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Title: “Central bank digital currency” anno 1962

Abstract: Cash use for payments purposes is decreasing in many countries. Hence, central banks around the world are exploring the possibility of introducing a digital central bank backed payment instrument for retail transactions - a retail central bank digital currency. Some projects look at using distributed ledger technology (eg block chain) while others rely on more traditional centralised “account-based” technologies. Increasingly, central bank experiments are focusing on cross-border dimensions as well. Mark Twain said, “History never repeats itself, but it does often rhyme”. This presentation highlights that for most of the 20th century there was a highly efficient state backed retail payments system that provided domestic transfers for free and international ones at low costs. The system used the predominant communication network prior to the internet: the postal service. Lessons for the future are plentiful.