gen Z consumers who value convenience, transparency, and efficiency. Their growth represents a significant shift in the banking industry, moving towards a more accessible, mobile-centric, and personalized approach to financial services.

Neo-banks, also referred to as digital or challenger banks, distinguish themselves from traditional financial institutions through their technology-driven business models. Without the overhead costs associated with physical branches, neo-banks can offer services at a fraction of the cost of traditional banks. This allows them to focus on delivering a superior customer experience, usually through intuitive mobile apps, personalized services, and low to no fees. Neo-banks primarily offer core banking services, such as checking and savings accounts, payments, and budgeting tools, but increasingly, they are expanding into lending, investment, and insurance products.

One of the main attractions of neo-banks is their user-friendly digital platforms, which are designed with the customer in mind. These platforms typically offer quick account setup, often in minutes, with minimal paperwork required. Neo-banks prioritize transparency, with many providing real-time transaction notifications, instant balance updates, and detailed spending insights. Their mobile apps allow customers to manage their finances on the go, with features such as easy money transfers, bill payments, and virtual card management. Additionally, many neo-banks offer features like automatic savings tools, which round up purchases to the nearest dollar and deposit the difference into savings accounts, helping customers build savings effortlessly.

Neo-banks also cater to a growing demand for personalized financial services. By using advanced data analytics and artificial intelligence, neo-banks can offer tailored financial advice, personalized product recommendations, and insights into spending habits. For example, some neo-banks analyze transaction data to provide users with insights into where they can cut expenses or suggest savings goals based on their financial behaviour. This level of personalization creates a more engaging and relevant banking experience compared to traditional one-size-fits-all banking

The rise of neo-banks has been fueled by the growing demand for mobile-first and digital-native services. As more people embrace smartphones as their primary means of managing their finances, neo-banks have positioned themselves as the go-to option for individuals seeking seamless, on-demand banking experiences. According to industry reports, the global neo-bank market is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 50% from 2021 to 2028, highlighting the increasing popularity of digital-only banking solutions. This rapid growth has led to the emergence of prominent neo-banks such as Revolut, Monzo, N26, Chime, and Starling, which have garnered millions of users

While neo-banks have found success in attracting younger, techsavvy customers, they also face several challenges. One of the primary hurdles is achieving profitability. Despite their growing user base, many neo-banks struggle to generate sustainable profits, as they often rely on razor-thin margins and have limited revenue streams compared to traditional banks. Most neo-banks do not have diversified portfolios, with a heavy dependence on interchange fees from card transactions and interest from loans. As competition in the digital banking space intensifies, neo-banks may face pressure to expand their product offerings and explore new revenue streams, such as lending, investment services, and subscription-based models.

Regulatory compliance is another critical challenge for neo-banks. As they operate in highly regulated environments, neo-banks must adhere to stringent banking regulations and ensure that their platforms are secure and compliant with data privacy laws. In some cases, neo-banks operate under banking licenses obtained through partnerships with traditional banks, limiting their autonomy and subjecting them to additional regulatory oversight. This reliance on legacy financial institutions for regulatory cover can slow down innovation and expansion plans for some neo-banks.

Cybersecurity is a further concern for neo-banks, given their reliance on digital platforms. The increasing threat of cyberattacks and data breaches means that neo-banks must invest heavily in security infrastructure to protect customer data and ensure the integrity of their systems. Failure to do so could lead to reputational damage and loss of customer trust, which is especially crucial for digital-only banks that lack the physical presence of traditional institutions

Neobank

Traditional bank

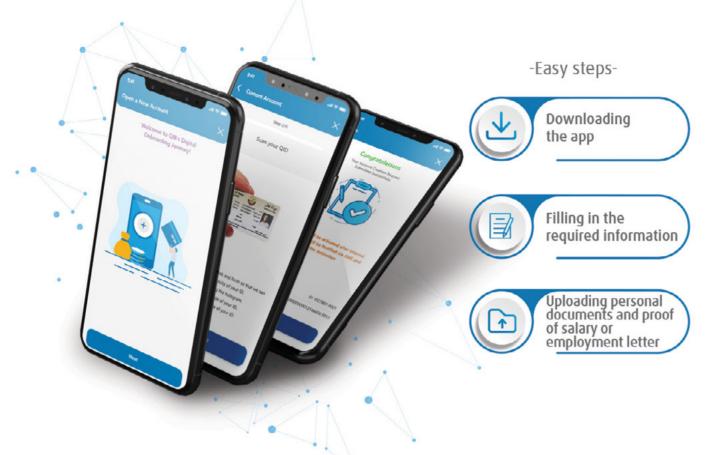
Despite these challenges, neo-banks continue to disrupt the financial industry by offering innovative solutions to modern banking problems. For instance, many neo-banks are at the forefront of financial inclusion efforts, particularly in emerging markets where traditional banking infrastructure is limited. By providing accessible, mobile-based banking services, neo-banks are helping to bridge the gap for underbanked and unbanked populations. In regions like Africa, Southeast Asia, and Latin America, neo-banks are empowering individuals and small businesses with essential financial tools, such as digital wallets, microloans, and mobile payments, that were previously out of

Neo-banks are also leading the way in promoting sustainability in banking. Several neo-banks have committed to environmentally friendly practices, such as offering carbon-neutral banking services or investing in renewable energy projects. Additionally, some neo-banks provide customers with insights into the environmental impact of their spending and offer features that help offset carbon footprints, such as planting trees for every transaction made with their cards. This focus on sustainability resonates with environmentally conscious consumers and differentiates neobanks from traditional financial institutions.

As neo-banks continue to evolve, they are expected to expand their service offerings to cater to a broader audience. This includes introducing new products such as mortgages, insurance, and wealth management services, as well as entering new markets. Neo-banks are also likely to enhance their platforms with more advanced AI-driven tools, enabling customers to benefit from even more personalized financial services and improved financial



QIB Digital Journey



From Traditional Banking to a Digital Ecosystem

Qatar Islamic Bank (QIB) has started a journey of digital change, moving beyond its origins as a traditional financial institution. This change has pushed QIB into the forefront of digital innovation, where it now holds a leading position as a pioneering force in modern banking.

Today, QIB has broadened its offerings to provide a versatile and easy-to-use digital ecosystem that meets the varied needs of both retail and corporate clients. By blending advanced technology with customer-focused design principles, QIB embraced the digital era while setting new standards in the financial services industry. This transformation shows QIB's dedication to offering unmatched convenience, efficiency, and innovation in every aspect of its business, solidifying its role as a symbol of progress and success in Qatar's financial sector.



A Customer-Centric Approach

QIB's digital strategy is built around the customer. The Bank has developed a suite of innovative Sharia'-compliant services and products tailored to each customer segment. This ensures seamless Banking experience, allowing customers to manage their finances, shop conveniently, and even track their environmental impact – all within QIB's mobile apps.

Mobile Banking at the Core

QIB prioritizes mobile Banking as the foundation of the digital transformation strategy. This commitment is reflected in three distinct mobile apps: the feature-rich QIB Mobile App for complete financial management & control, the QIB Lite App for swift everyday transactions, and the Corporate Mobile App designed for businesses to manage their company's finances effectively. This diversified approach caters to a wide range of users, ensuring both individuals and enterprises have the precise tools for seamless banking 24/7.

The Evolution of the QIB Mobile App

Originally launched in 2019, the new QIB Mobile App has continuously evolved to meet customer needs. By leveraging new technologies, QIB transformed the app into a digital one-stop-shop, to cater to customers' banking needs, at any time with 24/7 accessibility. With over 280 features and a refined user experience, the QIB Mobile App became the pre4ferred Banking channel for most customers.

Market Firsts

The QIB Mobile App

The QIB Mobile App stands out for its emphasis on convenience and innovative Shari'a-compliant features. It empowers customers with the world's first "One Click Financing" for instant personal finance and the first ever fully digital instant credit card issuance in Qatar, both



completed within minutes directly on the app. For new customers, QIB eliminates branch visits with its pioneering Digital Onboarding solution, allowing account opening in just a few minutes. The Bank's commitment to customer support extends to features like temporary credit limit increases and digital postponement options for financing installments.

This innovative approach to mobile Banking empowers users with an unprecedented level of control. Features such as instant access to digital card details for online shopping, on-the-go credit limit adjustments, and in-app card upgrades revolutionize the way individuals self-manage their finances on mobile devices.

QIB's dedication to fostering sound financial planning is reflected with the introduction of the digital-only Growing Deposit product. This innovative product encourages long-term saving habits, empowering users to build a secure financial future.

Furthermore, the QIB Mobile App serves as a comprehensive platform for all financial needs. Users can conduct various transactions, pay bills, transfer funds, and even handle school fee payments – all within a convenient environment. This eliminates the need to juggle multiple platforms or manage login credentials for a myriad of services.



The QIB Lite App

QIB breaks down language barriers with its multilingual Lite App, a simplified version of the Mobile App, designed specifically to meet the needs of low-income earners. This first in Qatar innovative app is promoting financial inclusion by providing easy access to essential Banking services. The QIB Lite App caters to those who prioritize quick and simple daily Banking needs, featuring instant transfers and payments at competitive rates.

The QIB Corporate App

Recognizing the needs of corporate clients, QIB launched the QIB Corporate Mobile App – the only Islamic Bank in Qatar to do so. This app allows QIB's corporate customers to have:

- Full control of their accounts via the Mobile App
- Instant access to their relationship managers
- The ability to fulfill their Banking needs without the need to visit a QIB branch

"We have been at the helm of a dynamic evolution, deeply influenced by the rapid pace of technological change and the shifting needs of our customers. We believe that the definition of success in Banking is in customer satisfaction, which is why we continue to invest in digital innovation. Our objective has always been to exceed expectations, and ensure that every interaction with QIB is intuitive, efficient, and rewarding", said Bassel Gamal, QIB Group CEO.

Going Beyond Banking

QIB sets itself apart by going beyond traditional banking products. Its dedication to customer service extends through strategic partnerships that drive innovation and education in Qatar. For instance, QIB joined forces with The Group Securities Companies to enable easy trading on the Mobile App. Additionally, the Bank collaborated with Damaan Islamic Insurance Company – BEEMA and Medgulf Takaful to offer instant Takaful plans through the Mobile app, ensuring customers' protection. Moreover, the QIB Marketplace on the Mobile App provides a diverse range of products, enhancing convenience for customers' shopping experiences. In addition to the QIB Auto Marketplace launched recently on the Mobile App.

Building a Holistic Digital Experience

Beyond mere transactional capabilities, QIB's digital experience fosters a holistic approach to financial management. This introduction sets the stage for exploring the innovative features offered through the QIB Mobile App, including functionalities designed to streamline daily tasks, enhance travel experiences, promote environmental awareness, and provide access to a comprehensive suite of financial tools.

- **Simplified Transactions:** The QIB Lite App is designed for low-income earners, facilitating financial inclusion through simplified access to essential banking services, including instant transfers and streamlined payments at competitive rates, available in multiple languages.
- **Global Reach:** For international needs, the Direct Remit service allows instant transfers to the popular expat destinations. Additionally, Visa Direct facilitates near real-time transfers to overseas Visa cards in a total of 57 countries.
- Travel Ready: For frequent travelers, QIB's Travel Mode
 is the feature to use. Customers can access travel
 insurance, secure instant financing for unexpected
 expenses, manage credit limits, and receive live currency
 rates all conveniently located within the Mobile App.
 The app also assists with activating card magstripes for
 international usage, scheduling trips, and finding ATMs
 abroad, ensuring a stress-free travel experience.



- Digital Cards: All QIB's Debit, Credit, and Prepaid cards are now digitized, providing instant access to card details via the QIB Mobile App. The cards are also seamlessly integrated with Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Samsung Wallet.
- Sustainability at its Core: QIB goes a step further by partnering with Visa and ecolytiq to offer a Carbon Emission Tracker. This innovative tool empowers customers to monitor their carbon footprint based on spending habits, promoting environmental awareness, and encouraging sustainable choices.
- Enhanced Security: The QIB Mobile App integrates a comprehensive suite of features catering to diverse needs. Customers can enjoy enhanced security with Secure Key, a faster and more secure authentication method.

Looking Ahead: A Commitment to the Future

QIB's digital transformation journey is an inspiring story of innovation, focus, and determination. The Bank has redefined banking in Qatar while emerging as a leader in the digital banking landscape. QIB's commitment to offering a holistic digital ecosystem empowers customers to manage their finances effectively, shop conveniently, and track their environmental impact – all within the QIB mobile apps.

Looking ahead, QIB will continue to invest in cutting-edge technologies and explore disruptive solutions. With more new features and services to be announced in 2024, QIB commits to further strengthen the digital banking experience for customers, and shaping the future of finance in Qatar and beyond.



Not 1, not 10, but 16 Global Finance Digital Banking Awards

Best Consumer Digital Bank in Qatar



In Qatar

- 2. Best Online Product Offerings
- 3. Best User Experience Design
- 4. Best Information Security and Fraud Management
- **5.** Best Social Media Marketing and Services
- 6. Best in Lending

In the Middle East

- 7. Best Information Security and Fraud Management
- 8. Best Social Media Marketing and Services

9. Best Corporate Digital Bank in Qatar



In Qatar

- 10. Best Online User Experience (UX) Portal
- 11. Best Mobile Banking App
- 12. Best in Innovation

In the Middle East

- 13. Best Online User Experience (UX) Portal
- 14. Best in Innovation

Global

15. World's Best UX Online Portal



16. Best Islamic Digital Bank in Qatar

We are proud to announce that QIB, for the first time ever, has won a total of 16 digital banking awards by Global Finance, including Best Consumer Digital Bank and Best Corporate Digital Bank in Qatar!

A true testament to the outstanding digital solutions we provide our customers every day. Thank you to all our customers and partners for your continued trust and loyalty.

