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System And Method Of Sharing Media Content With A Nearby Device

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SYSTEM AND METHOD OF SHARING MEDIA CONTENT WITH A NEARBY DEVICE

ABSTRACT

A system and method are disclosed that enable sharing media content such as an e-book or a video with a nearby device. The user may buy media content such as an e-book, online and access the content during a journey, for example. The user attempts to share the content with another recipient device, as it may be difficult to view the media content with another on the user's device. The system then filters possible recipient devices based on a number of criteria such as distance, availability of a compatible app, app settings, size of the user device etc. and displays valid recipients to the user. The user then shares the content with selected valid recipients. The system could operate via a network or through peer connectivity. The disclosed method enables sharing media content with others without sharing account information and eliminates the disadvantage of not having a physical book to share.

BACKGROUND

Currently, a person purchases media content online so that he can access the book or video on a phone or tablet instead of having to carry it around. While this helps with space savings, it can be a headache when trying to look at the content with a travel companion. Physical versions of books typically have a larger form factor than a cellphone screen, which may enable two users to look at the same content or different pages that are side-by-side simultaneously. Therefore a system is needed that enables users who are in close proximity (e.g. sitting next to each other on a train) to access the media.

DESCRIPTION

A system and method are disclosed that enables sharing media content such as an e-book

or a video with a nearby device. The system may include one or more user devices that have a software application that enables sharing media content, either directly or via a server as shown in FIG. 1. The system implements a method of sharing as illustrated in FIG. 2. As shown in FIG. 1, the user buys media content such as an e-book, online. The first user may attempt to share the content with a second user when the first and second users find it difficult to view the content together on the same device. The system may specify a maximum distance allowed between devices to enable sharing. The system then filters possible recipient devices based on a number of criteria such as distance between the user and other devices, availability of a compatible e-book reader or media app, whether the recipient device has an account with sharing of media enabled, whether the user device size is smaller than a predetermined size, etc. The system then displays a list of valid recipient devices to the user. The user then shares the content with selected recipients.

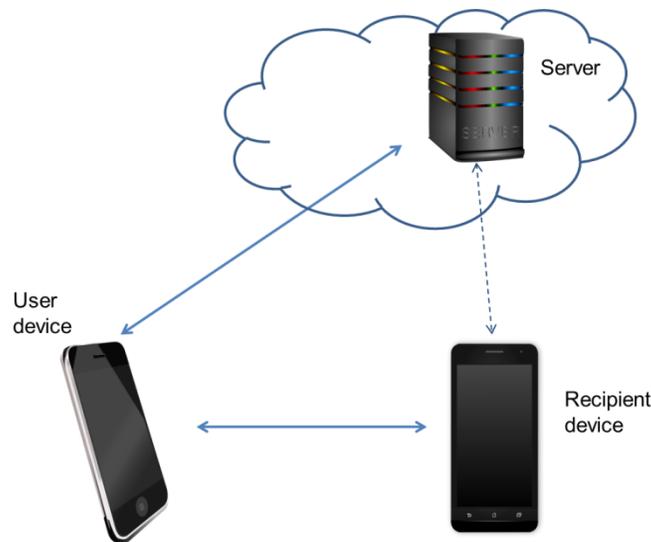


FIG. 1: System to share media content with a nearby device

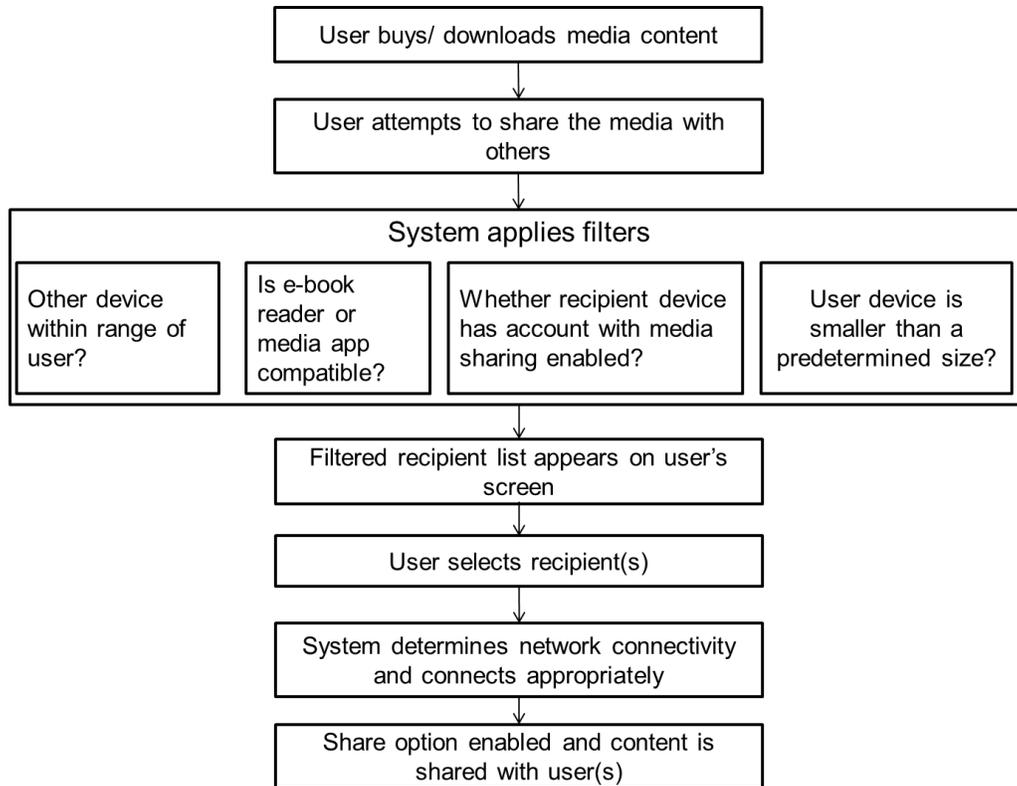


FIG. 2: Method of sharing media content with a nearby device

The invention enables sharing media content on a nearby user's device when being rendered on a small-form factor device such as a cellphone. The system may specify a maximum distance allowed between devices to enable sharing. If the content creator hopes to purely close the gap between the physical book experience and e-book experience, then the content creator may specify that the distance allowed may be proportional to the dimensions and font of the physical book. The e-book reader or media application may then surface a share option that only lists devices that are within the allowed distance for sharing based on the previously mentioned heuristic.

The most straight-forward implementation enforces that the fellow traveler who desires access equivalent to the "sharing a book" experience must also have downloaded the same or a compatible e-book reader or media application, where the user may turn on and off whether she

desires to have books "shared with her". Both users may also specify accounts that are eligible to be made visible as either potential sources or recipients of content. This specification process can prevent a scenario where 3 people are sitting next to each other, the person in the middle is the content owner and desires to only share with user A on the right and not user B who is on the left.

Distance may be determined by leveraging a combination of Bluetooth, cellphone GPS, and operating system or server-provided location services. Providing a heuristic for when content sharing is allowed for close proximity devices may also take into consideration the screen real estate size available on each device. For example, two travel companions sitting next to each other may watch the same video that one travel companion purchased as long as the size of the devices is less than "C" inches, where C may be specified as less than a large tablet size. The two people could have easily watched the video if shown on a tablet and sharing would not have been necessary. Video or e-book access may be provided either from the server or directly from the content-owner's mobile device. If both users have network access, then they may both interact with a server where they report location with access preferences and are then sent the appropriate version of content based on the content owner's location. The content owner may cede location determination to the recipient at any time. If one or both users lack network access, then Bluetooth or an alternative protocol may be leveraged to transmit the content.

An alternative implementation of the method may allow specifying which accounts have access to provide or receive shareable content via a separate interface instead of using the e-book reader or media app.

The disclosed system and method of content sharing considers the limitations that may have been imposed if the content was in a physical form in order to not minimize revenue for the

content creator. This solution takes into consideration the size of the devices involved and compares to alternative content consumption options in order to provide the appropriate proximity to allow for content sharing. This solution works even if one or both devices lack network access. Travel companions are thus able to share media content without sharing account information or being at a disadvantage to not having a physical book which is easier to share.