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LIVE AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM

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ABSTRACT

A live fan engagement system enables video creators to engage with viewers while the viewers are watching a video. The system sets up online group viewing sessions for creator and viewers. When the creator and viewers join these sessions, the system initiates playback of a desired media and concurrently starts a chat session. Further, the system determines whether the creator or the viewers have a second screen device available during the session. If the second screen device is present for any of the viewers or the creator, the media is played on one of the screens and the chat session is initiated on the other screen. Alternatively, in the absence of a second screen device, the media and the chat session are initiated on the same screen. The system further allows recording of these group viewing sessions including media and text from the chat session.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

The success of a video creator depends on the engagement of viewers with a video or other media created by the creator. Currently, the creators of videos engage with fans through comments either on a video platform where they upload their videos or other social media websites. However, there is no way to synchronize the conversations with a frame or timestamp of the video instance that the viewer is watching at the time of comment. This can lead to viewer comments that seem out-of-context and confusing to other viewers (or the creator) when reading the comments. Moreover, the conversations these days compete with the video since they are on

the same screen. There are opportunities to make the viewer engagement accessible for the video creators so that they can engage with viewers as they are watching the video.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The systems and techniques described in this disclosure relate to a live fan-engagement system which enables a creator of a video to synchronously engage with viewers while the viewers are watching the video. The system can be implemented for use in an Internet, an intranet, or another client and server environment. The system can be implemented across a client device and server environment. Such client devices may include televisions, display screens, projectors, smart TVs, set top boxes, gaming consoles, over the top boxes, and Chromecast-enabled screens. The client device can also include extension devices sometimes called “second screen” devices capable of displaying graphics and controlling playback of media content from video streaming platforms and audio streaming services associated with a main client device. Example second screen devices include a mobile device, a smartphone, a tablet, a handheld electronic device, a wearable device, a remote controller, etc.

Fig. 1 illustrates an example method 100 to enable live engagement between a video creator and the video’s audience. The method 100 can be performed by a live fan-engagement system. The system enables the creator to set up 102 a group viewing session for viewers. The group viewing session can be an event created by the creator for inviting viewers to watch a video or media instance in a “viewing party”. The media may include video, presentations, webinars, online seminars, audio streams, etc. These group viewing sessions can be hosted on a video streaming platform, a social networking website, a mobile application platform, or a

similar platform. The creator schedules a group viewing session at a particular start time. The creator can send invitations to fans to join the group viewing session through e-mail, messages, or calendar events, etc.

The creator selects the video(s) or media that will be streamed/played during the viewing session and/or the number of fans/viewers who can subscribe for the group viewing session. Further, the creator can manage the viewing rights of the viewers, e.g., whether the viewers have control over the playback of the content that is played in the group viewing session. The control of the media playback may include playing, pausing, or forwarding the content during the viewing session. Furthermore, the creator can enable the viewers to choose from a list of available "viewing parties" hosted on the video streaming platform. Alternatively, or additionally, the viewers may subscribe to calls from the creator for joining such group viewing sessions. This enables the creator to call the viewers that have subscribed to "being called" by the creator. The creator may initiate voice calls to one or more viewers during the session and/or message one or more viewers in the group viewing session.

The system determines 104 whether the creator or any particular viewer has a second screen device for playback of the media during the session. The extension devices sometimes called "second screen" devices capable of displaying graphics and controlling playback of media content from video streaming platforms and audio streaming services associated with a main client device. Example second screen devices include a mobile device, a smartphone, a tablet, a handheld electronic device, a wearable device, a remote controller, etc.

When any of the viewers or the creator have a second screen device, the system plays 106 the media on the main screen and establishes the chat session on the second screen. The second

screen devices may include mobile phones, smartphones, tablets, laptops, etc. In the presence of a second screen device, the media playback can be initiated on the main screen device and the chat session may be initiated on the device other than the second screen device. The creator and the viewers can interact either through text messages or voice in the chat session. The chat session may be launched as a new chat window, where the creator and the viewers can send and view texts from all the participants in the session. Furthermore, the chat window may also allow participants to send receive voice messages in either real time or recorded. The participants may choose to allow the voice messages to be played automatically as and when they are received, or otherwise selectively play the voice messages using manual selection. Alternatively, or additionally, the chat session may be initiated in a designated comments section of the hosting website or mobile application. In another embodiment, a similar chat session is launched when the creator starts a session by calling one or more viewers who have subscribed to incoming creator calls.

Further, the creator of the group viewing session may selectively enable the viewers to control the playback of the media during the group viewing session. This also enables all the second screen devices, which have requisite hardware and software controls for controlling the playback, to control the playback of the media for all the TVs and other devices within that session. For example, a viewer may have a chromecast enabled TV along with a smartphone while joining the “viewing party”. The system enables the viewer to use the TV for playing the desired media during the “viewing party” and use the smartphone for interacting with the other participants of the “viewing party”. Furthermore, if enabled by the creator of the session, the viewer may also control the playback of the media within that session using his second screen

device, i.e., smartphone controlling the playback. In such a case, the interaction does not compete with the video and enables full screen playback on the first screen device. Other advantages can include allowing a user to watch the video on a TV screen with other viewers around the user and provide comments from the second screen device, e.g., smartphone without others seeing the comments.

Alternatively, or additionally, the system plays 108 the media and shows the chat session on the same device for the participants who do not have a second screen device. FIG. 2 describes this situation in more detail. The video streaming platform provides a user interface for enabling simultaneous viewing of the media playback and engaging with the other participants through the chat session. For example, the screen may be divided into two parts, where video is played in one part and the other part is available for the chat session. Further, the participants without a second screen may also control the playback of the media from their devices, if enabled by the creator of the session.

The system may also record 110 the group viewing session including the media and the chat session. The recorded videos of group viewing sessions include the media played during the session along with the text and voice interaction of how the participants engaged with each other during the session. For example, the comments made during the session may be timestamped with the progress of the media playback in the session. The comments may appear in the recorded video at the particular timestamps for the media, thus including the viewer engagement with the media. Further, the group viewing sessions may be stored in the creator's device's local memory storage, cloud storage, video streaming website, or any other account linked with

creator. These recorded group viewings sessions may further be uploaded as new videos on the video streaming platforms.

Fig. 2 illustrates an example user interface of a live fan-engagement system 200 for a viewer with a first screen device for video playback and a second screen device for viewer interaction. The system includes two client devices 202a and 202b connected to a network for streaming media and enabling communication with other client devices. The client device 202a can be any electronic device such as television, display screen, projector, smart TV, set top box, gaming console, over the top boxe, or Chromecast-enabled screen. The client device 202b can be a mobile device, a smartphone, a tablet, a handheld electronic device, a wearable device, etc for enabling user interaction. When a viewer joins the group viewing session using the client devices 202a and 202b, the example interface enables the viewer to view the playback of the media in a designated media playback window 204 of the client device 202a and concurrently initiates a chat session 208 on the client device 202b being used by the same viewer. The viewer may engage with other participants in the group viewing session by sending text through the designated typing window 210 on the client device 202b while seamlessly viewing the media on the client device 202a. Alternatively, or additionally, the participants may also engage by sending voice chat messages. The creator of the session may also enable the viewers to control the playback of the media during the session. The playback controls 206 enable the participants to play, pause, or stop the playback for all the devices within the session. The playback controls can also be provided on the client device 202b (not shown in the figure) which enable the second screen devices to control playback of the media for all the devices within the session.

Fig. 3 is a block diagram of an exemplary environment that shows components of a system for implementing the techniques described in this disclosure. The environment includes client devices 310, servers 330, and network 340. Network 340 connects client devices 310 to servers 330. Client device 310 is an electronic device. Client device 310 may be capable of requesting and receiving data/communications over network 340. Example client devices 310 may include televisions, display screens, projectors, smart TVs, or Chromecast-enabled screens. The client device can also include extension devices 310' sometimes called "second screen" devices capable of displaying graphics and controlling playback of media content from video streaming platforms and audio streaming services associated with a main client device. Example second screen devices 310' include a mobile device, a smartphone, a tablet, a handheld electronic device, a wearable device, a remote controller, etc. Client device 310 may execute an application, such as a web browser 312 or 314 or a native application 316. Web applications 313 and 315 may be displayed via a web browser 312 or 314. Server 330 may be a web server capable of sending, receiving and storing web pages 332. Web page(s) 332 may be stored on or accessible via server 330. Web page(s) 332 may be associated with web application 313 or 315 and accessed using a web browser, e.g., 312. When accessed, webpage(s) 332 may be transmitted and displayed on a client device, e.g., 310. Resources 318 and 318' are resources available to the client device 310 and/or applications thereon, or server(s) 330 and/or web pages(s) accessible therefrom, respectively. Resources 318' may be, for example, memory or storage resources; a text, image, video, audio, JavaScript, CSS, or other file or object; or other relevant resources. Network 340 may be any network or combination of networks that can carry data communication.

The subject matter described herein can be implemented in software and/or hardware (for example, computers, circuits, or processors). The subject matter can be implemented on a single device or across multiple devices (for example, a client device and a server device). Devices implementing the subject matter can be connected through a wired and/or wireless network. Such devices can receive inputs from a user (for example, from a mouse, keyboard, or touchscreen) and produce an output to a user (for example, through a display and/or a speaker). Specific examples disclosed are provided for illustrative purposes and do not limit the scope of the disclosure.

DRAWINGS

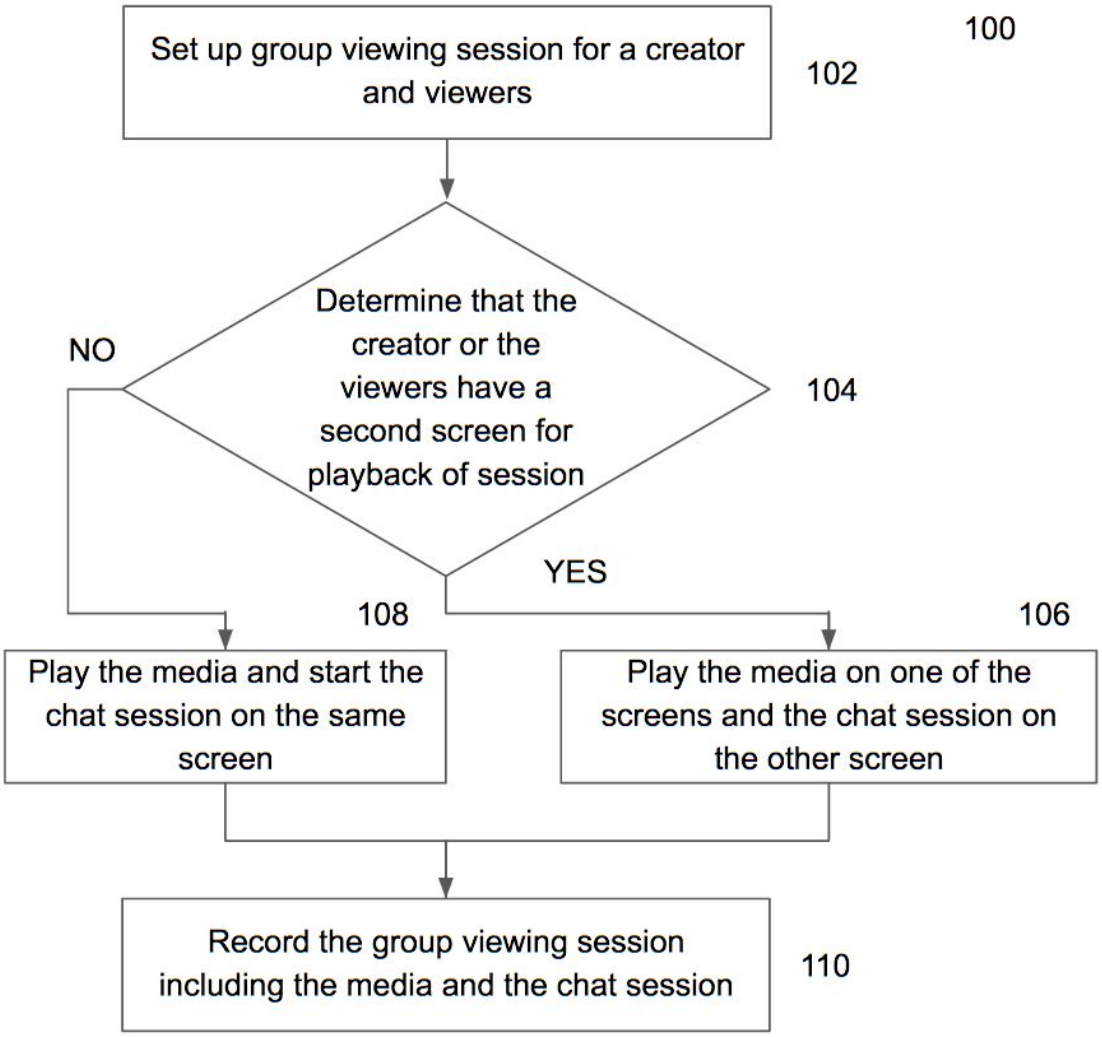

Fig. 1

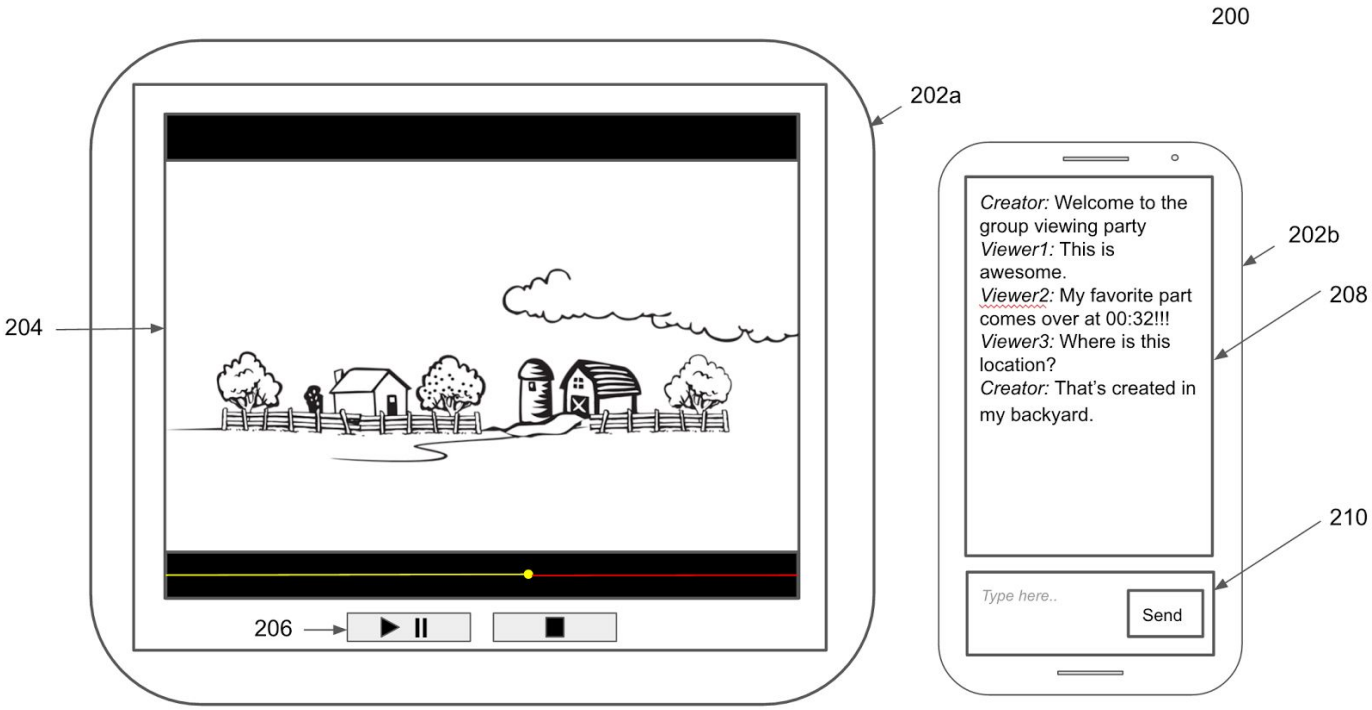
200
202a
204
206
202b
208
210
Creator: Welcome to the group viewing party
Viewer1: This is awesome.
Viewer2: My favorite part comes over at 00:32!!!
Viewer3: Where is this location?
Creator: That's created in my backyard.
Type here..
Send

Fig. 2

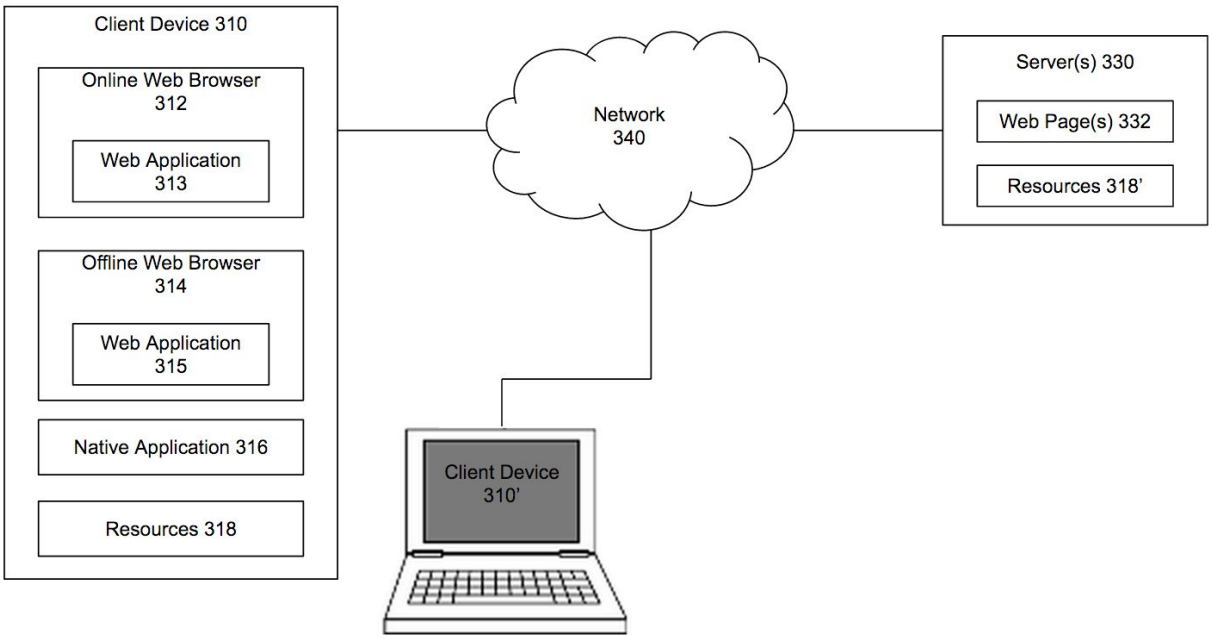
Client Device 310
Online Web Browser 312
Web Application 313
Offline Web Browser 314
Web Application 315
Native Application 316
Resources 318
Network 340
Server(s) 330
Web Page(s) 332
Resources 318'
Client Device 310'

Fig. 3