1.4.4.3 The Card Payment Systems

Bank account debit cards ordinarily involve four major players:

- The consumer receives the debit card from the issuing bank (that is, the bank that has the contract with the card network and issues the card).
- When the consumer uses the card, the merchant or service provider typically processes the card’s information through a payment processor.\[4\]
- Either the merchant directly or the payment processor in turn submits the payment through its bank, the “acquiring bank.”
- The debit information travels through the card network (VISA, Mastercard, American Express, or Discover) back to the issuing bank.

Debit card transactions may also be processed over a U.S. PIN debit system instead of through the applicable branded-card network. PIN debit systems began as regional ATM networks but were subsequently expanded for use at retail points of sale (POS). For example, NYCE operated in the Northeast, Pulse in the South, and Accel in the Northwest. Today, many of these U.S. PIN debit systems operate and are accepted nationwide. Visa (Interlink) and Mastercard (Maestro) also operate their own PIN debit networks.

Footnotes

\[85\] See § 1.4.3 [2], supra.

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