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Web-based currency for online content and transactions

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ABSTRACT

A web currency is described for settling digital transactions between parties. Users acquire web currency by outright purchase and based on user contributions. User privacy and security is enabled via the use of anonymized addresses that are mapped in a secure and private manner to a user wallet. User access of content is enabled by transmission of an address from the user's wallet that is representative of a value of web currency to be transferred. Users can obtain a subscription to multiple content providers via a browser platform that enables viewing of content of participating content providers. The web currency can also be utilized for online commerce.

KEYWORDS

- web currency
- content provider
- advertising
- micropayment
- subscription revenue
- paywall

BACKGROUND

Content providers that use digital media platforms face challenges in revenue generation. Advertising is a revenue source, but typically generates only a small fraction of revenue compared to subscriptions. Further, advertising can be perceived to be intrusive in some contexts. Revenue from subscriptions is an option for popular content providers, but poses a challenge for others, in part due to challenges faced by users in making small payments,

e.g., a payment for viewing a single article of content. Alternate models for low friction

monetization of content can facilitate a richer ecosystem of diverse content providers.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure describes a web currency for settling digital transactions between

multiple parties. The web currency enables direct exchange of value between content providers,

advertisers, users, etc. and enables a complementary monetization model, e.g., along with an

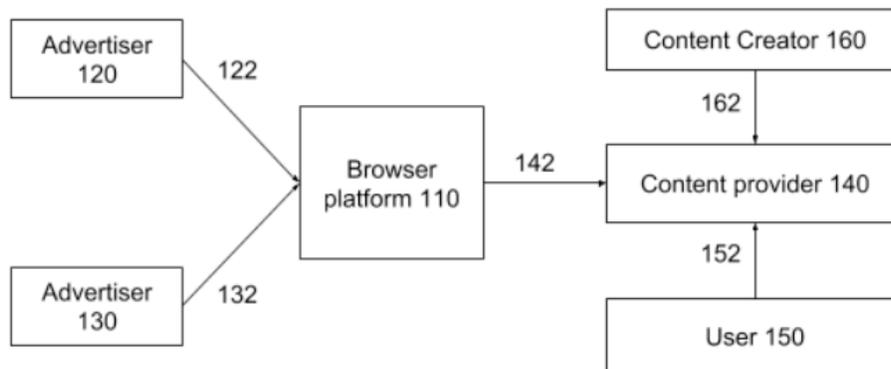advertising based model. The web currency can be deployed via a browser platform.

Fig. 1: Web currency flows between users, advertisers, and content providers

Fig. 1 illustrates an example of web currency transactions between a browser platform

(110), advertisers (120 and 130), a content provider (140), and a user (150). The web-currency

can be included as part of a wallet service that is provisioned as an embedded wallet using the

browser platform. Alternatively, or in addition, the wallet service can also be provisioned as an

online wallet via an application installed on a device.

In this illustrative example, advertisers (120, 130) use the web currency to settle

transactions (122, 132) with the browser platform, e.g., for advertisements displayed by the

browser platform. Further, the browser platform utilizes the web currency is to reward (142) the

content provider (140) for advertisements placed on websites or other online properties managed by the content provider.

The web currency is also utilized by a user (150) to access (152) content behind a paywall established by the content provider (140). For example, such a transaction can include payment for content consumed. The web currency also facilitates transaction (162) between the content provider and a content contributor (160). For example, such a transaction can include a payment the content creator for content contribution.

Users can obtain subscriptions to content from multiple content providers via the browser platform (or other software) that enables viewing of such content. If users provide consent to measure user engagement, e.g., an amount of time spent by a user viewing particular content, content providers can be compensated based on such measurements. Participating users can acquire web currency by outright purchase and via mechanisms that enable users to acquire web currency, e.g., based on providing content contributions. For example, social media providers can provide web currency to users that provide popular content (pictures, articles, videos, etc.). Similarly, e-commerce websites can use web currency to reward users who post product reviews.

While Fig. 1 shows a single browser platform, the web currency can be employed online, e.g., by any browser platform or other software that connects advertisers, content providers, and users (including content consumers and content creators).

User privacy and security is enabled via the use of addresses that are mapped in a secure and private manner to a user wallet. During user access of content at a content provider site, address from the user's wallet is transmitted that is representative of a value of web currency to be transferred.

With user permission and express consent, inline frames (iframes) are used to access content provider sites that are behind a paywall, e.g., websites that are subscription based. User status is verified by the iframe, and a message (for example, a postMessage) that includes the address that represents the value of web currency is transmitted to a main frame. The content provider website is configured to receive the message and allow content access (e.g., news articles, blog posts, documents, music, games ,etc.) upon receipt of the message. A pop-up window or other alert can be used to prompt a user to join a web currency enabled subscription service.

If the user permits, beacons are periodically transmitted during content access by the user (while the frame is on a foreground tab). Web currency is transferred to content providers from participating users based on user engagement, e.g., the relative time spent by participating users on different content provider sites.

The web currency may also be used for payments for purchases, etc. Websites can embed a payment button by injecting an appropriate iframe. A user can click the payment button to transfer a specified value of web currency from the user's wallet to a wallet associated with the website.

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

A web currency is described for settling digital transactions between parties. Users acquire web currency by outright purchase and based on user contributions. User privacy and security is enabled via the use of anonymized addresses that are mapped in a secure and private manner to a user wallet. User access of content is enabled by transmission of an address from the user's wallet that is representative of a value of web currency to be transferred. Users can obtain a subscription to multiple content providers via a browser platform that enables viewing of content of participating content providers. The web currency can also be utilized for online commerce.