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Layering incentives during idle time after user action in rewarded ads

ABSTRACT

Rewarded ads are an ad format that gives users the option to watch a (typically) thirty-second video ad in exchange of a reward, e.g., in-app points. Some rewarded ads additionally offer to install apps. Users who choose to download the app early during the rewarded video ad are forced to watch the remaining sections of the ad, leading to suboptimal user experience. On the other hand, ad networks typically require the user to watch the full thirty seconds of the ad.

This disclosure describes techniques to fill in the remaining time in a rewarded ad if the user takes action, e.g., downloads an offered app, early on in the rewarded app. The techniques incentivize the user to stay engaged with the app while continuing to watch the rewarded ad in its entirety. The techniques enhance user experience and are beneficial to the app publisher and the ad network that provides the rewarded ad.

KEYWORDS

Rewarded ad; online ad; mobile ad; in-app points; in-game points; user engagement

BACKGROUND

Rewarded ads are an ad format that gives users the option to watch a (typically) thirty-second video ad in exchange of a reward, e.g., in-game or in-app points. Examples of rewards are game coins, game lives, game toys such as swords, etc. Some rewarded ads additionally offer to install apps. Users can choose to download the app early on in the required thirty seconds of the ad. While the download may be underway early, the user is still forced to watch the full thirty seconds of the ad, which makes for suboptimal user experience. However, to keep users from gaming the rewarded ad, the ad network stipulates that the user experience the ad for the full

thirty seconds; otherwise they would click download immediately and get on with playing the game, only to uninstall the app immediately after the game.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure provides at least three techniques to fill the idle time after a user takes an action within a rewarded ad, e.g., selects an app offered for download, mutes an ad, etc., prior to the completion of the rewarded ad. The techniques make for a more interesting user experience and drive additional revenue for the ad network. The techniques assume that a user has chosen to install an app by selecting a rewarded video, and that the app downloads in the background.

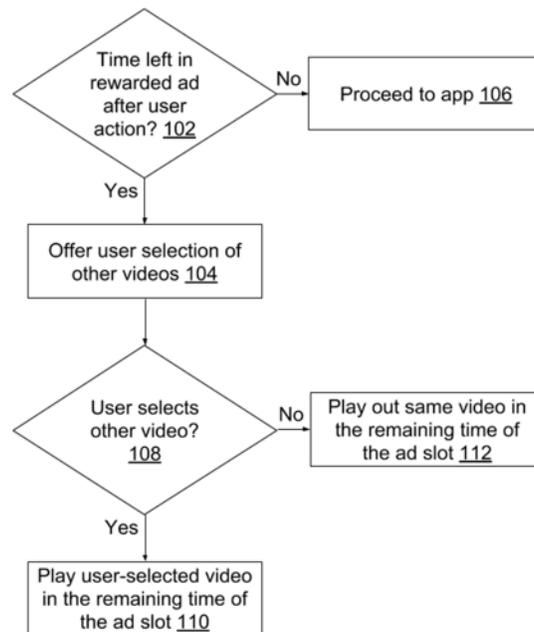


Fig. 1: Filling up idle time in a rewarded ad by offering a choice of other videos

Fig. 1 illustrates filling up idle time in a rewarded ad by offering a choice of other videos, per a first technique of this disclosure. If time is left in a rewarded ad after a user action (102) such as downloading an offered app, the user is offered a selection of other videos (104) to watch. The selection may number, e.g., four, and they may be, e.g., commercials. A countdown appears, e.g., in the upper right, showing the user the time left in the rewarded ad experience, so

the user can decide if they'd rather watch additional ads or do nothing during that time, e.g., watch the ad for the app they already downloaded. If the user selects one of the alternate videos (108), then the selected video is played (110) for the remaining time of the rewarded ad. If the user does not select an alternate video, the original rewarded ad plays out for its full duration (112). In any case, once the thirty-second time for the rewarded ad is up, the user is cleared for proceeding to the app (106).

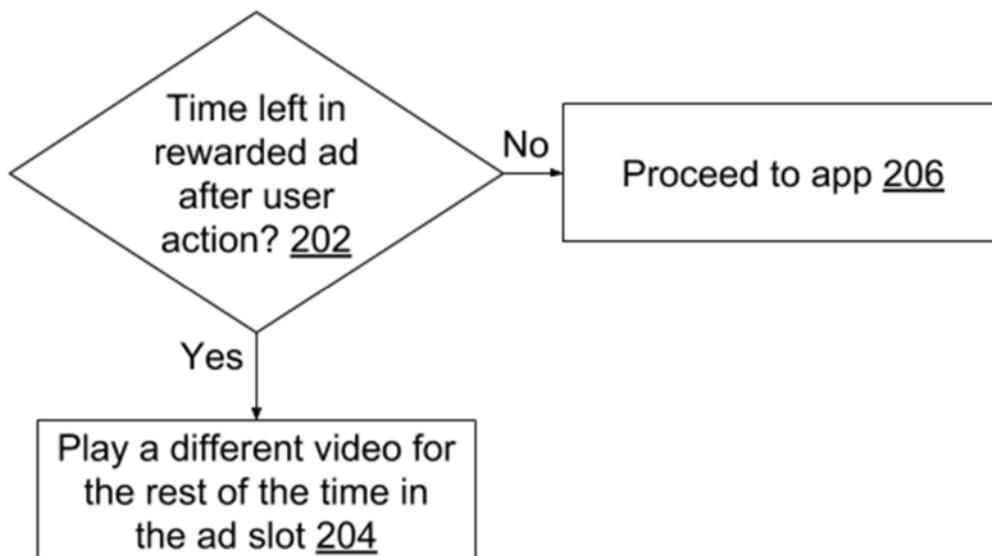


Fig. 2: Filling up idle time in a rewarded ad by playing a different video for the rest of the time in the ad slot

Fig. 2 illustrates filling up idle time in a rewarded ad by playing a different video for the rest of the time in the ad slot, per a second technique of this disclosure. If time is left in a rewarded ad after a user action (202) such as downloading an offered app, a different video, e.g., a commercial, or a survey, is played for the rest of the time in the ad slot (204). Once the thirty-second time for the rewarded ad is up, the user is cleared for proceeding to the app (206). The total watch time is still based on the start time of the original rewarded ad, so the user spends less time in the second ad, e.g., until the total thirty seconds is up.

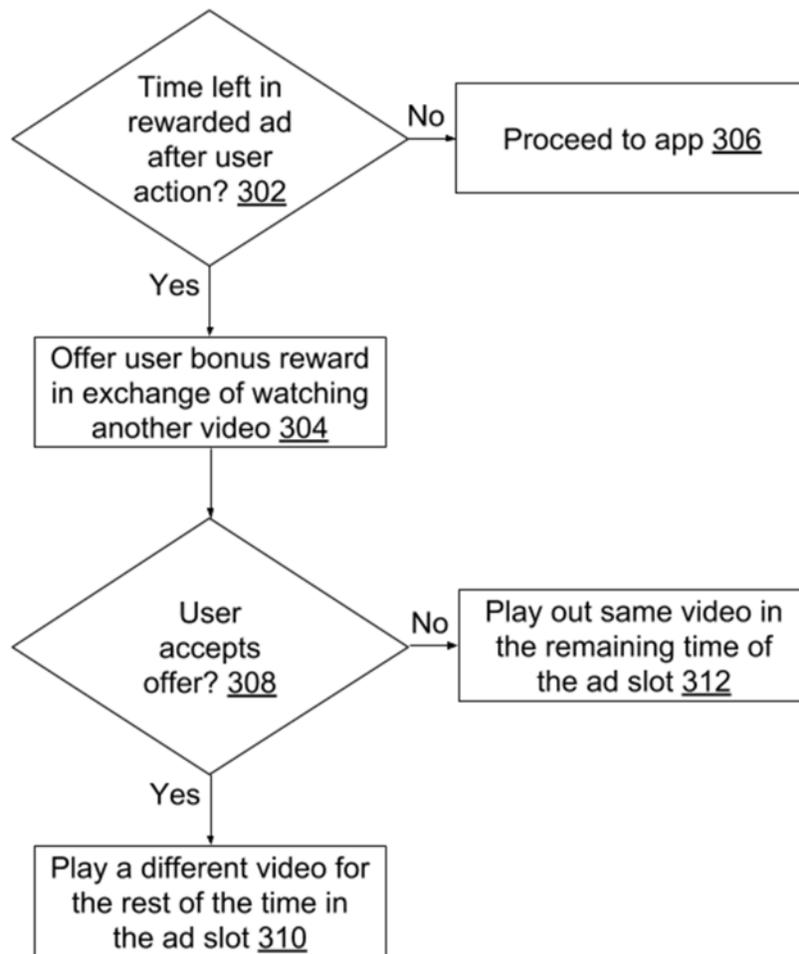


Fig. 3: Filling up idle time in a rewarded ad by further incentivizing the user to stay for the duration of the ad

Fig. 3 illustrates filling up idle time in a rewarded ad by further incentivizing the user to stay for the full duration of the ad, per a third technique of this disclosure. If time is left in a rewarded ad after a user action (302) such as downloading an offered app, the user is offered a bonus incentive (304), e.g., a doubling or trebling of the in-app reward in exchange of watching another video. If the user accepts the offer, another video is played (310) for the remaining time of the rewarded ad. If the user does not select an alternate video, the original rewarded ad plays out for its full duration (312). Once the thirty-second time for the rewarded ad is up, the user is

cleared for proceeding to the app (306), and the original plus bonus rewards is deposited in their app account. It can be emphasized to the user that the bonus reward does not entail an extended viewing of the rewarded ad, e.g., beyond thirty seconds. For example, the following message can be conveyed to the user: “You can double your total coin earnings if you watch another video for the remainder of your time! (It won’t take you any longer.)” If the user leaves prior to completion of the rewarded ad, then the user loses both original as well as bonus rewards. The technique can be modified to give variable amounts of rewards, e.g., a surprise amount, 3x, 4x, 10x, etc.

As mentioned before, user actions that trigger the above techniques to fill idle time in a rewarded ad include downloading an offered app, muting an ad, etc. For example, a user might start watching a rewarded ad and find it inappropriate. If the user then selects “mute this ad” from the menu, the remaining time in the rewarded ad is filled in by the techniques of this disclosure.

The techniques herein improve efficiency for both user and ad network. For the user there is nothing to be gained by watching a potentially stale or irrelevant ad once they have already taken up an offered action such as downloading an app or muting the ad. For the ad network, the idle time after user action represents a revenue opportunity. In this manner, the techniques of this disclosure improve ad revenue per user and provide a better user experience.

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 fill in the remaining time in a rewarded ad after the user takes up an offered action, e.g., downloads an offered app, early on in the rewarded app. The techniques incentivize the user to stay engaged with the app while continuing to watch the rewarded ad in its entirety. The techniques enhance user experience and are beneficial to the app publisher and the ad network that provides the rewarded ad.