

Google Wallet Now Creates Digital IDs from Photos



Google has added a new tool that permits Android users to create digital versions of many kinds of identification (ID) cards and event passes for device wallets.

The tool is part of the Google Wallet app. It was first announced in May along with other changes to the latest operating system, Android 15. The change is explained on a Google Wallet help website. The tool is now available for Android users in the United States who have the latest update of Google Wallet.

Digital wallets are designed to permit users to save non-physical versions of credit cards, personal IDs, membership passes and event tickets to their smartphones or other devices. Credit cards in wallets are linked directly to the banks that offer them and can be used to pay for things just like with a physical credit card.

The use of digital wallets has expanded over the years as people depend more on digital IDs and other documents. Supporters say this reduces the need to carry a lot of cards in a physical wallet.

Until now, Google Wallet divided its digital document offerings into categories. Examples of these categories would be payment or gift cards, transportation passes for bus, train or air travel as well as official IDs.

Google's new tool is designed to permit device users to easily add many more kinds of documents to its Wallet service. These could include the kinds of passes many people carry in their physical wallets, such as gym memberships and medical or insurance cards.

These digital versions can be created by the user taking a picture of the physical document or by doing a screen capture of a digital version from a device. Some documents have an electronic barcode or QR code that can be entered into the Wallet app.

Google Wallet then uses artificial intelligence (AI) technology to use information from the photo to create a new digital pass.

The process of creating these digital documents is similar to adding new documents to Google Wallet. Users open the app and then click on "Add to Google Wallet (+)." The app then gives users a choice of what kind of card or pass to create. These include groups like "Payment Card," "Transit Pass" or "ID Card."

The new Google Wallet has a new category, called “Everything Else.” This offering was created to permit users to make digital copies of just about any card, pass or document they want to keep in their devices.

Google offers additional security steps to users storing official documents on Android devices. These “private passes” can also be added to Google Wallet. Google says data contained in official digital documents is only saved on the device as an extra security measure.

People in some American states can create a digital ID to be used to officially prove their identity. Google explains that this service is currently only available in Arizona, Colorado, Georgia and Maryland

There is a process users must follow to have their digital IDs verified by each state. The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) even accepts this form of state ID at many major U.S. airports.

Online technology website Android Authority recently reported Google Wallet will soon be equipped to also create digital versions of American passports. To create this official digital document, users would need to be holders of a U.S. government issued e-Passport.

The online publication said one of its writers discovered the Google Wallet passport is still in development at Google. Android Authority noted that having a passport saved in Google Wallet might remove the need to present an actual passport in some cases. However, the digital version is not designed to replace the physical passport, which the user should continue to carry.