

A cashless society

by BRIAN LOCKHART

When you were a kid, you likely received an envelope from an older relative on your birthday or at Christmas.

Usually, it had a few dollars inside, although these days it's probably more like a \$50 bill.

It was an easy way to give a kid a chance to buy something they want, rather than trying to guess what a 10-year-old would like to receive for a special day.

It's a lot more fun for a kid to find money in an envelope rather than to receive a gift of new socks or underwear.

Our society is moving dangerously close to a cashless society. I can't remember the last time I put gas in my vehicle and paid with cash.

I still carry some cash in my pocket. It seems ridiculous to pay for a \$1.95 coffee with a debit card.

It seems the goal is to move to a strictly cashless situation.

However, with that cashless system comes some very serious issues that must be examined.

The thing is, with a cashless society, money is no longer tangible. It just becomes digital numbers on a screen.

On the lower end of the problem, no more piggy banks for your kids to learn how to save money, and forget the birthday card with the cash gift.

No more Craigslist or Facebook Marketplace transactions, unless you happen to own and carry a debit machine in your car.

No more opportunities for a kid to earn \$20 by shovelling snow in the winter or cutting grass in summer.

You won't be able to save that \$20 a week you stuff in an envelope because you are saving up for a new Johnson Rod accessory for the hot rod you store in the garage.

No more yard sales, garage sales, or charity sales, unless everyone goes back to a barter-type system.

You may want to buy that fancy trinket at a yard sale, but with no cash available, you may have to bring a chicken from your backyard chicken coop to trade.

Those are just the little annoyances that will plague a cashless society.

The real issue is the absolute control the state will have over you. And this is a very scary thing to think about.

A cashless society means someone else will have absolute control over your life. A bank will have full control of every single cent you have.

Bank robber Willie Sutton was asked, 'Why do you rob banks?' His notorious reply was, 'because that's where the money is.'

The banks don't have the money anymore. Try withdrawing several thousand dollars in cash from your bank account.

Most likely, you will be politely asked to come back in a couple of days because they will have to source the cash for you.

In a cashless society, every transaction you make will be recorded. Someone will be able to track your spending habits and your income.

Someone will be able to track your location and follow you across the country if you're on a road trip.

Every time you buy something, someone else can know exactly where you are.

It's a scary thought to think that a total stranger will be able to follow your every move.

If you are on Facebook, you know you are already being observed. Try looking for an item online, and sure enough, your Facebook page will suddenly start sending you ads for similar products because it has been watching your every online move.

A cashless society reduces your wealth to nothing more than numbers on a screen.

If the power goes out, so does your money.

Those numbers on the screen are not backed by anything. There is no gold standard anymore; there is nothing to back up those numbers as tangible assets, other than the fact that people have faith they mean something.

I'm not sure of the high-level security measures surrounding online banking and control, but I have wondered what stops a computer genius with access to computer systems from simply moving a decimal point to another spot on a bank account?

A cashless society will create a whole new way of life where everything you do, everything you buy, everywhere you go, will be recorded.

I'd rather carry a few \$20 bills in my pocket, rather than have it known that I'm currently sitting in Tim Hortons having a coffee by some unseen person tracking my movements.