

Copyright 2004 Gale Group, Inc.  
ASAP  
Copyright 2004 FT Business  
The Banker

November 1, 2004

SECTION: Pg. NA ; ISSN: 0005-5395

IAC-ACC-NO: 123915654

LENGTH: 248 words

HEADLINE: Global News: Brazilian Bank Unions Call Off Strike.

BODY:

BRAZIL'S LONGEST EVER banking strike came to an end last month, four weeks after it commenced, as workers heeded their union bosses' call to return to their jobs. Nearly half of the country's 400,000 bank employees had walked off the job on September 15, when Brazil's banks refused to give them a 25% salary increase.

An important factor in ending the strike appears to be the explosion of business conducted via automatic teller machines (ATMs) in the country of 175 million people.

The country's banking system has become among the most automated in the world. One of the reasons the banking strike lacked bite is that, despite half of the workforce walking out, the stoppage had little impact. The country's banking system is now so automated that less than 10% of transactions involve face-to-face contact between customer and employee.

But the technological revolution also comes with risks. On October 20, Brazil's Policia Federal arrested 50 computer hackers who had managed to tap into the online systems of banks and transferred an estimated \$ 28m in customer funds to other accounts. The scam revolved around a bogus e-mail message which, once opened, made personal banking and access codes available to hackers.

As Brazil's banking system continues its rapid technological development, progress seems guaranteed to add a provocative new dimension to the political and collective bargaining concerns that have often dominated the Brazilian labour market.