Method and system for processing payment using a generic gift card

FIELD OF INVENTION

[0001] The following discloses a method and system for processing payment using a generic gift card.

BACKGROUND

[0002] Statistics show that gift card is a $400 billion industry in the U.S. alone. However, about 20% of these cards go unused every year.

[0003] One possible reason why gift cards go unused may be because of limited acceptance in that they cannot be used at multiple stores or brands. Another possible reason is that, after receipt, customers may forget using the gift cards, or these cards end up being lost. Most likely, customers may receive multiple gift cards of different brands but have difficulty to monitor their respective expiry dates, because such conventional gift cards provide no solution for them to group different gift cards into one for ease of monitoring and management.

[0004] There is thus a need for a technical solution to provide a generic gift card that can be used at multiple merchants or multiple brands, and more importantly, to provide a method and a system for processing payment using such a generic gift card. Furthermore, other desirable features and characteristics will become apparent from the subsequent detailed description and the appended claims, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings and this background of the disclosure.

SUMMARY

[0005] In a first aspect, the present disclosure provides a method for processing payment using a generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across a plurality of participating merchants, the method being performed at a server

that administers usage of the generic gift card, the method comprising: receiving, by the server, from an application installed on a mobile device of a gift card holder, a conversion request for converting a plurality of conventional gift cards to a generic gift card; upon receiving the conversion request, transmitting, by the server, an endorsement request to a plurality of merchants, each merchant from the plurality of merchants being associated with a gift card from the plurality of gift cards, which the gift card holder is requesting to convert; receiving, by the server, in response to the endorsement request, from each of the plurality of merchants, a respective generated incentive value that each merchant requires in return for the conversion; forwarding, by the server, to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, the respective generated incentive value for each of the plurality of merchants to the gift card holder for confirmation and approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values; in response to receiving, from the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values, creating, by the server, the generic gift card and assigning an account number to the created generic gift card; converting, by the server, a balance associated with each gift card of the plurality of gift cards, to credit the created generic gift card, wherein payment of the incentive value by the gift card holder is by (i) direct payment, or (ii) deduction from the balance; receiving, by the server, a notification from the application installed on the mobile device, wherein the notification identifies a particular merchant from among the participating merchants at which gift card holder wishes to transact, wherein said server receives said notification prior to the gift card holder transacting with said particular merchant; upon receipt of the notification, generating, by the server, a unique code, wherein the unique code is different from the account number and identifies the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the particular merchant; transmitting, by the server, the unique code to the particular merchant and to the gift card holder prior to any transactions, associated with the generic gift card, occurring at the particular merchant, wherein the unique code is transmitted to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder; receiving, by the server, from the particular merchant, an indication of use of the unique code in a transaction by the gift card holder with the particular merchant, said indication of use including the unique code and a value of goods and/or services associated with the transaction, wherein no physical generic gift card is present; upon receiving the

indication of use of the unique code from the particular merchant, calculating and subtracting the value associated with the transaction from a balance of the generic gift card.

[0005a] In a second aspect, the present disclosure provides a server for administering usage of a generic gift card and processing payment using the generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across a plurality of participating merchants, the server comprising: at least one processor; at least one memory including computer program code; and at least one communication interface; the at least one memory and the computer program code configured to, with at least one processor, cause the server at least to: receive, from an application installed on a mobile device of a gift card holder, a conversion request for converting a plurality of conventional gift cards to a generic gift card; upon receiving the conversion request, transmit an endorsement request to a plurality of merchants, each merchant from the plurality of merchants being associated with a gift card, from the plurality of gift cards, which the gift card holder is requesting to convert; receive, in response to the endorsement request, from each of the plurality of merchants, a respective generated incentive value that each merchant requires in return for the conversion; forward, to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, the respective generated incentive value for each of the plurality of merchants to the gift card holder for confirmation and approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values; in response to receiving, from the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values, create the generic gift card and assign an account number to the created generic gift card; convert a balance associated with each gift card of the plurality of gift cards, to credit the created generic gift card, wherein payment of the incentive value by the gift card holder is by (i) direct payment, or (ii) deduction from the balance; receive a notification from the application installed on the mobile device, wherein the notification identifies a particular merchant from among the participating merchants at which gift card holder wishes to transact, wherein said server receives said notification prior to the gift card holder transacting with said particular merchant; upon receipt of the notification, generate a unique code, wherein the unique code is different from the account number and identifies the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted

for purchases made at the particular merchant; transmit the unique code to the particular merchant and to the gift card holder prior to any transactions, associated with the generic gift card, occurring at the particular merchant, wherein the unique code is transmitted to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder; receive from the particular merchant, an indication of use of the unique code in a transaction by the gift card holder with the particular merchant, said indication of use including the unique code and a value of goods and/or services associated with the transaction, wherein no physical generic gift card is present; upon receiving the indication of use of the unique code from the particular merchant, calculate and subtract the value associated with the transaction from a balance of the generic gift card.

[0005b] In a third aspect, the present disclosure provides a non-transitory computer readable medium having stored thereon executable instructions for controlling a computer to administer usage of a generic gift card being usable for payment across a plurality of participating merchants and process payment using the generic gift card, wherein the computer is controlled to perform steps comprising: receiving from an application installed on a mobile device of a gift card holder, a conversion request for converting a plurality of conventional gift cards to a generic gift card; upon receiving the conversion request, transmitting an endorsement request to a plurality of merchants, each merchant from the plurality of merchants being associated with a gift card from the plurality of gift cards, which the gift card holder is requesting to convert; receiving, in response to the endorsement request, from each of the plurality of merchants, a respective generated incentive value that each merchant requires in return for the conversion; forwarding, to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, the respective generated incentive value for each of the plurality of merchants to the gift card holder for confirmation and approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values; in response to receiving, from the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values, creating the generic gift card and assigning an account number to the created generic gift card; converting a balance associated with each gift card of the plurality of gift cards, to credit the created generic gift card, wherein payment of the incentive value by the gift card holder is by (i) direct payment, or (ii) deduction from the

balance; receiving a notification from the application installed on the mobile device, wherein the notification identifies a particular merchant from among the participating merchants at which gift card holder wishes to transact, wherein said server receives said notification prior to the gift card holder transacting with said particular merchant; upon receipt of the notification, generating a unique code, wherein the unique code is different from the account number and identifies the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the particular merchant; transmitting the unique code to the particular merchant and to the gift card holder priority to any transactions, associated with the generic gift card, occurring at the particular merchant, wherein the unique code is transmitted to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder; receiving from the particular merchant, an indication of use of the unique code in a transaction by the gift card holder with the particular merchant, said indication of use including the unique code and a value of goods and/or services associated with the transaction, wherein no physical generic gift card is present; upon receiving the indication of use of the unique code from the particular merchant, calculating and subtracting the value associated with the transaction from a balance of the generic gift card.

[0005c] According to a first embodiment of the present disclosure, there is provided a method for processing payment using a generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across one or more participating merchants, the method being

performed at a server that administers usage of the generic gift card. The method comprises: generating a unique code for identifying the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at a selected participating merchant; transmitting the unique code to the selected participating merchant; and calculating and subtracting the purchases made from a balance of the generic gift card in response to receiving from the selected participating merchant an indication of use of the unique code at the selected participating merchant.

[0006] According to a second embodiment of the present disclosure, there is provided a method for processing payment using a generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across one or more participating merchants, the method being performed at a server of a selected participating merchant. The method comprises: receiving, from a server that administers usage of the generic gift card, a unique code for identifying the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the selected participating merchant, and transmitting, to the server that administers usage of the generic gift card, an indication of use of the unique code, so as to facilitate calculating and subtracting the purchases made from a balance of the generic gift card.

[0007] According to a third embodiment of the present disclosure, there is provided a server for administering usage of a generic gift card and processing payment using the generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across one or more participating merchants. The server comprises: at least one processor; at least one memory including computer program code; and at least one communication interface. The at least one memory and the computer program code are configured to, with at least one processor, cause the server at least to: initialize the generic gift card for payment by generating a unique code for identifying the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at a selected participating merchant; transmit the unique code to the selected participating merchant; and calculate and subtract the purchases made from a balance of the generic gift card in response to receiving from the selected participating merchant an indication of use of the unique code at the selected participating merchant.

[0008] According to a fourth embodiment of the present disclosure, there is provided a merchant server for processing payment using a generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across one or more participating merchants. The merchant server comprises: at least one processor; at least one memory including computer program code; and at least one communication interface. The at least one memory and the computer program code are configured to, with at least one processor, cause the merchant server at least to: receive, from a server that administers usage of the generic gift card, a unique code for identifying the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the selected participating merchant, and transmit, to the server that administers usage of the generic gift card, an indication of use of the unique code, so as to facilitate calculating and subtracting the purchases made from a balance of the generic gift card at the server that administers usage of the generic gift card.

[0009] According to a fifth embodiment of the present disclosure, there is provided a non-transitory computer readable medium having stored thereon executable instructions for controlling a computer to administer usage of a generic gift card and process payment using the generic gift card, wherein the computer is controlled to perform steps comprising: initialising the generic gift card for payment by generating a unique code for identifying the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at a selected participating merchant; transmitting the unique code to the selected participating merchant; and calculating and subtracting the purchases made from a balance of the generic gift card in response to receiving from the selected participating merchant an indication of use of the unique code at the selected participating merchant.

[0010] According to a sixth embodiment of the present disclosure, there is provided a non-transitory computer readable medium having stored thereon executable instructions for controlling a computer to process payment using a generic gift card, wherein the computer is controlled to perform steps comprising: receiving, from a server that administers usage of the generic gift card, a unique code for identifying the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the selected participating merchant, and transmitting, to the

server that administers usage of the generic gift card, an indication of use of the unique code, so as to facilitate

CLAIMS

1. A method for processing payment using a generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across a plurality of participating merchants, the method being performed at a server that administers usage of the generic gift card, the method comprising:

receiving, by the server, from an application installed on a mobile device of a gift card holder, a conversion request for converting a plurality of conventional gift cards to a generic gift card;

upon receiving the conversion request, transmitting, by the server, an endorsement request to a plurality of merchants, each merchant from the plurality of merchants being associated with a gift card from the plurality of gift cards, which the gift card holder is requesting to convert;

receiving, by the server, in response to the endorsement request, from each of the plurality of merchants, a respective generated incentive value that each merchant requires in return for the conversion;

forwarding, by the server, to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, the respective generated incentive value for each of the plurality of merchants to the gift card holder for confirmation and approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values;

in response to receiving, from the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values, creating, by the server, the generic gift card and assigning an account number to the created generic gift card;

converting, by the server, a balance associated with each gift card of the plurality of gift cards, to credit the created generic gift card, wherein payment of the incentive value by the gift card holder is by (i) direct payment, or (ii) deduction from the balance;

receiving, by the server, a notification from the application installed on the mobile device, wherein the notification identifies a particular merchant from among the participating merchants at which gift card holder wishes to transact, wherein said server receives said notification prior to the gift card holder transacting with said particular merchant;

upon receipt of the notification, generating, by the server, a unique code, wherein the unique code is different from the account number and identifies the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the particular merchant;

transmitting, by the server, the unique code to the particular merchant and to the gift card holder prior to any transactions, associated with the generic gift card, occurring at the particular merchant, wherein the unique code is transmitted to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder;

receiving, by the server, from the particular merchant, an indication of use of the unique code in a transaction by the gift card holder with the particular merchant, said indication of use including the unique code and a value of goods and/or services associated with the transaction, wherein no physical generic gift card is present;

upon receiving the indication of use of the unique code from the particular merchant, calculating and subtracting the value associated with the transaction from a balance of the generic gift card.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

verifying, by the server, the unique code received in the indication of use against the unique code generated by the server and transmitted to the particular merchant.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving, by the server, an authorization code, from the particular merchant, the authorization code being generated, by the particular merchant, in response to the unique code received when the purchases are made at the particular merchant.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

generating, by the sever, an authorization code for verification of the unique code; and

transmitting, by the server, the authorization code to the particular merchant for verification of the received unique code by the gift card holder.

5. The method of claim 3, wherein the authorization code is generated by the selected participating merchant for subsequent verification of the received unique code.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the endorsement request includes particulars of the each associated gift card being converted.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein at least a portion of the balance of the generic gift card is extracted from a balance of a gift card from the plurality of gift cards.

8. A server for administering usage of a generic gift card and processing payment using the generic gift card, the generic gift card being usable for payment across a plurality of participating merchants, the server comprising:

at least one processor;

at least one memory including computer program code; and

at least one communication interface;

the at least one memory and the computer program code configured to, with at least one processor, cause the server at least to:

receive, from an application installed on a mobile device of a gift card holder, a conversion request for converting a plurality of conventional gift cards to a generic gift card;

upon receiving the conversion request, transmit an endorsement request to a plurality of merchants, each merchant from the plurality of merchants being associated with a gift card, from the plurality of gift cards, which the gift card holder is requesting to convert;

receive, in response to the endorsement request, from each of the plurality of merchants, a respective generated incentive value that each merchant requires in return for the conversion;

forward, to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, the respective generated incentive value for each of the plurality of merchants to the gift card holder for confirmation and approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values;

in response to receiving, from the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values, create the generic gift card and assign an account number to the created generic gift card;

convert a balance associated with each gift card of the plurality of gift cards, to credit the created generic gift card, wherein payment of the incentive value by the gift card holder is by (i) direct payment, or (ii) deduction from the balance;

receive a notification from the application installed on the mobile device, wherein the notification identifies a particular merchant from among the participating merchants at which gift card holder wishes to transact, wherein said server receives said notification prior to the gift card holder transacting with said particular merchant;

upon receipt of the notification, generate a unique code, wherein the unique code is different from the account number and identifies the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the particular merchant;

transmit the unique code to the particular merchant and to the gift card holder prior to any transactions, associated with the generic gift card, occurring at the particular merchant, wherein the unique code is transmitted to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder;

receive from the particular merchant, an indication of use of the unique code in a transaction by the gift card holder with the particular merchant, said indication of use including the unique code and a value of goods and/or services associated with the transaction, wherein no physical generic gift card is present;

upon receiving the indication of use of the unique code from the particular merchant, calculate and subtract the value associated with the transaction from a balance of the generic gift card.

9. The server of claim 8, wherein the server is further configured to:

verify the unique code received in the indication of use against the unique code generated by the server and transmitted to the particular merchant.

10. The server of claim 9, wherein the server is further configured to:

generate an authorization code in response to receiving the unique code from the particular merchant when the purchases are made at the particular merchant; and

transmit the authorization code to the particular merchant for verification of the received unique code by the gift card holder.

11. The server of claim 8, wherein the conversion request includes particulars of each associated gift card being converted.

12. The server of claim 8, wherein the server is further configured to:

extract a balance of one or more gift cards of the plurality of gift cards to provide at least a portion of the balance of the generic gift card.

13. A non-transitory computer readable medium having stored thereon executable instructions for controlling a computer to administer usage of a generic gift card being usable for payment across a plurality of participating merchants and process payment using the generic gift card, wherein the computer is controlled to perform steps comprising:

receiving from an application installed on a mobile device of a gift card holder, a conversion request for converting a plurality of conventional gift cards to a generic gift card;

upon receiving the conversion request, transmitting an endorsement request to a plurality of merchants, each merchant from the plurality of merchants being associated with a gift card from the plurality of gift cards, which the gift card holder is requesting to convert;

receiving, in response to the endorsement request, from each of the plurality of merchants, a respective generated incentive value that each merchant requires in return for the conversion;

forwarding, to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, the respective generated incentive value for each of the plurality of merchants to the gift card holder for confirmation and approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values;

in response to receiving, from the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder, approval for payment of the respective generated incentive values, creating the generic gift card and assigning an account number to the created generic gift card;

converting a balance associated with each gift card of the plurality of gift cards, to credit the created generic gift card, wherein payment of the incentive value by the gift card holder is by (i) direct payment, or (ii) deduction from the balance;

receiving a notification from the application installed on the mobile device, wherein the notification identifies a particular merchant from among the participating merchants at which gift card holder wishes to transact, wherein said server receives said notification prior to the gift card holder transacting with said particular merchant;

upon receipt of the notification, generating a unique code, wherein the unique code is different from the account number and identifies the generic gift card against which payment will be deducted for purchases made at the particular merchant;

transmitting the unique code to the particular merchant and to the gift card holder priority to any transactions, associated with the generic gift card, occurring at the particular merchant, wherein the unique code is transmitted to the application installed on the mobile device of the gift card holder;

receiving from the particular merchant, an indication of use of the unique code in a transaction by the gift card holder with the particular merchant, said indication of use including the unique code and a value of goods and/or services associated with the transaction, wherein no physical generic gift card is present;

upon receiving the indication of use of the unique code from the particular merchant, calculating and subtracting the value associated with the transaction from a balance of the generic gift card.