METHOD TO DISPLAY A VIDEO IN AN EMAIL

Title of the Invention

[0001] Method to display a video in an email

Cross-Reference to Related Applications

[0002] The present patent application claims the benefits of priority of commonly assigned Canadian Patent Application No. 2,613,821, entitled "Method to Display a Video in an Email" and filed at the Canadian Intellectual Property Office on December 7, 2007.

Field of the Invention

[0003] The present invention generally relates to the display of a video in an email opened or viewed on a computerized device, more particularly to the display of a video in an email that do not need any player to be installed or executed on the computerized device to be viewed.

Background of the Invention

[0004] Email marketing is the most cost-effective way for marketers to establish interactive relationships with their customers and prospects.

[0005] Video ads are significantly more effective at engaging viewers because they can capture attention of more of the viewer's senses by communicating the three V's: Visual, Vocal, and Verbal. Communication research has proven that a mere 7% of a message is perceived through words, 38% is through the tone of the presenter, and 55% is through seeing the presenter's body language. Video communicates the other 93% of an advertising message that the viewer receives beyond a simple graphic with text.

[0006] The challenge for today's email marketer is to stand out in the receiver's crowded inbox with a compelling and entertaining message. The first issue is getting the message into the inbox through the corporate firewall and spam filter. The second is creating content that will compel viewers to engage with the ad and 'click-through' to your web site to interact with your message. Indeed, marketers have only 3 seconds to grab the viewer's attention. The third

is to provide the irresistible offer that the viewer can easily register to accept. And, finally the campaign must have the tracking metrics in place to measure effectiveness.

[0007] There is thus a need to provide an email that attracts more traffic to a particular web site and to augment the number of subscriptions, sells or registration for a product or an event. Furthermore, the email should play quickly to grab the user attention.

Objects of the Invention

[0008] A first object of the present invention is to provide an email in which a video is displayed without the need to execute or install a player.

[0009] A second object of the present invention is to display a video in an email that plays instantly when the email is opened or viewed.

[0010] Other and further objects and advantages of the present invention will be obvious upon an understanding of the illustrative embodiments about to be described or will be indicated in the appended claims, and various advantages not referred to herein will occur to one skilled in the art upon employment of the invention in practice.

Summary of the Invention

[0011] The present invention provides an email in which a first video is displayed when the email is opened or viewed on a computerized device. If the user clicks on the email page, a web page is opened, referred as the landing page in the present document. The landing page displays a second video and other information related to the topic of the email and/or the first or second video. Finally, another web page may be opened or accessed, referred as the launch page. The launch page may contains, for example, details for special events, event registration, event notification, turnkey e-commerce site, product launch page, special services, special promotions, master corporate website home page, artist page, movie page.

[0012] The first video, displayed in the email page, does not need any player to be viewed on the computerized device. A main advantage of the present invention is that there is no delay to begin the display of the first video. Another advantage is that the email will not be blocked or targeted as a virus or spam by most firewall and anti-virus. The email page is custom

programmed and integrated into an HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) file, which can be inserted into most popular email delivery programs.

[0013] A first step is to create a first video file by defining the frames elements to be included in it. The frames elements may be images or frames coming from videos. The images may be, for example, JPEG images, PNG images, PSD images (Photoshop) or AI files (Adobe Illustrator files). The video frames may come from various digital video inputs (AVI, MPEG, MPEG2, MPEG 4, MOV, RAM, VOB, WMV, MOVPortable Media) or come from an analog form from digital video tapes (beta, VHS, mini DV) converted to a digital format. The first video may also be an animation. The frames can have any dimensions and are not limited to a rectangular shape. The first video file may also comprise audio components that may be, for example, WAV files, MP3 files or any other suitable format.

[0014] The chosen frames are ordered in a particular sequence and the first video file is created using an off the shelf software package. A new video file format has been created for this purpose, the CVI™ format. It is possible to display the first video file for a particular number of times in the email page. In this case, the html code of the email is implemented to create loops according to the desired number of times chosen previously. The loops are programmed by a consumer third party off the shelf software.

[0015] The first video file having a CVI™ format is then posted on a server which is programmed to recognize the CVI™ format.

[0016] To display the first video file in an email, a hot link is embedded in the html code of the email that call the first video file, which is stored on the server, and to sequently display the video frames. The hot link is a mechanism where two applications are linked together so that changes to one will affect the other. Thus, the hot link provides a link between the email and the first video file located on the server to sequently display the first video on a computerized device. The email page preferably integrates the first video and graphic content artwork and text into a complete design layout.

[0017] A frame editing system may be provided for the selection and the ordering of the frames of the first video file by different parties. The frames can be added, deleted, and re-ordered to create the first video file without the need to have an editing system. Reviews are

made in sync using the frame by frame feature of the custom Clemstar™ Video Player. The reviewing step can occur simultaneously in an unlimited number of geographical locations via the internet, enhancing significantly the review time.

[0018] The Clemstar™ player has been developed using action script in the Macromedia™ software development environment. The player can be custom branded for a company for the web video delivery solution in the landing page (special custom programming required). The length of the second video displayed in the landing page can be as large as the server can store.

[0019] All the files are custom programmed and integrated into an HTML (Hyper Text Markup Language) file. The completed video landing page HTML file is posted on a server.

[0020] The landing page may be automatically opened when the first video file is finished, or after a predetermined period. The landing page comprises a second video file and may comprise graphic components, such as graphical images files (JPEG or PNG images for example) or text. The second video may come from a digital or an analog input. The second video is preferably translated to a larger uncompressed video quality.

[0021] Preferably, the video player of the landing page instantly analyses the bandwidth of the computerized device and determines which video feed is best for the connection, allowing the player to start streaming with minimal delay, while providing a high quality streaming video. An automatic bandwidth detector can be a real performance booster to accelerate the time for the delivering the video playback as fast as possible. It has been noticed that in North America the recipient bandwidth varies all the time depending on company's bandwidth distribution and time of day. So in order to achieve the quickest play back with minimal wait time, the second video is encoded in several bandwidths. The bandwidth detector typically buffers for several seconds. Viewers have experience 0-5 seconds to buffer a whole 2 hours movie, for any operating system (Windows, MAC or UNIX).

[0022] To further minimize the delay to see the second video of the landing page, the download of this second video may begin as soon as the email is opened or viewed. When the landing page is opened, a portion of the video has yet been buffered.

[0023] The video player of the landing page may be programmed to automatically launch to the desired web launch page when the second video is finished. It is also possible to combine both previous web pages in only one web page.

[0024] The features of the present invention, which are believed to be novel, are set forth with particularity in the appended claims.

Brief Description of the Drawings

[0025] The above and other objects, features and advantages of the invention will become more readily apparent from the following description, reference being made to the accompanying drawings in which:

[0026] Figure 1 is a diagram showing the steps to create the first video file.

[0027] Figure 2 is a diagram showing the sequence for the display of the first video in an email as seen by the viewer.

[0028] Figure 3 is example of the frame by frame editing system.

Detailed Description of the Preferred Embodiment

[0029] A novel video email will be described hereinafter. Although the invention is described in terms of specific illustrative embodiment(s), it is to be understood that the embodiment(s) described herein are by way of example only and that the scope of the invention is not intended to be limited thereby.

[0030] In Figure 1, the steps to create the first video displayed in an email are shown in a sequential diagram. The first video file is constituted by a plurality of frames coming typically from a source video 105. If the source video is analog, it is convert 115 into a digital video.

[0031] To obtain frames, a third party software may be used to creates frames from the source video. It is also possible to use another method to extract the selected frames from a source video.

[0032] A plurality of frames is chosen 135 to create the first video file and ordered into a particular sequence 140 to create the first video file to be displayed in the email page. An optional step is to determine the number of time the video will be displayed in the email page 145, from 1 to infinity. The html code of the first video file is consequently implemented to create the corresponding number of loops for the display. This is typically realized by a third party software. The first video file created is associated to the CVI™ format 150 and posted on server 160. The CVI™ format has been created for this purpose and the server is configured to recognize this format.

[0033] The email is coded in a HTML format containing the text and the design of the email. A hot link is embedded 165 in the code of the email to call the first video file from the server and to display it in the email page when it is opened or viewed.

[0034] If the user clicks on the email page or on the first video file, a landing page is opened 170 where a second video is displayed.

[0035] The video displayed in the email is not limited to a rectangular screen, it may be almost any form such as, for example, a circle, a star, etc...

[0036] In Figure 2, the diagram shows the sequence as seen by the viewer. First, the viewer receives and views the email 205 containing the first video. When he clicks on the first video or on the email page 210, he is brought to a landing page where he can see a second video 215. It is also possible to automatically open the landing page when the display of the first video is finished. At the end of the second video, he may be automatically bring to another page, the launch page that may contains 220, for example, details for special events, an event registration, an event notification, a turnkey e-commerce site, a product launch page, special services, special promotions, a master corporate website home page, an artist page or a movie page. He may then interact with the launch page and enter information or request for a product related to the sent email.

[0037] On the landing page, many options for the video may be included, for example:

- Volume slider
- Information button
- Stop button
- Fast rewind button with Video display

- Play/pause button
- Fast forward with video display
- Timer button with elapsed time and time remaining toggle
- Navigation slider with time indicator
- Adjust Picture sliders
- Brightness and contrast
- Saturation
- Play size selector on display window
- Half size or original
- Fit to window

[0038] In Figure 3, an embodiment is shown for the frame by frame editing system, with a frame by frame counter 310, the image 320 and the menu 330.

[0039] It is to be understood that the video may be displayed in any computerized device that is enable to receive and display email messages. The computerized device may be, but not limited to, a computer, a pocket PC, a PDA, a laptop, a personal e-mailing system (e.g. Blackberry™) or a cellular phone which can be linked to the Internet.

[0040] While illustrative and presently preferred embodiment(s) of the invention have been described in detail hereinabove, it is to be understood that the inventive concepts may be otherwise variously embodied and employed and that the appended claims are intended to be construed to include such variations except insofar as limited by the prior art.

Claims

1. A method to display a first video in an html compliant email on a computerized device without the need to execute a video player on said device, comprising:
   a. defining a predetermined number of video frames to be included in said first video;
   b. creating a first video file containing all of said frames in a particular sequence;
   c. storing said first video file on a server;
   d. embedding a hot link in the html code of said email to call said first video file and to sequently display said video frames when said email is opened or otherwise viewed.

2. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a landing web page comprising a second video file, said landing page being opened when a user clicks on said email page.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein said second video file is stored on a server and said second video file is streamed onto said landing page.

4. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a landing page comprising a second video, wherein said second video file of said second video begins to be downloaded when said email is opened or viewed.

5. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of providing a landing page comprising a second videowhich is automatically opened when said all of video frames of said first video have been displayed.

6. The method of claim 1, further comprising the step of determining the number of time said sequence of said frames will be displayed.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising the step of implementing said html code to create a loop for the display of said first video file according to said number of time.

8. The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of providing a process residing on said server, said process including instructions to test the bandwidth of said computerized device to provide the optimum bit stream of said computerized device for the display of said second video, utilizing maximum available bandwidth.

9. A system to display a first video in an html compliant email on a computerized device without the need to execute a video player on said device, comprising:
    a. a first video file comprising a predetermined number of frames, all of said frames ordered in a particular sequence;
    b. a server to store said first video file;
    c. an email in which a hot link is embedded the html code of said email to call said first video file and to sequently display said video frames when said email is opened or otherwise viewed on said computerized device.

10. The system of claim 9, further comprising a landing page comprising a second video, said landing page being opened when a user clicks on said email page.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein said second video file is stored on a server and said second video file is streamed onto said landing page.

12. The system of claim 9, further comprising a landing page comprising a second video, wherein said second video file of said second video begins to be downloaded when said email is opened or viewed.

13. The system of claim 9, further comprising a landing page comprising a second video which is automatically opened when said all of video frames of said first video have been displayed.

14. The system of claim 9, wherein said first video is displayed a predetermined number of times by creating a loop in said html code of said email.

15. The system of claim 10, further comprising the step of providing a process residing on said server, said process including instructions to test the bandwidth of said computerized device to provide the optimum bit stream of said computerized device for the display of said second video, utilizing maximum available bandwidth.

16. An html compliant email residing on an individual computerized device, said email displaying a first video without the need to execute a video player on said device, comprising:

a. a hot link in the code of said email, said hot link calling a first video file composed by a plurality of frames, said frames being sequently displayed when said email is opened or otherwise viewed.

17. The email of claim 16, wherein said first video is displayed a predetermined number of times by creating a loop in said html code of said email.

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