



What happens when AI starts swiping the card?

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THE FUTURE

Agentic AI payments are moving from demo to infrastructure. And the payments industry is racing to define the rules.

In the past 12 months, we have gone from “AI can help you find a product” to AI agents that can actually complete the purchase.

The ecosystem is moving fast:

- **Mastercard** launched Agent Pay and has already announced authenticated agentic payment capabilities across markets including the UAE, Australia, India and Europe.
- **Visa** launched Intelligent Commerce and later introduced the Trusted Agent Protocol to help merchants distinguish legitimate AI agents from malicious bots.
- **American Express** has reported thousands of AI-assisted transactions through early pilots.

At the same time, Big Tech and payment platforms are building the surrounding rails:

- **Microsoft** launched Copilot Checkout with PayPal, Shopify and Stripe.
- **PayPal** partnered with Perplexity for AI-driven commerce.

- **Google** introduced the Universal Commerce Protocol to support agent-based purchasing.

All of this points to a major shift.

The future checkout experience might not be a human browsing a website. It might be an AI agent discovering, comparing and buying products and services on your behalf.

The upside is clear:

- dramatically reduced checkout friction.
- hyper-personalised purchasing decisions.
- improved conversion for merchants.
- stronger security via tokenisation, agent identity and permissioned payments with set limits and rules for what the agent can buy.

However, there are some important questions the industry still needs to address.

If AI agents can transact autonomously, then trust becomes the new infrastructure layer, sitting at the core of how AI-driven payments operate:

- How do merchants verify legitimate AI agents vs malicious bots?
- Who is liable if an AI agent makes a fraudulent or unauthorised payment?
- How do consumers maintain control over spending decisions?
- How do schemes and networks prevent AI-enabled fraud at scale?

Agentic commerce could become one of the most important shifts in payments since mobile wallets.

But the real race is not just about who enables AI checkout first. It is about who builds the trust layer that makes AI-driven payments safe and scalable across the global ecosystem.

As AI agents begin discovering, comparing and completing purchases on our behalf, the definition of “trust” in the payment flow may fundamentally change.

Which player in the ecosystem will ultimately own that trust layer? Will it be the AI platforms, the payment networks, or the consumers themselves?

And ultimately, would you trust an AI agent to make purchases on your behalf?

About us

Be | Shaping the Future is a leading pan-European financial services management consultancy, operating in 13 countries across Europe.

We are a disrupter to the top-tier consultancy brands, trusted by five out of ten of Europe's leading banks (alongside other leading financial institutions and FinTechs).

We are one of the fastest growing consultancies with dedicated specialist teams in:

- Banking and Capital markets
- Cards and payments
- Risk, regulatory and compliance
- Finance & CFO advisory
- ESG

At Be UK, we've worked with a range of financial services firms to help design, implement, and enhance scenario testing frameworks.

Our team brings a wealth of experience in resolution and recovery planning, operational resilience, data strategy, and regulatory compliance equipping us to support firms wherever they are on their journey, whether it's improving cross-team collaboration, modernising testing methods or unlocking the value of data, we're here to help firms turn insight into action.

Utilising our broad experience from across the banking sector, we ensure our clients take advantage of market disruption to achieve lasting value.

Bringing deep industry expertise and expert consulting capabilities, we support our clients to tackle their biggest opportunities and challenges to deliver fundamental and enduring change to their businesses.

Contact

For more information on how we can help you on your payments journey, please get in touch.



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