

# It's time to bank on next generation technology

How the banking industry can make the best of 5G and Wi-Fi 6

## Everyone's talking about 5G

From phone carriers to conspiracy theorists, the next-gen network is sparking debates and discussion. One thing everyone seems to agree on is the fact that 5G is going to transform our relationship to technology. While we likely won't see the full rollout until 2023, the fifth-generation network is already being tested out in select cities from Chicago to San Francisco, which means the fundamental shift has already begun.

Part of the change will come from Wi-Fi 6—the next step for wireless. Wi-Fi 6 (also known as 802.11ax) is built on the same foundation as 5G. And with Wi-Fi devices expected to grow to 26 billion by 2020, Wi-Fi 6 will have a powerful reach.

[Read our 5 Things to Know About Wi-Fi 6 and 5G here.](#)

Together, 5G and Wi-Fi 6 will coexist to create unprecedented connection for users, with higher speeds and virtually no delays in downloads, connections, and streaming (or in tech speak: lower latency and increased device density). But with those benefits to users come changes and challenges for industries that rely on wireless tech to interact with their customers— especially for industries like retail and banking.

More and more, both of these industries are building out their mobile capabilities to interact with customers—and keep them coming back. People can browse, buy, and ship items from retailers in a single tap. And they can check spending, pay friends, and handle bills the same way. If they can't, they'll likely move on to a company that says they can.

Most businesses have largely adapted to offer this level of convenience. But 5G is a new frontier.

## Key Advantages of 5G / Wi-Fi 6

### Higher data rates and lower latency

Support new applications and achieve better business outcomes

### Significant increases in network capacity

Seamless connectivity for more users, more applications, and more devices

### Support IoT... at scale

The explosion of IoT devices makes supporting a growing network mission critical for continued success

## Banking will face some of 5G's biggest challenges and opportunities.

With heavy regulations and a history of resistance to the latest advances, banking in particular faces an uncertain path forward in the next few years.

How can banks smooth out the transition to this technology?

### 1. Embrace the change

Traditionally, banks have been slow to bring in new types of technology. Need proof? Some banks still don't let customers deposit checks through an app, a feature that's been available to others for a decade. But 5G & Wi-Fi 6 aren't 'features.' And this isn't the time to wait and see how things shake out.

5G is already being tested in cities across the U.S. and abroad. There's no turning back. And while some are still considering it just another upgrade, the impact will be much more significant and transformative to the way consumers and businesses use technology on a daily basis.

So this is the time to get two steps ahead and get prepared. Banks who are still resisting going mobile and using tech will need to get moving to use the advances that are already available to them. If not, they'll find themselves playing catch up and potentially getting left behind by customers.

### 2. Keep up with disruptors

Finance and banking have been a breeding ground for shiny new competitors who are shaking things up with simple, streamlined user experiences that catch the eye of consumers. And this new generation gives fintech innovators the perfect time to make a splash—particularly if old institutions aren't keeping up.

But banks don't need to simply beat the competition. There's also an opportunity to partner up. Fintech disruptors may bring creativity and a customer experience mindset, but banks bring regulatory and security expertise to the table. Which means there's room for collaboration to create an ecosystem that makes the most of 5G for customers.

### 3. Think fast

When we say 5G will be faster, we mean it. We're talking download speeds of 20 Gbps per second. Which is at least 10 times faster than 4G. That certainly means money will be moving faster. But it means banks can move faster, too.

With increased speeds, banks can detect fraud in real-time. Use video streams to connect with customers with questions. Use facial recognition at ATMs. Detect issues before they become issues. Analyze mass amounts of data in an instant to make decisions and help customers make decisions, too. 5G speed makes it possible. So banks need to make sure they invest in the tools and infrastructure to make the most of this faster future.

*Banking will no longer stop at wallets, ATMs, or even mobile apps. 5G and Wi-Fi 6 will give banks the ability to create truly immersive experiences.*

#### 4. Invest in hardware

While this new era will make it seem like Wi-Fi is a naturally occurring part of the world, banks will still need the hardware to make it possible. We think of 5G as an outdoor solution and Wi-Fi 6 as an indoor solution—just like Wi-Fi now, but with more power. That increase in power can create better experiences both internally and externally for banks. But because Wi-Fi 6 will allow for higher speeds, it'll also attract a higher volume of users (remember those 26 billion devices?). And with three times the performance of 802.11ac, it'll lead to a boost in overall traffic.

So in-branch and internal tech will need to be up to the task both in speed and security capabilities—including hardware. We can help, with our newest products designed to make the most of this new era of unplugged and uninterrupted connection, including:

- Cisco Catalyst 9000 family of switches for resilience at scale
- Cisco Catalyst 9100 Wi-Fi 6 access point with superior RF innovations and intelligence
- Cisco Meraki MR 45/55 access points for top efficiency and performance

[Learn more about these products here.](#)

#### 5. Build a bank that goes anywhere

We're expecting an IoT explosion that will affect both 5G and Wi-Fi 6. Banking will no longer stop at wallets, ATMs, or even mobile apps (which might become a thing of the past with more accessible internet). 5G and Wi-Fi 6 will give banks the ability to create immersive experiences through augmented and virtual reality, 4k and 8k live streaming, AI, and connected devices.

In other words, banking can and will happen anywhere. That goes beyond the ability to transfer funds from a phone. It means customers can connect devices, cars, wearables, and more to move towards digital only banking—whether they're simply checking their balance or about to make a major financial decision with the help of an advisor on video chat.

And with added security due to fewer delays and personalization that comes with AI, customers who have resisted digital will have all the more reason to embrace it.

## Interested in learning more about 5G and Wi-Fi 6 for the banking industry?

For more information on how you can prepare your bank for the future of 5G and Wi-Fi 6 technology, visit:

[Cisco.com/go/FSI](https://www.cisco.com/go/FSI)

### 6. Imagine what's possible

It's easy to focus on the difficulties of change. And it's true that fully adapting to the 5G world won't be easy. But the same could be said of the shift to online. A couple decades ago, many people thought 'dot com' wasn't worth the trouble. And look where we are now.

For banks, 5G and Wi-Fi 6 opens a whole new world of capabilities. Greater speed means geolocation that will aid in fraud protection. Constant connection makes digital payments simpler for users and bankers. And newly empowered IoT could create a new world of devices and connections that haven't even been dreamt up yet.

5G and Wi-Fi 6 may still come with a lot of unknowns. But when banks get prepared for what's coming, they can start to embrace the exciting future of one of the world's oldest industries.