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Messaging continuity and lead generation using conversational ads

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ABSTRACT

Conversational ads are an immersive and engaging ad format where users can directly chat or interact with the ad unit instead of clicking out to a destination URL. Such ads are available on mobile web, on display web, and on mobile apps. However, the conversation ends when the user switches to a different web page or closes the mobile app.

The techniques of this disclosure integrate CAs with messaging services, e.g., rich communication services (RCS), such that users and advertisers can seamlessly continue to chat after the CA session ends. Per the techniques, a user's continued engagement after a chat session on a CA enables users to bookmark a business so as to easily engage with the business again, enables advertisers to send status updates to users, reduces the amounts of information needed to initiate and sustain chats, integrates payment handling into messaging, etc.

KEYWORDS

Conversational ads; display ads; rich communication services; RCS; messaging services; messaging continuity; business lead generation

BACKGROUND

Conversational ads (CA) are an immersive and engaging ad format where users can directly chat or interact with the ad unit instead of clicking out to a destination URL. Such ads are available on mobile web, on display web, and on mobile apps. Conversational ads are increasingly being adopted by businesses, e.g., that use chatbots to engage with customers. CAs are increasing in popularity with users as it helps them discover and interact immediately with businesses via a relatively a frictionless medium such as display ads. However, conversations conducted via CAs do not persist - the conversation ends when a user switches to a different web

page or closes the mobile app. Also, CAs does not support features of messaging apps such as rich communication services (RCS).

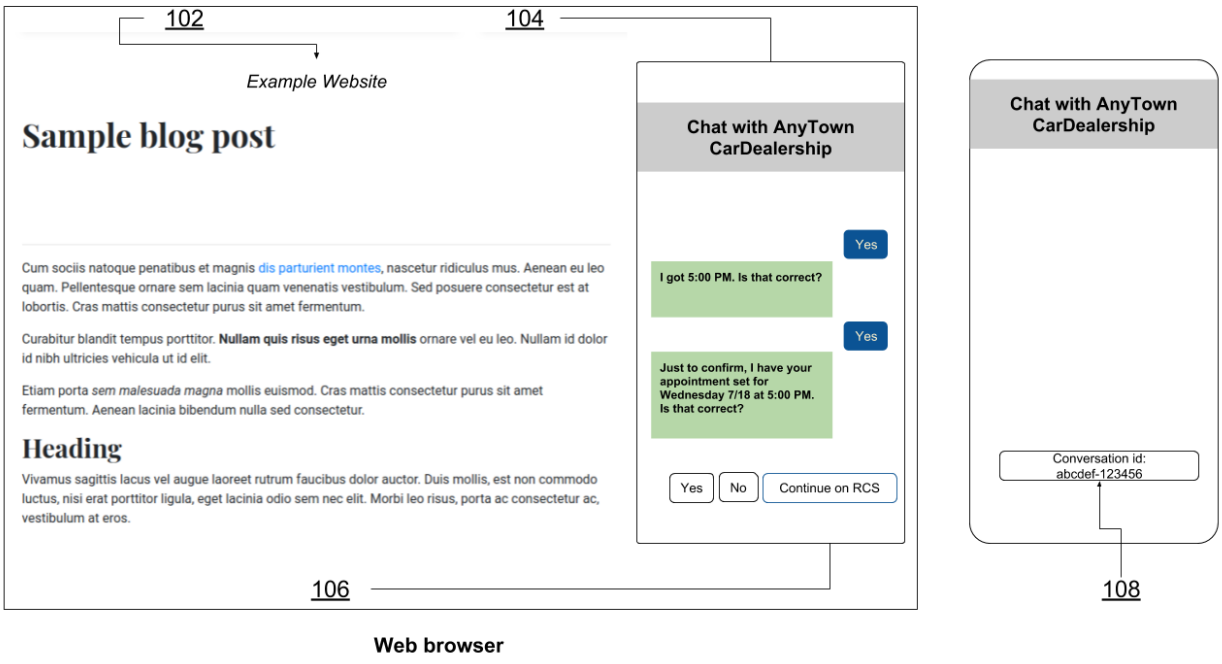
On the other hand, businesses today routinely use the messaging format to communicate with consumers on their mobile devices. Examples of such communication include credit card fraud alerts, flight status updates, package delivery notifications, etc. Rich business messaging (RBM) is a part of RCS that upgrades SMS with branding, rich media, interactivity, and analytics. With RCS, businesses can bring branded, interactive mobile experiences to the default messaging application on a mobile device. Businesses benefit from being able to generate more leads to send messages when users browse the web or use mobile apps.

DESCRIPTION

The techniques of this disclosure integrate CAs with messaging services, e.g., rich communication services (RCS), such that users and advertisers can seamlessly continue to chat or interact after the CA session ends. By providing a seamless handoff between CA and RCS at an appropriate time, the discoverability of the CA is united with the rich feature set of RCS, thereby delivering the benefits of both CA and RCS. For example, users can make purchases and receive notifications after their initial interaction with chatbots embedded within banner ads. Similarly, businesses can continue to sell products or services via their chatbots after an initial CA chat session with a user.

Conversational flow

The conversational flow begins as the user interacts with the advertiser, e.g., through the advertiser's chatbot, on a website. It then seamlessly moves to a messaging interface, e.g., RCS.



(a) (b)

Fig. 1: (a) A website and a conversation in a CA (b) CA chat moved to a messaging service

Fig. 1(a) illustrates an example of a website (102) and a conversational ad (104) within the website, viewed via a web browser. A user activates the CA, and the advertiser (e.g., an advertiser chatbot) enters into a conversation with the user. At some point in the conversation, the user is provided with an option to continue the chat on RCS (106). If the user clicks on the "continue on RCS" option, a messaging app is triggered, as shown in Fig. 1(b), with conversation ID (108) pre-populated.

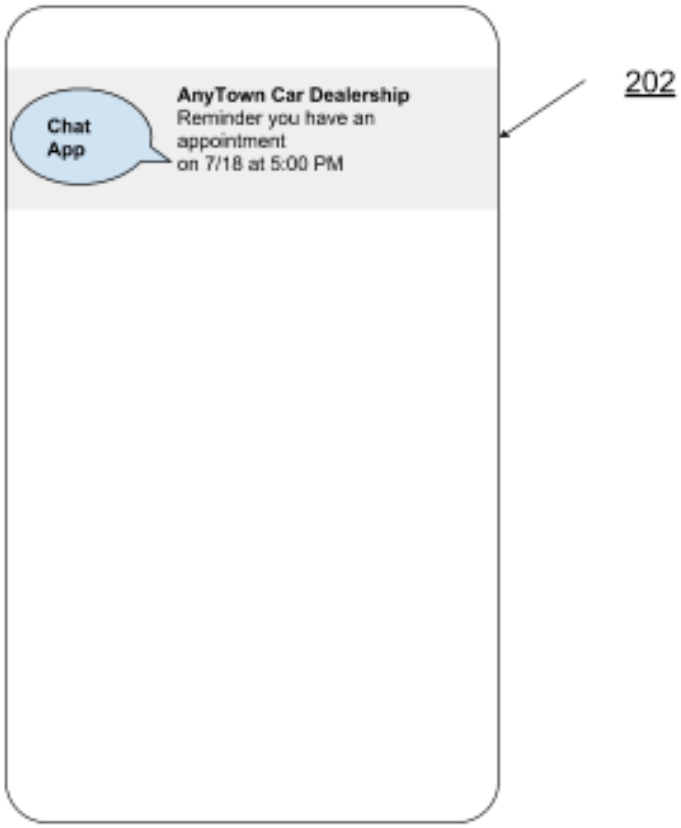


Fig. 2: A CA conversation continued on a mobile device via notification

Once the user clicks a send button on the messaging interface, the advertiser can send text notifications, as shown in Fig. 2, e.g., to remind the user of the appointment earlier agreed upon within the CA.

Serving Flow

The serving flow that occurs as a CA changes from display to conversation mode is as follows. The CA appears within a website or app. The CA is served via an advertiser's back-end system that may use a chatbox engine and other components. The change of a CA from display to conversation mode occurs as follows:

1. The user sees the CA.

2. The user activates chatting within the CA, e.g., by clicking a displayed chat activation UI element.
3. The CA sends the user's authentication credentials, with user permission, to the advertiser's chatbox backend.
4. The CA transforms to conversation mode and shows the user a welcome message that includes a suggestion UI element.
5. The user clicks on a suggestion UI element.
6. The CA sends the user response to the advertiser's backend.
7. The backend sends back to the CA a JSON response.
8. The CA renders the JSON as a carousel on its user interface.

The tasks of the CA include: connecting with the backend; receiving user responses; receiving backend response JSONs and converting to chat UI; passing responses back-and-forth between user and the advertiser backend; tracking, with user permission, user interaction time, location, device; etc. The tasks of the advertiser chatbox backend include: authenticating the user; sending a welcome JSON; receiving the user response from the CA, processing it, and generating a response JSON; sending the response JSON to the CA; tracking interaction metrics; etc.

Advertisers can modify their chatbox backends suitably to return, e.g., additional suggestions that the users can click on to continue the chat with a messaging application. Such suggestions include, in addition to a possibly pre-filled message, a phone number to send the user's message to. The pre-filled message can pertain to the product being discussed or transacted. The CA user interface displays the suggestion and provides to the user the appropriate hyperlink to enable transition to messaging application.

In this manner, the techniques of this disclosure enable continued engagement of a user with an advertiser/business after a CA session. The techniques thereby

- serve as a tool for users to bookmark a business so that they can easily chat or engage with the business again;
- enable advertisers to sign up users to send status updates or reminders;
- reduce the amount of information needed in conversations, e.g., advertiser does not need to ask users for their phone numbers;
- delegate handling of payment to messaging app; etc.

The advantages of the techniques described herein include: an improved average revenue per user (ARPU) for advertisers; lead generation for businesses; an enhanced feature-set within the CA format, e.g., persistence of conversation, notification, bookmarking, payment handling, etc.; providing a medium of discovery for businesses with RCS-enabled chatbots; improving the conversion rate for CAs; 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

The techniques of this disclosure integrate CAs with messaging services, e.g., rich communication services (RCS), such that users and advertisers can seamlessly continue to chat after the CA session ends. Per the techniques, a user's continued engagement after a chat session on a CA enables users to bookmark a business so as to easily engage with the business again, enables advertisers to send status updates to users, reduces the amounts of information needed to initiate and sustain chats, integrates payment handling into messaging, etc.