

[0044] In cases where the point-of-sale device 204 comprises a printer 324, the printer 324 may be used to generate a physical receipt of the transaction for the customer. In addition, the wireless device 224 may conveniently retain a copy of the transaction information and a record of which account transaction mechanism was used in executing the transaction. Systematic collection of such information provides a complete record of all transactions made by the customer with any of the account transaction mechanisms enabled on the wireless device. In some instances, the wireless-device controller 340 may further be configured to permit the data to be downloaded into a personal computer that runs commercially available personal-finance software, thereby simplify record-keeping functions and personal financial monitoring functions by the customer.

[0045] The configurations described above conveniently enable a number of other functions. For instance, the point-of-sale device 204 may be located at a store of a chain that has stores distributed geographically, with the point-of-sale devices 204 at each of those stores provided in communication with a central processor. The central processor may retain information regarding the customer that is obtained when the first transaction is executed. Thereafter, whenever the customer enters any of the chain's stores with his wireless device, an RFID system may recognize the RFID chip 364 and generate a customized greeting for display on the wireless device, as well as customized incentives. For instance, electronic coupons may be generated that allow the customer to benefit from a reduction in price on items purchased during that visit to the store. Such customization may be expanded by offering the customer the opportunity to enroll in the chain's loyalty program so that the customized greeting may include a specification of a current status of the customer's loyalty account. In some instances, points might be added to the loyalty account simply for visiting the store.

[0046] In some instances, a customer may wish to replace his wireless device, such as for an updated model, without losing the transaction-execution functionality. The data related to the account transaction mechanisms may be considered to define an image that may be downloaded from the wireless device. Sellers of wireless devices may provide cradles that have sufficient memory to store the image for uploading into a new wireless device, or may provide communications cables to perform a direct transfer of the image to the new wireless device. In either instance, the memory in the original wireless device is thereafter erased and made unreadable. The point-of-sale devices 204 may also have their functionality kept up to date by using the wireless communications facility provided through the antenna 312 or by using the physical communications facility provided by the Internet port 320. Such communications mechanisms permit new applications to be deployed to merchants, who may be given the option to accept or reject certain aspects of updated functionality.

[0047] Having fully described several embodiments of the present invention, many other equivalents or alternative embodiments of the present invention will be apparent to those skilled in the art. For example, while the invention has been described to illustrate how transactions may be processed with a wireless device, the methods and systems of the invention may be integrated with more traditional processing systems. For instance, the point-of-sale devices may

be equipped with conventional magnetic-stripe readers or smart-card readers in addition to the components described more extensively above. Such additional components permit merchants to accommodate customers who wish to use traditional card-based systems as well as customers who wish to use the wireless-based systems described. The scope of the invention should, therefore, be determined not with reference to the above description, but instead should be determined with reference to the appended claims along with their full scope of equivalents.

What is claimed is:

1. A method of initiating a wireless device for use in performing transactions, the method comprising:

receiving a wireless communication from the wireless device at a host system, the wireless communication identifying a financial account to be authorized for use in supporting transactions;

receiving a location-positioning signal at the host system, the location-positioning signal identifying a geographical location for the wireless device at a time when the wireless communication is received at the host system;

determining the geographical location from the location-positioning signal;

retrieving from a storage device in communication with the host system an authorized address for the financial account;

verifying that the geographical location is at a position substantially the same as the authorized address; and

wirelessly transmitting information defining an account transaction mechanism to the wireless device, the information including an identification of the financial account.

2. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the wireless device comprises a cellular telephone.

3. The method recited in claim 2 wherein the wireless communication comprises a cellular telephone call from the cellular telephone.

4. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising:

receiving at the host system from the wireless device biometric information read from a person initiating the wireless communication with the wireless device;

retrieving a biometric record associated with the financial account from the storage device; and

confirming that the biometric information is consistent with the biometric record to identify the person as authorized under the financial account.

5. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising:

receiving at the host system from the wireless device biometric information read from a person initiating the wireless communication with the wireless device; and

storing the biometric information on the storage device.

6. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising:

receiving a second communication from the wireless device at the host system, the second communication including an encryption key; and

storing the encryption key on the storage device.