

Glossary

Although we have tried to avoid jargon as much as possible in this book, some of the terminology used will be unfamiliar to some readers. This glossary defines the terms all readers should be familiar with to get the most out of this book—and to look smart and sound knowledgeable when talking to colleagues and prospective business contacts.

A/B split A test to compare two different versions of an email. Specifically, an email list is split into two groups; half is sent one version of the email, while the other half receives a second version. See also *Nth name*.

above the fold The part of an email message or web page that is visible without scrolling; this comes from a printing term for the top half of a newspaper above the horizontal fold in the paper. Material in this area is considered more valuable because the reader sees it first. Unlike a newspaper, email and web page fold locations aren't predictable. Your fold may be affected by the user's preview pane, monitor size, and monitor resolution, as well as any headers placed by email programs such as Hotmail and other factors.

acquisition cost In email marketing, the cost to generate one lead, newsletter subscriber, or customer in an individual email campaign; typically, this is 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, and so on. Generally, affirmative consent does not include the following: failing to uncheck a preselected box on a web form, entering a business relationship with an organization without being asked for separate permission to be sent specific types of email, or opting out.

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 when they join a list. It may be triggered by joins, unsubscribes, or all email sent to a particular mailbox. The autoresponse may consist of more than a single message, and it can be a series of date- or event-triggered emails.

blacklist A list developed by anyone receiving email or processing email on its way to the recipient, or by interested third parties,

that includes domains or IP addresses of any emailers suspected of sending spam. Many companies use blacklists to reject inbound email, either at the server level or before it reaches the recipient's inbox.

bounce A message that doesn't get delivered promptly is said to have bounced. Emails can bounce for more than 30 reasons; for example, 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. See also *hard bounce* and *soft bounce*.

bounce handling The process of managing email that has bounced. Bounce handling is important for list maintenance, list integrity, and delivery. Bounce handling is managed by adjusting the cadence of the retried email message attempts.

bounce message A message returned to an email sender, reporting that the message could not be delivered and why. Not all bounced emails result in messages being sent back to the sender, and not all bounce messages are clear or accurate about the reason the email was bounced.

brand equity Refers to the marketing effects or outcomes that accrue to a product with its brand name compared to those that would accrue if the same product did not have the brand name. This consumer perception of the brand's value over another one is referred to as brand equity.

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

bulk folder Where many email clients send messages that appear to be from spammers or contain spam, or are from any sender not

in the recipient's address book or contact list. Some clients allow the recipient to override the system's settings and direct that mail from a suspect sender to be routed directly to the inbox. Also called *junk folder*.

CAN-SPAM Popular name for the U.S. law regulating commercial email, updated in July 2008. (The full name is the Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act of 2003.)

cell A segment of your list that receives different treatment specifically to see how it responds compared to the control, which receives the standard treatment. Also called *test cell* or *test version*.

churn A measure of how many subscribers leave a mailing list (or how many email addresses go bad) over a certain time, usually expressed as a percentage of the whole list.

clickstream The collection or *stream* of clicks that a user makes when visiting a website.

click-through When a recipient clicks a hotlink included in an email. See also *uniform resource locator (URL)*.

click-through rate (CTR) The total number of clicks on an email link divided by the number of emails sent. Some email broadcast vendors or tracking programs define CTR differently. The term is slightly inexact because some clicks "get lost" between the click and your server. Also be sure to determine whether your CTR is unique, meaning that each individual user is counted only once no matter how many times they click a link.

click-through tracking The data collected about each click-through link, such as how many people clicked it and how many clicks

resulted in desired actions such as sales, forwards, or subscriptions.

confirmed opt-in Inexact term that may refer to double opt-in subscription processes or to email addresses that do not hard bounce back a welcome message. Ask anyone using this term to define it more clearly.

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

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 website, downloading a white paper, signing up for a web seminar, or opting into an email newsletter.

co-registration An arrangement in which companies collecting registration information from users (email sign-up forms, shopping checkout process, and so on) include a separate box for users to check if they would also like to be added to a specific third-party list.

CPA Cost per action (or acquisition). A method of paying for advertising, or of calculating equivalent results from other payment models, where the publisher is paid each time someone completes an action (such as making a purchase).

CPC Cost per click. A method of paying for advertising. This is 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.

cross-campaign profiling A method used to understand how email respondents behave over multiple campaigns.

CTR See *click-through rate (CTR)*.

data center A physical location that consists of servers used to store data and execute your email campaigns. Email Service Providers often run multiple data centers to create redundancy and scale.

delivered email The number of emails sent minus the number of bounces and filtered messages. This is a highly inexact number because not all receiving ISPs report accurately on which emails didn't go through and why not.

display name See *email-friendly name*.

DomainKeys An antispam software application being developed by Yahoo and using a combination of public and private "keys" to authenticate the sender's domain and reduce the chance that a spammer or hacker will fake the domain sending address. The latest version is referred to as DKIM.

double opt-in A process that requires new list joiners to take an action (such as clicking a link to a personal confirmation page) to confirm they want to be on the list. Interpreted incorrectly by some email broadcast vendors to mean a new subscriber who does not opt out of or bounce a welcome message.

dynamic content Email newsletter content that changes from one recipient to the next according to a set of predetermined rules or variables. Dynamic content often reflects past purchases, current interests, or where the recipient lives.

ECO A Email change of address. A service that tracks email address changes and updates.

email address The combination of a unique username and a sender domain (JohnDoe@anywhere.com). The email address requires both the username and the domain name.

email appending A 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 recipients use to read email, such as Outlook Express or Lotus Notes.

email domain Also called simply the *domain*, the portion of an email address to the right of the @ sign. Comparing your list to common domains can be a useful hygiene tool; for example, you can identify all records where the consumer entered name@aol as their email address and correct it to name@aol.com.

email filter A software tool that categorizes, sorts, or blocks incoming email, based either on the sender, the email header, or the message content. Filters may be applied at the email client, the ISP, or a combination.

email-friendly name The portion of the email address that is displayed in most, though not all, email readers in place of, or in addition to, the email address. Also called the *display name*; see also *From name*.

email harvesting An automated process in which a robot program searches web pages or other Internet destinations for email addresses. The program collects the addresses into a database, which frequently gets resold to spammers or unethical bulk mailers. Many U.S. state laws forbid harvesting. CAN-SPAM does not outlaw it by name

but allows triple damages against violators who compiled their mailing lists with harvested names.

email newsletter Content distributed to subscribers by email on a regular schedule. The content is seen as valued editorial in itself rather than primarily a commercial message with a sales offer.

email prefix The portion of the email address to the left of the @ sign.

enhanced whitelist A super whitelist maintained by AOL for bulk emailers who meet strict delivery standards, such as receiving fewer than one spam complaint for every 1,000 email messages. Emailers on the enhanced whitelist can bypass AOL 9.0’s automatic suppression of images and links.

event-triggered email Pre-programmed messages sent automatically based on an event such as a date or anniversary.

eye tracking The process of measuring either the point of gaze (“where we are looking”) or the motion of an eye relative to the head. A device is used for measuring eye positions and eye movements. This research process is applied to marketing creative and general usability projects.

false positive A legitimate message mistakenly rejected or filtered as spam, either by an ISP or by a recipient’s antispam program. The more stringent an antispam program, the higher its false-positive rate.

feedback loop (FBL) Information provided by a variety of ISPs (AOL, Microsoft, Yahoo, and so on) about which subscribers are marking your email as spam, as well as overall insight into your reputation with that ISP.

footer An area at the end of an email message or newsletter where you can place information that doesn't change from one edition to the next, such as contact information, the company's postal address, or the email address the recipient used to subscribe to mailings. Some software programs can be set to place this information automatically.

forward Also called *Forward to a Friend*, 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 have offered incentives to forward messages. Forwarding can be done through the recipient's own email client or by giving the recipient a link to click, which opens a registration page at your site in which you ask the forwarded visitor to give their name and email address, the name/email address of the person they want to send to, and (optionally) a brief email message explaining the reason for the forward. You can supply the wording or allow the forwarder to write their own message. The act of forwarding to a friend is commonly called *viral marketing*.

frequency value See *recency, frequency, monetary (RFM) score*.

From name Whatever appears in the From line in your email recipient's inbox. Chosen by the sender, it may be a personal name, a brand name, an email address, a blank space, or alphanumeric gobbledygook. This is not the actual "from" contained in the header, and it may also be different from the email reply address. It is easy to fake; it's also called *email-friendly name*.

full-service provider An email vendor that also provides strategic consulting and creative support in addition to sending messages.

hard bounce Message sent to an invalid, closed, or nonexistent email account.

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.

heatmap A visual depiction of data. Marketers use heatmaps to learn more about what visitors to their site are viewing. A heatmap can show things such as the frequency of clicks, the length of time spent on a particular page, and which tags and news subjects are most popular. A color scale is usually used to illustrate the variation in the data.

hotlink See *uniform resource locator (URL)*.

house list The list of email addresses an organization develops on its own.

HTML message An email message that contains any type of formatting other than text. This may be as simple as programming that sets the text in a specific font (bold, italics, Courier 10 point, and so on). It also includes any graphic images, logos, and colors.

hygiene The process of cleaning a database to correct incorrect or outdated values. See also *list hygiene*.

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 (changing each time an email message or campaign goes out), or it can be static (unchanging). Static IP addresses are best for email marketing, because dynamic IP addresses often trigger spam filters.

landing page A web page displayed after the user clicks a link within an email. Also may be called a *microsite*, *splash page*, *bounce page*, or *click page*.

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

list The email addresses to which you send your message. This can be either your house list or a third-party list that sends your message on your behalf.

list fatigue The effect of 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 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 (ideally with a permission step included) as part of this process.

list management How a mailing list is set up, administered, and maintained. The list manager has daily responsibility over the operation of the list, including processing subscribes and unsubscribes, bounce management, list hygiene, and so on. 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 organization or individual who has gathered a list of email addresses. Ownership does not necessarily imply that the addresses were collected “with permission.”

list rental The process in which a publisher or advertiser pays a list owner to send its messages to that list. This usually involves the list owner sending the messages on the advertiser’s behalf. (Tip: If someone hands over their list to you, take such a list with caution because it is likely a privacy policy violation and could lead to unsubscribe CAN-SPAM issues.)

list sale The actual purchase of a mailing list along with the rights to mail it directly. Permission can be “sold” only 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, not just a list.

mailto A code to make an email address (in either a text or an HTML email) immediately clickable (for example, `mailto:JohnDoe@anywhere.com`). When the link is clicked, it usually opens the user’s email client and inserts the email address in the To field of a blank message.

monetary value See *recency*, *frequency*, *monetary (RFM) score*.

MTA Mail transfer agent. A computer that forwards email from senders to recipients (or to relay sites) and stores incoming email.

multipart/MIME Also known (confusingly) as an *email sniffer*. This is a message format that includes both an HTML and a text-only version in the same message. Most (but not all) email clients receiving messages in this format will automatically display the version the user's system is set to show. Systems that can't show HTML should show the text version instead. This doesn't always work for many Lotus Notes users. Also note that tracking information about which version a recipient ended up viewing is limited; only HTML open rates and (possibly) link click tracking are transmitted to the sender.

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 fifth name on the list. See also *A/B split*.

open rate The number of HTML message recipients who opened your email, usually expressed 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. Opens also can't be calculated on text emails. Also, some email clients allow users to scan message content without actually opening the message, which is falsely calculated as an open. See *preview pane*.

open relay An SMTP email server that allows outsiders to relay email messages that are neither from nor addressed to local users. Often exploited by spammers and hackers.

opt-in A specific proactive request by an individual email recipient to have their own email address placed on a specific mailing list. Many list renters and buyers now require

list owners to provide proof of opt-in, including the actual email or IP address opt-in date and time the request was received.

opt-out A request to remove an email address from a specific list or from all lists operated by a single owner. Also, the practice of adding an email address to a list without the addressee's prior approval, forcing those who don't want to be on your list to actively unsubscribe.

pass-along An email recipient who received your message via forwarding from a subscriber. (Some emails offer Forward to a Friend links, but the vast majority of pass-alongs happen using email clients, and not that technique.) Pass-alongs can affect the formatting of the email, often stripping off HTML. See also *viral marketing*.

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

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

personally identifiable information (PII) Any piece of information that can potentially be used to uniquely identify, contact, or locate a single person.

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, Social Security numbers, and other data.

plain text Text in an email message that includes no formatting code. See *HTML message*.

POP Post Office Protocol, which an email client uses to exchange messages with an email server.

postmaster Whom to contact at a website, ISP, or other site to request information, get help with delivery, or register complaints.

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 messages should go, and which messages they want to receive from you. The more preferences a user can specify, the more likely you'll send relevant email.

Pretty Good Privacy (PGP) Software used to encrypt and protect email as it moves from one computer to another; it can also be used to verify a sender's identity.

preview pane The window in an email client that allows the user to scan message content without actually clicking the message. See *open rate*.

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, 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. State laws may also compel you to explain your privacy policy and may define where to put the policy statement so people will see it and even in what form the policy should be displayed.

proof list List of email addresses, usually production and marketing department employees who receive a copy of the email when it is deployed. This proof list may also include email addresses at a variety of domains or webmail accounts. See also *seed list*.

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. Some list software allows you to queue a message and then set a time to send it automatically, either during a quiet period on the server or at a time when human approval isn't available.

read email A type of data that is not measurable. Only opens and clicks can be measured in any way. You can never know whether a recipient simply read your message.

recency, frequency, monetary (RFM) score

Commonly referred to as *RFM analysis*, this approach is used to segment customers into different groupings based on how much they've spent (the monetary value), how frequently they've purchased, and how recently. Marketers will often use this to create groups of six-month buyers, meaning those buyers who have purchased in the past six months. The approach can also be applied to email click and or site visit behavior, as in those subscribers who may have clicked within the past six months.

registration The process where someone not only opts into your email program but also 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. Generally, this is not covered by CAN-SPAM requirements.

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. If a spam filter or program can't match the IP address to the domain name, it can reject the email.

rich media Creative content 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 messages. Some mailers also consider transactional email “rich.”

seed email Email addresses placed on a list (sometimes secretly) to determine what messages are sent to the list and/or to track delivery rate and/or visible appearance of delivered messages. Seeds may also be placed on websites and elsewhere on the Internet to track spammers' harvesting activities.

seed list A collection of email addresses that act only as seed emails.

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, and so on. CPM list renters pay an additional fee per thousand names for each select on top of the base list price.

selective unsubscribe An unsubscribe mechanism that allows a consumer to selectively determine which email newsletters they want to continue receiving while stopping the sending of others.

Sender ID The informal name for a new antispam program combining two existing protocols, Sender Policy Framework and Caller ID. Sender ID authenticates email senders and blocks email forgeries and faked addresses.

Sender Policy Framework (SPF) A protocol used to eliminate email forgeries. A line of code called an SPF record is placed in a sender's Domain Name Service information. The incoming mail server can verify a sender by reading the SPF record before allowing a message through.

sent emails The number of email names transmitted in a single broadcast. This does not reflect how many were delivered or viewed by recipients.

signature A line or two of information found in the closing of an email, usually following the sender's name. Signatures can include advertising information, such as a company name, product, brand message, or marketing call to action.

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

snail mail A slang term for postal mail.

soft bounce Email that is sent to an active (live) email address but is turned away before being delivered. Often, the problem is temporary—the server is down, or the recipient’s mailbox is over the quota. The email might be held at the recipient’s server and delivered later, or the sender’s email program may attempt to deliver it again. Soft-bounce reports are not always accurate because they don’t report all soft bounces or the actual reason for the bounce.

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.

SpamCop A blacklist and IP address database, formerly independently owned but now part of the email vendor Ironport. Many ISPs check the IP addresses of incoming email against SpamCop’s records to determine whether the address has been blacklisted because of spam complaints.

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 To join 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. (If you accept verbal subscriptions, you should safeguard yourself by recording each one and storing it, along with a time and date, in a retrievable format.)

subscriber The person who has specifically requested to join a mailing list. A list has both subscribers, who receive the message from the sender, and pass-alongs.

subscriber data table A database table that holds all your email subscriber information, including their demographic attributes and profile information.

suppression file A list of email addresses you have removed from your regular mailinglists, 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. More broadly, marketers may choose to suppress subscribers from a mailing for many reasons. Required by CAN-SPAM. Also called *do-not-email list*.

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. Email marketers should also send a test campaign to a list of email addresses not in the deployment database to determine likely response rates and how well different elements in the message perform.

throttling The practice of regulating how many email messages a broadcaster sends to one ISP or mail server at a time. Some ISPs bounce email if they receive too many messages from one sending address at a time.

transactional email Also known as transactive email. A creative format where the recipient can enter a transaction in the body of the email without clicking to a web page first. Transactions may be answering a survey or purchasing something.

UCE Unsolicited commercial email, also called *spam* or *junk mail*.

uniform resource locator (URL) The web address for a page, always beginning with `http://` (or `https://` for a secure page), followed by `www` (or variations, although some URLs are set up not to include this information), the domain name, and the domain suffix. This is commonly referred to as a *link* or *hotlink*.

unique reference number A unique number assigned to a list member, usually by the email-broadcast software, used to track member behavior (clicks, subscribes, unsubscribe) or to identify the member to track email delivery. Also referred to as the *primary record key*.

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; this is designed to stop email from forged senders.

video email An email message that includes a video file, either inserted into the message body, accessible through a hotlink to a website, or accompanying it in an attachment. (The latter is the least desirable because

many ISPs block executable attachments to avoid viruses.)

viral marketing The process of marketing a product or brand through an existing social network. This is a tactic that is not exclusive to email marketing.

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. See *worm*.

web bug A 1-pixel-by-1-pixel image tag added to an HTML message and used to track open rates by email address, as well as other behaviors. Opening the message, either in the preview pane or by clicking it, activates the tag and sends a signal to the website, where special software tracks and records the signal as an open. Also called *web beacon*.

webmail or web mail Any of several web-based email clients where clients have to go to a website to access or download email instead of using a desktop application. Some examples are Yahoo Mail and Hotmail.

welcome message A message sent automatically to new list members as soon as their email addresses are added successfully.

whitelist A list of email addresses authorized in advance, held by an ISP, subscriber, or other email service provider, which allows email messages to be delivered regardless of spam filters. See also *enhanced whitelist*.

worm A piece of malicious code delivered via an executable attachment in email or over a computer network and which spreads to other computers by automatically sending itself to every email address on a recipient's contact list or address book. See *virus*.