

Chapter 3

TV Check-In Services

Creating Vertical Social Networks around Television

Nina Perez is a 37-year-old fiction writer living in Atlanta, Georgia. She is able to stay at home to help raise her two kids while working as a Web content specialist for an outdoor gear and apparel company. Working from home has an added benefit for Nina: She can get her job done on her laptop while simultaneously watching TV. Nina admits to being a television fanatic and says that the TV is literally on all day and in multiple rooms in the house (apparently she has four TiVos).

Nina had been using an iPhone application called GetGlue that allowed her to “check-in” to the TV shows she watched and earn rewards (known as stickers) based on her activity. She noticed while on Facebook one day that one of her friends shared their TV check-in from another application called Miso. Though Nina had never heard of it before, she loved the idea of having the ability to check-in to a specific TV episode as opposed to the entire TV show.

Nina downloaded the app and quickly became hooked. She has since amassed over 100 Miso followers, checked-in to over 1000 television episodes, and earned more than 45 badges. Nina uses Miso to check in to just about every TV show she watches; she then auto posts every check-in to Twitter and Facebook. She absolutely loves the conversations that ensue when her friends see her check-ins and leave comments on Facebook or tweet her back. She also appreciates how seeing other people’s check-ins has led her to discover new TV shows to watch about which she would not have otherwise known.

Nina has also continued to use GetGlue; however, she only checks-in to TV shows that offer stickers because she has been in a competition with her friends as to who can collect the most. She is intrigued by how the game’s reward system compels her to tune in to TV shows as they air; if she doesn’t, she loses out on earning the sticker.

Even Nina’s husband has gotten into the TV check-in trend after his recent

smartphone upgrade, and cannot wait to receive his first physical batch of earned GetGlue stickers in the mail. Nina is most proud of her rare “Golden Cylon” sticker that she earned on GetGlue by watching a lot of science fiction TV shows. However, she also cited a surprise badge she received on Miso called “Parents Behaving Badly.” She has no idea how she earned it but attests that she is a good mom—despite all of her TV watching.

In fact, Nina addresses the less-than-favorable reputation that people who watch a lot of television tend to get. She admits that while watching TV used to be a much more isolated and solitary experience, social media has enabled coviewing—albeit virtual—on a mass scale. “It used to be that you were a loser if you stayed in on a Friday night, but now my friends and I have virtual TV dates,” Nina says.

TV check-in services are yet another way that television is being taken out of the solitary home environment and made into a fun and competitive social TV experience.

Location-Based Check-Ins Gave Rise to the TV Check-In

What’s cool about Foursquare is that you’re sharing your location and being seen in all kinds of places. But checking into a lot of different TV implies you’re a couch potato. So we need to answer the question: How do you make watching a lot of TV cool?

—Ryan Osborn, Director of Social Media at NBC News

Years ago, the way in which one “checked-in” to a television show was simply to turn on the TV and watch. The notion of using a mobile application to *literally* broadcast to your friends what you are watching simply did not exist.

Then the rise in popularity of location-based social networks—such as Foursquare and Gowalla—brought the trend of checking-in by using one’s mobile phone to physical places into the mainstream. This behavior was further fueled by the growth in smartphone adoption, along with advances in mobile device technology.

Foursquare’s concept is simple: when one arrives at a given destination, they launch the Foursquare application—which displays all of the various locations around them within a very close radius—on their smartphone. Thanks to their mobile phone’s built-in GPS, their exact location is likely at the top of the list. After making their selection, the user can optionally leave a message and post their check-in to Twitter and/or Facebook. Clicking a large green button is all that is left to do in order to check in and alert that individual’s friends as to their whereabouts.

The appeal of location-based social networks lies at a few different levels. Not only do they help to facilitate both planned and serendipitous meet ups, it is also fun to see who else is checked-in and what reviews (in the form of “tips”) people have provided about the given location. The applications’ native game mechanics induce a sense of competitive participation through earned points and unique badges. Additionally, users’ loyalty to various locations is rewarded with discounts, deals, and other specials.

The location-based check-in phenomenon caught the attention of several entrepreneurs in late 2009 who were intent upon bringing a similar concept to the world of entertainment. So they did—and by mid-2010, the public saw the birth of three separate TV/entertainment check-in mobile applications.

GetGlue Sees Itself As a Vertical Social Network Around Entertainment

We’re going deep as a stand-alone social network around entertainment, specifically in the realm of television. We want to create the delightful experience for the end-user to socialize with fans and friends around the television programs that they’re currently already watching and augmenting that experience in some capacity—and that’s our bet.

—Fraser Kelton, COO at GetGlue

GetGlue was founded in 2007 and launched its full-fledged destination website in October of 2009.¹ The company focused a little more on books, movies, and music rather than television in its early days; however, all of that soon changed.

By using principles of the semantic Web² to help interpret meaning and context from the data it collects over time, GetGlue provides its users with personalized entertainment suggestions. As part of creating a profile when first joining the social network, new users are presented with a library of TV shows and asked to “like” 10 of them. This action lays the foundation for GetGlue’s recommendations engine. As users “like” more and more TV shows—as well as movies, sports, books, and games—over time, their suggestions become increasingly fine-tuned, and therefore more relevant to them.

However, providing these kinds of personalized suggestions was just the beginning of GetGlue’s story. It was not until the company released its iPhone app in June of 2010 (and in an iPad version three months later) that it truly began to take off.³ By bringing utility, convenience, and simplicity to GetGlue through the power of mobile, the app introduced the idea of “checking in” to TV shows and other entertainment. GetGlue greatly reduced the barriers to engage on its platform by doing so.

The application’s welcome screen presents users with six buttons—each of

which represents an entertainment media type—in response to a simple prompt, “You are . . .” For example, one of the choices is “Watching TV.” Clicking that button lists all of the TV shows that are currently trending as measured by each of their relative amount of recent GetGlue activity. If users cannot find the show within the trending list, they can use a search box at the top of the screen that is available. Clicking a show name reveals a large green “Check-In” button accompanied by other information about the show, including the app’s built-in form of social currency: GetGlue stickers.

By incorporating a layer of game mechanics, GetGlue incentivizes engagement by rewarding its users with branded stickers that they can earn through predefined check-in parameters. Through over fifty partnerships with television networks and other entertainment companies, there are close to 3,000 available stickers up for grabs.⁴ Upon earning 20 of these in their virtual form, they allow a user to unlock the ability to request the actual physical stickers from GetGlue, who mails them at no charge to the user.

On September 29, 2011, GetGlue announced a partnership with DirectTV that deeply embedded its check-in and community functionality into the pay TV provider’s viewer interfaces.⁵ By linking their GetGlue accounts, DirectTV subscribers are able to check-in to TV shows onscreen using the DirectTV remote as well as from the DirectTV iPad app. In addition to checking-in, DirectTV subscribers can pull up their GetGlue stream to see what their friends are watching and at the click of a button tune in to watch a given show themselves. This becomes a great way to discover new content, similar to the social TV guides that we illustrated in the previous chapter.

Social Impressions Give GetGlue Its Power

From the very first interaction at the point of sign-up, GetGlue encourages users to connect their Facebook and Twitter accounts so that they can easily share the TV shows to which they have checked in. Furthermore, GetGlue community members can follow each other, an option that lets others know about the actions they take via their respective activity feeds. All of this leads to new content discovery and increased probability for TV tune-in as social impressions are constantly being generated with each and every check-in.

There was an 800 percent increase in GetGlue check-ins over the course of six months, from January of 2011 to August of that same year.⁶ Not only did August produce over 11 million check-ins for the month, but in June, the service averaged 100,000 check-ins shared to Facebook and Twitter per day. As a result, GetGlue estimated their average social impressions generated per day to be around 80 million.

The spike in engagement that GetGlue is experiencing is not just based on its user growth. The company has been working hard to bring richer entertainment partnerships to its user base—something that compels people to take action

and participate.

***True Blood* Set a New Record for GetGlue**

The fourth season premiere of HBO's cult vampire hit *True Blood* gave GetGlue a record number 38,000 check-ins (up from a mere 3,000 from its earlier season²). The previous single event GetGlue check-in record was set by the 2011 Oscars and amounted to 25 percent less check-ins.

To build anticipation toward the premiere, GetGlue ran a contest where fans could win a bottle of "Tru Blood" (carbonated beverage) by checking-in to the show and using the #TBWithdrawal hashtag. Not only would one receive a special *True Blood* sticker, they would also be entered into a daily drawing. In addition to the free drinks, winners would also receive an exclusive sticker. This helped to spur engagement by using competitive gamification techniques.

During the actual premiere—which aired on June 26, 2011—GetGlue unveiled a series of *True Blood* stickers, each of which corresponded to an upcoming episode.³ Fans who checked in to all 12 episodes on GetGlue were entered into a drawing to win an item from the actual *True Blood* set.

What was particularly innovative about this partnership was that GetGlue's execution did not exist in a vacuum. Instead, it was tightly integrated into HBO Connect, which is the network's visualizer for the real-time backchannel. By utilizing cross-linking and promotion, GetGlue and HBO created a much more inclusive and complementary television viewing experience.

If GetGlue Really Is a Social Network, Is Facebook a Threat to Them?

GetGlue's COO Fraser Kelton explains the difference between a horizontal—and thus broad—social network like Facebook versus a vertical and deep one—which is the space in which GetGlue is playing. As Kelton explains:

We've historically seen Facebook own the horizontal play connecting people to people. Is there room for a vertical social network connecting people through Television? The answer is very quickly becoming yes. The question that keeps coming up now is—will Facebook—or a strong horizontal like Google—'kill the vertical'? The answer we've historically seen is no. When Twitter emerged 24 to 36 months ago, people began asking the same questions. But Twitter went deep in the vertical, and their growth accelerated. Then the same thing happened with Foursquare and location-based platforms. Eighteen months ago, people were predicting that Facebook Places was going to kill Foursquare; but instead, it's accelerated their growth more than anything. We've seen that while the

horizontal layer can add value and compete on some level, it usually can't go as deep as the vertical layer does.

We found a common theme throughout our interviews and across social TV topics—one that debates the merits of the “one size fits all solution” versus a niche solution that does a single thing really well. While the question is yet to be answered, there is no denying the growth rates and loyal fanatics that many of the niche players are currently enjoying.

Miso Aims Beyond the TV Check-In

In five years, there will be a second screen experience. We believe that there is a better way to watch TV and Miso is going to be part of it.

—Somrat Niyogi, Cofounder and CEO at Miso

Three months before GetGlue's iPhone app launched, Miso made its big debut, unveiling the concept of the TV check-in just in time for Austin's South by Southwest Interactive Festival in March of 2010. At the time, Miso positioned itself as the Foursquare of television, an analogy that the media and press immediately latched on to.⁹

Despite the number of apps available to help people decide what to watch on TV, the Google Ventures-backed company felt that a large gap existed—namely, one that made the experience of sharing television with friends *fun*. In its early days, Miso considered itself to be a “social entertainment game”; they emphasized gamification principles such as a points system and the ability to earn badges, which was reminiscent of the Foursquare app from which it drew some of its inspiration.

Inspiration Can Come When You Least Expect It

A funny thing happened to Miso cofounder Somrat Niyogi in early 2010: he surprisingly earned the “douchebag” badge one night while checking-in to Foursquare. This fueled Niyogi's desire to create Miso,¹⁰ as that particular badge was not only difficult to earn—but (unsurprisingly) created a little controversy, given its name and implied meaning. Yet a lot of people were talking about it at the time, which only thrust Foursquare even more into the spotlight and helped to fuel its growth.

Niyogi took notice of the curious inquiries he spawned amongst the people within his own social graph as his newly earned badge was broadcast from his Facebook and Twitter accounts to his friends and followers. Coupled with the rise in mobile smartphone usage and the increased simplicity of social sharing, this experience was the inspiration that helped give birth to Miso.

The name “Miso” was chosen because of its short, sweet, and easy to spell wording. The founders hoped that it would take off via people’s use of the term as a verb within the common lexicon—similar to the way that it has become normal to say, “Let me Google that” or “Facebook me.” The company has grown its community into a base of over 250,000 engaged users who skew a bit male and fall within the 18 to 45 age demographic.

Miso Sets the Bar on User Experience

As Miso looks to build value for its community beyond the check-in, it is providing its users with companion opportunities to keep them engaged during the shows they are watching. The Miso app update that released on May 2, 2011 included a new “pick ‘em” feature that poses a poll-like question about a given checked-in TV show. Miso participants are able to share their answer with their friends on the platform and through other social networks. Among the TV shows for which the feature was implemented includes the eighth season of *So You Think You Can Dance*.¹¹ Miso users could choose which dance contestant they felt was going to be voted off the show each week, and see how their choice ranked against the rest of the Miso community.

The Miso app’s graphical user interface—available for the iPhone, iPad, and Android phones—is strikingly polished and intuitive to navigate. The “TV & Film” button at the center of the bottom navigation bar lists recently checked-in TV shows, followed by those that are trending. The trending shows also display the number of people who are currently checked-in.

The shows listed include a corresponding logo graphic, which makes it a lot faster—and more visually effective—to scan for them. Clicking a show brings up a synopsis page that provides a show description and list of cast members. A prominent “Pick An Episode” button details a program’s recent episodes, followed by its past episodes grouped by season.

When a user selects an episode, they receive its description along with the cumulative rating the Miso community gave it. This allows users to check-in to specific TV shows and optionally rate them. A “chatter” tab in the upper right corner displays comments and ratings that Miso community members are posting about the given TV show episode in real-time.

Miso Expands with the Help of Third-Party Developers

In May of 2011, Miso launched an app gallery showcasing third-party applications that had been built with its open application programming interface (API).¹² By leveraging the wider developer community, Miso is strategically accelerating its growth and innovation. As a result, the Miso app is now available for the Windows Phone 7 operating system. Another third-party-

developed application synchs one's Miso friends with their Android phone contacts.

Miso hopes to find its way into many other platforms, devices, and experiences by opening up their code to ambitious programmers. The company and its app have jumped full force into the second screen synched content phenomenon—a topic that we address in the next chapter.

PHILO Enters the Market Thanks to a Rerun of *Animal House*

There are a bunch of reasons people check into TV shows. Game mechanics are real. This is not some kind of fad that's going away. It's kind of freakish, in a good way, how people really strive to have the most amount of points on their favorite TV shows.

—David Levy, CEO at PHILO

On a cold New York City evening in December of 2009, David Levy was watching a television rebroadcast of the classic movie *Animal House*. Levy was e-mailing back and forth with a buddy of his who was also tuning-in (but at his own house). As the two men discussed their real-time reactions, they reminisced back to a day when they originally saw the movie. And despite being in separate physical locations, they were still sharing the viewing experience. One of David's final e-mails sent to his friend that night posed the question, "Why can't we just check-in to TV?"

Shortly thereafter, the duo got to work designing a new iPhone application that was meant to connect people watching TV on a giant virtual sofa. In May of 2010, the application—PHILO, aptly named after the man credited with inventing television, Philo Farnsworth—launched just two months after Miso made its big debut. This made PHILO the second TV check-in application to hit the market; it would be joined by GetGlue's iPhone app one month later.

Shaquille O'Neal Starts Using PHILO

When TNT's *NBA Sprite Slam Dunk Contest* aired on February 19, 2011, a partnership with the network offered the PHILO community a virtual viewing party for those who checked-in using the app. Participants earned a "Slam Dunk badge" and were able to connect in real-time with Shaquille O'Neal, who was courtside giving a live play-by-play on PHILO.¹³

Shaq—who has a colossal social media following—awarded three PHILO users whom he deemed made the best comments a pair of his size 23 sneakers.

PHILO reported that viewing parties like this typically generate over one million Facebook social impressions from users who share their interactions during programs.¹⁴

PHILO Gets Acquired and Sunsets Its Check-In App

In late April of 2011, David and his team strategically paused for a moment to take a step back. They discussed where PHILO was headed amidst a crowd of seemingly similar TV check-in apps—including new players like IntoNow—that had arose in the space. The increasingly crowded market prompted the company to start deemphasizing the TV check-in application it had been supporting for about a year. Instead, David and his team reallocated PHILO’s resources toward a new effort that helped TV networks and brands target audiences based on an aggregated set of TV check-in data.

This move set the stage for check-in search engine LocalResponse to acquire PHILO on August 4, 2011. While LocalResponse—where David now serves as an advisor¹⁵—had already been providing brands with the ability to target tweets to individuals using location-based check-in data, integrating PHILO would expand their business model to include TV check-ins.

IntoNow Puts a New Spin on the TV Check-In

We view ourselves as a companion product to TV that helps surface all of the social elements that are there already. We’re just providing a platform for people to be able to easily do that.

—Adam Cahan, CEO at IntoNow

One appealing feature of consumer tech company IntoNow is the one-click TV check-in capability that it provides to users. Using patented audio fingerprinting technology, the app tracks what a user watches on television and automatically “tags” the show (the equivalent of checking-in). IntoNow—which launched on January 31, 2011—was quickly dubbed as the “Shazam for TV.”¹⁶

Because the company indexed 130 television channels representing over 2.5 million broadcast airings, IntoNow set itself apart from its competition out of the gate. However, CEO Adam Cahan warns against the dangers of putting IntoNow—or other startups like them—into a vertical category. “You have to be careful about who you define as your competition, especially as an early stage company. When you determine who that competitive set is, you start to emulate them.”

In April of 2011, a new version of the app gave IntoNow’s 500,000 users at the time new features that focused on the post check-in experience. The

upgraded functionality allowed IntoNow users to have in-app TV show discussions and receive content recommendations from friends.¹⁷

Yet certain features were glaringly missing from both the original and upgraded application; specifically, the badges and points systems that were now typical to the location and entertainment check-in categories. IntoNow felt strongly that making connections within the application and engaging with relevant content was what would drive repeat usage behavior—without the need for game mechanics.¹⁸

Yahoo! Buys IntoNow and Secures a Deal with *Project Runway*

On the morning of April 25, 2011—just three months after IntoNow’s launch¹⁹—news broke about Yahoo!’s acquisition of the company. At that point, the app’s users were generating over 35,000 tags per day. While some felt the sale was extremely premature,²⁰ IntoNow was thrilled to have their seven-person team all join Yahoo! and enjoy the benefit of a full sales force to help drive media partnerships.

In July of 2011, Yahoo! announced IntoNow’s integration with season nine of Lifetime Television’s hit program *Project Runway*. Fresh out of the gate with a brand new Android version and over one million users already on its iPhone app, the product enticed *Project Runway* fans with exclusive content in exchange for tagging TV episodes. IntoNow made it incredibly easy for viewers to engage while watching the show. By simply clicking the application’s big green button (demarcated with a TV icon), guests were able to unlock upcoming episode sneak peeks, photos, and guest judge bios. IntoNow users could also partake in *Project Runway*-related polls, and enter contests.²¹

There Is Something in a Name

One might notice upon looking closely at IntoNow’s logo that a “fill in the blank” space separates the two words that comprise the product’s name. It was born of the notion of how people, when conversing about television, often say, “I’m really into (*show name*) now.”

Designing the application around the strengths of the specific devices on which it runs not only makes its user experience incredibly simple, it also essentially guarantees that the product will continue to evolve in ways that are almost impossible to predict at this stage. In the meantime, IntoNow continues to grow its user base and device footprint and select the kind of partnerships that complement the application’s user experience.

We Check-In Because We Are Wired to Share

TV Guide asked people why they share what they are watching on television within social networks, and 77 percent cited the desire to tell their friends what shows they like as their top reason.²² There is a certain level of personal endorsement we make when we check-in to a show—which may be one reason why our sharing behaviors vary by gender.

A data analysis study conducted by GetGlue in July of 2011 found a higher percentage of women checking-in to episodic television shows, despite the fact that its user base is pretty equally spread across males and females.²³ Their theory for the discrepancy is that men are embarrassed to check-in to TV shows they deem to be “feminine” (but that they watch nonetheless). GetGlue does not see the reverse of this behavior when it comes to their female user base. The question, then, becomes: at what point in time are people checking-in to their favorite TV shows?

Miso confirmed that most TV check-ins take place at the very start of a show.²⁴ The company analyzed and compared check-in data for the 2011 Super Bowl, Oscars, and Grammy Awards and plotted the results on a line graph. The graph showed huge spikes at the beginning of each of the shows followed by a gradual tapering of check-ins as the show progressed. Unsurprisingly, the data displayed several similarities to location-based check-ins, as most people check-in upon arrival at a given destination.

To add a little more color to its raw check-in data, Miso layered on the results of a user survey it conducted in March of 2011. Fifty-one percent of the respondents said they check in before or at the beginning of a TV show. Twenty-seven percent delay their check-in to a point during the show; in many cases, they wait until something “interesting” happens that compels them to want to broadcast a comment about it.

As we discussed in Chapter 1, television viewers do not just comment about TV programs, but TV advertising as well. It was therefore just a matter of time until mobile devices would be used to engage with ads on television and deliver users with some kind of offer or exclusive content in return.²⁵

The Check-In Phenomenon Hits TV Commercials

If you tag a commercial and an MP3 shows up in your device, that’s pretty cool. You just transcended two different screens and gave me as a user a very personal experience. That’s the kind of magic that we’re after, and want to provide in big, scaleable ways.

—Adam Cahan, CEO at IntoNow

Just before its sale to Yahoo!, IntoNow partnered with Pepsi as part of Pepsi MAX's Major League Baseball sponsorship and produced a television commercial featuring various MLB legends. The first 50,000 IntoNow users who found and tagged it unlocked a mobile coupon to receive a free bottle of Pepsi MAX redeemable at select retail stores.

According to IntoNow CEO Adam Cahan, this was the first time anyone had been able to generate a unique coupon within a mobile device. What also made the execution of the brand integration stand out is that IntoNow was able to, in effect, bridge the digital and physical worlds using mobile in a very simple, useful, and elegant way.

However, Cahan cautions about dialing up advertising within the IntoNow platform too quickly, and explains that “We actually turn down advertising. We often are approached with a standard request to put banners in the app. But we're still looking for ways for advertising to coexist with our product and for the two to actually add value to one another.”

This is yet another echo of a common theme we heard from many of these organizations' leaders: the need for advertising to be applied in such a way so that it complements the unique user experience of the environment.

Shazam Brings Its Built-In User Base to TV

For years, people have been Shazaming TV shows and ads for the music featured, so it was a logical next step for people to Shazam them for the shows and ads, themselves. And, because the tag lives on in their tag list, they can interact with the program or brand in their own time, “snacking” on the media when they're in line, waiting for the bus, or just have a couple of minutes to spare.

—David Jones, EVP of Marketing at Shazam

Originally known for its ability to recognize music, Shazam is the fourth most downloaded mobile application of all time. It has exceeded 150 million users and is growing at over a million more per week. “Shazamers”—as the company calls its users—are currently tagging over four million songs per day.

Shazam works by matching a short captured sample of music against its database using audio fingerprinting. If this sounds like the product might have copied IntoNow, think again—Shazam has been around since 1999. They released their iPhone app on July 10 2008,²⁶ nearly three years before IntoNow launched its app for television.

The first time Shazam integrated with a TV commercial was for a Dockers ad that debuted during Super Bowl XLIV on February 7, 2010.²⁷ When initiated,

the Shazam app recognized the Dockers commercial as it aired, and unlocked additional complementary content. While this integration got a good amount of buzz, what seemed to put Shazam officially on the TV map was Old Navy’s spring advertising campaign announced on February 17, 2011.²⁸

The TV spots featured original “Old Navy Records” music videos and included an animated Shazam “bug” in the lower right-hand corner. Shazaming the commercial presented the user with several options including a page that featured the Old Navy fashions from the music video. Users also had the opportunity to download the song for free. According to Shazam, one of the Old Navy TV spots was in the top three most tagged songs for the week; it even beat out extraordinarily popular singer Lady Gaga. And 27 percent of the people who ended up Shazaming the Old Navy commercials went to the Old Navy mobile storefront to shop for the featured looks.

There is an addictive instant gratification that comes from using apps like Shazam and IntoNow. While IntoNow started off with TV shows and is making their way into TV commercials, Shazam did just the opposite. On January 20, 2011—eleven months after their Dockers TV advertising integration—Shazam announced a partnership with cable channel SyFy.²⁹ Users who Shazamed episodes of the program *Being Human* gained access to exclusive preview videos, music playlists, and contest entries.

Shazam continued to grow into television. News broke in June of 2011 that the company had raised \$32 million in venture capital specifically earmarked to expand its TV offering.³⁰ The company added USA Network, HBO, and Bravo to its roster of TV program integrations.

The CW Partners with Shopkick

Shopkick’s location-based iPhone app, which gives you offers and rewards for simply walking into a store, launched on August 17, 2010 coupled to a deep partnership with BestBuy.³¹ The application’s users are automatically checked-in to select retail stores when they walk through the doors. Shopkick does this by listening for a specific audio tone (inaudible to humans) that is emitted by a physical speaker at the entrance of participating retailers.

Simply by walking into a store, a Shopkick users earns “kicks” (the app’s form of virtual currency) that can accumulate with additional in-store app engagement. Users can redeem their kicks for partner retailer gift cards or a growing list of other rewards—including iTunes gift cards, movie tickets, and Facebook credits. Users can also donate their kicks to various nonprofit causes.³²

With over two million users, Shopkick has grown its retail partnerships to include select Macy’s, Target, Sports Authority, and Crate & Barrel locations,