

Technology innovation makes retail trading platforms more accessible and inclusive

I started my career trading options on the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Before joining Moomoo Technologies Inc., I worked at Bloomberg on the equity news desk. Both jobs required training to navigate a variety of professional platforms, such as the Bloomberg terminal. I even printed out a Bloomberg cheat sheet for beginners, so I could remember all the shortcuts to use the terminal more efficiently. During these years, I have been continuously thinking about retail investors, regular Americans who don't have this privileged training or access, and what it entails to trade like a pro.

Over the last decade, online platforms have used technological innovation to make investing more accessible to a wider group of retail investors. Today, that trend is accelerating. Artificial Intelligence, automation, real-time data, and pattern detection are being made available for investors as leading-edge tech tools.

As with all innovation, however, there needs to be a clear understanding of the ability and readiness of investors to take advantage of these innovations. That means looking closely at the different types of investors, and understanding how they use these tools - all in the context of what drives their journey using technology to achieve their investment objectives. For the platforms, it's about forging an alignment between delivering practical utility and ensuring that innovation truly serves investors.

The three main investor segments - investors who are just starting out, those who are somewhat active, and those who are advanced - are at very different stages of their investment journeys. The tech features and tools each segment uses should be adapted to meet where they are, and not ahead of their ability to generate potential benefits.



Justin Zacks,
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That's where some platforms are facing challenges. These platforms are putting greater emphasis on injecting innovation than on outlining the roadmap of adoption of these tools as they're relevant within each investing segment. To support the investment journey, they need to help their investors see when it's time to "bridge" from these tech tools to the next level in achieving their objectives.

One example is charting and drawing tools that can help identify stocks that have comparable price trends of various stocks. These are important because patterns give investors a more holistic picture with a context for future decision-making, and greater transparency, helping them to make sense of activities that would otherwise not be evident or may take a longer time to become evident. Without tools like this, finding patterns in stock performance would be like looking for a needle in a haystack for investors of all levels.

For new investors, friendly interfaces and simplifying trading and analysis are generally the first and most important aspects of their experience on the platform, whereas more active and advanced investors could be more comfortable with a variety of interfaces and analyses.

AI-enabled tools that flag unusual stock and options movements are typically more beneficial for active, advanced traders who can act on them more quickly due to their experience and the fact they are more likely to spend more time trading. That's why we believe the future of retail trading lies in personalization.

The platforms need to hear from investors on what's working and what's not, then use that feedback to shape future generations of technology innovation. The best way to do that is by being inclusive, listening to investors, and making changes. At Moomoo, this is integral to the way we interact with our users.

For example, at Moomoo in May 2023, a customer suggested that our App should provide choices to move the timeframe line for the candlestick or K-line charts, similar to their presentation in our desktop version. A few months later, we made the options available so clients can now easily adjust from intraday to a one-year timeframe with the K-line charts on our mobile App.

Innovation should be pursued to provide greater, seamless processes and detect risks that can help enable better investment decisions that get to the ultimate destination for investors: achieving their investment objectives.