

Technical Disclosure Commons

Defensive Publications Series

November 14, 2018

Ad points: rewards to engage with ads

Gang Wang

Cindy (Yian) Gao

Follow this and additional works at: https://www.tdcommons.org/dpubs_series

Recommended Citation

Wang, Gang and Gao, Cindy (Yian), "Ad points: rewards to engage with ads", Technical Disclosure Commons, (November 14, 2018)
https://www.tdcommons.org/dpubs_series/1646



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by Technical Disclosure Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Defensive Publications Series by an authorized administrator of Technical Disclosure Commons.

Ad points: rewards to engage with ads

ABSTRACT

Visitors to publisher websites have generally come to regard publisher content and services as free. Consequently, revenues from advertising account for the majority of publishers' revenues. In ad-supported free access to information, there is an implicit value transfer to users, which users do not always realize. Users take actions such as installing of ad-blockers, tracking preventers, etc. that can diminish revenue to publishers.

This disclosure presents techniques that make the value transfer more apparent by rewarding users who participate in the ad ecosystem, e.g., by completing ad surveys; by opting in for personalized ads; by sharing ads; by making purchases after viewing an ad; etc. Per the techniques, ad points accumulate across multiple devices associated with a user. Ad points may be used in several ways, e.g., to access publisher content, etc. By incentivizing users, advertisers can target appropriate audiences more accurately. The techniques allow discovery of a sweet spot between user privacy and personalization of ads.

KEYWORDS

- Online advertising
- Publisher revenue
- read-only cookie
- personalized ads
- ad rewards
- ad points
- advertising network

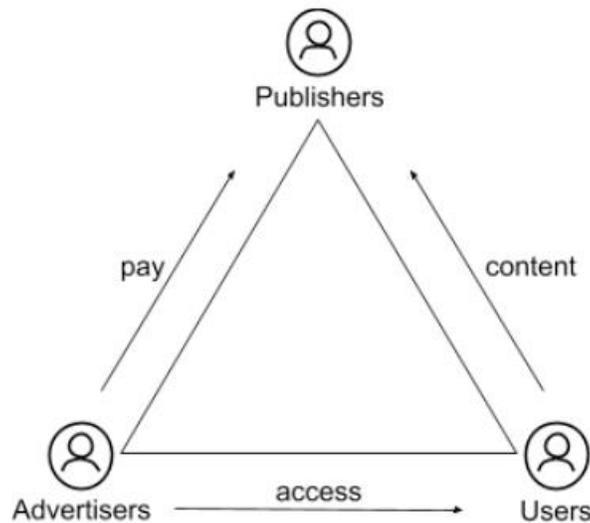
BACKGROUND

Fig. 1: Value transfers in the online advertising ecosystem

Fig. 1 illustrates value transfers that occur in the online advertising ecosystem. Publishers provide content that is viewed (e.g., text, audio, or video content on a website) by users. Advertisers pay publishers to access users that visit the publisher sites. Although publishers and advertisers are generally aware of the role and benefits of ads, users are often not. In particular, users may dislike seeing ads, having come to view free content as a given. Such avoidance of ads explains, at least in part, the relatively low opt-in rate for personalized ads, e.g., ads that enable advertisers to reach users based on their demographics and interests. On the other hand, the default settings of personalized ads are not the users' own choice. Users are also not rewarded if their data is accessed or exchanged by third parties.

The read-only cookie (ROC) is a browser or operating system (OS) initiated user identity that uniquely identifies a device on the Internet, e.g., desktop, mobile web, mobile app, mobile device, etc. Any browser or OS has the ability to create an ROC. Many parties request and obtain permission to read such a cookie, e.g., demand-side platforms (DSP), ad-tech companies, etc.

Users explicitly consent to ROCs and can opt in or opt out. By allowing users to specify their privacy settings, ROCs provide better privacy protection. Legitimate advertisers can leverage the ROC to achieve more efficient monetization. The read-only cookie is partly a mechanism by which personalized ads are created.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure describes techniques that bring transparency to the value transfer process that occurs within advertising supported online content. The techniques make cause-and-effect clear to users, e.g.,

- cause: user enables personalized ads and ROC, and
- effect: user gets rewarded.

From the users' perspective, some advantages are as follows:

- Users earn ad points by allowing personalized ads. Users can earn (significantly) more ad points if they interact with ads, e.g., complete an advertiser initiated survey, share ads with friends, make a purchase after viewing an ad, etc.
- Ad points are available across multiple devices without the risk of losing points while switching devices.
- Users spend ad points to gain access to more content and apps, e.g., news, music, membership, etc., that users would otherwise have to pay for.

From the publishers' perspective, some advantages are as follows:

- Publishers earn better user loyalty since users are more engaged with or interested in the ads on their pages.
- Publishers are often willing to grant users free access to content/app in exchange of ad revenue.

- The exchange process between publishers and users is formalized and codified.

From the advertisers' perspective, some advantages are as follows:

- A well-designed incentive system leads to higher opt-in rate for personalized ads, enabling advertisers to better target internet users.

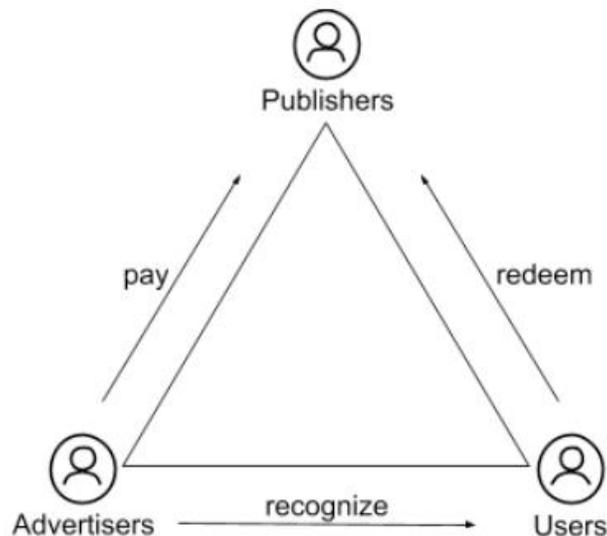


Fig. 2: Ad points make the value transfer more apparent

Per techniques of this disclosure, as shown in Fig. 2, users earn ad points by engaging with ads, e.g., by allowing personalized ads. Users redeem accumulated points with publishers to gain content and apps that they would otherwise have to pay for. Advertisers pay publishers for their ads, as before, but now also recognize users and are able to target advertising. Thus, ad points incentivize users to opt in to read-only cookies that enable personalized ads while protecting user privacy.

A publisher that receives online ad revenue typically has a supply side platform (SSP) that acts as an agent of the publisher and maximizes ad revenue. If the SSP can identify an internet user, the SSP can typically calculate the total ad revenue from such a user. Therefore, the SSP is in a position to issue, manage and redeem ad points.

Example 1: New user who hasn't yet opted in personalized ads

The following actions take place.

- The user gets a default number of ad points, e.g., 100 or 1000 from the SSP.
- User interacts with publisher:
 - When user browses content on a publisher page, the SSP shows default non-personalized ads to the user with a gadget option or funding choice that encourages user to opt in personalized ads.
- User interacts with advertisers:
 - User views an ad, e.g., a rewarded video ad. Before or after the ad ends, there is a message to incentivize users to share the ad with their friends, e.g., via social media, or to complete a survey campaign, etc.
 - User clicks the ad. Before getting redirected to the landing page, the user is asked if they want to opt in to personalized ads.

Example 2: Existing user who has already opted in personalized ads

The following actions take place.

- User accumulates points in their account.
- User interacts with publisher:
 - If user opts in, the SSP delivers ad points to the user such that different events such as views, clicks, converts, etc. have respective associated ad points.
 - Users have a rough understanding of how they can get ad points. However, detailed rules can be kept confidential from the user.
- User interacts with advertisers:

- User views an ad, e.g., a rewarded video ad. Before or after the ad ends, there is a message to incentivize users to share the ad with their friends, e.g., via social media, or to complete a survey campaign; etc.
- User clicks the ad. Before getting redirected to the landing page, the user is asked if they want to opt in to personalized ads

Issuance and management of ad points

The SSP decides the number of ad points to be issued to a given user based on one or more user-permitted factors such as, e.g., the user's current ad points balance, the user's browsing patterns, ad revenue attributable to the user, etc. The SSP records the balance of ad points for each user, e.g., on the server side at the data centers of the SSP, on the client side within the user's browser cookies, etc.

On participating publisher websites, the SSP includes a widget associated with the ad points program. The widget provides the user visual feedback regarding the balance of ad points, the consumption (redemption) of ad points, the accumulation of ad points upon reward by SSP, etc. By clicking the widget, the user can go to the page of the SSP for more features to manage ad points.

Redemption of ad points

Participating publishers have a paywall managed, or otherwise integrated, with the ad point framework run by the SSP. Participating publishers, or SSPs acting on their behalf, decide how many ad points a publisher charge the user for, e.g., a page view, unlimited page views for a given period (e.g., daily, weekly), etc.

As the user browses through the pages of a publisher, the SSP deducts corresponding ad points from the user's account, keyed, e.g., by the cookies of the SSP in user's cookie jar; using

read-only cookies or other identity solutions; etc. When the user has no more ad points, the paywall of the publisher reminds the user to pay for content.

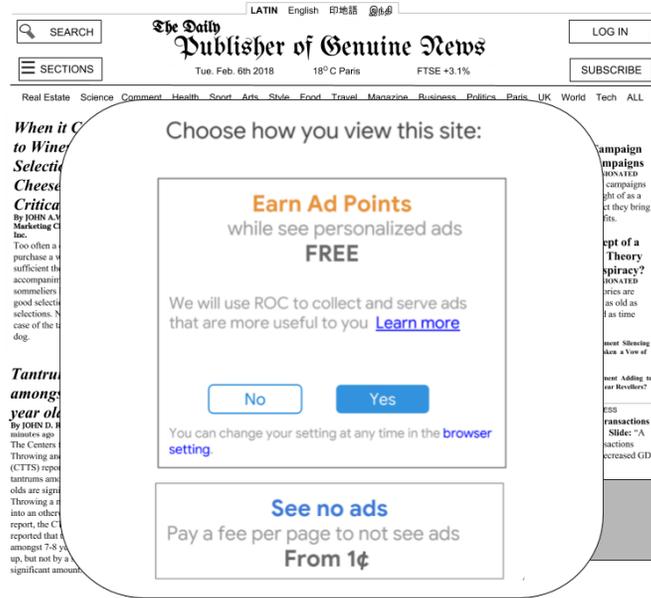
For users that don't enable personalized ads, e.g., those who don't opt in to ROC, or enable personalized ads but install and enable ad blockers, the publisher paywall requests the user to pay for content, or to enable personalized ads and/or uninstall/disable ad blocker.

Number of ad points to issue

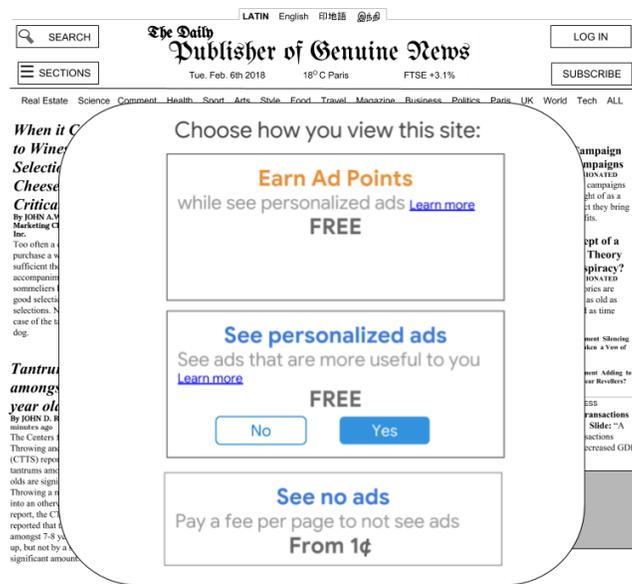
Ad points themselves have no inherent monetary value, unless specifically assigned as such by a member of the ad ecosystem (e.g., publisher, ad-tech company, advertiser, etc.). As such, the SSP can issue different amounts of ad points to users who have had the same interaction with personalized ads. Further, the SSP can optionally publish the number of ad points awarded to a user for the user's interaction with personalized ads.

Without the above restrictions, the SSP can freely decide the number of ad points to reward to each user such that business goals of the publisher are met, e.g., maximizing total revenue from both ads and non-ads, growing the visitor base, etc. The SSP can also adjust ad points to discourage users from interacting with ads for the sole purpose of collecting points.

The techniques are applied to reward user behaviors healthy for the ad ecosystem in the long run, e.g., users spending more time reading more articles, users interacting deeply with advertisers' websites, users researching advertisers' products and services, ads being converted to purchases, etc.



(A)



(B)

Fig. 3: Example user interface at publisher site that offers ROC/personalized-ad options

Fig. 3 illustrates an example user interfaces that offers ROC/personalized-ad options to a visitor of a publisher’s website, per techniques of this disclosure.

By incentivizing users to opt in personalized ads in order to accumulate ad points, advertisers address the problem of tracking prevention. The ad points described here can also

translate to cash back for the user. By integrating with a payment app, cash earned can be spent online or offline, thereby creating a richer user experience, e.g., by strengthening the online and offline connectivity of users. The techniques of this disclosure generally apply to the adoption incentive problem of consumer products.

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 presents techniques that make the value transfer more apparent by rewarding users who participate in the ad ecosystem, e.g., by completing ad surveys; by opting in for personalized ads; by sharing ads; by making purchases after viewing an ad; etc. Per the techniques, ad points accumulate across multiple devices associated with a user. Ad points may be used in several ways, e.g., to access publisher content, etc. By incentivizing users, advertisers can target appropriate audiences more accurately. The techniques allow discovery of a sweet spot between user privacy and personalization of ads.