CLAIMS

1. A method for carrying out an electronic transaction involving use of a digital payment reference between a merchant, a consumer and a trusted party, the method including:

receiving the digital payment reference at a portable communication device of the consumer;

transmitting the digital payment reference from the portable communication device to at least one server of the trusted party;

processing the digital payment reference at the at least one server of the trusted party to carry out the transaction; and

transmitting notifications to the merchant and the consumer of a status of the transaction being carried out.

2. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the digital payment reference is in a form selected from a group consisting of: an alphanumeric string, a barcode, and audio signals.

3. The method as claimed in either claim 1 or 2, wherein the digital payment reference includes a merchant identity and an amount of the transaction.

4. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the transmission of the digital payment reference from the portable communication device to at least one server of the trusted party includes input of either a password or a PIN.

5. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 4, wherein the at least one server of the trusted party includes a transaction server and a payment server.

6. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the processing of the digital payment reference includes recording both successful and failed transactions.

7. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 6, wherein the status of the transaction is either successful or failed.

8. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the digital payment reference is received when the digital payment reference is generated by either the portable communication device or an enterprise device of the merchant.

9. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, wherein the digital payment reference is received from an advertisement for either a product or a service, the advertisement being in a form selected from a group consisting of: print media, video media, and audio media.

10. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 7, further including:

generating the digital payment reference at the trusted party,

transmitting the digital payment reference to an enterprise device of the merchant; and

conveying the digital payment reference from the enterprise device.

11. The method as claimed in claim 10, wherein the enterprise device is selected from a group consisting of: a tablet computer, a desktop computer, a point of sale terminal, and at least one server.

12. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 11, wherein the portable communication device is selected from a group consisting of: a wearable mobile communication device, a mobile phone, a tablet computer, and a notebook computer.

13. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 12, wherein the portable communication device is configured to process the digital payment reference to carry out at least one task selected from: display information relating to the transaction to the consumer, and check on the consumer's benefits and restrictions with the trusted party.

14. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 13, further including selecting a payment type for the transaction, the payment type including data stored with either the consumer or the trusted party.

15. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 14, wherein tampering of the digital payment reference causes a failed transaction, the tampering being carried out by malware.

16. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 15, wherein the consumer and the merchant are associated with the trusted party.

17. The method as claimed in claim 1, wherein the digital payment reference is a payment token.

18. The method as claimed in claim 17, wherein the payment token includes a limit for the transaction amount.

19. The method as claimed in either claim 17 or 18, wherein the payment token includes an authorization step to enable the transaction to be carried out.

20. The method as claimed in any one of claims 1 to 19, wherein an aggregator consolidates at least two of the steps selected from the group consisting of: receiving the digital payment reference, receiving the consumer's benefits and restrictions regarding the transaction, receiving a desired payment type and receiving confirmation of close proximity of both the merchant and the consumer.

21. An apparatus for carrying out an electronic transaction involving use of a digital payment reference, the apparatus including:

a data transceiver configured to receive usage information relating to the electronic transaction;

a digital database configured to store the usage information received from the data transceiver; and

a processor configured to process provision of the usage information stored in the digital database for determining if the electronic transaction is at a stage to proceed on to processing by a payment server.

22. The apparatus as claimed in claim 21, wherein the data transceiver is configured to receive and transmit data either wirelessly or via a cabled connection.

23. The apparatus as claimed in either claim 21 or 22, wherein the usage information is at least one item selected from a group consisting of: the digital payment reference, a consumer's benefits and restrictions regarding the transaction, a desired payment type and confirmation of close proximity of both a merchant and the consumer.

24. The apparatus as claimed in any one of claims 21 to 23, wherein the usage information is transmitted from a portable communication device installed with an "app".