

Resource Sheet

Why Your Newsletter Gets Marked As Spam

Content Checking Resources

Spammy Words

<https://www.sendx.io/help/list-of-spam-trigger-words>

<https://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/30684/the-ultimate-list-of-email-spam-trigger-words.aspx>

Suspicious Subjects

<https://www.mequoda.com/articles/audience-development/subject-line-spam-trigger-words/>

<https://www.omnisend.com/subject-line-tester/>

Spamminess Engines

<https://www.mail-tester.com/>

<https://neverbounce.com/>

<https://emailable.com/>

<https://glockapps.com/inbox-email-tester/>

Understanding the Law

<https://www.ftc.gov/tips-advice/business-center/guidance/can-spam-act-compliance-guide-business>

Content Tips

- Avoid embedding forms in your message – the submit button likely uses Java.
- Use common fonts (Arial, Verdana, Helvetica)
- Include Alt-text for images
- Max Width 600-800px
- Optimize images to reduce size

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Infrastructure Resources

Checking the Blacklists

<https://mxttoolbox.com/blacklists.aspx>

Checking with the Major Players

- Run a [quick check at IsNotSpam](#)
- Following gmail's [list of Sender Guidelines](#).
- Use [Gmail's Postmaster Tools](#)
 - Visibility into your current domain reputation, IP reputation, spam complaint rate, and other deliverability statistics.
 - [Interpreting what you see](#)
- Senders using a dedicated IP address can request access to [Microsoft's Smart Network Data Services](#) (SNDS) – (their version of Postmaster tools).
 - In addition, senders can enroll in Outlook's [Junk Email Reporting Program](#) (JMRP) feedback loop service to receive copies of messages their recipients have marked as spam.
 - If you are following best practices and still encountering deliverability issues, you can [submit a support ticket to Microsoft directly](#).
- [SenderScore.org](#) - Sender Score by Return Path is probably the best known service that tracks email sender reputations.
 - They say: *"senders scoring 91-100 (the best possible reputation score) saw 92 percent of their messages delivered to the inbox. For senders scoring 70 or below, only a small fraction of messages were actually delivered."*

Infrastructure Tips

- Changing providers / domains / senders = a change of sender. Your IP reputation score will take a temporary hit
 - If you have a list over @ 30k, make changes gradually – migrate just your most-engaged first so that the 'new' actor will have good engagement (opens, click-through)
 - Once a few good results have established your new identity as legit, add remaining subscribers in waves, based on engagement history.
 - Don't migrate the last wave – cull them.

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About SPF, DKIM, and DMARC

1. This is high geekery. Find someone who understands it.
2. Your buddy who fixes PCs is not that person. You need a skilled network geek who plays with routers and firewalls all day.
3. If you want to try it yourself, there are resources that can help. They will vary based on who your domain provider is and who your mail provider is. Some general info to get you started, and help you identify the search terms you'll need to find your answers:
 - a. [Google's SPF Instructions](#)
 - b. [Google's DMARC Instructions](#)
 - c. [Understanding SPF](#) (moderately techie)
 - d. [SPF and DKIM for Beginners](#)
 - e. [DKIM](#) (moderately techie)

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Mail Marketing Platform Resources

List Management Tips

- 1 in 3 subscribers changes addresses each year
- Cull subscribers who
 - Haven't engaged in 9-12 months
 - Give multiple soft bounces
 - Give a single hard bounce

A/B Testing Tips

If you're getting routed to the junk folder too often, A/B testing can help you determine why.

For testing purposes, you can create a subscriber list that just consists of your mail accounts. If you're getting a lot of blocks, you can experiment and see how your providers respond.

- Variables to test
 - Links. If one of your links / too many links is getting you routed to spam, removing/varying links will help you identify
 - Content. Change the words. Remove a paragraph. Change the subject.
 - Content. Remove everything. If your message still goes to junk – your domain or IP reputation is likely the problem.

Managing Your Mail

*WHY YOUR
NEWSLETTER
GETS MARKED
AS SPAM*

(AND WHAT TO DO ABOUT IT)



*If It Looks Like A
Duck...*

How Mail Servers Identify
Spam



Your Content

The Problem

- Spammy words and subjects
- Image to Text ratio
- Link to Text ratio
- Suspicious Links
- Non-responsive templates
- Buttons that use java
- Attachments, especially PDFs/ZIPs

The Cure

- Learn what's "suspicious"
- Weight content in favor of text
- Link once: organize content on your site
- Short titles, No link shorteners
- Be mobile aware
- Use a simple web link instead
- Link from web site or cloud storage

Your Text

The Problem

- Poor editing
- Misleading subjects
- Excess XML/HTML
- Weird Characters
 - Alphabet other than primary language
 - Strings of emojis
 - Strange spacing
 - Lots of exclamation points
 - Red/multicolor text
 - All Caps

The Cure

- Use your built-in editing tools
- Thoughtful, crafted subject lines
- Don't paste directly from word processor

Your Message

The Problem

- *Excessive frequency*
- *Too big*
- *Malformed Sender*
- *Nonexistent Reply-To*
- *HTML errors*
- *Recipient recognition*

The Cure

- *Limit to twice a week (but once is better)*
- *Keep message size under 100k*
- *Name and address should align*
- *Send replies to a real address*
- *Ensure clean, minimal html*
- *Ask your subscribers to whitelist your domain and add you to their contacts*

Your Behavior

The Problem

- *Changing Providers*
- *Buying lists*
- *Generic messages*
- *Failure to comply with spam and privacy laws (CAN-SPAM, CASL, GDPR)*

The Cure

- *Staged Migrations to mitigate impact*
- *Build it the hard way*
- *Use Mail merge to personalize messages*
- *Learn the rules, or use a mail management platform that handles it for you*
 - *Unsub options*
 - *Opt-ins*
 - *Physical address*



Managing Your Lists

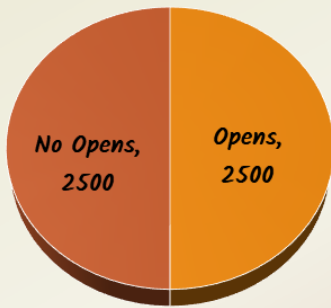
How removing subscribers
can improve your deliveries

- *Things recipients do that raise your spam score*
 - *Never open your message*
 - *Delete without opening*
 - *Mark your message as spam*
 - *Forget they signed up*
- *When you send to outdated addresses*
 - *Bounces*
 - *Soft Bounces*
 - *Hard Bounces*
 - *Spam Traps*

Why List Management Matters

It's all about the numbers – except this one

5,000 Subscribers



50,000 Subscribers



The numbers that matter

Delivery Rate

- Below 80% is not OK
- 90% is a reasonable target

Open Rate

- 20-30% is good

Click-Through Rate

- 2.5-5%

Name recognition

Sending from your own domain



Mail Marketing Platforms

Why a dedicated tool is
good for you

- *Automatically add compliance elements to your messages*
- *Manage technical mail-format “stuff”*
- *Provide performance data to help you manage your lists*
- *Automate/enhance list management tasks*
- *Built-in spam review features that can check your message before you send it*
- *Send your messages from established IP addresses with a valid reputation*
- *A/B Testing to improve Open Rates*

*Things A Mail
Marketing
Platform Can
Do For You*



How To Tell When You Look Like A Spammer

How Do I Know If I Look Like A Spammer?

- *Check your vocabulary*
- *Check your message*
- *Use the tools*

- *Elements of Spam Rating*
 - *Domain Reputation*
 - *IP Reputation*
 - *Sender Reputation*
- *Establish Trustworthy Infrastructure*
- *Craft Deliverable Messages*
- *Manage Your Lists*

Staying Out Of The Spam Folder