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Assisted self-service terminals provide bridge between physical and digital banking

The number of assisted self-service banking terminals installed around the world has been increasing significantly over recent years, allowing banks to migrate transactions away from the teller's desk and redeploy staff to focus on sales and advisory activities

### A compelling alternative to the teller line

Findings from RBR's latest study, *Branch Transformation 2021*, show that there are 340,000 assisted self-service terminals (ASSTs) deployed worldwide, the vast majority of which can be found in China. ASSTs share many features with multi-functional ATMs, the main difference being that certain transactions must be authorised by bank staff. They also typically offer a more complex transaction set than ATMs, making them a compelling alternative to the teller line. For instance, ASSTs in the USA allow customers to specify the bank note denomination when making a withdrawal.

Remote video assistance is common in the USA

While most Chinese ASSTs offered video assistance when they were first introduced, today the majority of the country's terminals provide an in-person service. This is in response to legislation introduced in 2017 that ID verification must be performed in person, rather than via video. ASSTs in China frequently enable cashless processes, such as account opening and allow branch employees to authorise certain transactions with a tablet. In-person assistance is also the norm in Italy where banks see a benefit in being able to replace the teller line with ASSTs, transforming branches into outlets where staff do not handle cash. This provides an opportunity to redeploy staff to undertake more value-adding activities, such as sales.

The report shows that the USA is the world's second largest ASST market. Here, it is typical for customers to receive remote video assistance, often from their vehicle in drive-through banking lanes, allowing them to access a wide range of services outside of the core branch opening hours.

Number of assisted self-service terminals worldwide by type, 2016-2020 (thousands)
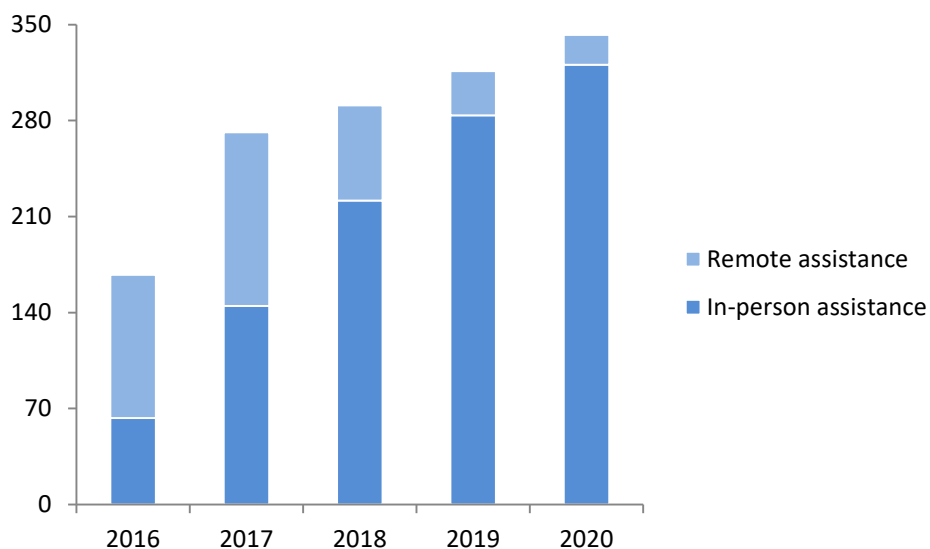
Source: Branch Transformation 2021 (RBR)

Assisted self-service preserves the human element in banking

There remain some countries where ASST technology is not present, such as Poland and France. RBR found that Polish deployers prefer to limit the number of banking channels rather than overwhelming customers with too much choice. Meanwhile, French banks believe that their customers are already served adequately via a combination of in-branch assistance and telephone banking. In some countries, banks hold back from deploying ASSTs as they are unsure whether demand would be sufficient to justify their relatively high price. This is particularly the case in countries with a strong attachment to face-to-face banking, such as Mexico.

On the whole, however, the reception of ASSTs has been overwhelmingly positive. Emily Beeby, who led RBR's *Branch Transformation 2021* study, noted: "*Banks increasingly see ASSTs as the ideal bridge between physical and digital channels, as they encourage greater use of self-service terminals. ASSTs' strength is that they preserve the human element in banking, which customers continue to value for certain transactions*".

Notes to editors

These figures and insights are based on RBR's study, *Branch Transformation 2021.* For more information about this report or to discuss the findings in more detail please email Emily Beeby (emily.beeby@rbrlondon.com) or call +44 7305 882 176.

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