



## Tools to keep your email marketing out of spam and reduce the spam you receive

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Email marketing is a great tool for reaching new customers and communicating with existing customers. If you are already engaging in email marketing, you are probably putting a great deal of effort into designing an effective marketing piece and generating a useful mailing list. But all that effort is for naught if your emails aren't getting through to your intended recipients.

The tech reviewer CNet recently reported on a large-scale study of email spam that found that in 2007 95% of all email sent was spam. This is up from 70% in 2004, and a mere 5% in 2001.

So what can you do to ensure your email does not become part of that statistic?

First of all, make sure you are using a reputable email service provider. Just as single email addresses can be blacklisted because they are found to be a source of spam, so too, when a large volume of spam is traced as being sent from a single mail server, that server might then be blacklisted as being a known source of spam. If that is the case, it doesn't matter that you are sending legitimate email that follows all the rules – it won't stand a chance of getting delivered.

Chances are, though, that you are using a reputable service provider. That being the case, there are several steps to take that will decrease the chances that your email will be tagged as spam.

1. Ask regular email recipients to add you to their safe senders or white lists.
2. Don't send an email message to 50 or more addresses without using an email list service.
3. In the Subject field of your email:
  - Don't leave it blank.
  - Don't use punctuation, especially exclamation marks.
  - Don't put any words in all capitalized letters.
  - Don't use spamming words like "free", "offer", "medication", "prescription" and "mortgage".
  - Don't use numbers or dollar amounts.
4. If you want to check that your email is clean before sending it, try these online tools to check your email's deliverability rating:  
[http://www.contactology.com/check\\_mqs.php](http://www.contactology.com/check_mqs.php)  
<http://spamcheck.sitesell.com/>.

## What about all the spam you are getting?

If you have a website, then the most important element on your site is a way for prospective customers to reach you – your Contact Us information. If that contact information includes your email address, it's likely being picked up by spambots - programs designed to collect email addresses from the Internet in order to build mailing lists for sending unsolicited email. There are some things you can do to allow your email address to be visible, but not accessible to spambots.

1. If your email address appears in full, rather than an "Email us" or "Click here" reference, rather than having it appear as text, you can turn your address into an image that looks like text. A free online email address image generator that lets you customize how your address will look can be found at <http://www.spam-proof-email-generator.com/>.
2. There's more to your email address than just what's seen on the screen. There is the coding around it that takes the user to their email program and inserts your address. That coding also contains your email address and can be picked up by spambots. However, you can hide it by encoding it as a decimal character entity rather than real text. Again there is a free online tool that will generate the code at <http://www.wbwip.com/wbw/emailencoder.html>.
3. Although there's not much you can do to get off the lists you're already on, you can reduce the spam you receive from those lists by blacklisting the senders and contacting your email service provider to find out what additional spam filters they can offer you.

Keep up your email marketing, but take whatever steps you can to ensure you're reaching your market.