

Microsoft lets US shoppers pay with Bitcoin

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Microsoft began Thursday letting US shoppers at its online Windows Store pay with digital currency Bitcoin.

Bitcoin, traded in at [market value](#) through a partnership with payment processor BitPay, could be used to add money to Microsoft accounts that provide funds for buying games, music, video or applications for Xbox consoles or computers powered by the US technology titan's Windows

operating systems.

"The use of digital currencies such as Bitcoin, while not yet mainstream, is growing beyond the early enthusiasts," Microsoft Universal Store corporate vice president Eric Lockard said in a blog post.

"We expect this growth to continue and allowing people to use Bitcoin to purchase our products and services now allows us to be at the front edge of that trend."

Virtual [currency](#) cannot be used to directly buy products at the Windows Store, but must first be converted to traditional funds in Microsoft accounts, according to the post.

No more than \$1,000 worth of Bitcoin can be exchanged per day, and there is also a limit regarding the overall amount that could be exchanged in multiple accounts registered to a single person.

The [virtual currency](#) is a software-based system introduced in 2009 by an individual or group masked by the pseudonym Satoshi Nakamoto.

It can buy goods or services from any person or company accepting it as payment, but is not a real currency managed by a central bank.

Bitcoin value has been subject to wild crashes and the digital currency's reputation has suffered due to a lack of transparency that has made it a tempting tool for criminal activity such as money laundering.

Bitcoin took a hard hit after Mt. Gox trading exchange declared bankruptcy early this year due to a fortune in [digital currency](#) vanishing or being stolen.

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