



## PRESS RELEASE

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### Partnerships between schemes, networks and banks are boosting card acceptance worldwide

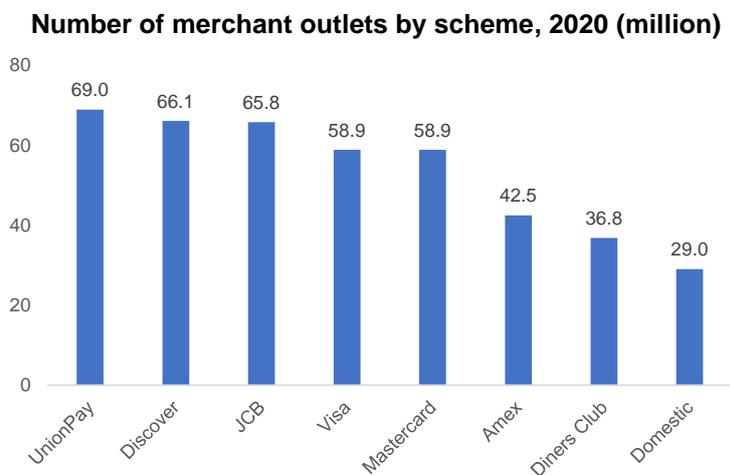
*Regulations, COVID-19, and an increasing number of partnerships are driving card acceptance across all regions. Further growth in traditional card acceptance is forecast but will be tempered by the rising popularity of alternative options*

### COVID-19 leads many outlets to start accepting card payments for the first time

The number of card-accepting outlets and EFTPOS terminals continued to rise in 2020 despite the COVID-19 pandemic, according to RBR's new report, *Global Payment Cards Data and Forecasts to 2026*, with 118.2 million EFTPOS terminals in place across 82.2 million outlets by the end of the year. While the pandemic caused an economic downturn which forced many businesses to close, merchants were encouraged to promote cashless payments to mitigate the spread of COVID-19, leading many outlets to start accepting card payments for the first time.

### UnionPay remains the world's most widely accepted card scheme

According to RBR's research, UnionPay remains the most widely accepted card scheme worldwide, having overtaken Discover in 2019. The number of outlets accepting UnionPay globally rose by 16%, and its cards can now be used at 84% of outlets. This growth was primarily driven by a notable rise in the number of outlets in its home market of China, where the scheme is universally accepted, although UnionPay's acceptance nearly doubled in India following its partnership with the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), and almost tripled in Chile thanks to its partnership with the Multicaja network.



Source: *Global Payment Cards Data and Forecasts to 2026 (RBR)*

### New and existing partnerships sustain growth for Discover and JCB

Discover and JCB are each accepted at 80% of outlets globally, both having seen double-digit growth in acceptance last year. Discover benefits from reciprocal network-to-network agreements with UnionPay in China, JCB in Japan, and BC Card in South Korea. In most markets, all outlets that accept Discover also accept Diners Club, but China is a notable exception. Meanwhile, JCB's acceptance continued to grow in all regions, including Europe – partly thanks to partnerships with Arkea in France and Nets Group in the Nordics – and MEA, as the first Saudi Arabian banks started to acquire the scheme.

If China is excluded, Visa and Mastercard are the most widely accepted schemes, and can both be used at 95% of outlets outside China. These schemes are accepted at nearly all outlets in the Americas and in Europe, and universally in all Asia-Pacific markets except Singapore and China.



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### **Increase in alternatives will temper growth in traditional card acceptance**

RBR forecasts that the number of outlets and EFTPOS terminals will continue to grow through to 2026, reaching 141.4 million terminals and 99.2 million outlets. In some markets such as Pakistan and India, merchant fees are being abolished or lowered to encourage merchants to accept cards; in others, like Russia, card-acceptance mandates are being introduced. The effect of such measures, however, will be counteracted by other emerging trends.

Daniel Dawson, who led RBR's *Global Payment Cards Data and Forecasts to 2026* research, remarked: *"The growing popularity of alternative digital payments such as QR codes may limit the incentive for merchants to accept cards at traditional POS in some markets. In regions, such as the Americas and MEA, smaller merchants are increasingly taking out lower-cost mPOS devices rather than traditional EFTPOS terminals"*.

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### **Notes to editors**

These figures and insights are based on RBR's study, *Global Payment Cards Data and Forecasts to 2026*. For more information about this report or to discuss the findings in more detail please email Daniel Dawson ([daniel.dawson@rbrlondon.com](mailto:daniel.dawson@rbrlondon.com)) or call +44 20 8831 7310.

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