

Barclays to allow payments by using Twitter handles

February 27 2015, by Nancy Owano



The next chapter in banks moving into the digital age is a stretch beyond reminding customers over phone lines that they can also bank online. Barclays has launched Twitter payments through Pingit.

Barclays announced this month that it will gain the distinction of being the first British bank to allow people to pay each other and small businesses using their Twitter handle. "The service will be available to all Pingit customers whether they bank with Barclays or not," the bank said. Darren Foulds, director of Barclays Mobile Banking and Pingit,

considered this as a new step forward for mobile payments in the UK. The launch is scheduled for Tuesday, March 10. All Pingit customers will find the service available to them. (Pingit availability is for Barclays customers and non-customers as long as they have a UK current account and UK mobile phone number.) How it works: users link their Twitter handle to their Pingit profile under app settings. On logging into Pingit, the user enters the handle or chooses a payee from the contact list. (To use the service, both the payee and payer need to be signed up to both Twitter and the Barclays Pingit app.) For person to person [payments](#), there is no transaction fee, according to the bank announcement.

Barclays did the numbers to conclude this was a step to take. The bank announcement said 80 percent of UK Twitter users accessed the social network through their mobile regularly. Pingit, which started up in 2012, has received 3.7 million downloads; over £1 billion has been sent using the app. What is more, 57,000 companies in the UK have signed up to Barclays Pingit [service](#).

The banking giant saw writing on the wall for some time. Michael Moore, writing in *TechWeek Europe* in September last year, in a story about UK [banking](#) customers using smartphone apps, referred to research by Barclays. "A study by the bank found that usage of its [mobile banking](#) apps has grown hugely in recent times, with customers accessing the offerings 29 times a second. In contrast, the average customer only visits a physical branch less than twice a month, but uses Barclays Mobile Banking 26 times a month."

Pingit is a mobile payment service. As *BizReport* commented on Thursday, banks are fighting off competition from [digital](#) payment providers by slowly adopting their own digital banking processes.

Foulds, in an interview last year in *The Drum*, a website focused on modern marketing and the media, spoke about the growth of Ping. He

said what they were seeing since its 2012 launch was an evolution from a consumer-based proposition into a broader, consumer-to-merchant-based proposition. At the same time, Foulds did not envision a complete fadeout of bank branch usage as a result of online transactions being available and convenient. "The bank branches are really critical for us," he said, where "fundamentally we have bank branches on most major high streets, and they are the point at which people want to come in to and get advice around the services." He predicted the role of [branches](#) will evolve with consumers using them in different ways. He said "branches have a huge role to play both for Barclays and for the community."

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