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# Hybrid format for click-to-expand advertisements

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# Hybrid format for click-to-expand advertisements

ABSTRACT

Click-to-expand advertisements are ads that, when clicked, require a second click to trigger the monetized event and subsequent redirection to landing page or similar, and visually expand after the first click to indicate to a user that a second click is required. In some cases, an online ad network may support "native ads," where a publisher can implement a package of ad elements with the layout and behavior of their choosing. A publisher can implement ads based upon specific preferences for look and feel. If not carefully designed, native ads may result in user-interface issues, e.g., ads that are easy to interact with unintentionally. This disclosure describes techniques wherein these ads are made to be click-to-expand advertisements via intervention of the ad network that serves the ad. Through serving ads that are click-to-expand, a user's intention to click an ad is confirmed via a second interaction with the expanded state of the ad instead of an immediate redirection to a landing page or similar on the first click. Through this confirmation of user intent via click-to-expand ads, instances of inadvertent ad clicks are reduced.

KEYWORDS:

- Advertisement
- Native ad
- Click-to-expand
- Invitation state
- Ad activation

BACKGROUND

Native ads are an online advertising format in which the publisher implements the look-and-feel of the ad. Traditionally, the ad network renders hypertext markup language (HTML) code into rectangular pieces comprising the ad. Under the native ad format, the ad network relinquishes to the publisher implementation of individual sections of the ad, e.g., "title", "image", "description", "call to action", etc. If not carefully designed, native ads may result in user interface problems, e.g., inadvertent ad clicks, which engender an inadvertent redirection to a landing page.
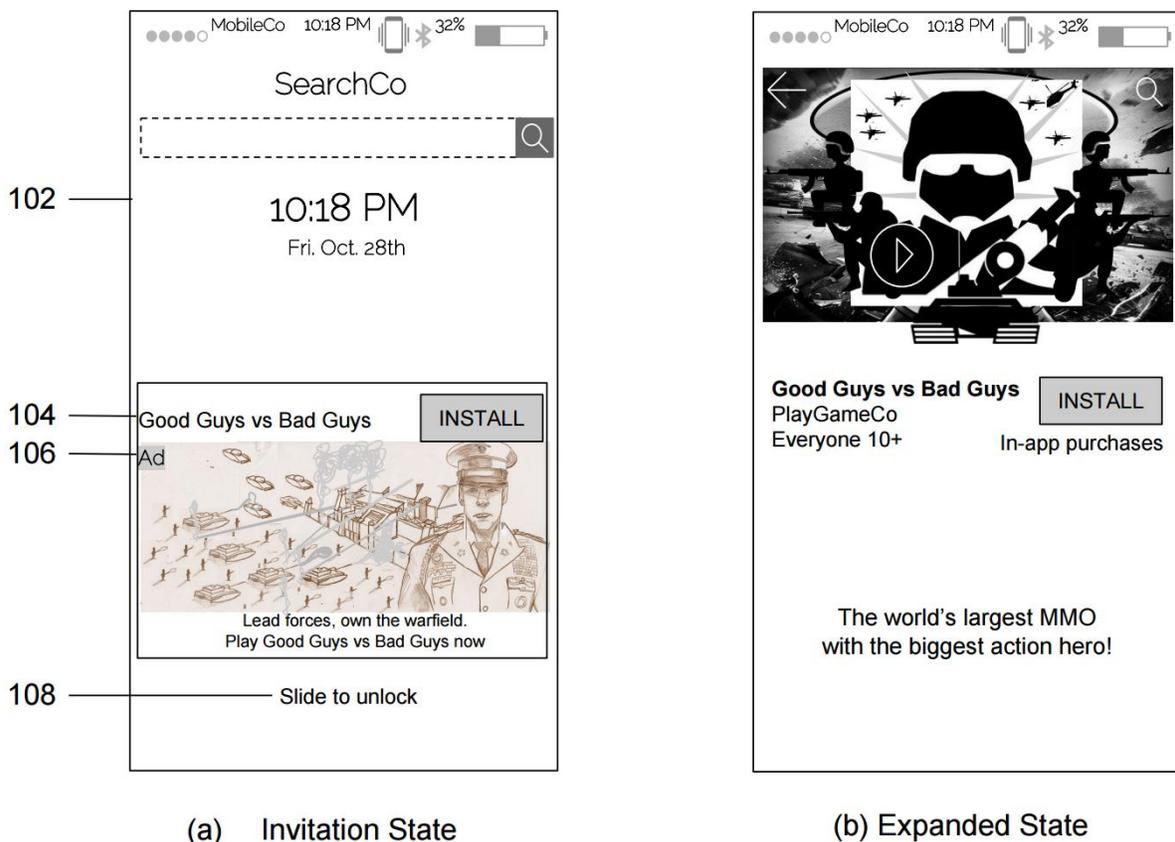


(a) Invitation State          (b) Expanded State

**Fig. 1: User interface that can result in inadvertent click on an ad**

Fig. 1 illustrates an example of this problem. Fig. 1(a) shows the invitation state of an ad that is displayed on the screen of a consumer device 102. The ad occupies a portion 104 of the screen. A label 106 ("Ad") inside section 104 makes it clear to the user that all elements of that section, e.g., title, imagery, install-button, etc. pertain to an advertisement. An indication for a user-engagement action 108 ("Slide to unlock") appears below the ad. However, action 108 pertains not specifically to the ad, e.g., in the illustrated example, it is indicated to the user that performing a slide gesture (e.g., by swiping a finger on the screen) would unlock the device.

In this example, if the user inadvertently touches the screen in a portion of the display on which the ad is displayed, it can cause an ad click that will charge the advertiser and redirect the user to a landing page or similar, as shown in Fig. 1(b). In this scenario, an intent to unlock the device instead results in activation of the ad. This constitutes a poor user experience, resulting in negative customer perception of both the advertiser and the ad network.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure describes a hybrid advertising format. Per this format, the invitation state is implemented by the publisher and the expansion state is implemented by the ad network. Fig. 2 illustrates the format of a hybrid ad.
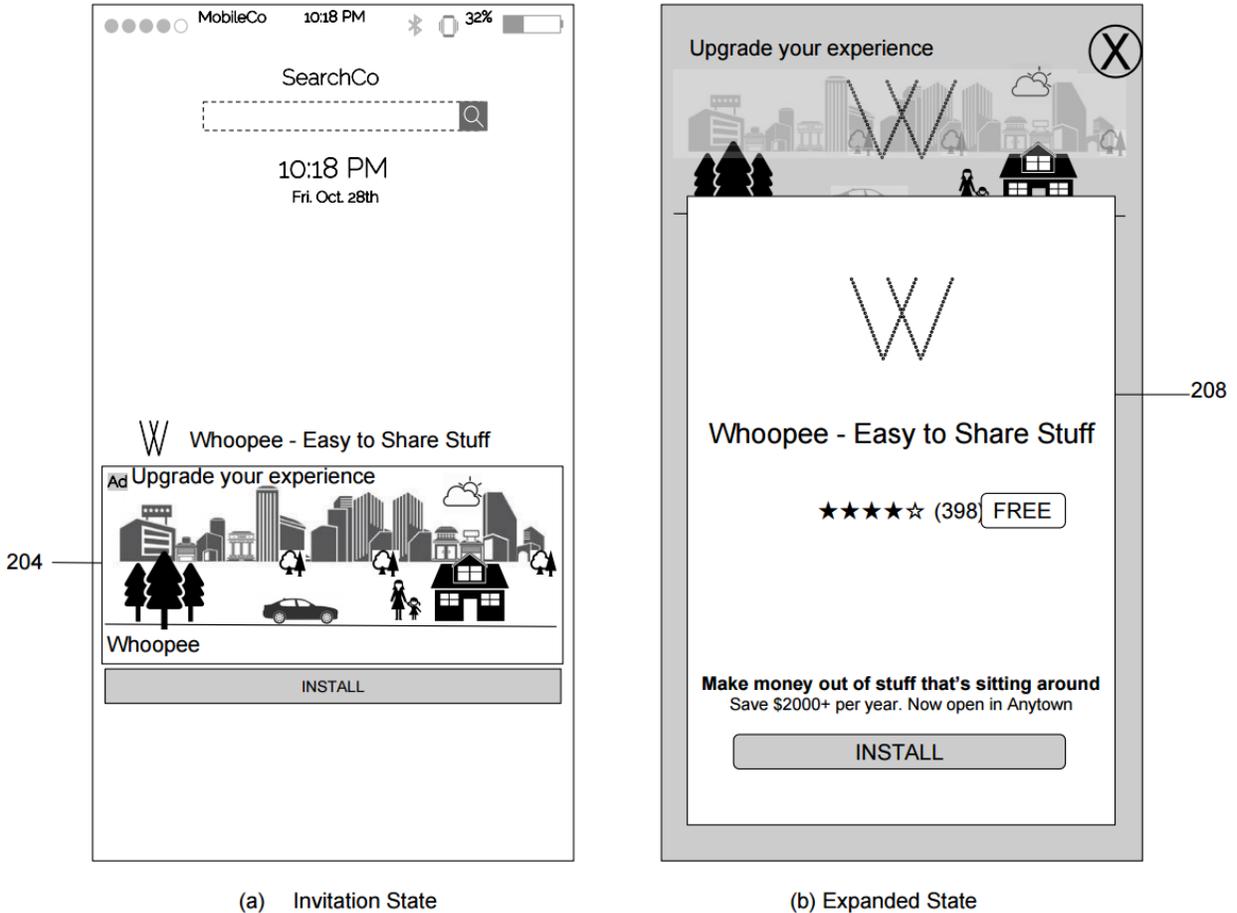
(a)    Invitation State                    (b) Expanded State

**Fig. 2: Invitation state implemented by advertiser, and expanded state by ad network**

Fig. 2(a) shows an ad 204 in the invitation state. The invitation state is designed and implemented by the publisher, thereby permitting the publisher to utilize design elements to attract the user's attention. Upon activation by the user, the ad transitions to an expanded state 208 as shown in Fig. 2(b). The expanded state is implemented by the ad network. Thus, for example, user selection of the ad in the invitation state does not directly lead the user to the advertiser's landing page. Further, such user selection also does not charge the advertiser. Rather, the ad transitions to the expanded state, where the user may navigate back to the

invitation state, or forward to the advertiser's landing page. Only clicking again to continue to the advertiser's landing page will charge the advertiser for that click.

The expanded state implemented by the ad network therefore provides a better user experience, by permitting the user to recover from inadvertent selection of the ad. Further, user selection of the expanded state transitions to the landing page, ensuring that visitors to the landing page are users that explicitly selected the ad. In this manner, only visitors with genuine intent to select the ad are counted at the advertiser's landing page, and the advertiser is only charged for the clicks of such visitors. This results in accurate measurement of the efficacy of the ad. By sending only visitors with genuine intent to select the ad, the hybrid ad format also improves traffic quality to the advertiser's page. Protection against accidental clicks, improved accuracy in counting genuine visitors, and improved traffic quality to the advertiser's web-pages serve as an incentive for more ad publishers to join the ad network.

Since the expanded state of the ad is implemented by the ad network, latest, spam-hardened web technology can be provided for the advertisement. Features that reflect the latest developments in web safety can be incorporated by the ad network into the expanded state of the ad. In this manner, techniques of this disclosure provide protection against spam and malicious intervention with ad content.

By splitting the look-and-feel and the technology aspects of the advertisement between the advertiser and the ad network, traditional, spam-hardened advertising is merged with native advertising in a natural way. The advertiser can focus on the creative aspects of the ad, and not the technical requirements of protecting ad content against malicious actions. Likewise, the ad

network is assured that ads that use the hybrid format are hardened against attacks, and don't serve as entry points for network disruption by malicious actors.

CONCLUSION

This disclosure describes a hybrid format for click-to-expand ads, whereby an invitation state of an advertisement is implemented by the advertiser and an expansion state of the advertisement is implemented by the ad network. The hybrid ad format described enables users to recover from accidental activation of the ad, and thus ensures that visitors who genuinely intend to visit an advertiser's landing page arrive at that page, and that advertisers are only charged for the activity of such visitors. This ensures accurate measurement of the efficacy of the ad, because actual activations are being counted and unintended ones are excluded from counting.

The hybrid ad format allows the publisher to focus on the creative aspects of the ad's implementation and layout, rather than the technical requirements of protecting the ad against malicious actors. Similarly, the ad network, which implements the expanded stage of the hybrid ad, is assured that the latest web technology is deployed to protect against spam and malicious intervention. In this manner, hybrid ads can improve user experience, increase traffic quality to an advertiser's pages, measure ad performance more accurately, and protect against malicious actions. These attributes serve as an incentive for ad publishers to join the ad network.