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Goal completion based content access

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Goal completion based content access

ABSTRACT

This disclosure describes techniques to use goal based advertising. Users are enabled to unlock ad-free content or obtain services in exchange for completion of advertiser specified actions. Advertisers and other parties define the actions as predefined goals. The available goals from various parties are ranked, e.g., using an auction. The ranking can be based on the probability with which a user is likely to complete actions corresponding to each goal. The number and type of actions to be offered to a user are determined. When users permit use of user data, the offers can be tailored to user interests. The described techniques enable advertisers to attribute marketing goals to user actions and link the completion of marketing goals to the originating advertising campaign.

KEYWORDS

- Locked content
- Sponsored content
- Paywall
- Marketing goal
- Content provider
- Subscription revenue

BACKGROUND

Content providers that use digital media platforms and other online service providers (e.g., providers of backup storage) face challenges in revenue generation. Although revenue from subscriptions is an option, users typically gravitate to the most popular content providers,

resulting in a “winner-takes-all” outcome that leaves the large number of remaining providers with low revenue.

While advertising is a revenue alternative, online advertising typically generates a small fraction of subscription revenue. For example, display advertisements usually have low user engagement and generate noticeable revenue only over large volumes. Alternatives such as ads embedded within content such as games and movies also do not address the problem stated above. Further, in some instances, can negatively impact user experience since such advertisements can be more abundant and intrusive. Alternative digital advertising options can benefit advertisers and content providers.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure describes a goal based advertising platform that enables users to obtain content or services through performance of certain actions. Techniques described employ game dynamics and artificial intelligence (AI) based advertising that enables users to unlock ad-free content or obtain services in exchange for completion of advertiser specified actions. In some instances, the actions may be specified by a different type of party, e.g., that is interested in crowdsourcing or otherwise obtaining input from online users on certain tasks. An advertiser can define user actions based on predefined goals.

With user permission and express consent, artificial intelligence techniques are employed to predict actions that a user is likely to complete. The advertising platform utilizes an auction to rank available user goals based on the probability with which a user is likely to complete the action corresponding to each goal. Machine learning is used to determine the number and type of actions that are offered to a user as options. When users permit access to data such as user

interests, the offers are tailored to user interests. Upon completion of the specified goals, content is unlocked and access is provided to the user.

A marketplace of buyers and sellers of goals is provided. Goals are customized to requirements of advertisers. For example, a goal can include buying a product from a store and completing a marketing challenge aimed at increasing brand awareness. Advertisers buy content/services from the respective provider (seller) and offer the content/services to users in return for the users performing advertiser specified actions and meeting predetermined marketing goals.

An independent platform provides advertisers and users with access to goal completion data. Neutrality is ensured by a third party, independent of the advertiser, the content/service provider, and the user, that manages the marketplace. Users are assured of their rewards (e.g., payments, goods, or access to promised content/service) upon successful completion of assigned actions.

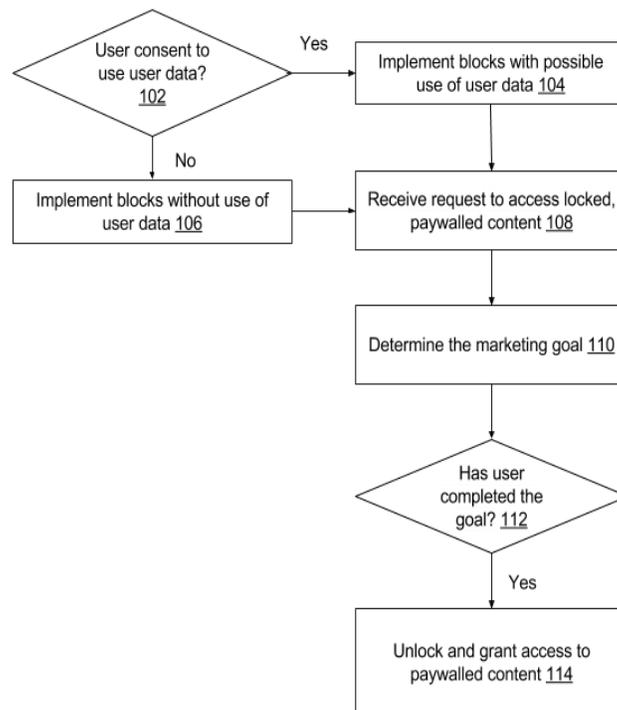


Fig. 1: Completion of goals to access locked content

For example, consider a user that attempts to access paywalled content without a subscription. Fig. 1 illustrates an example method to provide access to such content upon the user completing specified goals. As illustrated in Fig. 1, it is determined whether user consent has been obtained to use user data (102), e.g., user interests, in the implementation of the method. One or more blocks of the methods described herein may use such user data, when permitted by users. If user consent has been obtained from the user, it is determined that the blocks of the method can be implemented with possible use of user data as described for those blocks (104). If user consent has not been obtained, it is determined that the method is to be implemented without use of user data (106), and the method continues to block 108. In some implementations, if user consent has not been obtained, the method is implemented without use of user data and/or generic or publicly-accessible and publicly-usable data.

The user makes a request to a content provider to access locked content (108). An advertiser determines a marketing goal (110) along with predetermined actions for completing the marketing goal. For example, the advertiser can offer the user access to the paywalled content without a subscription in exchange for the user completing the action of visiting a store and purchasing merchandise.

Once the user accepts the offer and performs the action, with user permission and express consent, fulfillment of the corresponding goal is confirmed (112), and the action and the goal accomplishment are attributed to the user. Confirmation is sent to the content provider to grant the user access to the content (114). Offers are thus presented as actionable alternatives to the user paying for the subscription content.

In another example, a content provider utilizes a point-based system where users can gain access to content by paying with points instead of money. Users obtain points from the content

provider in different contexts, and can unlock content using the points (beyond predetermined thresholds). For example, media content, e.g., a television episode, that a user is interested in can be purchased for a price, e.g., \$2 or a specific number of points, along with an option to complete a goal to earn the points.

Advertisers utilize a variety of modes to achieve their marketing objectives, and the attribution of sales to each mode can pose a challenge. However, the described techniques, implemented with specific user permission for use of user data, enable advertisers to easily attribute marketing goals to user actions. Advertisers can link the completion of marketing goals to the originating advertising campaign with these techniques.

The described techniques unlock value for advertisers, users, and content providers. Advertisers achieve their defined marketing goals and pay only for conversions, i.e., goal completion. Marketing goals, user actions, and the related advertisements can be accurately monitored. Providers monetize their content or service and generate revenue from advertising. Users can unlock paywalled content or services by performing specified actions. The present techniques can be deployed in situations that are suitable for use of goal-oriented advertising frameworks to provide access to content or services.

Further to the descriptions above, a user may be provided with controls allowing the user to make an election as to both if and when systems, programs or features described herein may enable collection of user information (e.g., information about a user's social network, social actions or activities, profession, a user's preferences, or a user's current location), and if the user is sent content or communications from a server. In addition, certain data may be treated in one or more ways before it is stored or used, so that personally identifiable information is removed. For example, a user's identity may be treated so that no personally identifiable information can

be determined for the user, or a user's geographic location may be generalized where location information is obtained (such as to a city, ZIP code, or state level), so that a particular location of a user cannot be determined. Thus, the user may have control over what information is collected about the user, how that information is used, and what information is provided to the user.

CONCLUSION

This disclosure describes techniques to use goal based advertising. Users are enabled to unlock ad-free content or obtain services in exchange for completion of advertiser specified actions. Advertisers and other parties define the actions as predefined goals. The available goals from various parties are ranked, e.g., using an auction. The ranking can be based on the probability with which a user is likely to complete actions corresponding to each goal. The number and type of actions to be offered to a user are determined. When users permit use of user data, the offers can be tailored to user interests. The described techniques enable advertisers to attribute marketing goals to user actions and link the completion of marketing goals to the originating advertising campaign.