

# Pay without Cash – Google Wallet Facing Security Risks

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Google is well known for aligning its business according to the emerging market trends. Regarding this, as the market size of Android technology users is rising rapidly, Google worked hard for offering something convenient to these users, i.e. Google Wallet. Here is what you should know more about it:

## Is It A Real Wallet?

Google Wallet is an app for smartphone users through which they can store credit cards, gift cards, loyalty cards, and redeem sales promotions on their smartphone. When you are shopping from a store that accepts Google Wallet, all you need to do is to tap your phone and make the payment at checkout. Additionally, you can even use this app for online shopping. For that, look for the button “Buy” or “Checkout”. After that, review your purchase and click to make the payment by signing into your account.

In order to make it a reality, Google has partnered with Citibank, MasterCard, and Sprint. There are thousands of merchants who accept your payments through Google Wallet. Some of the most popular merchants include McDonald’s, Toys “R” Us, Subway, Jamba Juice, BP, Best Buy, The Home Depot, Dairy Queen, and many more.

## Safety and Security

Apart from all the convenience it promises to provide its customers, the most important element in this app is the level of security being provided by Google Wallet. In some situations, anyone can use a stolen debit card without inserting the Personal Identification Number (PIN). However, Google Wallet has something more to offer, i.e. it requires the PIN from users. Additional security offered by Google Wallet includes the following:

- It uses a computer chip “Secure Element” for storing encrypted user information.
- You can even lock your smartphone with a PIN.
- You need to insert an additional PIN in the app for activating the antenna of NFC chip.
- Payment through Google Wallet can only be made if you place your smartphone near a MasterCard PayPass reader.
- The antenna turns off as soon as one transaction is completed. If you want to make another transaction, you will have to insert the PIN again.

Regardless of the fact that Google Wallet offered its users with as much security as possible, Google is facing many challenges that question the reliability of its security. Zvelo is a Security Research company that found out that if your smartphone gets stolen, thieves can easily access your Google Wallet PIN. However, Google says that this threat is only applied on Android devices with “Rooting”, a process that

gives the owner of the device an access of the PIN. But it is only helpful for software geeks. Google warns users about not installing Google Wallet if their phone is rooted.

Currently, you can only use a Citibank MasterCard for making payments through Google Wallet. But many of the users do not have an account in Citibank. Google provides them the solution by giving them a pre-paid card that has similar functions as that of a credit card. The security problem is that the linking data added to your smartphone by linking your phone with your prepaid account remains on your phone and does not get erased even after deleting all your personal information.

### **The Bottom Line**

Although Google is taking sound initiatives to tackle these security risks, people will be more concerned about whether they should use Google Wallet or not. No matter what happens, Google has always managed to meet the challenges. However, using Google Wallet while making payments is now a big question because it is all about your money and you will definitely need to think twice before using this mobile app.