



The Anatomy of Email Delivery

Bill Pease, Chief Scientist
Convio

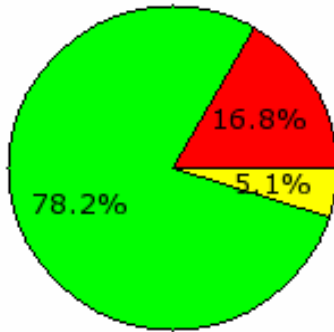


Outline

- Email Delivery Overview
 - ▶ What is email deliverability?
 - ▶ How does it vary across ISPs?
 - ▶ Who is responsible for email delivery?
 - ▶ What does good email delivery look like?
- Best Practices for Improving Deliverability
 - ▶ List Building
 - ▶ List Maintenance
 - ▶ Subscription Management
 - ▶ Avoiding Spam Filters
 - ▶ Email Subject and From Address
 - ▶ Content
 - ▶ Messaging
- Q&A

Email Deliverability – Why it matters

Did your email arrive?



■ % Missing ■ % Inbox ■ % Bulkbox

What company are you keeping?

Bulk

[Switch to the new Yahoo! Mail](#) X

SpamGuard Plus is ON: [\[Edit Settings - What's This?\]](#)

With SpamGuard turned on, Yahoo! Mail will deliver suspected spam to this folder and delete them after one month.

View: [All Messages](#) ▾

Messages 1-21 of 21 First | Previous | Next | Last

<input type="checkbox"/>	Sender	Subject	Date	Size
<input type="checkbox"/>	Nell Hansen	No.1 for enlargement	Tue Mar 04, 2008	2k
<input type="checkbox"/>	ONE/Northwest	ONEList March 2008	Tue Mar 04, 2008	25k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Lily Cooke	Message from Mr.Big	Tue Mar 04, 2008	2k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Congress.org	Congress.org Weekly Newsletter--Power Rankings Released	Mon Mar 03, 2008	17k
<input type="checkbox"/>	megavote@ mailmanager.net	MegaVote: CA 9th, 3/3/2008	Mon Mar 03, 2008	10k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Planned Parenthood Golden Gate	Meet your state representatives, lobby for a pro-choice agendal	Sat Mar 01, 2008	16k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Martina Funk	Let your dreams come true	Fri Feb 29, 2008	2k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Shays, Rep	Fourth District Credit Forums -- Change in Stamford Location	Thu Feb 28, 2008	16k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Planned Parenthood Golden Gate	Save the Date, Gala 2008!	Thu Feb 28, 2008	12k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Salvatore Sullivan	point, says Bugeja	Thu Feb 28, 2008	2k
<input type="checkbox"/>	ONE/Northwest	ONE/Northwest Event: Campaign Season and Technology	Tue Feb 26, 2008	9k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Opal Bailey	Who has the bigger one? hehe	Sun Feb 17, 2008	2k
<input type="checkbox"/>	WWF Passport	Support Scotland in leading the fight against climate change	Fri Feb 15, 2008	14k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Deborah Jean	February promo on wltches	Tue Feb 12, 2008	1k
<input type="checkbox"/>	PPGG eNewsletter	Will you have Proper Attire this V-Day?	Tue Feb 12, 2008	62k
<input type="checkbox"/>	drbillpease@ yahoo.com	Can't get meds that you need?	Tue Feb 12, 2008	2k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Congress.org	Congress.org Weekly Newsletter--February 11, 2008	Mon Feb 11, 2008	19k
<input type="checkbox"/>	drivingimages@ yahoo.com	Medication worldwide at low price	Sun Feb 10, 2008	2k
<input type="checkbox"/>	GameRanger News	GameRanger: Help load-test the server!	Wed Feb 06, 2008	6k
<input type="checkbox"/>	megavote@ mailmanager.net	MegaVote: CA 9th, 2/4/2008	Mon Feb 04, 2008	9k
<input type="checkbox"/>	Teppo Betts	RE: stenograph VIAGGRoA	Mon Feb 04, 2008	4k

Defining Deliverability

■ Classic definition

Gross Delivery =

$$\frac{\# \text{ Sent} - \# \text{ Bounced}}{\# \text{ Sent}}$$

- Measures delivery into a domain, but not to an end recipient
- Relies on bounce messages, which have become very unreliable
- Overstates delivery success

■ Today's definition

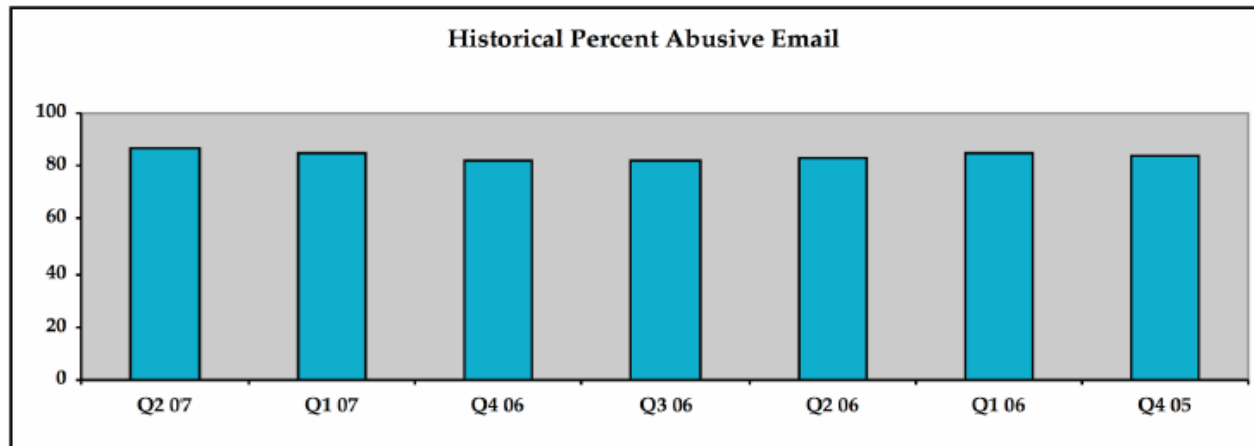
Inbox Delivery =

$$\frac{\# \text{ Delivered to Inbox}}{\# \text{ Sent}}$$

- Focuses on whether end recipient gets the email
- Tracks bulk folder diversions as well as delivery rejections
- Relies on seed lists, which are only available for top ISPs

ISP Perspective:

To protect subscriber inboxes, ISPs need to block and filter

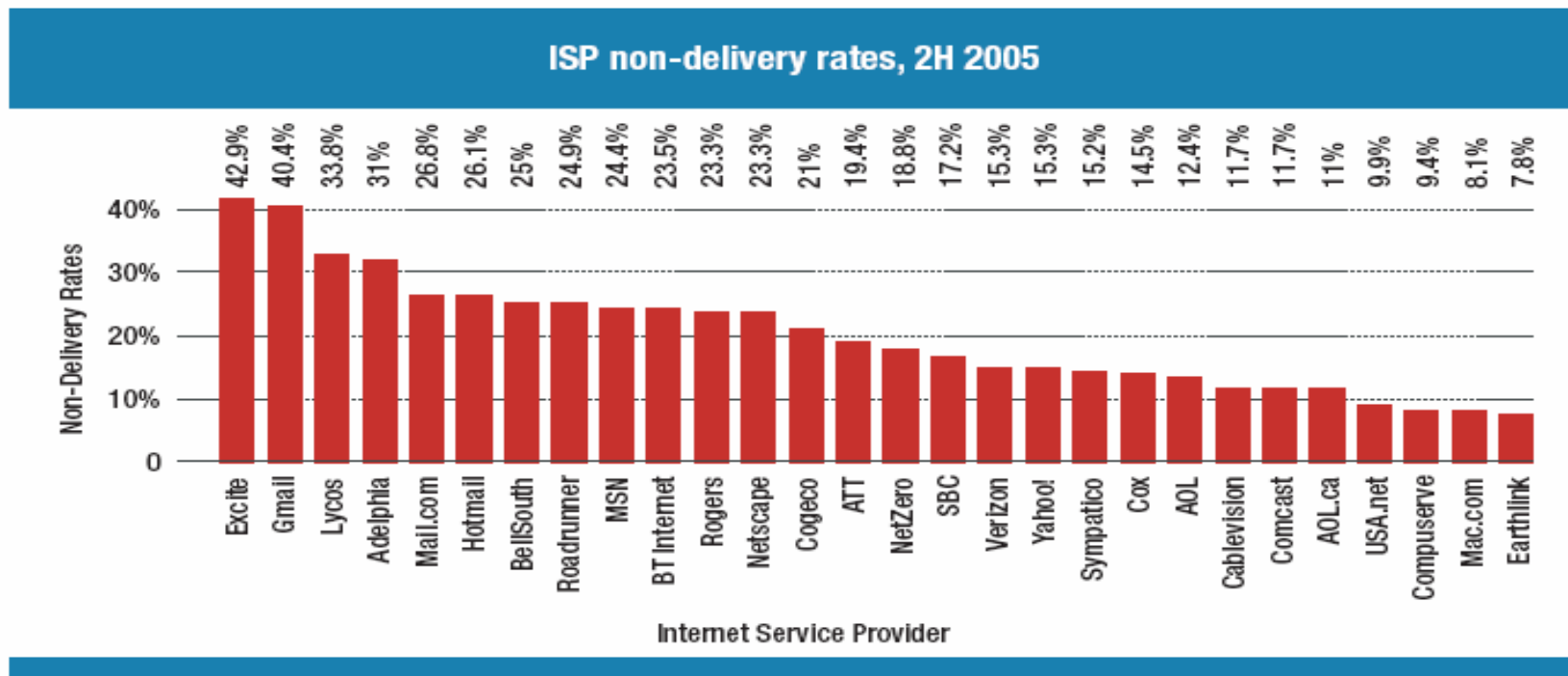


Selected Ratios	Report#6 Q2 2007	Report#5 Q1 2007	Report#4 Q4 2006	Report#4 Q3 2006
Dropped Connections & Blocked/Tagged Inbound Emails per Mailbox	1230	1178	1221	1210
Dropped Connections & Blocked/Tagged Inbound Emails per Unaltered Delivered Email	6.50 or 86.7% abusive email	5.77 or 85.2% abusive email	4.58 or 82.1% abusive email	4.82 or 81.8% abusive email
Number of Unaltered Delivered Email per Mailbox	189	204	267	268

MAAWG Second Quarter 2007 Email Metrics Report:
http://www.maawg.org/about/MAAWG20072Q_Metrics_Report.pdf

Delivery Barriers Vary across ISPs

5%-40% of commercial permission-based email is not delivered



Source: Return Path Email Blocking and Filtering Report
<http://www.returnpath.biz/resources/archives/whitepapers/index.php>

Ranking ISPs: Rejections vs Diversions

1 Top Ten US Domains by Gross Deliverability		
Rank	ISP Name	Percent Delivered
1	AIM.com	96.65
2	XO Concentric	93.25
3	USA	92.98
4	Verizon	92.95
5	SBC Global	91.18
6	Yahoo!	90.14
7	IWon	89.53
8	Google Mail	89.06
9	PeoplePC	88.60
10	RoadRunner SoCal	87.01
AVG		83.60

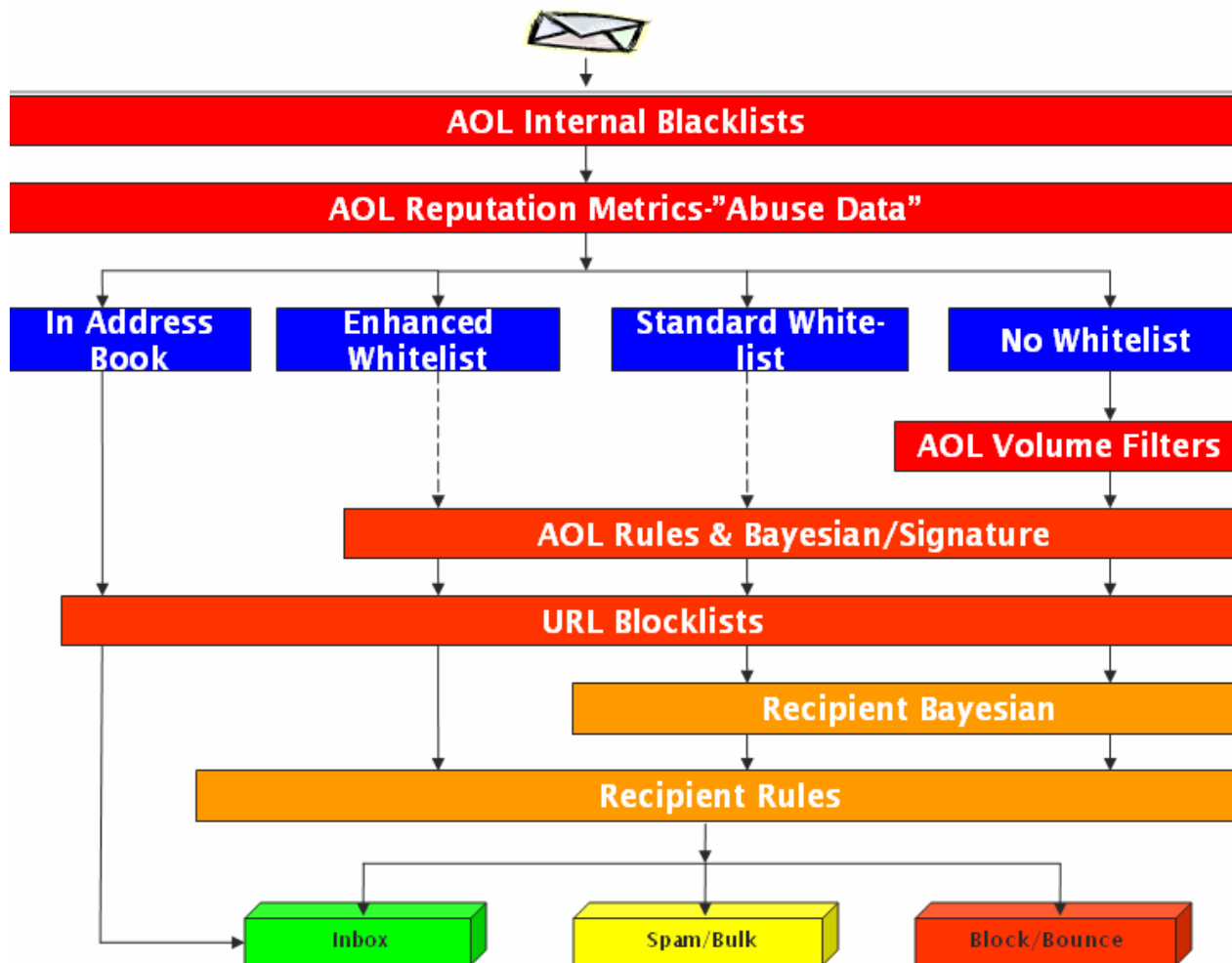
Compare Lycos: Rejects 53% of all email

3 Top Ten US Domains by Junk/Bulk Folder Deliverability		
Rank	ISP Name	Percent Spam
1	XO Concentric	56.49
2	SBC Global	29.61
3	Bell South	29.52
4	Yahoo!	25.95
5	MSN Network	17.82
6	Google Mail	17.76
7	Hotmail	17.51
8	PeoplePC	13.27
9	USA	7.40
10	Earthlink	6.46
AVG		15.94

Compare AOL: Diverts only 1.9% to spam folder

Lyrus Q2 2007 ISP Deliverability Report Card: <http://www1.lyris.com/resources/reports/>

Blocking & Filtering: AOL Example



Analysis and graphic courtesy of Pivotal Veracity

Impact of Delivery Problems on Non-profits

- Messages don't get through
 - ▶ Rejection
 - ▶ Diversion to bulk/spam folder
- Messages get mangled
 - ▶ Images suppressed
 - ▶ Hyperlinks disabled
- Slower list growth
 - ▶ Dropping opt-in rates
 - ▶ Increasing spam-policy related list churn
- Brand damage
 - ▶ Spam complaints

Deliverability is a Shared Responsibility

Your Email Service Provider:

- ▶ Email infrastructure
- ▶ Compliance with sender verification standards
- ▶ ISP relationships
- ▶ Mail reputation monitoring & management

Your Organization:

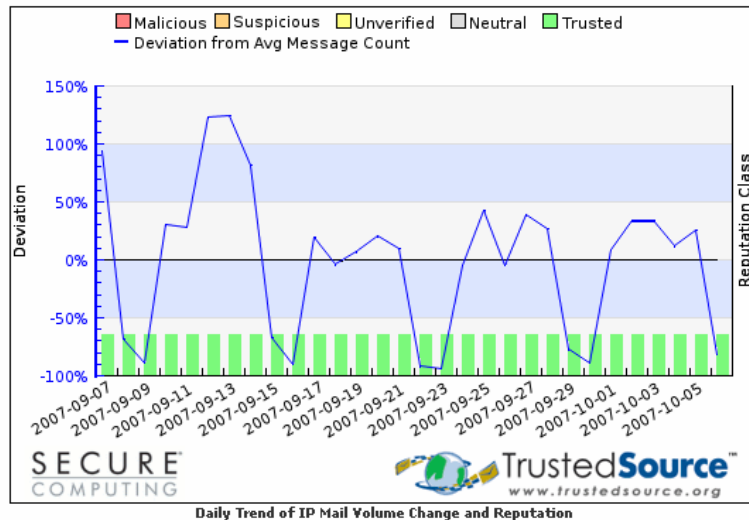
- ▶ Compliance with sender verification standards
- ▶ Permission-based list building
- ▶ Emarketing practices
- ▶ Complaint reduction

Optimal Email Infrastructure

- Use specialized email appliances or MTA software to send email
 - ▶ Send rates and procedures customized to each ISP
- Automate compliance with ISP requirements
 - ▶ No repeat mailings to hard-bouncing addresses
 - ▶ Integrate feedback loops that automatically unsubscribe recipients that report messages as spam
- Support Sender Verification
 - ▶ Enable recipients to check that email sent using your brand name is really from your organization
- Manage mail reputation actively
 - ▶ Segment senders based on complaint rates
 - ▶ Segregate mail streams by message type
 - ▶ Monitor inbox delivery and blocklisting

Mail Reputation

Mail Reputation



Sender Information

Hostname: cluster2.convio.net
 Domain: convio.net
 Current reputation: ● Trusted
 First seen: 2006-08-30
 Last seen: 2007-10-07

Whois Information

Registry: RIPE
 CIDR range: 0.0.0.0/0
[Show related netblocks](#)
 Description: The whole IPv4 address space
 Country: USA

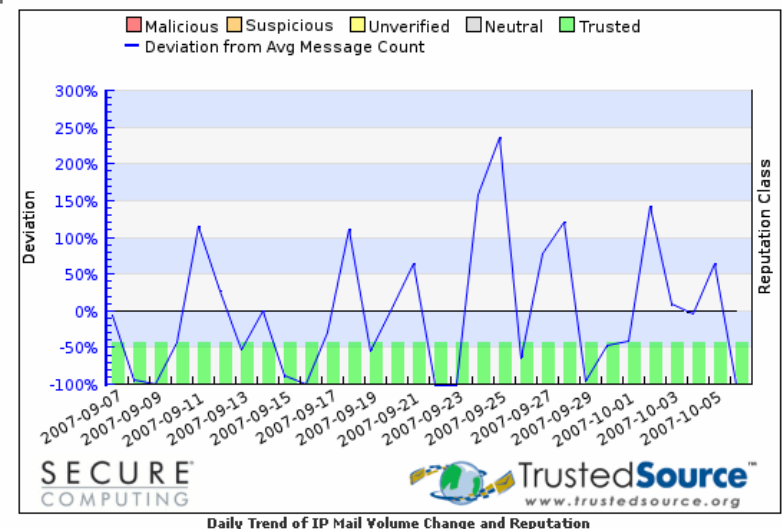
Message Volume

Daily avg 30 days:
 Yesterday: (-81%)

Real-Time Blacklists

Not on any blacklists

Mail Reputation



Sender Information

Hostname: bonded.iron2.getactive.com
 Domain: getactive.com
 Current reputation: ● Trusted
 First seen: 2006-08-30
 Last seen: 2007-10-06

Whois Information

Registry: RIPE
 CIDR range: 0.0.0.0/0
[Show related netblocks](#)
 Description: The whole IPv4 address space
 Country: USA

Message Volume

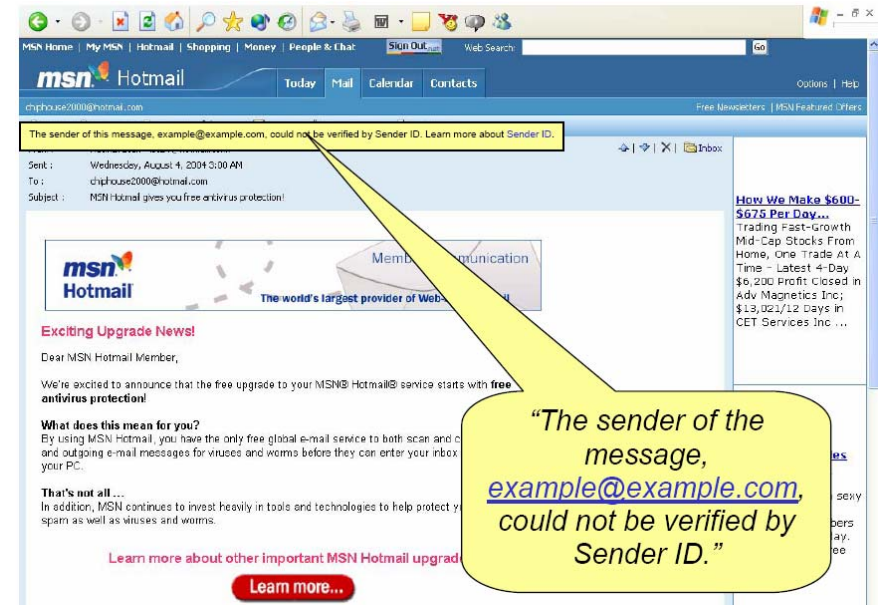
Daily avg 30 days:
 Yesterday: (-99%)

Real-Time Blacklists

Not on any blacklists

Rise of Sender Verification: Sender ID

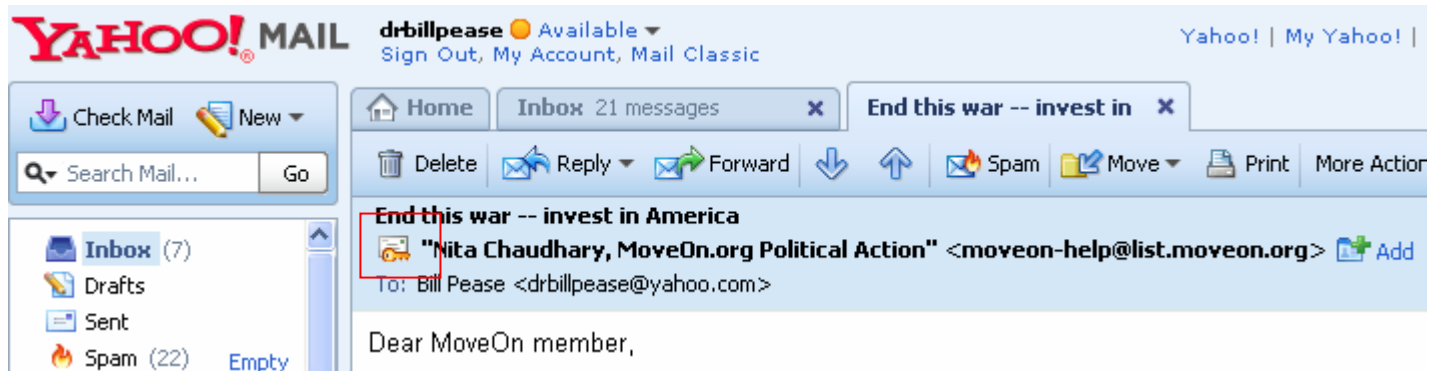
- Microsoft's sender verification protocol
 - ▶ Used at MSN & Hotmail
 - ▶ Integrated into Outlook
 - ▶ Sender ID checks used to filter spam
 - ▶ Verification results displayed to recipients (trust demotion)
 - ▶ Email failing verification is marked as suspicious, or diverted to bulk folder
- Easy to implement
 - ▶ Simple addition of SPF TXT record to your DNS record



"If the Sender ID verification passes, the message is delivered as regular mail. If the check fails, the message is further analyzed and the receiving server may refuse to deliver the e-mail, or it may flag the e-mail as a possible deceptive message. Depending on the recipient's ISP or e-mail server software, messages that fail the Sender ID check may be flagged and sorted differently. For example, a simple icon may be displayed in the message to indicate the failure. Or the message may be sent to the junk mail folder for the recipient's review, or it may be automatically rejected and deleted."

Rise of Sender Verification: DomainKeys

- Yahoo and Cisco's sender verification protocol
 - ▶ Integrated into various anti-spam systems
 - ▶ Yahoo provides delivery benefits to senders supporting DK
 - ▶ Verified email is marked as trustworthy (trust promotion)
- Harder to implement
 - ▶ Mail infrastructure must be able to digitally sign email



Trust promotion of sender with DK icon



ISP Whitelists



- Two of the top-tier ISPs operate their own whitelists:



- ▶ Yahoo
- ▶ AOL (standard and enhanced)



- MSN and Hotmail use a commercial whitelist:

- ▶ Return Path – Sender Score Certified

- Most second-tier ISPs do not offer whitelists, although some use commercial reputation services to filter email:



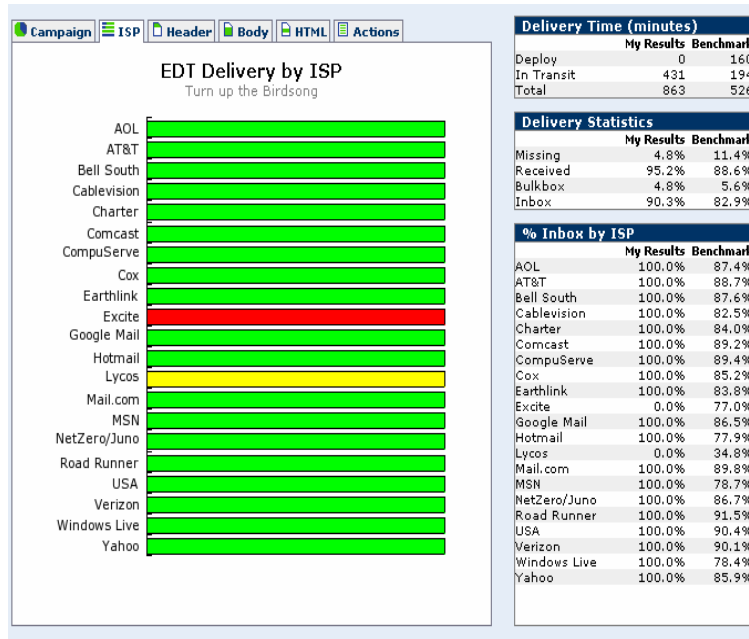
- ▶ Return Path Sender Score - Comcast
- ▶ Habeas Safelist - Charter



Delivery Monitoring

Good delivery performance =

- Gross Delivery ~95%
- Inbox Delivery 95% – 100%



Representative Pivotal Veracity Report

First Seen	Customer	Subject	From	ID	Inbox %	Bulk %	Missing %	Complaints
10/05/2007 16:51:55	Convio	Save the Earth One Tree at a Time!	nwf.org		93.9	1.7	4.3	0

ISP	First Seen	Most Recent	Inbox %	Bulk %	Missing %	Duplicates	Complaints	ISP Profile
AOL	10/05/2007 16:53:17	10/05/2007 17:12:27	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	Profile for AOL
ATT	10/05/2007 16:53:29	10/05/2007 17:12:07	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for ATT
Adelphia	10/05/2007 16:53:34	10/05/2007 17:09:13	100.0	-	0.0	0	-	Profile for Adelphia
BellSouth	10/05/2007 23:13:32	10/05/2007 23:27:53	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for BellSouth
Cablevision	10/05/2007 16:54:22	10/05/2007 17:08:37	100.0	-	0.0	0	-	Profile for Cablevision
Comcast	10/05/2007 16:52:21	10/05/2007 17:07:40	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Comcast
CompuServe	10/05/2007 17:00:02	10/05/2007 17:12:53	100.0	-	0.0	0	-	Profile for CompuServe
Cox	10/05/2007 16:52:46	10/05/2007 17:08:31	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Cox
Earthlink	10/05/2007 16:53:35	10/05/2007 17:13:35	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Earthlink
Excite	-	-	0.0	0.0	100.0	0	-	Profile for Excite
Gmail	10/05/2007 16:53:21	10/05/2007 17:13:48	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Gmail
Hotmail	10/05/2007 16:52:02	10/05/2007 17:13:08	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	Profile for Hotmail
MSN	10/05/2007 16:52:03	10/05/2007 17:23:05	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for MSN
Mac.com	10/05/2007 16:52:54	10/05/2007 17:10:45	100.0	-	0.0	0	-	Profile for Mac.com
Mail.com	10/05/2007 16:54:01	10/05/2007 17:06:26	100.0	-	0.0	0	-	Profile for Mail.com
Netscape	10/05/2007 16:58:37	10/05/2007 17:11:07	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Netscape
Netzero	10/05/2007 16:55:59	10/05/2007 17:14:32	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Netzero
Road Runner	10/05/2007 16:55:39	10/05/2007 17:10:22	100.0	-	0.0	0	0	Profile for Road Runner
SBC	10/05/2007 16:54:52	10/05/2007 17:10:23	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for SBC
USA.net	10/05/2007 16:54:12	10/05/2007 17:13:28	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	0	Profile for USA.net
Verizon	10/05/2007 17:01:04	10/05/2007 17:01:04	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Verizon
Yahoo!	10/05/2007 17:01:35	10/05/2007 17:44:43	100.0	0.0	0.0	0	-	Profile for Yahoo!
Total			96.2	0.0	3.8	0	0	

Representative Return Path Report

Reputation Monitoring

■ Sender Score

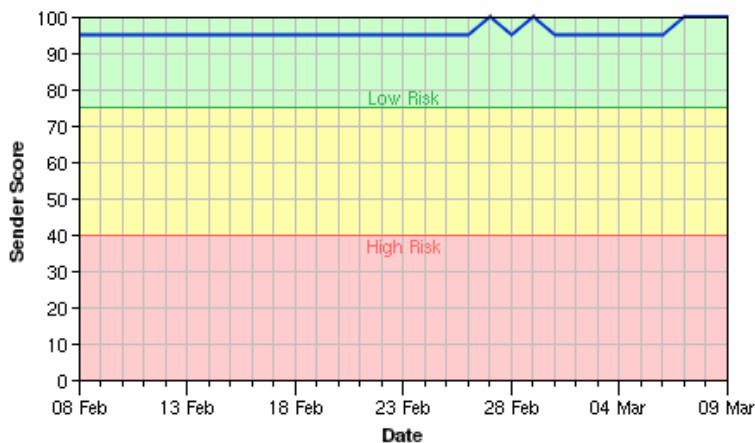
Reputation for 66.45.103.63 (Pool A1)

Sender Score
100

[? Help](#)

Measure	Risk	You	CMI	All Mailers	
Sender Score	✓	100	70	5	Graph
Complaint Rate	⚠	0.19%	0.12%	0.61%	Graph
Volume (percentile)	⚠	97th	69th	50th	Graph
Unknown User Rate	✓	0.33%	0.33%	12.88%	Graph
Rejected Rate	✓	0.38%	0.6%	67.4%	Graph
External Reputation (percentile)	✓	87th	87th	50th	Graph

Sender Score for 66.45.103.63



■ Blocklist Alert

Convio Blacklist Alert

Across all of your IP addresses you're listed on a total of 6 blacklists checked by our service.

	All blacklists	Important blacklists
Added To:	0	0
Removed From:	0	0
Unchanged:	6	0
Total Active:	6	0

Testing 66.45.103.63

Generated by www.DNSstuff.com

Status: Got back 103 of 107 requests.
Failed: None

Test Name	Result
PTR	Pass
AHBL	Not listed
ASPEWS	Not listed
BACKSCATTERER	Not listed
BURNTECH	Not listed
CBL	Not listed
CASA-CBL	Not listed
CASA-CBL+	Not listed
CASA-CBL-	Not listed
CSMA	Timeout
CSMA-SBL	Timeout
CYBERLOGIC	Not listed
DEADBEEF	Not listed
DELINK	Not listed
DNSBLINFO	Not listed
DNSBLNETAUOHPS	Not listed
DNSBLNETAUOMRS	Not listed
DNSBLNETAUOSPS	Not listed
DNSBLNETAUOSRS	Not listed
DNSBLNETAUOWFS	Not listed
DNSBLNETAUOWPS	Not listed
DNSBLNETAURDTS	Not listed
DNSBLNETAURICH	Not listed
DNSBLNETAURMST	Not listed
DNSBLNETAUT1	Not listed
DSBL	Not listed

Best Practices to Ensure Good Delivery

1. List Building
2. List Maintenance
3. Subscription Management
4. Avoiding Spam Filters
5. Email Subject and From Address
6. Content
7. Messaging

Best Practices: List Building

- Recipient complaints are the single most important cause of delivery barriers
 - ▶ Complaint rates increase as permission-basis of list decreases
- Permission-based = Opt-in, not opt-out
- Request explicit permission whenever and wherever you acquire email addresses
 - ▶ Link brand or publication name to every opt-in request
 - ▶ Document all opt-ins—especially those collected offline
- Respect permission
 - ▶ Let subscribers control their communication preferences
 - ▶ Address and investigate complaints
 - ▶ Honor opt-out requests

List Building Methods to Avoid

Questionable*

- Opt-in without positive action
 - ▶ Pre-checked opt-in
- Hidden opt-in
 - ▶ Transactional opt-in – adding to a list as part of some other transaction, like event participation or donation
- Appending
 - ▶ Assumed opt-in - based on some prior business relationship
 - ▶ >80% of recipients do not think a mailer who has their postal address on file "has the right to send me email"

<http://www.proclickexchange.com/news/easyway.php>

Indefensible*

- Transferred opt-in
 - ▶ List shares or buys
- Email harvesting
 - ▶ From web pages, directories, voter registration lists
- Opt-out

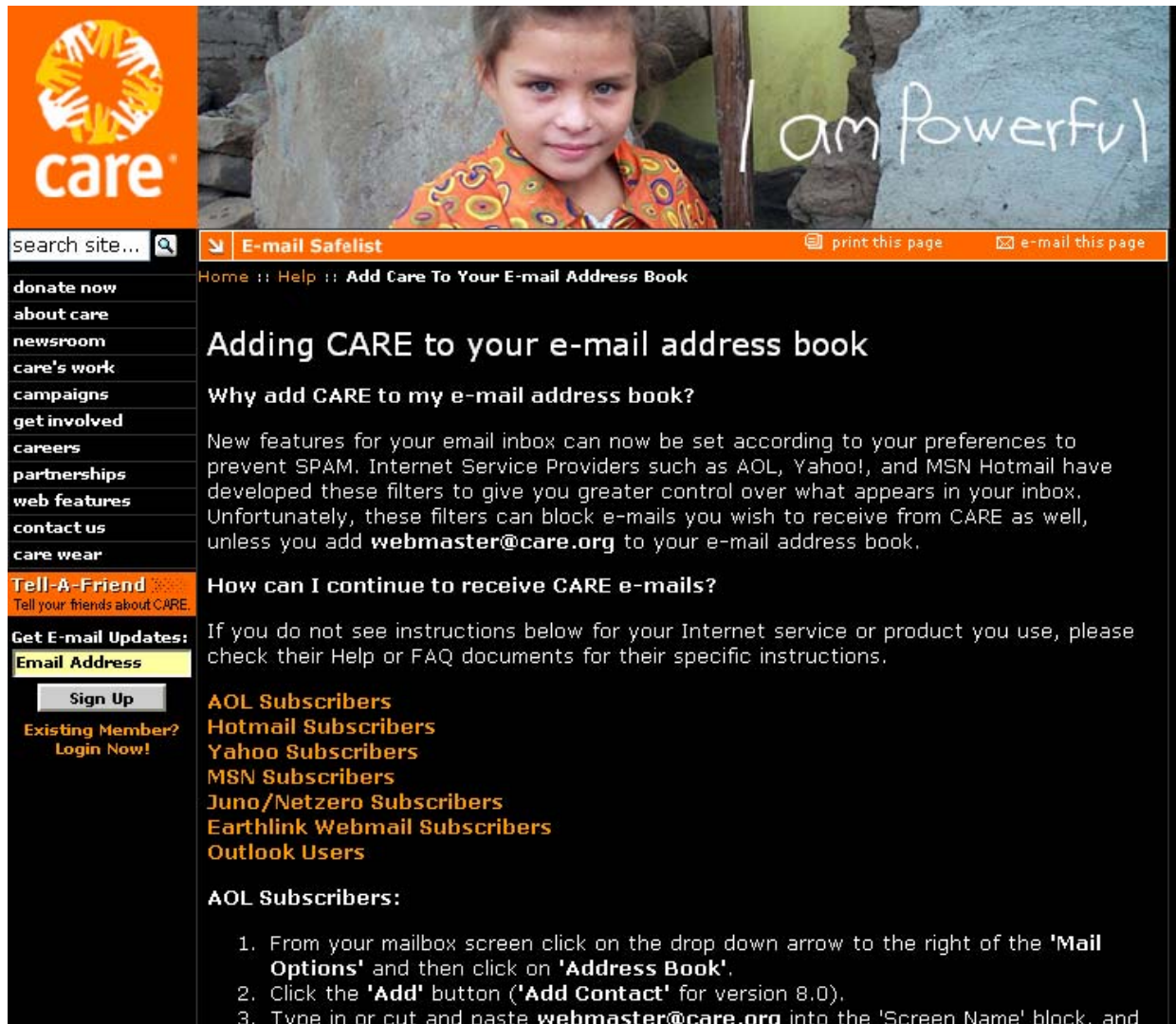
* From the perspective of a major ISP that has requested documentation of opt-in for a recipient that filed a spam complaint

Best Practice: List Maintenance

Preserve Your Opt-Ins


- Recipient address books serves as a local whitelist
 - ▶ If you're on it, email is delivered
 - ▶ If you're not, email will be blocked, routed, or mangled
- Ask to be added
 - ▶ Provide instructions regularly
 - ▶ Use one branded "from:" address for all bulk email from your organization
 - ▶ Don't break local whitelisting by changing your "from" address

Sample “Add to Address Book” Instructions



The screenshot shows the CARE website with a navigation menu on the left and a main content area. The CARE logo is in the top left corner. The main content area has a header with a search bar and a navigation bar. The main content area is titled "Adding CARE to your e-mail address book" and contains instructions for adding CARE to an e-mail address book. The instructions are organized into sections: "Why add CARE to my e-mail address book?", "How can I continue to receive CARE e-mails?", and "AOL Subscribers".

care

search site... 

[E-mail Safelist](#) [print this page](#) [e-mail this page](#)

Home :: Help :: [Add Care To Your E-mail Address Book](#)

Adding CARE to your e-mail address book

Why add CARE to my e-mail address book?

New features for your email inbox can now be set according to your preferences to prevent SPAM. Internet Service Providers such as AOL, Yahoo!, and MSN Hotmail have developed these filters to give you greater control over what appears in your inbox. Unfortunately, these filters can block e-mails you wish to receive from CARE as well, unless you add webmaster@care.org to your e-mail address book.

How can I continue to receive CARE e-mails?

If you do not see instructions below for your Internet service or product you use, please check their Help or FAQ documents for their specific instructions.

AOL Subscribers

Hotmail Subscribers

Yahoo Subscribers

MSN Subscribers

Juno/Netzero Subscribers

Earthlink Webmail Subscribers

Outlook Users

AOL Subscribers:

1. From your mailbox screen click on the drop down arrow to the right of the 'Mail Options' and then click on 'Address Book'.
2. Click the 'Add' button ('Add Contact' for version 8.0).
3. Type in or cut and paste webmaster@care.org into the 'Screen Name' block, and

Best Practices: List Maintenance

Managing “Churn”

- Email addresses have a short shelf life
 - ▶ People are forced to change address when they switch ISPs or change job
 - ▶ They may change voluntarily to avoid spam
 - ▶ They almost never tell you when they do
 - ▶ ISPs may tell you an address is no longer valid when it is
- An average list will decrease by 2-5% per month!
- Use direct mail or phone to re-recruit lost constituents
- Use “email change of address” (ECOA) services to refresh email addresses for unreachable opt-in subscribers
- Continuous recruitment and viral marketing are essential to offsetting churn and growing your list

Best Practices: List Maintenance

List Hygiene

- Keeping lists “clean” is critical to deliverability
 - ▶ ISPs monitor proportion of invalid addresses in an inbound mailing, and raise delivery barriers when this exceeds acceptable thresholds
- Quality control email addresses collected offline
 - ▶ Correct common mistakes (e.g., spelling of top level domain names) prior to import
- Remove hard bouncing emails until they can be recovered
 - ▶ ISPs monitor resends to addresses they have previously hard bounced, and treat this as a spam signal
 - ▶ Do not reset the delivery status of an email address without evidence that a hard bounce was in error or spam-policy related

Best Practices: Subscription Management

- Respect your audience
 - ▶ Provide tools that enable self-serve subscription management
 - ▶ Avoid complex log-in or email account management procedures
 - ▶ Allow users to maintain profiles with their contact data and interest preferences
- Provide subscribers with choices
 - ▶ Offer a variety of email publications if your organization targets different audience segments, works on different issues, sends email at different frequencies, etc.
 - ▶ Provide text-only versions of HTML publications
- Make it easier to get removed/unsubscribe than complain
 - ▶ Support single-click unsubscribe
 - ▶ Promote the option to unsubscribe from a single publication rather than all organizational communications

Complex Removal -> More Spam Complaints

Unsubscribe Confirmation Code [Inbox](#)

★ "Democrats.org" <partybuilder@dnc.org> [show details](#) 1:23 pm (1 minute ago) [Reply](#) | ▼

Below you will find your mailing list unsubscribe confirmation code.
Please copy this code into the form in your web browser to fully
unsubscribe from this mailing list.

Confirmation Code: 1453

Thank you!

[Reply](#) [Forward](#)

THE
DEMOCRATIC PARTY

[Blog](#) [Our Party](#) [Action](#) [Agenda](#) [Local](#) [People](#) [Press](#) [Contact](#) [Español](#)

Stay up to date
SIGN UP FOR EMAIL UPDATES

Email Address
 Zip Code

Search

Confirm Your Unsubscription

To ensure the security of your account, we've sent you an email at the address you provided us. This email contains a 4-digit code that you will need to enter below. If you do not see the inbox within a couple of minutes, check your junk or bulk mail folder as your ISP may have incorrectly marked this message as spam.

Confirmation Code:

Copyright © 1995-2007 DNC Services Corporation | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Technical Problems and Comments](#) | [Manage Your Account](#)

Paid for by the Democratic National Committee — 430 S. Capitol St. SE, Washington DC 20003.
This communication is not authorized by any candidate or candidate's committee.

Best Practices: List Maintenance

Act on Spam Complaints

- Use each complaint to conduct ongoing evaluation of your list building practices
- Reduce your reliance on list building practices with high complaint rates
- Ensure your “remove me” procedures across all touch points are operational
- Prevent inadvertent re-additions of complainants to your lists
- Complaints can also be caused by messaging frequency (too often, or too infrequent), list age, and the overall quality of your content and engagement offers

Best Practices: Email Subject

- The “Subject” line is your first opportunity to get subscribers' attention
 - ▶ For regular newsletters, use a standard title that conveys your brand identity
 - ▶ Succinct but informative subject lines should stand out in a crowded inbox
 - ▶ Less is more – it has to work in 31 characters in some clients

View: All Messages Messages 1-25 of 1

Sender	Subject
World Wildlife Fund	WWF: Send a Grandparents' Day E-card
WWF - Conservation Action Network	Only a Few Days Left to Help Stop Prairie Dog Poisoning
ASPCA	Your personalized ASPCA website is here
Rodger Schlickelsen, Defenders of Wildlife	Stop the prairie dog poisonings!
Heather Tuckfield, CBF	Bay-friendly Gifts for Dad
National Wildlife Federation	National Wildlife Magazine: June/July 2007
Defenders of Wildlife	Wolves, Wildlife and the Way to Dad's Heart!
Chesapeake Bay Foundation	Celebrate Your Bay & Your Rivers
Defenders of Wildlife	California: Check one for sea otters this tax season!
Sarah Brady	An Easy Way to Protect US Gun Laws
National Wildlife Federation	Wildlife Online: April 2007: Take Action During National Wildlife Week
Sierra Club Currents	Sierra Club Currents - Doctors Prescribe Cleaner Air
Consumers Union	CA to make a difference, you need to act fast!
American Rivers	RiverNews: Last Week to Register a Cleanup!
ASPCA	Ban Raccoon Dog Fur and Demand Proper Labeling!
Anthony D. Romero, ACLU	What Your Friends and Neighbors are Saying

AOL mail Mail Blog | What's New Today

convoadm Mail Edit Folders

New Mail (66)

Old Mail Recently Deleted Sent Mail Spam Saved on AOL Saved Mail

Write Mail Delete Action Move Keep As New Report Spam

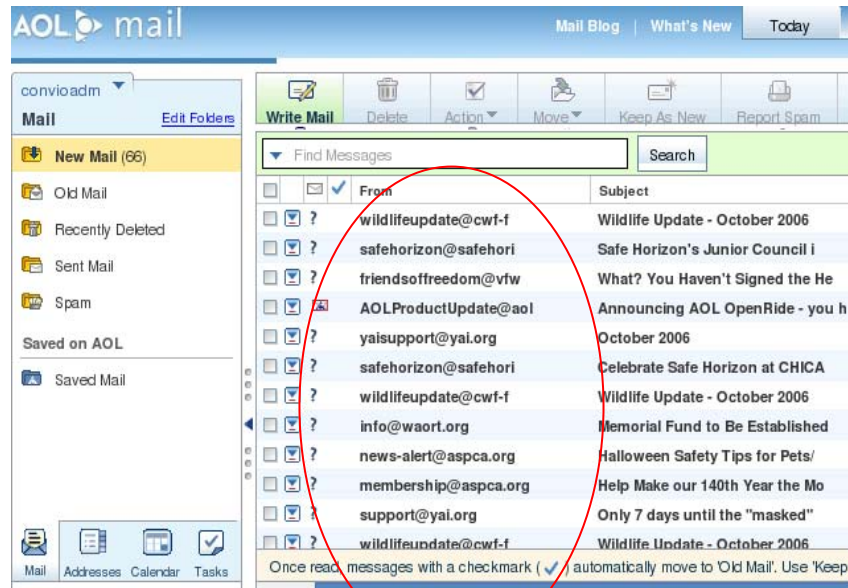
Find Messages Search

From	Subject
wildlifeupdate@cw1-f	Wildlife Update - October 2006
safehorizon@safehori	Safe Horizon's Junior Council I
friendsoffreedom@vfw	What? You Haven't Signed the He
AOLProductUpdate@aol	Announcing AOL OpenRide - you h
yaisupport@ya!org	October 2006
safehorizon@safehori	Celebrate Safe Horizon at CHICA
wildlifeupdate@cw1-f	Wildlife Update - October 2006
info@waort.org	Memorial Fund to Be Established
news-alert@aspc.org	Halloween Safety Tips for Pets/
membership@aspc.org	Help Make our 140th Year the Mo
support@ya!org	Only 7 days until the "masked"
wildlifeupdate@cw1-f	Wildlife Update - October 2006

Once read, messages with a checkmark (✓) automatically move to 'Old Mail'. Use 'Keep

Best Practices: Email “From” Address

- Many recipients decide whether to read a message – or report it as spam - based on the sender’s identity.
 - ▶ In the subscriber's inbox, the From line is what carries your brand
 - ▶ Use a consistent From name and address to support both brand recognition and auto-whitelisting systems
 - ▶ Some email clients only display email address, so make sure your brand is clear in your email address



Best Practices: Avoiding Spam Filters

- Filters attempt to identify spam in order to block it or route it to bulk mail
- Market-leaders like Spam Assassin
 - ▶ Authenticate senders
 - ▶ Check blocklists and whitelists
 - ▶ Check distributed spam ID networks
 - ▶ Check content against rule sets
 - ▶ Score message for spam probability
- Few prevalent anti-spam systems filter by content alone
- Testing messages against a single type of filter is rarely sufficient
- Avoid content practices that can impact delivery

Best Practices: Content (1)

Word Choice

- Content-based filters are triggered by characteristics of email messages which are commonly associated with spam
- Keyword filters
 - ▶ Avoid overly promotional language: the word “free” is all too easy to trip up on
 - ▶ Avoid words associated with common spam memes – this can sometimes be very tricky for groups with reproductive health missions
- Bayesian filters
 - ▶ Most modern filters use multi-word/phrase matching, which is harder to trigger with legitimate messaging
 - ▶ Unless your phrasing is necessarily commercial, or reported as spam to a distributed spam identification network

Best Practices: Content (2)

Formatting and Attachments

■ HTML Formatting

- ▶ Spammers often use lots of HTML formatting to break up words into letters, in attempts to confuse keyword and Bayesian filters
- ▶ Spam filters look for a high ratio of HTML tagging to actual text
- ▶ Use a light, clean style with significant chunks of meaningful content.
- ▶ Get the side benefits of better rendering in multiple email clients.

■ Attachments

- ▶ Malware is often hidden in executable attachments.
- ▶ Avoid bulk mail distribution of any type of attachment (e.g., pdf)

Best Practices: Content (3)

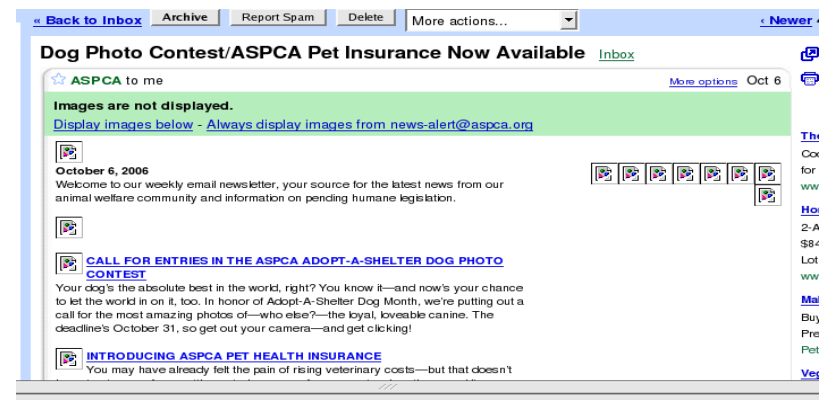
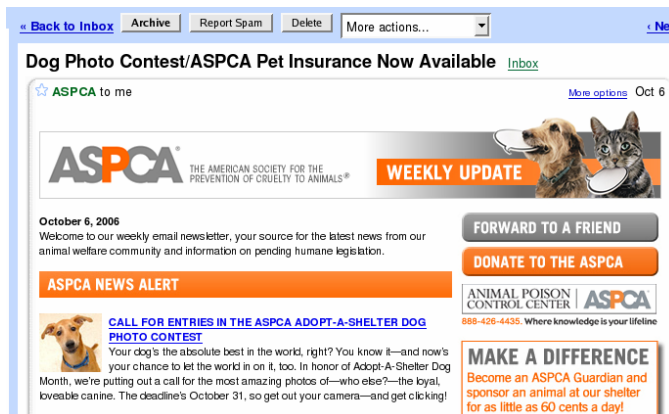
Images

- Single Images
 - ▶ Spammers often use image-based spam to defeat content filters
 - ▶ Filters therefore treat all single-image messages as suspicious
- Growing number of email clients (AOL 9.0, Gmail, MS-Outlook) block images by default
 - ▶ Implemented to protect subscribers from pornography and spam
 - ▶ Suppression can be over-ridden if sender is whitelisted at an ISP, or safelisted in local email address book

Best Practices: Content (4)

Anticipate Image Suppression

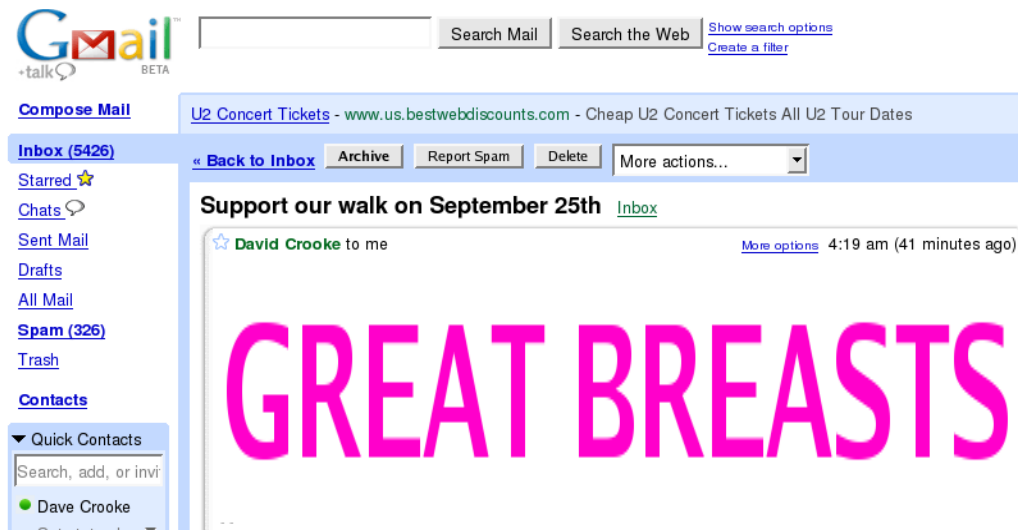
- Design your email to render well even with images suppressed
 - ▶ Provide a link to the online version of your HTML newsletter
 - ▶ Omit width and height specifiers to allow blocked images to collapse



Best Practices: Content (5)

Use Common Sense

- Content alone can trigger delivery barriers – if you send a message that looks like spam:
 - ▶ Is this email from a cancer charity or ?
 - ▶ Spam complaints from highly engaged walkathon participants triggered barriers at multiple ISPs



Best Practices: Messaging Quality Control

- Test your content thoroughly before you send
 - ▶ Use A/B split testing tools to optimize your messaging – different subject lines, different layouts, different engagement offers
 - ▶ Run draft content through a spam filter to check for spam signals that are easy to avoid
 - ▶ Proofread draft messages in major webmail systems and desktop email clients
 - ▶ Setup and monitor test accounts at major webmail systems (leaving default spam filter settings unchanged) to identify problems with message mangling or spam folder diversion.

Best Practices: Messaging Premium Spam Filter Scoring

- Several commercial services allow you to identify potential delivery barriers with advanced screening that tests your email messages against more than 50 different anti-spam systems
- Learn whether you are on blocklists that will prevent delivery of your email
- Learn whether your content triggers spam filters based on keywords, rules, or probability tests
- Focus your attention on the spam signals that could actually impact your delivery
- Receive real-time advice on the changes needed to maximize your email delivery

Summary Results by Filter Method:

Pass / Fail type Filters (probability of being blocked increases at scores above 1)

0.000 # Black Lists Failed
 0.000 # Collaborative Filters Failed
 0.500 # Key Word Match Rules Failed
 0.000 # Message Certificates Passed/Failed

Score-Based Filters (probability of being blocked increases at scores above 5)

-0.001 Heuristic (local) Score
 -0.001 Heuristic (network) Score

Probability-Based Filters (probability of being spam; scores above 75% should be reviewed)

99.500 % Probability based on Bayesian Filter
 0.000 % Probability based on Collaborative Filter

key word match

key word match net # key word rules failed: 0.5

Key Word Match is a content-based filter. Rules are based on the inclusion of words and phrases in the email. Instead of computing an aggregate score, key word match programs typically block mail if a single rule has been broken.

Recipients (typically at the local level only) may choose to use a key word match filter. The rules in any keyword match filter depend on the program. If any rule used in the program are failed, the chances your email will be blocked are HIGH.

305	Body Text Contains- 1-800	Net # Key Word Rules Failed:	0.5
This rule is searching for an exact match. Consider rephrasing or removing if it does not impact your response. If it is a critical call to action TEST the impact of removal based on Clicks or Conversions prior to rolling-out.			

Heuristic (local & network)		Local / Netwk Heur. Score:	1.015 / 0.465
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Heuristic Filters apply a series of rules to determine an emails likelihood of being spam. Each rule has a particular weighting or score as determined by the Heuristic Filter developer. The sum of these scores results in a total score.

Heuristic Filters may be deployed at either the LOCAL (desktop - personal) or NETWORK (server - corporations & ISPs) level. The rule weightings/scores may differ between levels. It is the TOTAL score that impacts your deliverability. The chances your email will be blocked or redirected are: Low if score is less than 5 and Medium to High if score is 5 to 7 and Very High at 8 or above.

1875	FONT Size +2 and up or 3 and up	Local / Netwk Heur. Score:	0.001 / 0.232
This rule scans the body looking for "FONT" tags. Specifically it looks for "FONT" tags whose "SIZE" attribute is set to 3 or larger.			
Large font size may be indicative of a spam sender practice. Consider using an image to represent the desired text with the appropriate size desired.			

Best Practices: Messaging Frequency

- For periodic emails, establish a predictable schedule that leads subscribers to expect your email
 - ▶ If your newsletter is your primary or sole touch point, weekly is better than monthly
- If you have a lot of departments / campaigns, coordinate drop days to avoid subscriber fatigue
 - ▶ Few subscribers want (and few communications program warrant) multiple emails per week
- If you have a high frequency email publication, make it a separate subscription
- Contrary to popular wisdom, **which** day of the week you send on rarely has a major impact