

POLLCART

Full Name of Sole or First Inventor:	Rich Williams
Residence (<i>city, state, country</i>):	Richardson, Texas, US
Mailing Address (<i>address, city, state, zip, country</i>):	1335 Northlake Dr. Richardson, Texas 75080 US
Citizenship:	US

Full Name of Second Inventor:	Douglas M. Berman
Residence (<i>city, state, country</i>):	Dallas, Texas, US
Mailing Address (<i>address, city, state, zip, country</i>):	1209 N. Bishop Ave. Dallas, Texas 75208 US
Citizenship:	US

Full Name of Third Inventor:	Jonny Mack
Residence (<i>city, state, country</i>):	Dallas, Texas, US
Mailing Address (<i>address, city, state, zip, country</i>):	10802 Hermosa Dr. Dallas, Texas 75218 US
Citizenship:	US

Assignee:

This page is not to be included with the application as filed.

□

- 0 -

POLLCART**TECHNICAL FIELD**

[0001] The invention relates generally to communication technology and, more particularly, to a system and method for soliciting and communicating votes.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Decisions to purchase goods and services often impact others, or could be made better with input from others. However, it is not always practical, for reasons such as time constraints, to discuss purchase decisions with others before making a decision.

[0003] In view of the foregoing, what is needed is a system and method for obtaining the opinion of others before or in conjunction with making purchase decisions.

SUMMARY

[0004] The present invention, accordingly, provides a method for communicating, wherein one or more processors are used to facilitate identifying by a purchaser at least one good or service to purchase. The desire by the purchaser to purchase the at least one good or service is communicated to the one or more pollees, and opinions of the potential purchaser are obtained from the pollees. A decision of whether the purchaser should purchase the at least one good or service is made with reference to the one or more opinions.

[0005] The foregoing has outlined rather broadly the features and technical advantages of the present invention in order that the detailed description of the invention that follows may be better understood. Additional features and advantages of the invention will be described hereinafter which form the subject of the claims of the invention. It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the conception and the specific embodiment disclosed may be readily utilized as a basis for modifying or designing other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the present invention. It should also be realized by those skilled in the art that such equivalent

constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0006] For a more complete understanding of the present invention, and the advantages thereof, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

[0007] FIGURE 1 is a schematic block diagram of a system and method embodying features of the present invention;

[0008] FIGURE 2 is a flow chart illustrating control logic embodying features of the present invention for soliciting and communicating votes regarding a purchase decision;

[0009] FIGURE 3 is a flow chart exemplifying the poll process; and

[0010] FIGURE 4 is a flow chart showing further detail of the system and process.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[0011] The following description is presented to enable any person skilled in the art to make and use the invention, and is provided in the context of a particular application and its requirements. Various modifications to the disclosed embodiments will be readily apparent to those skilled in the art, and the general principles defined herein may be applied to other embodiments and applications without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention. Thus, the present invention is not intended to be limited to the embodiments shown, but is to be accorded the widest scope consistent with the principles and features disclosed herein. Additionally, as used herein, the term “substantially” is to be construed as a term of approximation.

[0012] It is noted that, unless indicated otherwise, all functions described herein may be performed by a processor such as a microprocessor, a controller, a microcontroller, an application-specific integrated circuit (ASIC), an electronic data processor, a computer, or the like, in accordance with code, such as program code, software, integrated circuits, and/or the like that are coded to perform such functions. Furthermore, it is considered that the design, development, and implementation details of all such code would be apparent to a person having ordinary skill in the art based upon a review of the present description of the invention.

[0013] Referring to FIGURE 1 of the drawings, the reference numeral 100 generally designates a communication system embodying features of the present invention. The system 100 includes a communication network 102, such as the Internet. As discussed in further detail below, a number of communication devices are connected to the communication network 102, including:

- a communication device 112 utilized by a potential purchaser 110 of one or more goods and/or services;
- a communication device 122 coupled to a server 124 of an online seller 120 of goods and/or services;
- a communication device 132 coupled to a server 134 of a polling service (the “pollcart”) 130;
- a communication device 142 coupled to server 144 of a credit/debit card issuing bank 140; and
- one or more communication devices 152 utilized by one or more potential pollees 150, pollees including anyone who may have an opinion valued by the purchaser, such as family members (e.g., spouses, parents, children, extended family), friends, co-workers, others available or willing to provide feedback, and the like.

[0014] FIGURE 2 is a flow chart 200 exemplifying operation of one embodiment of the invention. According to principles of the present invention, at step 202, a potential purchaser selects an item to purchase from an online seller (e.g., retailer) 120. The purchaser may then either elect at step 203 for the purchase to be contingent on poll results (discussed below), or place the order. If the order is placed, then at step 204, the seller receives the order and at step 206, the online seller queries whether purchaser 110 desires to solicit feedback from pollees as to whether to proceed with the purchase, and in step 207, the purchaser responds. If the purchaser decides at steps 203 or 208 against running the item by pollees, then execution proceeds to steps 210-214, the order is processed, a purchase message is delivered to the purchaser, and the purchaser receives the message. In steps 216-218, the retailer ships the order notifies the purchaser receives of what he ordered.

[0015] If in steps 203 or 208, a purchaser should indicate to the seller that he would prefer to submit the potential purchase to pollees, and then in step 220 the seller 120 generates to the pollcart server 130 a request to submit a potential purchase to pollees. In steps 222-226, pollcart server 130 asks purchaser 110 to identify who to use as pollees. The purchaser may manually enter contact information of pollees, use contact information for pollees stored in its communication device, or access contact information from online services or other storage locations. All pollers and pollees will eventually get an option to log in to the pollcart server 130, in which case they preferably receive the polls via push notification through a dedicated application.

[0016] In step 228, the request from the purchaser and retailer for approval or vote is sent electronically to the pollee, which may include SMS, email, push notification, or through third party communication services or the like. In steps 230-235, pollcart server 130 polls the pollees for comments and their vote and forwards comments to the purchaser (comments may be made before or after voting) and displays the vote and comments on a webpage (the “landing page”).

Comments may include referrals of other products, which may include, among other things, the pollcart referral information, general opinions, and ultimately the option to tag other participants in the poll. A referral might be in the form of a hyperlink with a special code in it to note that pollcart is the referrer, though other software methods may be used to determine which users referred, such as phone and email matching. Any link a pollee leaves may be augmented in a comment with a code that will denote to that retailer that pollcart is the referrer, which may also change a regular link to a link that contains customized, trackable referral info.

[0017] Another option may be included for pollees wherein a click of a button on the poll notice, push notification or landing page allows the pollee or landing page viewer to immediately purchase the same item or a similar item. Advertising and branding for the retailer will optionally be included in such locations to encourage pollees to shop while they are researching the item on their site.

[0018] In step 233, votes from pollees are transmitted to pollcart server 130. If the number of votes does not meet a predetermined quantity, such as a majority or some other ratio or number, then in steps 238-240, a denial is sent to the purchaser. If in step 236 there are enough votes, then execution proceeds to steps 210-218, discussed above.

[0019] FIGURE 3 exemplifies how a landing page may be incorporated into the invention to display or present materials such as poll results, comments, retailer ads and invitations to login to pollcart. At step 302, an online purchaser selects one or more products or services, referred to collectively herein as “item”. Then the purchaser may select button 304 to add the item via line 332 to his shopping cart 308 in a conventional manner where the purchaser has the option via button 311 (corresponding to step 208) to make the purchase contingent on votes from pollees. Alternatively, the purchaser may select button 306 (corresponding to step 203) to make the purchase contingent on votes from pollees. In the latter cases, polling data relating to the item is sent to the pollcart server 130 via API 330. The item is forwarded to the shopping cart and the purchaser is also immediately brought to the cart checkout process to handle the single item separately for polling purposes.

[0020] Information regarding the polling process is displayed in the landing page, which may be displayed, for example, on a purchaser’s smart phone or other communication device. Pollcart server 130 transmits data about the item and poll by API 342 for display on the landing page. The purchaser can edit the poll and invites via buttons 320 and 322, and that data is communicated to pollcart server 130 via API 344. If votes meet a predetermined quantity, discussed above, then the item is purchased; otherwise, it is denied. If a purchase is completed or denied, a notice 314 is transmitted to the purchaser.

[0021] Communication with the poller and pollees may be done using SMS, email, push notification or through third party communication services or the like.

[0022] Purchases may be tracked using referral codes and data storage and analyzation methods for recordkeeping and analysis purposes.

[0023] It is understood that the present invention may take many forms and embodiments. Accordingly, several variations may be made in the foregoing without departing from the spirit or the scope of the invention. For example, there may be available options relating to the number of pollees, the actions or inactions of the purchase mechanism upon any particular poll result, sources of contact information for pollees, communication methods for soliciting and communicating votes, use and manipulation of data created and collected, display of poll results and contents of poll messages and landing pages.

[0024] Having thus described the present invention by reference to certain of its preferred embodiments, it is noted that the embodiments disclosed are illustrative rather than limiting in nature and that a wide range of variations, modifications, changes, and substitutions are contemplated in the foregoing disclosure and, in some instances, some features of the present invention may be employed without a corresponding use of the other features. Many such variations and modifications may be considered obvious and desirable by those skilled in the art based upon a review of the foregoing description of preferred embodiments. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the appended claims be construed broadly and in a manner consistent with the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

1. A method for communicating, the method comprising steps performed by one or more processors of:

- identifying by a purchaser at least one good or service to purchase;
- communicating to one or more pollees the desire by the purchaser to purchase the at least one good or service;
- soliciting from the one or more pollees one or more opinions of whether the purchaser

should purchase the at least one good or service;

obtaining from the one or more pollees one or more opinions of whether the purchaser should purchase the at least one good or service; and

making a decision automatically of whether the purchaser should purchase the at least one good or service with reference to the one or more opinions.

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

A method for communicating, wherein one or more processors are used to facilitate identifying by a purchaser at least one good or service to purchase. The desire by the purchaser to purchase the at least one good or service is communicated to the one or more pollees, and opinions of the potential purchaser are obtained from the pollees. A decision of whether the purchaser should purchase the at least one good or service is made with reference to the one or more opinions.