



## Evil Tech?

### Apple going in the right direction, Google in the wrong

*Nick Brown, June 30, 2021*

*"Don't be evil"* used to be the unofficial mantra of Google. [Abandoned in 2018](#)

As the power of Big Tech continues to grow, the ability to abuse that power also grows. Many of the biggest have already shown their inclination to do exactly that.

My three big areas of concern:

- Privacy – controlling our personal information
- Speech – controlling what we hear and say
- Payment Processing – controlling what we can buy and sell

### Apple – moving in the right direction regarding Privacy

Apple recently announced they would make it possible for us to manage our personal information by restricting access by third parties. [Story](#)

While this sounds like a nice new feature, the bigger story behind it is profound.

Apple have declared: *"Privacy is a fundamental human right."* [Here](#)

In words and action, this is who Apple is now. They have drawn a line in the sand and declared Apple is on our side, against the entire world if necessary.

This single statement will change the entire tech industry. Apple has set a new standard, based on a fundamental principle, and every other tech company will be compared to this new standard or be found wanting.

This will have ripple effects for years if not decades to come.

Well done Apple.

## **Google – moving in the wrong direction regarding Payment Processing**

### **Why have I included Payment Processing on the list above?**

Big Tech is in the process of grabbing control of ALL payment processing globally with their Global Mobile Wallets.

Few are talking about this as a global threat, as it is currently taking place in Developing Countries, and does not yet seem like a threat. However, as a technical expert in this industry I am aware of what is really going on, as I know where to look and understand what I am seeing, and can also predict the likely progression into the future. [Article](#)

**A Trojan Horse:** Many people are cheering on Big Tech, as Global Mobile Wallets offer desperately needed financial services to the poorest people in Developing Countries. This removes a barrier trapping people in poverty, solving the global Financial Inclusion challenge. Surely we should support them in this.

However, their long term goal is to control all Payment Processing in Developing Countries, followed shortly by Developed Countries. They could easily achieve global dominance in 5-10 years. I am fine with Global Mobile Wallets offering great services. My concern is if they are the only ones left.

Look at China – AliPay and WeChat Pay now almost completely dominate the entire country, to the point almost no one uses physical cash any more.

Imagine here in the USA in 10 years: no more banks or credit unions, no more credit or debit cards – the only way to buy anything will be with a Facebook or Google Wallet.

Most likely players: **Facebook, Amazon, Google, AliPay and WeChat.**

## **Then things get really bad**

Big Tech has a long history of entering and dominating one industry after another. If you think about it, that's how they became Big Tech.

If they manage to control all Payment Processing globally, then they will be absolutely unstoppable.

With this power, when they enter a new industry they will be able to destroy all their competition by simply cutting them off – a business can't compete if it can't get paid.

Controlling Payment Processing is the *Golden Ticket* for Big Tech.

This will be the start of the Big Tech Wars. Their only competition will be each other. The race will be on for them to enter each industry before the others do.

At this point it will be too late to stop them.

## **Sophisticated Payment "Rails" will prevent this from happening**

Here in the West we have the credit/debit card Rails - thousands of financial institutions connect to these Card Rails, providing access to millions of merchants, with the result that anyone can shop anywhere they want, and use any credit/debit card.

This “one of many” model allows everyone to play, and ultimately encourages innovation.

Unfortunately, in Developing Countries these Payment Rails are far from complete, leaving an opening for the Global Mobile Wallets.

Governments and financial institutions across the developing world have been making steady progress for years, and are more focussed now than ever before on completing this infrastructure. Many of us in the West are assisting where we can. This is the right way to solve Financial Inclusion.

I am confident we will complete this infrastructure in time.

## **What is Google doing?**

Google, with their Mobile Wallet Google Pay, has for many years been playing the “one of many” game, for example in India by joining the UPI payment switch/hub. Despite the inevitable teething problems of new Payment Rails, adopting this model would in time be extremely good for the poor, good for merchants, good for countries, and good for Google. I have been openly supportive of Google for this.

However, I now have it on authority they are no longer interested in continuing this “one of many” business model. They now want to be one of the few that “own” the market.

Bad for people, bad for merchants, bad for countries, and ironically it is even bad for Google.

They may believe a handful of Global Mobile Wallets controlling global payment processing is inevitable. In which case it would seem logical for them to adopt this same model and attempt to catch up with AliPay and WeChat Pay, and to compete with the likes of Facebook. This would not work out well for Google, as the key to this game is social media.

However, they are wrong, and Google would do far better to persevere with their previous “one of many” model, encouraging the growth and resilience of the Payment Rails they connect to, and expand their offering with the right partners. This way they would actually compete better against the other Global Mobile Wallets mentioned above.

Bad move Google.



**Nick Brown** is a technical expert in Interoperable Payment Infrastructure, the “Rails” of the payment industry, with over 30 years of experience across the entire breadth of the industry. This included building VISA’s Global Debit Card System in 1996. He is currently founder of [Clear Purchase](#) which is building new Payment “Rails” for Developing Countries specifically designed for the poorest people on the planet.