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User choice in conversational advertisements

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ABSTRACT

Current advertising formats are displayed at the edges of content, e.g., website content, mobile application content, etc. Such advertisements can interrupt the flow of conversation in a conversational application and are therefore unsuitable for such use. This disclosure describes techniques to provide user choice in advertisements in conversational applications, e.g., during interaction between a user and a chat bot. The advertisements are provided in two parts - a user choice portion and one or more second portions that include creative assets of the advertisement. The second portion(s) are displayed upon user selection to view the advertisement. This enables the advertisement to be minimally intrusive to the conversation, e.g., between a user and a chat bot. Further, with user permission, it can provide advertisers useful information regarding the proportion of users that are interested in the advertisement.

KEYWORDS

- conversational advertisement

- bot

- messaging app

- mobile advertising

- user choice

BACKGROUND

Online advertisements, e.g., on a website or in a mobile application, are rendered alongside other content, e.g., on the edges of the content information. For example, the advertisements are displayed as banners below the application content, as pop-ups that overlay a portion of content, etc. Messaging applications are popular among users. Some messaging

applications include chat bots and some applications support third-party chat bots. Conversations

in these applications have a single stream, and inserting an advertisement can interrupt the flow

of conversation and interaction.

DESCRIPTION

This disclosure describes techniques to provide user choice in conversational

advertisements, e.g., advertisements provided in a conversational interface, such as in a

messaging application. The user is provided with an option to decide whether they are interested

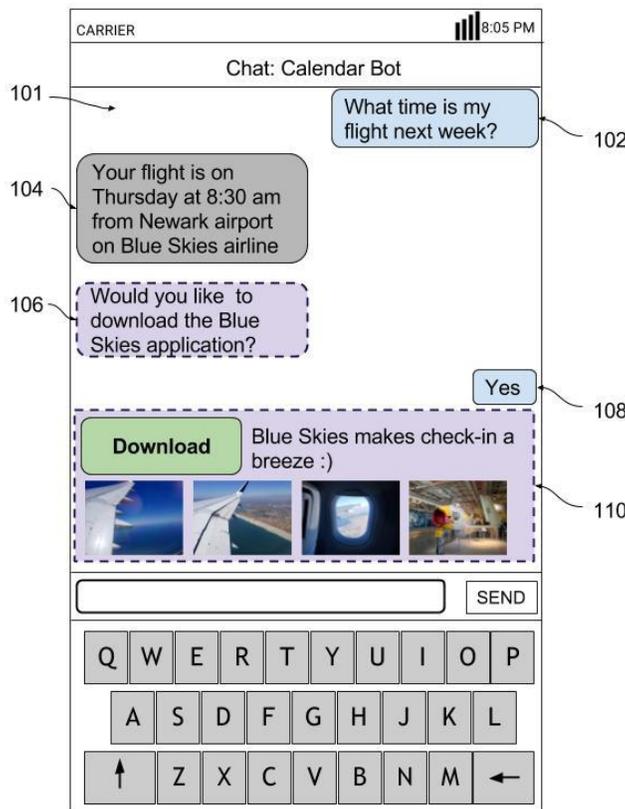in seeing details about an advertised product or service before the advertisement content is

served.

Fig. 1: Providing user choice in conversational advertisements

Fig. 1 illustrates an example user interface for conversational advertisements that provide user choice. A messaging application (101) is used for text message exchanges between a human user and a calendar bot. As seen in Fig. 1, the user has asked "what time is my flight next week?" (102). In response the calendar bot has replied, "Your flight is on Thursday at 8:30 am from Newark airport on Blue skies airline" (104).

With user permission, a suitable advertisement is determined for this point in the conversation. For example, it may be determined that the user is likely to find a mobile application for "Blue Skies airline" of interest, e.g., due to the chat context. If the user doesn't permit use of user data, advertisements are identified without use of user data.

The advertisement is provided in two parts. The first part is rendered in the user interface as a user choice question. The question enables the user to indicate whether they would like to know more about the advertised product, brand, feature, or service, etc. For example, in Fig. 1, the first part of the advertisement is "would you like to download the Blue Skies application?" (106), shown in a different color than messages from the calendar bot. Further, the question can also enable the user to pick an option that they would like to learn more about, e.g., to learn more about the "Blue Skies app" or to see a "coupon for a cab ride to the airport" (not shown in the figure).

If the user chooses to not view the advertisement, the interruption to answer the question is the much shorter in comparison with the user having to see a lot of advertising content on the screen or played as audio. The advertisement content is not inserted in the conversation unless the users make a choice to view the advertisement.

The second part of the advertisement includes creative assets of the advertisement, e.g., images, audio, text, click out link, etc. If the user indicates interest in the advertisement, the

corresponding advertisement is displayed. For example, in Fig. 1, the user has indicated interest in the "Blue Skies application" with the message "Yes" (108). In response, the second part of the advertisement is displayed (110). In the example shown in Fig. 1, the advertisement includes a link to download the application, images of the application, and descriptive text "Blue Skies makes check-in a breeze :)"

When a request for the advertisement is received from a chat bot (e.g., "calendar bot") or the messaging application, both parts of the advertisement are provided in a single ad response payload that includes two or more segments. A first segment provides the user choice, and the other segments of the payload include creative assets for the different options that the user can choose from the first part. A or messaging application that implements support for this format can show any advertisement that such parts, e.g., a user choice question to be optionally followed by the advertisement.

The two part advertisements provide benefits to advertisers. With user permission, the sends a pingback to the advertiser that indicates the response to the user choice question as well as to the actual advertisement. This enables advertisers to learn the proportion of users that want to know more about the advertised product/service, to provide the details in a customized way based on the user response. Further, a positive impression of the advertiser and the is generated among users of messaging applications that interact with due to the less intrusive advertising format and the availability of the user choice.

Two part advertisements can be implemented in different ways. For example, both parts of the advertisement may be sent as a response. This enables the user-selected second part to be rendered without the need to send a further request to the advertiser for the creative assets of the

advertisement and to wait for the advertiser response. Further, this allows the advertisement server to serve a single payload and not have to wait to send the second payload.

An alternative is for the advertisement server to gain control of the chat interaction, e.g., via an application programming interface (API). Once the user choice question is served, the advertisement server can receive the response and provide the second payload to render. After providing the second payload, the advertisement server returns control to the that requested the advertisement. This provides the same user experience of using the and seeing the advertisement.

The techniques described in this disclosure can be used by any entity that serves advertisements to conversational bots (or in messaging applications) and to conversational bot developers that want to integrate advertising. The advertisement can be for a brand, a product, a service, a subscription, an application, a game, media, etc. Further, the format of the advertisement can be similar to conventional online advertising, and include audio, video, text, images, etc.

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 provide user choice in advertisements in conversational applications, e.g., during interaction between a user and a chat bot. The advertisements are provided in two parts - a user choice portion and one or more second portions that include creative assets of the advertisement. The second portion(s) are displayed upon user selection to view the advertisement. This enables the advertisement to be minimally intrusive to the conversation, e.g., between a user and a chat bot. Further, with user permission, it can provide advertisers useful information regarding the proportion of users that are interested in the advertisement.