TargetR

By Greg Milette

Summary

TargetR is a fun, reality-based, social shopping game that Target customers can play whenever they go to a Target store and talk about while they are elsewhere.

The Goal of the Game

The goal of the game is earn the most points. First, users control a particular item located at a particular Target store through a process called "targeting." Then users earn points when the virtual shopper purchases their targeted item.

Setup

Before beginning, a user must download the TargetR app onto their mobile phone. The phone must have location sensing capabilities.

The Rules of the Game

The rules of the game are as follows:

- The user can only target one item at a time at one Target store.
- The user must be at a Target store to target an item.
- Only one user can target one particular item at each store. If someone else targets the same item at the same store, the user loses control of that item and is no longer targeting the item.
- Every day the virtual shopper shops at each Target store and "purchases" an item that someone is targeting. The shopper behaves as follows:
    - The lower the price the item has the more likely he is to buy it.
    - During certain times of the year the virtual shopper prefers different categories of items over others. For example, in February he prefers to buy Valentines Day items.
- When the virtual shopper buys the user's targeted item, TargetR awards the user points based on the current purchase price.

Game Play

A typical interaction with the game might be as follows:

1. User enters a Target store
2. User finds an item on the shelf
3. User scans barcode
4. TargetR locates the store the user is in, looks up the product just scanned, and saves it as targeted by the user.

5. User leaves Target. Sometime later the user may receive an instant push notification notifying the user that the following events occurred:
    a. Virtual shopper purchased their targeted item, the user's points increase.
    b. Someone else targeted their targeted item and the user is no longer targeting it.
6. User returns to a Target store and targets another item.

App Features

TargetR's features are designed to make the app easy to use, keep the use engaged with the app, and be appealing to many kinds of users. Specifically the app has the following features:

- Location aware: TargetR uses the phone's location sensors and Target API to verify a user is at a particular store when they target an item. This makes the app easier to use because the user does not have to manually enter their location. Also, verifying location using the sensors ensures everyone plays fair.
- Barcode scanning: TargetR uses the phone's camera to help users to quickly target items.
- Summarizes Activity: TargetR provides information about the activities of other users, such as % items targeted at certain stores or most targeted items.
- Social: TargetR encourages several social interactions:
    - Friendly competition: Users compete with each other to target the highest performing items and get the most points.
    - Something to talk about: Users discuss which strategy gets the best results. Users can employ different strategies, such as targeting items that are purchased frequently that cost less money, or items that are expensive, but that are bought less.
- Possible reward system: Target can choose to develop a reward system based on the points that the users acquire. Users could convert TargetR points to rewards such as coupons or donations. In particular, allowing users to use their points to make donations to local schools would help Target's goals of helping education while at the same time encouraging wider community usage of TargetR.

Plan

TargetR requires several technologies for the mobile app and server in addition to Target's API. TargetR will use zxing to implement barcode scanning and use native mobile phone APIs for different mobile platforms to create the best experience possible for users. For server storage and processing, TargetR will use a cloud-based service, such as Google App Engine, that can scale as the amount of data and interaction increases. The initial prototype will be an Android app, and we will expand to other mobile platforms later.

Team

Greg Milette (http://www.gregmilette.com) is an experienced mobile developer and leads the team. Our team also has Adam Jacobi (http://www.adamjacobi.com), who is an interaction designer.