

THE EVOLUTION OF The Modern POS System

The way we eat is changing because restaurant technology is evolving. Over the years, restaurants have used cash registers, POS systems, mobile apps, and more to take payments and drive revenue. Join us as we dive into the history - and the future - of restaurant technology.

Blue text indicates changes to the technology and payment industry and orange text indicates changes to the point of sale and restaurant industry.



18th Century

Loyalty programs began with merchants giving products in exchange for culminated proofs of purchase.



1879

The first cash register was invented.



1931

The first drive-thru was pioneered by a fast food restaurant in California, Pig Stand Number 21.



1960

The first credit card was created when IBM used magnetic tape to secure magnetic stripes to plastic cards.



1950s

Take-out became popular in the U.S. in conjunction with the end of WWII and the invention of the TV.



Mid 1970s

IBM introduced the electronic cash register (ECR), the first computer-based system used by the restaurant industry.



1980s

Gift certificates were originally designed as a donation tool. Merchants would offer a gift certificate at a discounted cost to non-profit organizations so they could sell them for full price and make a profit.



1972

Thermal printing was developed and applied to printed kitchen tickets and receipts.



1975

IBM created the first desktop computer, the IBM 5100.



1992

The first POS software for Microsoft Windows was created.



1986

Gene Mosher pioneered technology for his deli with the first graphical point-of-sale software, with colored widgets and a touch-screen interface.



1993

The EMV (Europay, MasterCard, and Visa) standard was established in Europe.



1991

The World Wide Web was born.



2000

The first tablet was created by Microsoft and produced by Lenovo.



2001

Starbucks began to offer refillable gift cards.



1994

Pizza Hut accepted their first-ever online order (a large pepperoni, mushroom and extra cheese pizza).



1994

Blockbuster introduced swipeable gift cards instead of gift certificates to reduce fraud.



2002

The first cloud-based POS system was introduced in the United Kingdom.



2010

Near Field Technology (NFC) functionality was added at low cost to mass-market mobile phones and other devices.



2007

The first iPhone came on the market.



2003

McDonald's, America's largest restaurant chain, started to accept credit and debit cards.

2012

Consumer-grade tablets took over the POS market.



2013

Papa John's and Domino's Pizza attributed over 40% of their sales to orders made online.



2013

Restaurant management platform Toast launched a commercial-grade restaurant POS system in Boston.



2014

Panera Bread allows guests to order through to self-serve kiosk systems.



2%



2017

Only 2% of restaurants named technology their biggest challenge to success.



2015

The U.S. introduced EMV chip card technology.

2018

Toast Go™

Toast introduced Toast Go™, a fully integrated handheld POS system, allowing servers to take orders and payments and issue digital or email receipts from anywhere in the restaurant.



2019 & Beyond

The future of the POS is in your hands - literally. Will restaurants adopt more online ordering and delivery technology, like Domino's, or more kiosk stations, like Panera Bread? Will robots eventually run operations, lowering labor costs? Will mobile POS systems become as ubiquitous as smartphones? We'll be watching closely as these trends disrupt the industry - and you should too.

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