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Automated marketplace for sponsored content

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ABSTRACT

Alongside traditional media channels, a new influencer marketing channel has emerged over the past several years. This channel comprises individual personalities and content providers that provide standalone or integrated sponsored content as part of their overall online presence. This sponsored content can be on online video-sharing, podcast, messaging, and other platforms. Advertising purchases for such online content providers are typically executed as direct deals, in which an advertiser or agency reaches out to the content provider to arrange the sponsored content. Given the proliferation of influencer marketing globally, such reliance on direct deals causes inefficient spend across providers. This disclosure provides techniques to automate the marketplace for sponsored content and increase its efficiency by smoothing spend across content providers.

KEYWORDS

- sponsored content
- online ad marketplace
- Internet personality
- online influencer
- influencer marketing
- social media influencer
- social media personality
- ad auction
- content provider

BACKGROUND

In recent years, the Internet has seen the emergence of an influencer marketing channel. This channel comprises individual personalities and content providers that provide standalone or integrated sponsored content as part of their overall online presence. Such sponsored content is provided on online video-sharing, messaging, podcasting, photo-sharing, social-networking, social media, and other platforms.

Ad purchases for online content providers are almost exclusively executed as reservation (direct) deals, in which an advertiser or agency reaches out to the social media personality (content provider) to arrange the sponsored content. Given the proliferation of influencer marketing globally, marketplace information becomes asymmetrical. Consequently, direct deals tend to be an inefficient way for advertisers to place sponsored content at scale. Direct deals cause lopsided spends across providers: a popular content provider (at the head of the distribution) is often overpriced, while a less well-known or niche content provider (at the tail of the distribution) is often underpriced or even undiscoverable by advertisers.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure describes techniques to automate the advertising market for sponsored content, also known as "sponcon," and thereby increase its efficiency by smoothing spend across content providers.

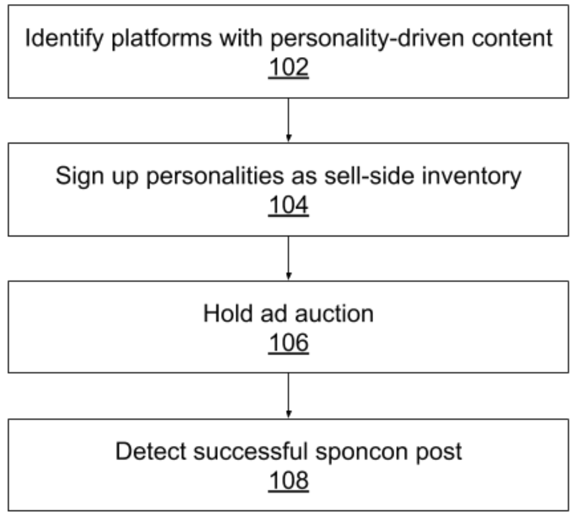

Fig. 1: Automating the sponsored content advertising marketplace

Fig. 1 illustrates an example process to automate the advertising marketplace for sponsored content. Online platforms, e.g., video-sharing, messaging, podcasting, photo-sharing, social media, etc., that host personality-driven content creators are identified (102). Such identification of suitable platforms is done, e.g., using machine learning models that use site attributes as input features to determine if a site is a platform with a critical mass of popular content creators and a wide enough audience.

Personalities on the identified platforms are signed up (104) as sell-side advertising inventory. For the purposes of advertising, online personalities may be valued in units of estimated revenue-per-mille using various analytics, e.g., number of followers, numbers of followers of followers (second-tier followers), cross-mentions, the numbers of followers within the context of a specific platform, social-network centrality, network-based metrics, etc. In contrast to existing techniques of valuation, where a given media, e.g., video content, is valued based on number of views or likes, the present disclosure assigns a value to the online personality.

An auction for advertising inventory is held (106) in a central exchange. Advertisers that wish to place sponcon ads participate in the auction. To help advertisers arrive at their bids, images or videos relating to the online personality are hosted on the server-side during the auction. Advertisers bid on a cost-per-click basis. The platform passes the link to the winning image or video, which provides an opportunity to the advertisers to track click events. If the platform caches this image/video, click events are tracked through a URL redirect before landing on the final advertiser's URL.

Because the value-add of serving a personality-driven advertisement is often the personality appearing in the ad, in some cases there is a pre-processing step, known as dynamic insertion, that takes place prior to ad serving. Dynamic insertion appends the advertiser’s product into an image or video that includes the online personality, and may further include, for example, the online personality gesturing towards or talking about the advertiser’s product. In other cases, the content provider (personality) creates the sponsored content and posts it within a specified timeframe.

A successful sponcon post is followed by automatic detection (108) and confirmation of engagement figures. In this manner, the techniques of this disclosure automate the sponcon advertising marketplace. By creating essentially a parallel marketing channel the techniques provide symmetry of marketplace information and flexibility, reach and efficiency to players of the online advertising ecosystem. Sponsored content providers that are appropriate to the advertiser’s offerings are more quickly discovered, near real-time adjustments are made possible, and dollars spent per audience reach is optimized.

CONCLUSION

Alongside traditional media channels, a new influencer marketing channel has emerged over the past several years. This channel comprises individual personalities and content providers that provide standalone or integrated sponsored content as part of their overall online presence. Given the proliferation of influencer marketing globally, reliance on direct deals between advertiser/agency and the content provider causes inefficient spend across content providers. This disclosure provides techniques to automate the marketplace for sponsored content and increase its efficiency by smoothing spend across content providers.