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## App distribution via affiliate marketing on social media

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## **App distribution via affiliate marketing on social media**

### **ABSTRACT**

App developers benefit from increased distribution of their apps. This disclosure leverages existing app users as affiliate marketers to spread word about the app. Users that consent to act as affiliate marketers and spread the word, e.g., on social media, are rewarded upon the acquisition of a new user.

### **KEYWORDS**

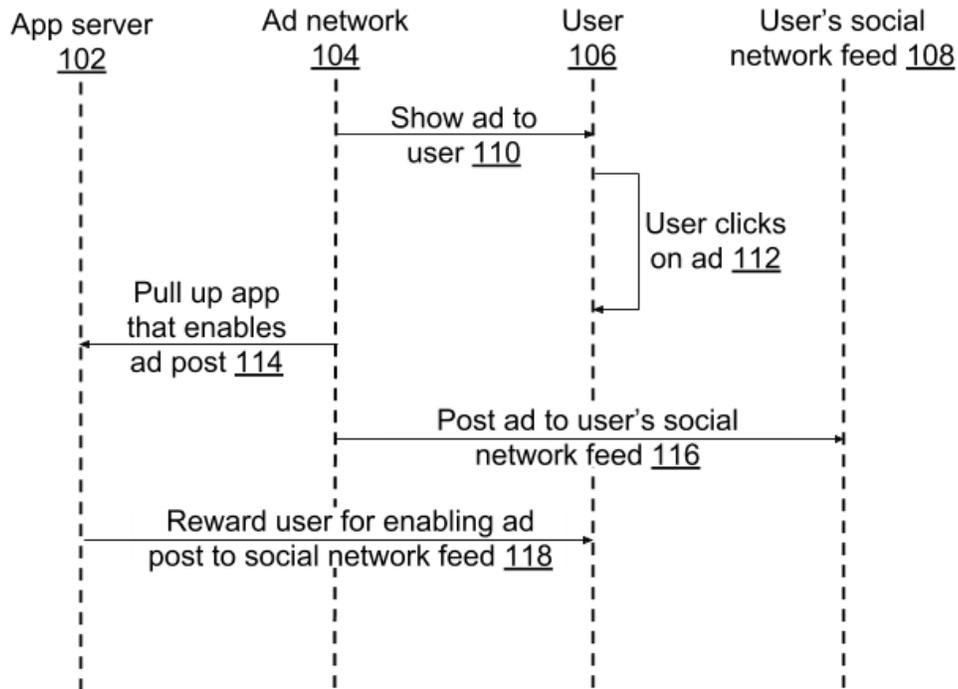
- affiliate marketing
- app distribution
- word-of-mouth
- social network
- user endorsement

### **BACKGROUND**

App developers benefit from increased distribution of their apps. Users in the existing app user base are often connected over social media and form a natural channel for word-of-mouth advertising for the app.

### **DESCRIPTION**

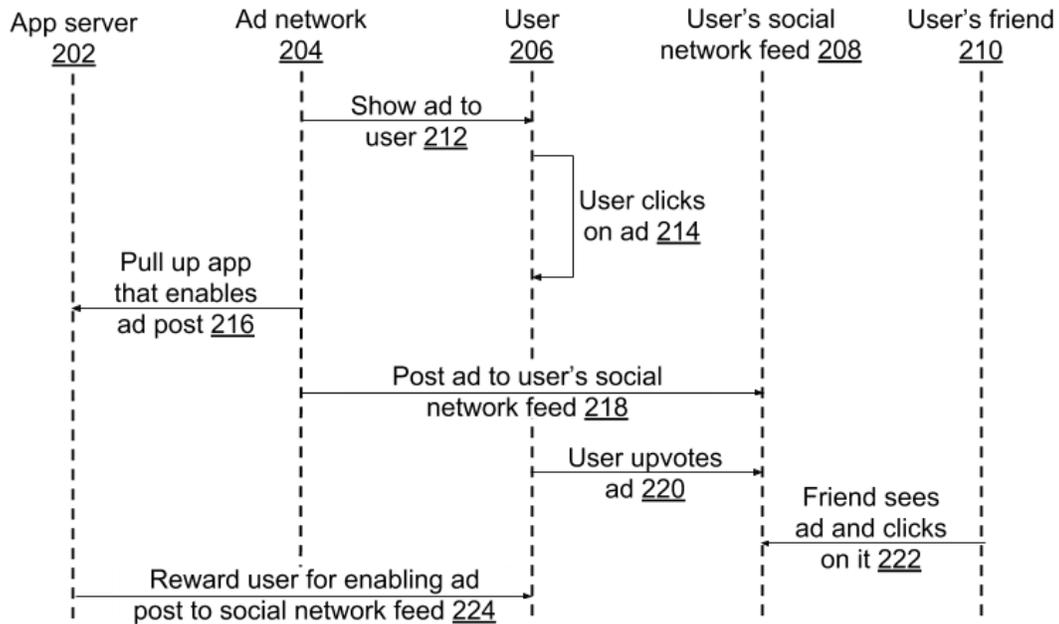
This disclosure provides techniques for app developers to leverage existing users as affiliate marketers to acquire new users. Per the techniques, a user whose marketing efforts or endorsements result in the acquisition of another user gets a reward.



**Fig. 1: App distribution via affiliate marketing on social media**

Fig. 1 illustrates an example technique to distribute apps via affiliate marketing on social media, per this disclosure. A user (106) has a social network feed (108) and uses an app that is served by an app server (102). An ad network (104) shows the user an ad (110). The ad includes text that asks if the user wants to post the ad to their social network feed. The ad may also include text that declares an in-app reward that will be earned if the user consents to posting it in their social network feed.

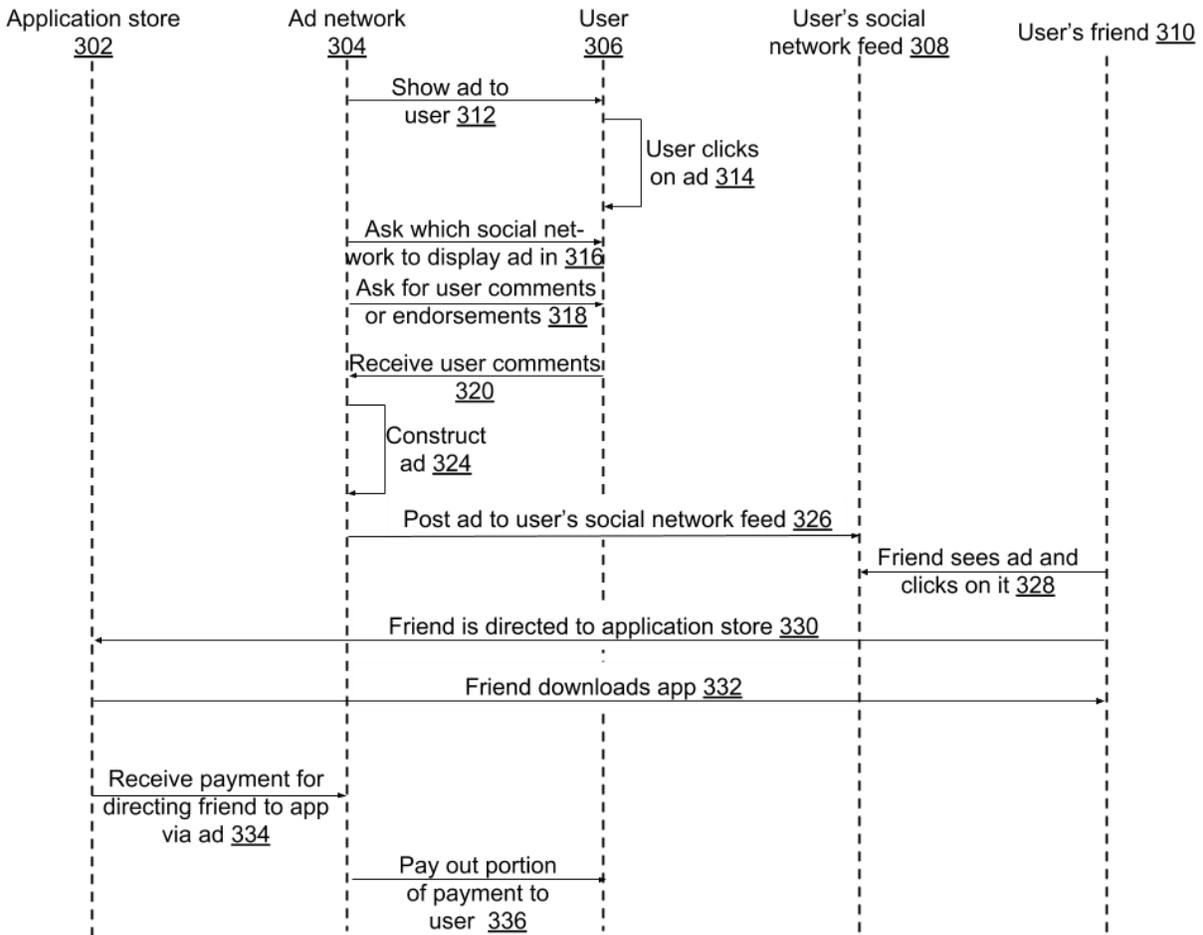
If the user clicks on the ad (112), the ad network pulls up the app that enables posting to the social network (114) and posts the ad to the user's social network feed (116). The user is rewarded (118) for enabling the ad to post to the social network feed. The reward can include, e.g., in-app points for the app they were in while posting the ad, in-app points for the app they are endorsing, etc.



**Fig. 2: Example technique to distribute apps via affiliate marketing on social media**

Fig. 2 illustrates another technique to distribute apps via affiliate marketing on social media, per this disclosure. A user (206) has a social network feed (208) and uses an app that is served by an app server (202). An ad network (204) shows the user an ad (212). The ad includes text that asks if the user wants to post the ad to their social network feed. The ad may also include text that declares an in-app reward if a social network friend (210) of the user clicks on the posted ad, or if the user upvotes the ad.

If the user clicks on the ad (214), the ad network pulls up the app that enables posting to the social network (216) and posts the ad to the user's social network feed (218). The user upvotes the posted ad (220). A friend of the user sees the ad and clicks on it (222). The user is rewarded for enabling the ad post to their social network feed (224) and for upvoting the ad. The reward can include, e.g., in-app points for the app they were in while posting the ad, in-app points for the app they are endorsing, etc. The number of in-app points can be based on the number of friends who saw or clicked on the ad posted in the social network feed of the user.



**Fig. 3: Example technique to distribute apps via affiliate marketing on social media**

Fig. 3 illustrates another technique to distribute apps via affiliate marketing on social media, per this disclosure. A user (306) has a social network feed (308) and uses an app that is distributed off an applications store (302). An ad network (304) shows the user an ad (312), similar to a meta-widget. The ad includes text that asks if the user wants to post the ad to their social network feed. The ad may also include text that declares an in-app or monetary reward if any social network friend of the user (310) clicks on the posted ad, or downloads the app promoted by the ad.

If the user clicks on the ad (314), the ad network asks the user to indicate the social network to post the ad to (316). Selection of the social network to post the ad can advantageously

be done just once. Further, the ad network requests the user for comments or endorsements (318). The ad network receives user comments or endorsements (320) and constructs an ad (324) that is appropriate to the user's feed on the selected social network. The constructed ad includes written or oral user endorsements and other related content that the user wants to share. The ad network posts the ad to the user's social network feed (326).

When a social network friend of the user sees the ad and clicks on it (328), the friend is directed to the application store (330) to download the app (332) that was endorsed by the user. The friend may have to log in to an online store that provides app downloads which enables linking the friend's download to the user's endorsement of the ad. Alternately, if the endorsing user and their friend each have an advertiser's identity, then the download can be associated with the user without the friend logging in. The ad network receives a payment (e.g., from the app developer) for posting an ad that influenced the user's friend to download the app (334). The ad network pays out a portion of the received payment to the user whose social network endorsement led the friend to download the app (336).

To facilitate the techniques of this disclosure, the ad network may reach agreements with other parties, e.g., app developers, application stores, app users, etc., who want to participate in word-of-mouth or affiliate marketing.

The techniques described with reference to figures 1-3 above are implemented with permission from the user to generate and post ads/ app endorsements to their social network feeds. Ads are posted to the social network feed upon specific user approval, e.g., including the content of the ad that includes the user comments, as illustrated in Fig. 3. Users that do not provide permission to post ads to their networks are provided with options to disable the techniques. The posts to the social network are part of the user's social network feed, not inserted

by the social network itself. One advantage of such posts is that the user's friends on the social network obtain the benefit of a the app recommendation from the user. Also, with the implementation of the described techniques, app developer scan reduce their online advertising spend with social networks (e.g., to purchase ad slots) and instead, spend on rewarding users that provide recommendations of their apps.

## CONCLUSION

App developers benefit from increased distribution of their apps. This disclosure leverages existing app users as affiliate marketers to spread word about the app. Users that consent to act as affiliate marketers and spread the word, e.g., on social media, are rewarded upon the acquisition of a new user.