



What emerging payment options should utilities be offering?

By Lisa Schulte
June 12, 2019

What emerging payment options should utilities be offering?



June 12, 2019

What Emerging Payment Options Should Utilities Be Offering?

Lisa Schulte

There are clear opportunities to improve the utility payment experience, especially among nontraditional bankers, low-income customers, and rural areas. In our report [How Emerging Payment Options Can Better Serve Customer Needs](#), we evaluate six emerging payment methods to see which are most likely to succeed.

Emerging payment options

Text to pay. This method allows customers to pay their utility bill by texting “PAY” or an emoji such as a light bulb, as PSEG Long Island has done. **Voice assistant/smart speaker.** Customers can pay their bills via voice command through smart speakers, such as the Amazon Alexa, Google Home, and Apple HomePod. **Mobile and digital wallets.** Mobile wallets allow customers to store credit and debit card information within their mobile device. The most common are Apple Pay, Google Pay, and Samsung Pay. **Peer-to-peer (P2P) transfer.** Apps that use P2P transfer payments mostly see payments between friends and family. However, leading utilities are starting to use P2P to pay bills. **Split payment.** Split pay or split billing allows multiple parties to pay a bill. Overall, we’ve found two main types of split-bill programs:

- *Split billing for prepaid services.* Customers pay up front and if the full payment isn’t received, the service or goods aren’t provided.
- *Repayment aid.* Often touted as split billing, repayment aid requires the bill owner to pay the full amount due, but the company pays the bill for the customer.

Cryptocurrency. Cryptocurrency is a digital or virtual currency that uses cryptography to secure financial transactions. Bitcoin is the most well-known.

E Source recommendations

You should be looking to add text to pay, voice assistant, and mobile wallet payment options. Split payments are logistically challenging.

Payment method

Text to pay

Voice assistant/smart speaker

Mobile wallet

P2P transfer

Split payment

Cryptocurrency

Members of the E Source Customer Service Operations subscription, Customer Experience Strategy Service, or Digital Self-Service subscription should consider:

- The benefits and limitations to customers
- Which customer segments these bill-pay options best serve
- Current consumer and utility adoption

[Read the report](#)

About the author



LISA SCHULTE

Analyst

Lisa Schulte is a research analyst for the CX team at E Source. With a background in market research and customer insights, Lisa provides strategic insights on customer experience and digital self-service.

Talk back!

Let us know what you think. If you want to weigh in or chat about this topic, just email [Sannie Sieper](#), E Source director of market research.