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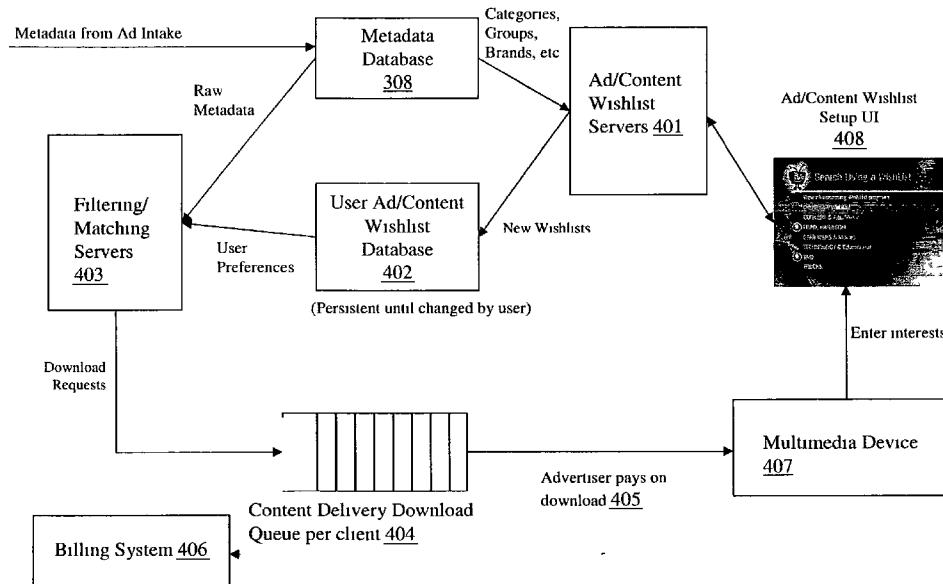
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(54) Title: METHOD FOR ENHANCING TELEVISION ADVERTISING VIEWERSHIP



(57) **Abstract:** A method and apparatus for enhancing television advertising viewership. Advertisers deliver content demographic and associated data as metadata along with content to a service that is in communication with a large number of multimedia devices. Each device supplies information to the service that tells about the user of the device's content viewing preferences. The service compares user information to content metadata to find content for the user. The service sends the selected content to the multimedia device. Advertisers whose content were downloaded to the multimedia device may be charged a fee for the download. The multimedia device sends statistics regarding the user's action when the user viewed the content to the service. The service charges a fee to advertisers that had their content viewed by the user.

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AMENDED CLAIMS

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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

26. A method for distributing advertisements and/or content to multimedia devices, comprising:

receiving content and associated metadata from advertisers and/or content providers;

wherein the received content includes any of: video advertisements or content, audio advertisements or content, text advertisements or content, graphical advertisements or content, or multimedia advertisements or content;

wherein the associated metadata includes any of: content title, content synopsis, information specifying what program or type of program the content should be played during, information specifying that the content is to be played before or after a program, or information specifying that the content be displayed in a specific user interface screen;

receiving a user's content viewing preferences;

matching the user's content viewing preferences with appropriate received content using the received associated metadata;

sending matched content and content information to a multimedia device; and

receiving user input commands and associated content identification from multimedia devices that detail user input commands input by the user while viewing a sent content.

27. A method as recited in Claim 26, further comprising:

charging an advertiser or content provider a fee for delivering content to a multimedia device.

28. A method as recited in Claim 26, further comprising:

charging an advertiser or content provider a fee when received user input commands and associated content identification indicates that content has been viewed by a user.

29. A method as recited in Claim 26, further comprising:

ensuring that a user does not receive repeats of content that the user has already viewed or heard.

30. A method as recited in Claim 26, further comprising:

receiving a request for content from a multimedia device; and
wherein the sending step sends any content and content information to the multimedia device if content and content information exist in a queue specifically for the multimedia device.

31. A method as recited in Claim 26, further comprising:

generating a report based on user input commands and associated content identification received from a plurality of multimedia devices for any of: indicating popularity of content for a specific advertiser or content provider, indicating what actions users performed during display of certain content for a specific advertiser or content provider, or indicating most popular content of all advertisers or content providers that have content available from a service.

32. An apparatus for distributing advertisements and/or content to multimedia devices, comprising:

a module for receiving content and associated metadata from advertisers and/or content providers;

wherein the received content includes any of: video advertisements or content, audio advertisements or content, text advertisements or content, graphical advertisements or content, or multimedia advertisements or content;

wherein the associated metadata includes any of: content title, content synopsis, information specifying what program or type of program the content should be played during, information specifying that the content is to be played before or after a program, or information specifying that the content be displayed in a specific user interface screen;

a module for receiving a user's content viewing preferences;

a module for matching the user's content viewing preferences with appropriate received content using the received associated metadata;

a module for sending matched content and content information to a multimedia device; and

a module for receiving user input commands and associated content identification from multimedia devices that detail user input commands input by the user while viewing a sent content.

33. An apparatus as recited in Claim 32, further comprising:

a module for charging an advertiser or content provider a fee for delivering content to a multimedia device.

34. An apparatus as recited in Claim 32, further comprising:

a module for charging an advertiser or content provider a fee when received user input commands and associated content identification indicates that content has been viewed by a user.

35. An apparatus as recited in Claim 32, further comprising:

a module for ensuring that a user does not receive repeats of content that the user has already viewed or heard.

36. An apparatus as recited in Claim 32, further comprising:

a module for receiving a request for content from a multimedia device; and wherein the sending module sends any content and content information to the multimedia device if content and content information exist in a queue specifically for the multimedia device.

37. An apparatus as recited in Claim 32, further comprising:

a module for generating a report based on user input commands and associated content identification received from a plurality of multimedia devices for any of: indicating popularity of content for a specific advertiser or content provider, indicating what actions users performed during display of certain content for a specific advertiser or content provider, or indicating most popular content of all advertisers or content providers that have content available from a service.

38. A computer-readable medium carrying one or more sequences of instructions for distributing advertisements and/or content to multimedia devices, which instructions, when executed by one or more processors, cause the one or more processors to carry out the steps of:

receiving content and associated metadata from advertisers and/or content providers;

wherein the received content includes any of: video advertisements or content, audio advertisements or content, text advertisements or content, graphical advertisements or content, or multimedia advertisements or content;

wherein the associated metadata includes any of: content title, content synopsis, information specifying what program or type of program the content should be played during, information specifying that the content is to be played before or after a program, or information specifying that the content be displayed in a specific user interface screen;

receiving a user's content viewing preferences;

matching the user's content viewing preferences with appropriate received content using the received associated metadata;

sending matched content and content information to a multimedia device; and

receiving user input commands and associated content identification from multimedia devices that detail user input commands input by the user while viewing a sent content.

39. A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 38, further comprising:

charging an advertiser or content provider a fee for delivering content to a multimedia device.

40. A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 38, further comprising:

charging an advertiser or content provider a fee when received user input commands and associated content identification indicates that content has been viewed by a user.

41. A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 38, further comprising:
ensuring that a user does not receive repeats of content that the user has
already viewed or heard.

42. A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 38, further comprising:
receiving a request for content from a multimedia device; and
wherein the sending step sends any content and content information to the
multimedia device if content and content information exist in a queue specifically for
the multimedia device.

43. A computer-readable medium as recited in Claim 38, further comprising:
generating a report based on user input commands and associated content
identification received from a plurality of multimedia devices for any of: indicating
popularity of content for a specific advertiser or content provider, indicating what
actions users performed during display of certain content for a specific advertiser or
content provider, or indicating most popular content of all advertisers or content
providers that have content available from a service.