Claims

1. A method of real-time three-party transaction processing, comprising, at an intermediation server:

(a) receiving invoice data defining a price payable to a vendor for supplying a product to a customer;

(b) after (a) and prior to initiation of a payment to the vendor for supplying the product:

extracting, from the invoice data, a vendor identifier corresponding to the vendor;

selecting, based on the invoice data, a customer identification mechanism;

determining, in association with the invoice data, a customer identifier corresponding to the customer according to the selected customer identification mechanism;

retrieving a payer identifier corresponding to a payer associated with the customer;

retrieving, based on at least the payer identifier, a transaction policy that defines criteria for allocating expenses between the payer and the customer;

determining, based on the criteria of the retrieved transaction policy, at least one of an eligible portion of the price to be allocated to the payer identifier, and an ineligible portion of the price not to be allocated to the payer identifier but to be allocated to the customer identifier; and

allocating the eligible portion of the price to the payer identifier; and

(c) generating and transmitting payment data for initiating a payment of the eligible portion from the payer to the vendor.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein receiving the invoice data comprises: receiving the invoice data from a vendor computing device corresponding to the vendor identifier.

3. The method of claim 1 or 2, wherein determining the customer identifier comprises extracting the customer identifier from the invoice data.

4. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein determining the customer identifier comprises:

obtaining a unique invoice identifier; and

receiving an association request from a customer computing device corresponding to the customer identifier, the association request containing the unique invoice identifier.

5. The method of claim 4, and when dependent on claim 2, wherein obtaining the unique invoice identifier comprises generating the unique invoice identifier and transmitting the unique invoice identifier to the vendor computing device for capture by the customer computing device.

6. The method of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein receiving the invoice data comprises receiving invoice data from a customer computing device corresponding to the customer identifier.

7. The method of any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein extracting the vendor identifier comprises performing optical character recognition on the invoice data.

8. The method of any one of claims 1 to 7, further comprising:

when the ineligible portion is non-zero, transmitting a notification to a customer computing device corresponding to the customer identifier, the notification containing an indication of the ineligible portion.

9. The method of claim 1, wherein generating and transmitting the payment data comprises:

requesting the payment data from an external payment system; and

transmitting the payment data to a customer computing device corresponding to the customer identifier for presentation to a vendor computing device corresponding to the vendor identifier to effect the payment.

10. The method of claim 1, wherein generating and transmitting the payment data comprises:

sending a payment instruction to an external payment system to effect the payment; and

sending payment notifications to each of (i) a customer computing device corresponding to the customer identifier and (ii) a vendor computing device corresponding to the vendor identifier.

11. An intermediation server comprising:

a communications interface; and

a processor interconnected with the communications interface, the processor configured to:

(a) receive invoice data defining a price payable to a vendor for supplying a product to a customer;

(b) after (a) and prior to initiation of a payment to the vendor for supplying the product:

extract, from the invoice data, a vendor identifier corresponding to the vendor;

select, based on the invoice data, a customer identification mechanism;

determine, in association with the invoice data, a customer identifier corresponding to the customer according to the selected customer identification mechanism;

retrieve a payer identifier corresponding to a payer associated with the customer;

retrieve, based on at least the payer identifier, a transaction policy that defines criteria for allocating expenses between the payer and the customer;

determine, based on the criteria of the retrieved transaction policy, at least one of an eligible portion of the price to be allocated to the payer identifier, and an ineligible portion of the price not to be allocated to the payer identifier but to be allocated to the customer identifier; and

allocate the eligible portion of the price to the payer identifier; and

(c) generate and transmit, via the communications interface, payment data for initiating a payment of the eligible portion from the payer to the vendor.

12. The intermediation server of claim 11, wherein the processor is further configured to execute the method of any one of claims 2 to 10.

13. A system for real-time three-party transaction processing, comprising:

(i) a vendor computing device associated with a vendor, and configured to generate invoice data defining a price payable to the vendor for

supplying a product to a customer;

(ii) an intermediation server configured to:

(a) receive the invoice data via a network;

(b) after (a) and prior to initiation of a payment to the vendor for supplying the product:

extract, from the invoice data, a vendor identifier corresponding to the vendor;

determine, in association with the invoice data, a customer identifier corresponding to the customer;

retrieve a payer identifier corresponding to a payer associated with the customer;

retrieve, based on at least the payer identifier, a transaction policy that defines criteria for allocating expenses between the payer and the customer;

determine, based on the criteria of the retrieved transaction policy, at least one of an eligible portion of the price to be allocated to the payer identifier, and an ineligible portion of the price not to be allocated to the payer identifier but to be allocated to the customer identifier; and

allocate the eligible portion of the price to the payer identifier;

(c) generate and transmit payment data, via the network, for initiating a payment of the eligible portion from the payer to the vendor; and

(iii) a customer computing device associated with the customer, the customer computing device configured to:

receive the payment data from the intermediation server via the network; and

present the payment data for receipt by the vendor computing device to execute the payment of the eligible portion.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the intermediation server is further configured, to generate the payment data, to request a virtual card number (VCN) from a payment subsystem connected with the intermediation server via the network; and

wherein the customer computing device is configured to receive and present the VCN to the vendor computing device.

15. The system of claim 14, wherein the vendor computing device is configured to execute the payment of the eligible portion by transmitting the VCN to the payment subsystem.

16. The system of any one of claims 13 to 15, wherein the vendor computing device is configured to transmit the invoice data to the intermediation server via the network.

17. The system of claim 16, wherein the intermediation server is configured, responsive to receiving the invoice data from the vendor computing device, to obtain a unique invoice identifier and transmit the unique invoice identifier to the vendor computing device for presentation to the customer computing device;

wherein the customer computing is configured to capture the unique invoice identifier and transmit an association request containing the customer identifier and the unique invoice identifier to the intermediation server via the network; and

wherein the intermediation server is configured to determine the customer identifier by retrieving the customer identifier from the association request.

18. The system of any one of claims 13 to 17, wherein the customer computing device is configured to capture the invoice data and transmit the invoice data to the intermediation server via the network.