

Here's how it works

■ Type in the name and address of the person or company you want to pay. If they have never received payment electronically before, TelPay will physically mail them the paper cheque. Included with the cheque will be a registration form so that if they register, an electronic cheque from anyone will go directly into their account next time.

■ If the sender knows the receiver's bank account number, the money will move electronically regardless if they are registered.

■ Most people are registering because they receive money faster, they don't have to travel to the bank to deposit the cheque, and the cheques don't bounce.



KEN GIGLIOTTI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS

Bill Loewen, right foreground, the creator of TelPay with president and CEO Brian Denysuik, introducing a new bill-paying system.

Loewen file

A short history of entrepreneur and philanthropist Bill Loewen

- Loewen was raised in Elkhorn, Manitoba, in 1930.
- A chartered accountant, Loewen launched payroll company Comcheq in 1968 with a \$15,000 investment.
- Comcheq had over 400 employees and \$25 million in revenue when Loewen sold the company to Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in 1992, which subsequently sold it to American buyers.
- Loewen retained a research and development division of Comcheq called TelPay Inc.
- Headed Winnipeg Millennium Committee.
- Put up \$1 million to form National Party of Canada with Mel Hurtig in 1992, which dissolved over political philosophy and a money scandal by 1994.
- Opposed the Canada-United States free trade deal in 1988, and publicly opposes bank mergers.
- A prominent funder of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra and Pantages Playhouse Theatres, and donated \$1 million to the Manitoba Choral Association in 1998, among other philanthropic endeavors.
- Named to the Order of Canada in 1999.
- Married to wife Shirley. They have five children together.

— TelPay Inc. and Wikipedia

Another Loewen revolution

Comcheq pioneer comes up with a new, simpler bill payment system

By Bill Redekop

YOU can pay your contractor with a click of a button from home. You can pay your sister for your parents' anniversary gift also via home banking.

You can even send money to your child's school for its lunch program, or transfer money to the account of your child who's away in college, from your home.

At age 76, Bill Loewen, former president and founder of Comcheq, has revolutionized telebanking — again.

It's called the "next generation" bill payment system. No longer do you need an approved "billers list" as most peo-

ple have now when telebanking from home. All you need is the person's or company's name, and address.

It's the first system of its kind in Canada.

"It eliminates the need to write a cheque," said Loewen, who for the past 20 years has run TelPay Inc., a research and development arm of his former company, Comcheq, that he sold.

The service was introduced this month to over 30,000 members of the Fédération des caisses populaires du Manitoba. The first trial began with the civil service's Alterna Savings in Ottawa last year.

"My son's in college. I can transfer him money into his bank account...when I get the emergency phone call, you

know," laughed Gilbert Audette of La Broquerie, a member of the caisse populaire in St. Pierre.

It was Loewen and his TelPay company, with 40 employees at its downtown Winnipeg office, that first introduced the "billers list" system in 1985 that lending institutions eventually adopted.

"Bill Loewen has never stopped being a true entrepreneur," said Brian Denysuik, TelPay president and CEO. "He's still 20 years ahead of anyone else."

The biggest beneficiaries of the new system may be farmers and rural residents, who often still have to drive into town to pay a supplier or to mail a cheque.

"Now, they pop open their computer at the end of the day, and pay all their

suppliers electronically," said Denysuik.

You can post-date cheques. You can also transfer money from one banking institution to another, and donate to charities.

The two largest concerns in the system's development were security, and ensuring money reaches its destination, said Loewen. One security feature is that users get confirmation to verify transactions.

Most caisses populaires are charging 35-50 cents per transaction, with the service free for seniors.

"It's leading edge technology and very user friendly," said Bernie Marcoux, Caisse project manager. "The feedback we're getting from members is very positive."

The system is limited to payments within Canada right now but will add international electronic chequing by early next year, Denysuik said.

A pilot project is also in the works to allow people to use "electronic cheques" while Internet shopping. TelPay expects the system to be able to make international payments by early next year.

The new system serves Caisse members with main branches in St. Boniface, and rural communities Elie, La Salle, Laurier, Notre Dame du Lourdes, Ste. Anne, St. Claude, St. Malo, and Ste. Rose du Lac. Other Manitoba credit unions are in the process of converting to the new system.

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