

Apple Pay and Google Pay

This month, we review two secure, easy-to-use in-store and online payment methods.

When I wrote about Apple Pay and Google Pay five years ago, I lamented that U.S. retailers were way behind those in other countries in recognizing these convenient and secure payment options.

Today, both are accepted at many (most?) “bricks-and-mortar” stores and online sellers, and they deserve a revisit.

Apple Pay and Google Pay

While Apple Pay works on Apple devices and Google Pay on Android smartphones, these payment applications are similar enough, so I’ll just refer to Apple Pay and explain how to set it up on your iPhone.

First, you add your credit or debit card(s) to the **Apple Wallet** app by either manually entering the card details or scanning the card using the iPhone’s camera. Apple then verifies the card details with the bank or card issuer, and **authenticates your iPhone¹** before enabling the card for Apple Pay. **The credit card information per se is not stored in your iPhone.**

To pay, you hold your iPhone near the payment terminal and authenticate the transaction using biometric identification (**Face ID or Touch ID**) or the device’s **passcode** to prove you are you. Once authenticated, the payment is completed, and the terminal confirms the transaction.

Your iPhone never provides your credit card information. Instead, it sends a number (called a “token”) that identifies your device (which you authenticated with your biometric or passcode ID) and a one-time security code to the merchant’s payment processor.

From this point, the transaction is handled as though you gave the merchant your credit card: The merchant forwards the transaction request to the card network (Visa, Master Card, AMEX, etc.), which forwards the request to your issuing bank. The bank pays the merchant if your credit account is in good standing.

This transaction happens without anyone seeing your credit card number. And, because Apple Pay transactions require either a biometric or passcode ID, the chance of you becoming a victim of a fraudulent transaction is much lower.

Online Purchases

Many online retailers also accept Apple Pay and Google Pay. Even though you’re not holding your smartphone next to a payment terminal to make the purchase, from Apple Pay’s perspective, it’s the same: You’ll authenticate your purchase with your biometric ID or passcode to prove that you are you, and the transaction is completed.

If you need computer help just fill out the form at **Tech Lab – Center for Modern Aging Princeton** (cmaprinceton.org) to set up an appointment.



*Many stores accept Apple Pay.
I'm not sure this is one of them.*

¹ You must authenticate every device on which you want to use Apple Pay. This ensures that the device is yours.