

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method comprising:
 - receiving a payment card account system transaction request initiated by
 - 5 acceptance of a payment card account transaction by a merchant, said transaction request including a transaction amount;
 - determining whether the merchant has selected EFT (electronic funds transfer) settlement for the accepted payment card account transaction; and
 - responding to said receiving step and a result of said determining step by
 - 10 routing an EFT transaction request for said transaction amount to an EFT system to benefit the merchant.
2. The method of claim 1, wherein the EFT system is an ACH (automated clearinghouse) system.
- 15 3. The method of claim 1, wherein said routing includes routing the EFT transaction request to an issuer financial institution that maintains an account for a user who initiated said payment card account transaction.
- 20 4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:
 - receiving a message that indicates failure of an EFT transaction requested by said EFT transaction request; and
 - in response to receiving said message, routing a payment card account system transaction authorization request message to an issuer financial institution that
 - 25 maintains an account for a user who initiated said payment card account transaction.
5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:
 - receiving a payment card account system transaction authorization response message from the issuer financial institution.
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6. The method of claim 5, further comprising:
 - settling said payment card account transaction in a payment card account transaction settlement system.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein said payment card account system transaction request includes an EMV cryptogram generated during said accepted payment card account transaction.

5 8. An apparatus comprising:

a processor; and

a memory in communication with the processor, the memory storing program instructions, the processor operative with the program instructions to perform functions as follows:

10 receiving a payment card account system transaction request initiated by acceptance of a payment card account transaction by a merchant, said transaction request including a transaction amount;

determining whether the merchant has selected EFT (electronic funds transfer) settlement for the accepted payment card account transaction; and

15 responding to said receiving step and a result of said determining step by routing an EFT transaction request for said transaction amount to an EFT system to benefit the merchant.

20 9. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the EFT system is an ACH (automated clearinghouse) system.

10. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said routing includes routing the EFT transaction request to an issuer financial institution that maintains an account for a user who initiated said payment card account transaction.

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11. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein the processor is further operative with the program instructions to:

receive a message that indicates failure of an EFT transaction requested by said EFT transaction request; and

30 in response to receiving said message, route a payment card account system transaction authorization request message to an issuer financial institution that maintains an account for a user who initiated said payment card account transaction.

12. The apparatus of claim 11, wherein the processor is further operative with the program instructions to receive a payment card account system transaction authorization response message from the issuer financial institution.
- 5 13. The apparatus of claim 12, wherein the processor is further operative with the program instructions to settle said payment card account transaction in a payment card account transaction settlement system.
14. The apparatus of claim 8, wherein said payment card account system transaction
10 request includes an EMV cryptogram generated during said accepted payment card account transaction.
15. A method comprising:
receiving a payment card account system transaction request initiated by
15 acceptance of a payment card account transaction by a merchant, said transaction request including a transaction amount;
determining whether an acquirer bank has selected EFT (electronic funds transfer) settlement for the accepted payment card account transaction, said acquirer bank engaged to perform services for the merchant; and
20 responding to said receiving step and a result of said determining step by routing an EFT transaction request for said transaction amount to an EFT system to benefit the merchant.
16. The method of claim 15, wherein the EFT system is an ACH (automated
25 clearinghouse) system.
17. The method of claim 15, wherein said routing includes routing the EFT transaction request to an issuer financial institution that maintains an account for a user who initiated said payment card account transaction.
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18. The method of claim 15, further comprising:
receiving a message that indicates failure of an EFT transaction requested by said EFT transaction request; and

in response to receiving said message, routing a payment card account system transaction authorization request message to an issuer financial institution that maintains an account for a user who initiated said payment card account transaction.

5 19. The method of claim 18, further comprising:

receiving a payment card account system transaction authorization response message from the issuer financial institution.

20. The method of claim 19, further comprising:

10 settling said payment card account transaction in a payment card account transaction settlement system.