

MANFRED: DISCOVERING THE ADVANTAGES OF DIGITAL FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT



LIFE STORY BASED ON STORYTELLING

Developed by the die Berater (Austria)

About me

I am 62 years old and have three more years of work before retirement. I have studied engineering and worked in the software industry. I have a wife and three grown up children. In my free time I like to go sailing and hiking in nature.

My story of using digital financial services

Do you manage your finances digitally?

I have not been to a bank for a very long time. So yes, I manage my finances digitally. I use online banking, but only on the computer and not in banking Apps. I prefer to use the computer because I do not like the small display and keyboard on smartphones. I feel less in control which is not good for managing money digitally. I also shop online, mostly using my credit card or immediate transfer for payments.

Did you have any problems or challenges so far?

One time my new credit card was blocked during online shopping. I tried to log into my credit card account but the password was not working. It seemed that my account was still connected to my old credit card and not the new one. I could not solve the problem on my own so I called the hotline of the credit card provider.

I was surprised that a robot answered and not a person. The robot told me that they can understand when and what I speak. So I asked how I could reset my password for the new card. The robot told me where I could find the answer to my question online. I really found the answer there. It was still very frustrating that I could not speak to a real person.

Do you usually call hotlines when you need help?

Yes, the hotline is usually my first choice when I need help. I would also ask younger colleagues at work or my grown-up children because they are more skillful with online things.

Do you have safety concerns with online banking?

I do not have safety concerns with online banking. I work in the software industry myself and that is why I trust that banks have good and safe softwares. When doing online shopping I feel safe because I always get a TAN on my smartphone when I need to pay higher sums. Even if someone gets my credit card details, they could only shop up to sums of 50€.

And if you do something on a new computer or smartphone, you are usually notified whether you did it yourself. So this is an additional safety for me.

How do you react when you get a suspicious e-mail from your bank?

One time I got a suspicious e-mail from my bank and I immediately called the hotline. A person answered and explained to me that it was not an authentic e-mail from the bank and that I could always tell by the e-mail address whether the sender is suspicious or real.

Lessons learned and experience gained

Funded by the European Union. Views and opinions expressed are however those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Education and National Agency (NA). Neither the European Union nor the NA can be held responsible for them.

According to you, what are the benefits of managing your finances digitally?

I think it is easier than before. In the past, when I opened an online bank account, I got a letter with 50 TAN numbers that I could use for money transfers. I always had to remember where I put the paper with the TANs. Today I can make transfers from any computer.

I can also save time because I do not need to go to banks anymore where there are long waiting hours nowadays. It is very handy and I can always check whether something has been transferred already. In my online bank account I can also search for old payments, whether they are from a few weeks or a few years ago. It is much easier with the search function, whereas in the past I had to store payment slips in folders. Finding the right payment slip after a long time was not always easy.

I can read information online and take as much time as I want to understand everything. Because banking systems are often changing, reading about them online is useful because it gets updated more quickly

Do you see any disadvantages in managing your finances digitally?

I think the biggest disadvantage is that the hotline with a real person is difficult to reach when you have problems. One time I filled in the contact form because I had a problem. I got an e-mail as an answer with a link to the website of the bank to the section with frequently asked questions. I was hoping for an answer specifically to my question. I would like there to be a hotline where I can talk to a person even regarding smaller problems.

What are some of the lessons you have learned from managing your finances digitally?

I think I developed my knowledge and skills through managing my finances online. For example, now I know what an IBAN is or that I do not need to transfer money immediately but can do it in a week. With payment slips this was not as flexible. Today I can plan my bank transfers ahead and can do more in a day, if I need.

Recommendations

What do you recommend to people who have difficulties with managing their finances digitally?

I recommend that people try online banking if they have a computer and know how to use it. Especially people who have the time and patience to visit banks and store papers in folders can use that patience to learn how to manage their finances online.

In my opinion, many problems arise because older people, in particular, lack trust in online banking and become confused as a result. I think special workshops or training sessions could help them learn the basics for digitally managing their money and to slowly lose their fears and doubts. It is important to show those people how to use things like online banking and to show them how easy it is. Once they have tried it themselves, they will be able to learn it very quickly.

Self-reflection questions

These questions can serve as prompts for introspection and self-assessment, helping individuals gain insight into their financial habits, values, and aspirations.

1. Have you experienced similar challenges like Manfred?
2. How has your past experiences, such as your profession or hobbies, influenced your comfort level with digital financial services?
3. Do you think there are generational differences in attitudes towards digital financial services?
4. What steps could you take to increase your confidence and proficiency in managing your finances digitally?
5. What kind of support would you need for managing your finances digitally?