

PayPal, A Way To Protect Your Credit/Debit Card Numbers

Did you think that if you stayed away from online purchases that your credit card number would remain safe? Think again. Last month *Target Stores* ([Target's data breach](#)) had 40 million credit and debit card numbers stolen from their internal computer systems (from customers shopping in their stores). Then we learned that *Neiman Marcus* ([Neiman Marcus' data breach](#)) had similar troubles with malicious software ([malware](#)) clandestinely installed on their computer system. Apparently we now live in a time where even the largest companies with the deepest pockets can not keep their computer systems from being hacked by criminals.

So what are we to do to protect ourselves and our credit and debit card numbers? One alternative is to use a service like *PayPal* which will store your account numbers for you so you don't have to give your number to every online store you visit. Yes, this means that we must trust PayPal to keep their computer system safe (more on that later).



So what is [PayPal](#)? "It is an international e-commerce business allowing payments and money transfers to be made through the Internet." It is a way to send a payment to someone else (business or individual) without having to give them your credit/debit card number or bank account number. *PayPal* stores your account information for you and then they pay the business or individual. So when you shop *PayPal* pays the store and then charges your credit card. In this way your credit card number is not stored on the businesses computer system to be stolen by criminals. (Yes, this only protects your online purchases and not store purchases but some protection is better than none. Also, more and more stores now let you shop and pay online and then drive to the store for the pickup. So you could shop, pay online with *PayPal* and then drive to the store to pickup your item.)



Own a business? Accept credit cards with PayPal.

So why should we trust *PayPal* to protect our account numbers? Because unlike retail stores, financial institutions' highest duty is to protect your account information. Banks, brokerage firms and *PayPal* all know that if they can't keep their customer's account information safe then game over. The first time we hear that a bank or brokerage firm's computer system has been hacked by criminals watch out. Talk about a "run on the bank"! So *PayPal* must at all costs spend the resources to protect your account information. Unfortunately, *Target* and *Neiman Marcus'* first priority is to make a retail sale. Then somewhere down the priority list is protecting the credit/debit account numbers of their customers. And multiply that by all the possible online business and you have millions of business that all must protect their internal computer systems. I'll place my bet on *PayPal* protecting my information better than all the online stores I do business with.

In short here is a list of what you might do to protect your credit card number:

- Use *PayPal* whenever possible when shopping online.
- Shop online but select store pickup, pay with *PayPal*, then drive to the store for pickup.
- Contact your credit card company to have them send you an email or text message every time your card is used. That way you will immediately see any unauthorized activity.
- Always use a credit card not a debit card. They offer better protection and you will not chance your bank account being drained of funds.

Keep your fingers crossed that your card will never be used fraudulently, but if it does happen to you (it has happened to me 3 times in the last 10 years), just calmly contact your credit card company to have the charges

reversed and they will cancel the number and send you a new card.

Happy Shopping!

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Some of my clients do not realize that my business has expanded to all mobile devices. In fact, any consumer electronic product that you can purchase I can help you with. So if you would like help setting up or syncing your new smartphone or tablet or connecting your new WiFi TV to the Internet, just let me know.

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