

Epic offers new direct payment in Fortnite on iOS and Android to get around app store fees

Today, Epic announced the *Fortnite* “mega drop,” a permanent discount on V-bucks and other cash purchases in the game of up to 20 percent. The developer is quick to point out that it’s not a sale: these are new prices for the in-app currency in both the PC and console versions of the game. On mobile, however, things are a bit more complicated.

On both iOS and Android, Epic has introduced a new direct payment option. If you purchase V-bucks or anything else in the game through either the App Store or Google Play Store, it will cost the same as always. But the new direct option comes with the discount; when you select it, the game sends you to a payment screen where you can choose either a credit card or PayPal. “Currently, there are no savings if players use Apple and Google payment options, where Apple and Google collect an exorbitant 30 percent fee on all payments,” Epic says. “If Apple and Google lower their fees on payments, Epic will pass along the savings to players.” (You can check out a list of supported countries [here](#).)

It’s not clear exactly how Epic is able to get around these fees, but here’s some more detail from the company’s FAQ:

Why has Epic decided to implement its payment system for purchases inside Fortnite on iOS and Android?

By offering an alternate payment system, we’re not only

offering players more choice, but we're able to pass along the savings to players.

Does a new payment method on mobile mean purchases there are less safe?

*No. Thousands of apps on the App Store approved by Apple accept direct payments, including commonly used apps like Amazon, Grubhub, Nike SNKRS, Best Buy, DoorDash, Fandango, McDonalds, Uber, Lyft, and StubHub. We think all developers should be free to support direct payments in **all** apps. In operating Fortnite on open platforms and operating the Epic Games Store, Epic has processed over \$1,600,000,000 of direct payments successfully, and uses industry trusted encryption and security measures to protect customer transactions.*

Clearly Apple and Google acknowledge that third party payment services are safe and acceptable for goods and services. Epic direct payment simply offers players the same kinds of payment options as these other apps.

Of course, the battle between Epic and mobile app stores isn't new. In 2018, the developer ignored Google Play completely when launching *Fortnite* on Android, before eventually giving in earlier this year.

"After 18 months of operating *Fortnite* on Android outside of the Google Play Store, we've come to a basic realization," Epic said in a statement back in April. "Google puts software downloadable outside of Google Play at a disadvantage, through technical and business measures such as scary, repetitive security pop-ups for downloaded and updated software, restrictive manufacturer and carrier agreements and dealings, Google public relations characterizing third party software sources as malware, and new efforts such as Google Play Protect to outright block software obtained outside the Google Play store."

The company has been similarly critical of Apple's store fees, joining the likes of Spotify and Match Group, with CEO Tim Sweeney frequently speaking out about it.

Apple has gone crazy. If colleges hold virtual classes through an iPhone app, Apple could demand 30% of the tuition. Truly, Apple has no right to take any percent of any company's revenue just because they made the phone people use to access the stuff.<https://t.co/Pt2JlS4bvo>

– Tim Sweeney (@TimSweeneyEpic) July 28, 2020

As for *Fortnite* players, the new discounted prices are in effect today, and Epic says that it will be offering bonus V-bucks to those who made purchases after July 14th. The developer is also giving a new in-game item – the Shooting Starstaff Pickaxe – for free to all active players.

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