

Glossary

of email terminology

ACQUISITION COST: In email marketing, the cost to generate one lead, newsletter subscriber or customer in an individual email campaign; typically, the total campaign expense divided by the number of leads, subscribers or customers it produced.

AFFIRMATIVE CONSENT: An active request by a reader or subscriber to receive advertising or promotional information, newsletters, etc. Generally affirmative consent does not include the following - failing to uncheck a pre-checked box on a Web form, entering a business relationship with an organisation without being asked for separate permission to be sent specific types of email, opt-out.

ALERT: Email message that notifies subscribers of an event or special price.

ATTACHMENT: A text, video, graphic, PDF or sound file that accompanies an email message but is not included in the message itself.

AUTHENTICATION: An automated process that verifies an email sender's identity.

AUTORESPONDER: Automated email message-sending capability, such as a welcome message sent to all new subscribers the minute they join a list. May be triggered by joins, unsubscribes, all email sent to a particular mailbox. May be more than a single message - can be a series of date or event-triggered emails.

BANDWIDTH: Very simply, bandwidth relates to how much a resource is used. When a website gets a lot of visitors, it will use a lot of bandwidth.

BAYESIAN FILTER: An anti-spam program that evaluates header and content of incoming email messages to determine the probability that it is spam. Bayesian filters assign point values to items that appear frequently, and a message that accumulated too many points is either rejected as probable spam or delivered to a junk-mail folder. (Aka *content-based filter*.)

BETA: A term used for software that is in a "live" testing phase. People can use it but can expect some hiccups.

BINARY: A numbering system that consists of only two numbers, 0 and 1. Everything that you type or input into a computer is converted into binary – a unique combination of the zeros and ones. Screens and printers then convert this binary code back into what you inputted. When uploading (transferring) information (files) from a computer to a server, certain files need to be transferred as binary in order to be correctly interpreted and rendered. The alternative to binary for uploading is ASCII.

BLACKLIST: A list developed by anyone receiving email, or processing email on its way to the recipient, or interested third-parties, which includes domains or IP addresses of any emailers suspected of sending spam.

BLOCK: A refusal by an ISP or mail server not to forward your email message to the recipient. Many ISPs block email from IP addresses or domains that have been reported to send spam or viruses or have content that violates email policy or spam filters.

BLOG: An online journal or diary and a very popular current method of sharing your thoughts with the world. It is also very popular as a marketing tool.

BOUNCE: A message that doesn't get delivered promptly is said to have bounced. Emails can bounce for more than 30 reasons: the email address is incorrect or has been closed; the recipient's mailbox is full, the mail server is down, or the system detects spam or offensive content

BOUNCE MESSAGE: Message sent back to an email sender reporting the message could not be delivered and why. Note: Not all bounced emails result in messages being sent back to the sender. Not all bounce messages are clear or accurate about the reason email was bounced.

BOUNCE RATE: Number of bounces divided by the number of emails sent. This is an inexact number because some systems do not report back to the sender clearly or accurately. (Aka *return rate*)

BROADBAND: Relates to a type of internet connection. When someone says they have a broadband connection it means they are connecting using a service that provides greater speed. ADSL is one example of a broadband connection. It also often means greater reliability because you will not experience as many time-outs and also because more people can use a broadband connection at the same time without it causing "traffic congestion".

BROADCAST: The process of sending the same email message to multiple recipients.

CACHE: Every time you do anything on your computer, it stores this in memory so that the next time you try to do the same thing, it happens quicker than having to wait from scratch. The place where it stores all this is called the "cache". The irony is that if your cache gets too full, it in fact makes your computer work a lot slower. It's a good idea to empty your cache regularly to keep your computer working optimally.

CALL TO ACTION: In an email message, the link or body copy that tells the recipient what action to take.

CC: *Carbon Copy.* An email feature used to send a copy of an email to one or many other people at the same time that you are sending it to the main recipient/s.

CELL: A segment of your list that receives different treatment specifically to see how it responds versus the control. (Aka *Test cell* or *version*.)

CGI: *Common Gateway Interface.* It is a specification for transferring information between the Web and a Web server, such as processing email subscription or contact forms.

CHALLENGE-RESPONSE SYSTEM: An anti-spam program that requires a human being on the sender's end to respond to an emailed challenge message before their messages can be delivered to recipients. Senders who answer the challenge successfully are added to an authorisation list.

CONNECTION: This is what gets you going on the internet. Just like you cannot make a phone call without a telephone service provider to give you the use of their cables or towers, you cannot connect to the internet without an internet service provider to give you a connection to the internet. You get different types of connection: dial-up, ISDN, ADSL and wireless. Depending on the type of connection you choose, who you get your connection through and many other factors, you could end up with a slow or fast connection and a reliable or unreliable connection. However, not all connections are equal and no connection is necessarily the same from one day to the next or even one hour to the next. This is because of all the factors that can influence it. Some of these are: the equipment that your provider is using, the technical maintenance that they do, the software that they use, how busy the internet is at any given time, your physical location, the weather and even the condition of all of these things somewhere on the other side of the world.

CLICKTHROUGH: When a link is included in an email, a clickthrough occurs when a recipient clicks on the link.

CTR: *Clickthrough Rate.* Total number of clicks on email link(s) divided by the number of emails sent.

COMMERCIAL EMAIL: Email whose purpose, as a whole or in part, is to sell or advertise a product or service or if its purpose is to persuade users to perform an act, such as to purchase a product or click to a Web site whose contents are designed to sell, advertise or promote.

CONFIRMATION: An acknowledgment of a subscription or information request. "Confirmation" can be either a company statement that the email address was successfully placed on a list, or a subscriber's agreement that the subscribe request was genuine and not faked or automatically generated by a third party.

CONFIRMED OPT-IN: Inexact term that may refer to double-opt-in subscription processes or may refer to email addresses which do not hard bounce back a welcome message.

CONTENT: All the material in an email message except for the codes showing the delivery route and return-path information. Includes all words, images and links.

CO-REGISTRATION: Arrangement in which companies collecting registration information from users (email sign-up forms, shopping checkout process, etc.) include a separate box for users to check if they would also like to be added to a specific third-party list.

CONVERSION: When an email recipient performs a desired action based on a mailing you have sent. A conversion could be a monetary transaction, such as a purchase made after clicking a link. It could also include a voluntary act such as registering at a Web site, downloading a white paper, signing up for a Web seminar or opting in to an email newsletter.

CPA: *Cost Per Action:* A method of paying for advertising, or calculating results from non-CPA marketing. (Aka *Acquisition*)

CPC: *Cost Per Click.* A method of paying for advertising. Different from CPA because all you pay for is the click, regardless of what that click does when it gets to your site or landing page.

CPM: *Cost Per Thousand.*

CREATIVE: An email message's copy and any graphics.

CRM: *Customer Relationship Management* technology and systems

CROSS-CAMPAIGN PROFILING: A method used to understand how email respondents behave over multiple campaigns.

CROSS-POST: To send the same email message to at least two different mailing lists or discussion groups.

DEDICATED SERVER: An email server used by only one sender. A dedicated server often costs more to use because the expense can't be spread among many users, but it performs better than a shared server. Email usually goes out faster, the server is more secure, and you eliminate the possibility that another sender could get the server blacklisted for spamming.

DELIVERY TRACKING: The process of measuring delivery rates by format, ISP or other factors and delivery failures (bounces, invalid address, server and other errors). An inexact science.

DENIAL-OF-SERVICE ATTACK: An organised effort to disrupt email or Web service by sending more messages or traffic than a server can handle, shutting it down until the messages stop.

DEPLOY: The act of sending the email campaign after testing.

DIGEST: A shortened version of an email newsletter which replaces full-length articles with clickable links to the full article at a Web site, often with a brief summary of the contents.

DISCUSSION GROUP: An email service in which individual members post messages for all group members to read ("many to many.") In contrast, a newsletter is a "one to many" broadcast, where comments by members or subscribers go only to the message sender

DOUBLE OPT-IN: A process that requires new list joiners to take an action (such as clicking on an emailed link to a personal confirmation page) in order to confirm that they do want to be on the list.

DOWNLOAD: When you transfer information from a website or server to your computer, this is called downloading. Collecting email is therefore a download, as is saving a document from the internet to your computer. The bigger the download, the greater the bandwidth that you are using.

DYNAMIC CONTENT: Email-newsletter content that changes from one recipient to the next according to a set of predetermined rules or variables, usually according to preferences the user sets when opting in to messages from a sender. Dynamic content can reflect past purchases, current interests or where the recipient lives.

EFFECTIVE RATE: Metric that measures how many of those who opened an email message clicked on a link, usually measured as unique responders divided by unique opens.

EMAIL: The internet equivalent to post and mail, email is an encoded message that is sent instantly to someone else's computer. It is however a "best attempt" facility and not foolproof, largely because of the complexity of the internet itself and the vast number of things that can cause the process to stall or fail.

EMAIL ADDRESS: The combination of a unique user name and a sender domain. The email address requires both the user name and the domain name.

EMAIL APPENDING: Service that matches email addresses to a database of personal names and postal addresses. Appending may require an "OK to add my name" reply from the subscriber before you can add the name to the list.

EMAIL CLIENT: The software programme that you use in order to send and receive email from your home computer, tablet or smart phone.

EMAIL DOMAIN: The portion of the email address to the right of the @ sign. (Aka *Domain*).

EMAIL FILTER: A software tool that categorises, sorts or blocks incoming email, based either on the sender, the email header or message content. Filters may be applied at the recipient's level, at the email client, the ISP or a combination.

EMAIL NEWSLETTER: Content distributed to subscribers by email, on a regular schedule. Content is seen as valued editorial in and of itself rather than primarily a commercial message with a sales offer. (See *ezine*.)

EMAIL PREFIX: The portion of the email address to the left of the @ sign.

EMAIL VENDOR: Another name for an email broadcast service provider, a company that sends bulk (volume) email on behalf of their clients. Also email service provider (ESP).

EVENT TRIGGERED EMAIL: Pre-programmed messages sent automatically based on an event such as a date or anniversary.

EZINE (also *e-zine*): Another name for email newsletter, adapted from **electronic 'zine** or electronic magazine.

FALSE POSITIVE: A legitimate message mistakenly rejected or filtered as spam, either by an ISP or a recipient's anti-spam program. The more stringent an anti-spam program, the higher the false-positive rate.

FIREWALL: A program or set of programs designed to keep unauthorised users or messages from accessing a private network. In email, a firewall can be designed so that messages from domains or users listed as suspect because of spamming, hacking or forging will not be delivered.

FOLD: The fold is a term carried over from newspaper design and pagination (where the fold referred to the physical fold in the paper). The fold in a website is the point on the web page that **rests at the bottom of someone's browser (in other words, to see anything below the fold, they would have to scroll down)**. There are varying opinions on how important the fold is in web design as more and more people are accessing the web on smartphones which require scrolling.

FOOTER: An area at the end of an email message or newsletter that contains information that **doesn't change from one edition to the next, such as contact information**.

FORWARD: The process in which email recipients send your message to people they know, either because they think their friends will be interested in your message or because you offer incentives to forward messages.

FROM: Whatever appears in the email recipient's inbox as your visible "from" name. Chosen by the sender. May be a personal name, a brand name, an email address, a blank space, or alpha-numeric gobbledegook. Note - this is not the actual "from" contained in the header and may be different to the email reply address.

FULL-SERVICE PROVIDER: An email vendor that also provides strategic consulting and creative support, in addition to sending messages.

GIF: A type of file used for images, especially animated graphics and line-drawn images (as opposed to photographs). A .gif image can be saved with a transparent background, making it ideal for graphic overlays.

EMAIL: A free email service offered by Google, giving users storage space, email search, and conversation threading.

GOODBYE MESSAGE: An email message sent automatically to a list member who unsubscribes, acknowledging the request.

HEADER: Routing and program data at the start of an email message, including the sender's name and email address, originating email server IP address, recipient IP address and any transfers in the process.

HOST / HOSTING: In order for you to have an email address or a website, a computer somewhere, with all the necessary software, has to provide you with three things: an IP (domain) address, physical space to store the information and bandwidth that accommodates the flow of information that is taking place on your behalf. The company that provides you with these facilities is your host and you will pay them a fee for hosting your site and or email address.

HOUSE LIST: The list of email addresses an organisation develops on its own. (Your own list.)

HYGIENE: The process of cleaning a database to correct incorrect or outdated values.

HYPERLINK: A hyperlink is a link from one web page to another, either on the same site or another one. Generally these are text or images, and are highlighted in some way (text is often underlined or put in a different colour or font weight). The inclusion of hyperlinks are the "hyper" part of "hypertext."

IMAP: *Internet Message Access Protocol.* A standard protocol for accessing email from a server.

IMPRESSION: A single view of one page by a single user, used in calculating advertising rates.

IP ADDRESS: A unique number assigned to each device connected to the Internet. An IP address can be dynamic, meaning it changes each time an email message or campaign goes out, or it can be static, meaning it does not change. Dynamic IP addresses often trigger spam filters.

ISP: *Internet Service Provider.* The company that provides you with internet access (connection) and related services is your ISP

JPG: A type of file used for images, especially photographs. Images used on web pages work best as jpg or gif.

JUNK FOLDER: Where many email clients send messages that appear to be from spammers or contain spam or are from any sender who's not in the recipient's address book or contact list.

LAN: Local Area Network. A method of connecting a small network of computers to each other. Using LAN enables file sharing amongst different computers and the ability to connect multiple computers to the internet using the same connection.

LANDING PAGE: A Web page viewed after clicking on a link within an email.

LINKROT: What happens when links go bad over time, either because a Web site has shut down or a site has stopped supporting a unique landing page provided in an email promotion.

LIST: The list of email addresses to which you send your message. Can be either your house list or a third-party list that sends your message on your behalf.

LIST FATIGUE: A condition producing diminishing returns from a mailing list whose members are sent too many offers, or too many of the same offers, in too short a period of time.

LIST HYGIENE: The act of maintaining a list so that hard bounces and unsubscribed names are removed from mailings. Some list owners also use an email change-of-address service to update old or abandoned email addresses (hopefully with a permission step baked in) as part of this process.

LIST MANAGEMENT: How a mailing list is set up, administered and maintained. The list manager has daily responsibility over list operation, including processing subscribes and unsubscribes, bounce management, list hygiene, etc. The list manager can be the same as the database manager but is not always the same person as the list owner.

LIST OWNER: The organisation or individual who has gathered a list of email addresses. Ownership does not necessarily imply "with permission."

LIST RENTAL: The process in which a publisher or advertiser pays a list owner to send its messages to that list. Usually involves the list owner sending the message's on the advertiser's behalf. (If someone hands over their list to you, beware.)

LIST SALE: The actual purchase of a mailing list along with the rights to mail it directly. Permission can only be "sold" if the subsequent mailings continue to match the frequency, brand name, content, and "from" of the past owner's mailings - and even then this is a somewhat shaky procedure on the spam-front. You are in effect buying a publication, and not just a list.

MAIL BOMB: An orchestrated attempt to shut down a mail server by sending more messages than it can handle in a short period of time.

MAILING LIST: A list of email addresses that receive mailings or discussion-group messages.

MAIL LOOP: A communication error between two email servers, usually happening when a misconfigured email triggers an automated response from the recipient server.

MAIL SERVER: A mail server is a computer that distributes email. Simplest is to think of it as an internet version of your local post office. (Aka *server*)

MAILTO: A code to make an email address in either a text or HTML email immediately clickable. When the link is clicked, it usually opens the user's email client and inserts the email address in the To: link of a blank message.

MSP: *Mail Service Provider*, such as Hotmail.

NTH NAME: The act of segmenting a list for a test in which names are pulled from the main list for the test cell by number -- such as every 5th name on the list.

OPEN RATE: The number of HTML message recipients who opened your email, usually as a percentage of the total number of emails sent. The open rate is considered a key metric for judging an email campaign's success, but it has several problems. The rate indicates only the number of emails opened from the total amount sent, not just those that were actually delivered.

OPEN RELAY: An SMTP email server that allows outsiders to relay email messages that are neither for nor from local users. Often exploited by spammers and hackers.

OPT-IN: A specific, pro-active, request by an individual email recipient to have their own email address placed on a specific mailing list.

OPT-OUT: A specific request to remove an email address from a specific list, or from all lists operated by a single owner.

PASS-ALONG: An email recipient who got your message via forwarding from a subscriber. Pass-alongs can affect the formatting of the email, often stripping off HTML.

PERMISSION: The implicit approval given when a person actively requests to have their own email address added to a list.

PERSONALISATION: A targeting method in which an email message appears to have been created only for a single recipient. Personalisation techniques include adding the recipient's name in the subject line or message body, or the message offer reflects a purchasing, link clicking, or transaction history.

PHISHING: A form of identity theft in which a scammer uses an authentic-looking email to trick recipients into giving out sensitive personal information, such as credit-card or bank account numbers, and other data.

PLAIN TEXT: Text in an email message that includes no formatting code.

POP: Post Office Protocol, which an email client uses to send to or receive messages from an email server.

PREFERENCES: Options a user can set to determine how they want to receive your messages, how they want to be addressed, to which email address message should go and which messages they want to receive from you.

PREVIEW PANE: The window in an email client that allows the user to scan message content without actually clicking on the message.

PRIVACY POLICY: A clear description of how your company uses the email addresses and other information it gathers via opt-in requests for newsletters, company information or third-party offers or other functions. If you rent, sell or exchange your list to anyone outside your company, or if you add email addresses to opt-out messages, you should state so in the privacy policy.

PROPAGATION: (Please first read about IP's and domains if you are not already familiar with those terms). When an IP is changed because you have started up a new website or moved your website from one hosting company to another, every nameserver across the entire internet globally has to update its records to know where to find you. This process is called propagation and can take up to 48 hours. Sometimes even longer. This is because nameservers do not all update at the same time, some update more frequently than others and sometimes a nameserver can have a problem for a while. This means that some people can see the site and others can't. Some emails will reach their destination and others won't. Once domain propagation is completed however, everything should work as normal.

QUEUE: Where an email message goes after you send it but before the list owner approves it or before the list server gets around to sending it.

READ EMAIL: Not measurable. Only opens and clicks are measurable in any way. You can never know if a recipient actually read your message.

REGISTRATION: The process where someone not only opts in to your email program but provides some additional information, such as name, address, demographic data or other relevant information, usually by using a Web form.

RELATIONSHIP EMAIL: An email message that refers to a commercial action - a purchase, complaint or customer-support request - based on a business relationship between the sender and recipient.

REPLY-TO: The email address that receives messages sent from users who click "reply" in their email clients. Can differ from the "from" address which can be an automated or unmonitored email address used only to send messages to a distribution list. "Reply-to" should always be a monitored address.

REVERSE DNS: The process in which an IP address is matched correctly to a domain name, instead of a domain name being matched to an IP address. Reverse DNS is a popular method for catching spammers who use invalid IP addresses.

RICH MEDIA: Creative emails that includes video, animation, and/or sound. Rich-media emails often collect high open and click rates but require more bandwidth and are less compatible with different email clients than text or regular HTML email-format messages.

SEGMENT: The ability to slice a list into specific pieces determined by various attributes, such as open history or name source.

SELECT: A segment of a list determined by any number of attributes, such as source of name, job title, purchasing history, etc.

SELECTIVE UNSUBSCRIBE: An unsubscribe mechanism that allows a consumer to selectively determine which email newsletters they wish to continue receiving while stopping the sending of others.

SENT EMAILS: Number of emails transmitted in a single broadcast. Does not reflect how many were delivered or viewed by recipients.

SERVER: A program or computer system that stores and distributes email from one mailbox to another, or relays email from one server to another in a network.

SHARED SERVER: An email server used by more than one company or sender. Shared servers are less expensive to use because the broadcast vendor can spread the cost over more users. However, senders sharing a server risk having emails blocked by major ISPs if one of the other users does something to get the server's IP address blacklisted. See dedicated server.

SIGNATURE: A line or two of information found in the closing of an email, usually followed the sender's name.

SMTP: *Simple Mail Transfer Protocol*, the most common protocol for sending email messages between email servers.

SNAIL MAIL: Postal mail.

SOLO MAILING: A one-time broadcast to an email list, separate from regular newsletters or promotions, and often including a message from an outside advertiser or a special promotion from the list owner.

SPAM: The popular name for unsolicited commercial email. However, some email recipients define spam as any email they no longer want to receive, even if it comes from a mailing list they joined voluntarily.

SPOOFING: The practice of changing the sender's name in an email message so that it looks as if it came from another address.

SUBJECT LINE: Copy that identifies what an email message is about, often designed to entice the recipient into opening the message. The subject line appears first in the recipient's inbox, often next to the sender's name or email address. It is repeated in the email message's header information inside the message.

SUBSCRIBE: The process of joining a mailing list, either through an email command, by filling out a Web form, or offline by filling out a form or requesting to be added verbally.

SUBSCRIBER: The person who has specifically requested to join a mailing list.

SUPPRESSION FILE: A list of email addresses you have removed from your regular mailing lists, either because they have opted out of your lists or because they have notified other mailers that they do not want to receive mailings from your company.

TEST: A necessary step before sending an email campaign or newsletter. Many email clients permit you to send a test email before sending a regular email newsletter or solo mailing, in which you would send one copy of the message to an in-house email address and then review it for formatting or copy errors or improperly formatted links.

TEXT NEWSLETTER: Plain newsletter with words only, no colours, graphics, fonts or pictures; can be received by anyone who has email.

THANK-YOU PAGE: Web page that appears after user has submitted an order or a form online.

THROTTLING: The practice of regulating how many email message a broadcaster sends to one ISP or mail server at a time. Some ISPs bounce email if it receives too many messages from one sending address at a time.

TIMEOUT: If you try to connect to any server on the internet – to view a website or collect email – and it takes too long, you will have a time out. It purely means it has taken too long, so the process was aborted. This is often what has happened when you get an error while trying to send or receive email, or when you try to visit a website and instead get a page that tells you the site cannot be found. Often just trying again immediately fixes the problem.

TRANSACTIONAL EMAIL: A creative format where the recipient can enter a transaction in the body of the email itself without clicking to a web page first. Transactions may be answering a survey, or purchasing something.

TROJAN HORSE: A type of virus (malicious code) that arrives posing as something harmless (or even desirable) and infects a computer by getting the user to activate it. It achieves this because it supposedly performs a function that the user wants – like install a piece of desirable software, open a presentation, show a picture, etc. while in fact it is activating itself. Trojan horses either do something harmful (like erase files) or open a backdoor to your computer so that someone else can get access to do something – like retrieve private information. A Trojan Horse can only infect a computer if the user invites it in by performing an action – clicking a link, opening an email attachment or downloading it from the internet.

UCE: *Unsolicited Commercial Email.* Spam or junk mail.

UNIQUE REFERENCE NUMBER: A unique number assigned to a list member, usually by the email-broadcast software, and used to track member behaviour (clicks, subscribes, unsubscribe) or to identify the member to track email delivery.

URL: *Uniform Resource Locator.* The Web address for a page, always beginning with <http://> (or <https://> for a secure page)

UNSUBSCRIBE: To remove oneself from an email list, either via an emailed command to the list server or by filling in a Web form.

VERIFICATION: A program that determines an email came from the sender listed in the return path or Internet headers; designed to stop email from forged senders.

VIDEO E-MAIL: An email message that includes a video file, either inserted into the message body, accessible through a hotlink to a Web site or accompanying it in an attachment (least desirable because many ISPs block executable attachments to avoid viruses).

VIRUS: A program or computer code that affects or interferes with a computer's operating system and gets spread to other computers accidentally or on purpose through email messages, downloads, infected CDs or network messages.

WELCOME MESSAGE: Message sent automatically to new list members as soon as their email addresses are added successfully.

WHITELIST: Advance-authorized list of email addresses, held by an ISP, subscriber or other email service provider, which allows email messages to be delivered regardless of spam filters.

WEBMAIL: Email that you can check from any computer anywhere in the world using software on a server.

WORM: A type of virus (malicious code) that looks for security loopholes in a system and uses that to replicate itself. It then scans the internet for other computers that have the same flaw and spreads to them, often creating a new identity for itself in the process so that it evolves. Where a virus uses a host file to spread, a worm is imbedded in an actual document, like a Word or Excel document.