



Guideline for improving deliverability

Version: 1.0
Date: June 5th 2008

Introduction

Because of the huge amounts of spam that are being sent by email these days, it's essential to make sure that legitimate emails (like your newsletter) get recognized as such by users and their ISP's (Internet Service Providers).

Yourzine works hard to ensure good delivery rates, but some actions have to be taken by our customers who make the newsletters and their system administrators / IT department. Therefore this document is intended for Yourzine customers and their system administrators.

What can you as a customer do?

As the person responsible for making the content of the newsletter and sending it out, the main questions to ask yourself for improving deliverability should be:

- How does my subscriber perceive my newsletter?
- What makes someone to read my newsletter and not (accidentally) mark it as spam?
- How do I make sure ISP's don't identify my content as spam?

The following paragraphs are related to these questions and give you some guidelines as to what to keep in mind when making your newsletters.

Your subject line is key

The subject line of your newsletter is the first piece of information that gives your readers an insight into what could be in your newsletter. It's therefore very important to think carefully about your subject line.

Subject lines should be short (definitely less than 35 characters) and provide useful information. The theme of an event is much more important to make a first impression than the date, therefore never put the date first. Also include a phrase in every subject line that shows at a glance who you are and what your message is about. Subscribers get used to recognizing each message from you.

For more information on good subject lines, check out the following sites:

<http://www.tamingthebeast.net/articles7/email-subject-lines.htm>

<http://www.mailchimp.com/resources/subject-line-comparison.phtml>

http://www.emallabs.com/email_marketing_articles/article_15tipstoimprovesubject.html

Get subscribers to add your "From:" address

You have to make sure your subscribers add the email address from which you send your newsletters to their address book or "allowed senders" list. This increases the chances of sending enormously. After this is done, you of course have to make sure you keep your "From:" address constant and don't change it.

Include contact information

Adding contact information to your newsletter raises the level of trust readers have in you.

Definitely include a contact email address, but adding postal address and even a telephone number enhances the level of trust your readers have.

Avoid words that are related to spam

Many spam filters filter out emails that use words often used in spam such as “Free!” or “You’re a Winner!”. In “appendix A” at the bottom of this document you’ll find a list of the most common used words. Try to find synonyms by using a thesaurus.

Avoid making newsletters build only with images

Spammers often use emails that are build up completely of images and don’t use any HTML text (text that you can select and copy / paste using your cursor). Because this is such standard practice, spam filters and ISP’s often automatically block emails that only contain images.

Think what you put “above the fold”

Many email programs use only ¼ of the screen to display emails (the other parts of the screen to show mail folders and inbox contents). Therefore it’s very important what you put at the top of your mail, as that’s the part people will see without scrolling through your mail.

Adding your company logo in the top is very important (builds trust) and make sure the reader sees in the top what the newsletter is about. A short summary or introduction of the content in your mail should be seen at first glance. Avoid putting the same introduction text to your company or newsletter at the top, as this is what people will see without scrolling and they might think you’re sending the same newsletter each time.

Think from left to right

We are used to read from left to right. Therefore we will first notice what’s on the left side of an email. Your logo in the left top is a very good idea as that’s what people will see first, but avoid putting any standard columns (for example with contact information) on the left side. This information will always be the same and doesn’t tell the reader what the newsletter is about. It’s better to put this kind of information on the right and the content of your newsletter on the left.

Size of text used

It’s OK to use larger text size to emphasize headers or other important information. Avoid though

to make your texts **too big** as this is done a lot in spam and can trigger spam filters.

What can system administrators or IT departments do?

There are two important things system administrators and IT departments (from now on all labeled “system administrator”) can do to improve the delivery of your newsletter. One (whitelisting) has to be done by the system administrators of your subscribers, the other (adding an SPF record) by your system administrator (who is responsible for the domain name from which you send your mailings).

Whitelisting

To guarantee the successful delivery of your newsletter to the subscribers mail servers, the system administrator of your subscriber has to “white-list” the IP addresses and domains of the mail servers of Yourzine. This means the mail server of your subscriber will allow the mails coming from Yourzine to “pass the gate” and get into the inbox of the subscriber.

The system administrator will know how to do this, and the following IP addresses should be white listed:

210.51.17.231
210.51.17.232
210.51.17.233
210.51.17.234
210.51.17.235

In addition to these IP addresses, the following domains should be white listed:

clients.yourzine.com.cn
c.1yz.cn
img.yourzine.com.cn
mail01.1yz.cn
mail02.1yz.cn

Adding an SPF record - explanation

After you’ve created a newsletter in our application and click “send”, our mail servers will start to send out this mail to all the addresses in your database. When these emails arrive at their destination, the mail servers that receive these emails will process them and do a check to see where the mail is coming from.

The “from:” field will say the mail is coming from “newsletter@yourcompany.com”. However, then the server will check where mail was “really” send from and found out it’s coming from “1yz.cn” (our mail server). This is often what spam does: it pretends to be coming from a certain address, but in reality it’s coming from somewhere else. Therefore, a lot of mail servers and anti-spam filters will mark a newsletter as spam and block it if our mail servers don’t have permission to send mail on behalf of your domain.

An SPF-record does exactly that: it gives the Yourzine mail servers permission to send mail on behalf of your domain (newsletter@yourcompany.com). When the mail arrives at its destination, it

will check the SPF records on your domain and if that record includes the Yourzine mail servers it will allow the newsletter go through and not mark it as spam.

Adding an SPF record – instructions

The SPF record had to be added by the person or company who takes care of the domain name from which you send your newsletters (the email address that's in the "From:" field of your newsletter). This is often the person who has registered your domain name, so your hosting provider or IT department. They should follow the instructions below:

Add the following to an existing SPF record (between the " "):

" include:1yz.cn "

Or if there's no SPF yet, create the following (between the " "):

" v=spf1 +mx include:1yz.cn -all "

The input screen used for this can look a bit different from the image below, depending on the server software used, but this gives an example of what it should more or less look like:

RR	类型	优先级	值	操作
yourdomainname.com	NS	--	dns7.hichina.com	--
yourdomainname.com	NS	--	dns8.hichina.com	--
yourdomainname.com	TXT	--	v=spf1 a mx include:1yz.cn -all	修改 删除
www.yourdomainname.com	A	--	121.198.123.211	修改 删除
mail.yourdomainname.com	A	--	202.91.187.57	修改 删除
yourdomainname.com	MX	1	mail.yourdomainname.com	修改 删除
smtp.yourdomainname.com	A	--	202.91.187.57	修改 删除

便捷解析 **高级解析**

适用于专业人员设置解析，此外可单条添加解析记录。

RR	类型	值	优先级	
<input type="text" value="v=spf1 a"/> .yourdomainname.com	<input type="text" value="MX记录"/>	<input type="text" value="include:1yz.cn ~all"/>	<input type="text" value="10"/>	<input type="button" value="新增"/>

① 单个域名免费设置总共10条解析记录；超过10条记录，需要另外购买。 [立即购买](#)

Figure 1 - creating an spf record

Need help or got questions?

If you have any more questions or comments after reading these guidelines please don't hesitate to contact us. We're constantly working on improving deliverability and any questions or idea's you might have can be send to info@yourzine.com.cn .

Appendix A – list of words often used in spam

These words often result in immediate blocking by ISP's and spam filters:

Free!
50% off!
Click Here
Call now!
Subscribe
Earn \$
Discount!
Eliminate Debt
Double your income
You're a Winner!
Reverses Aging
"Hidden"
Information you requested
"Stop" or "Stops"
Lose Weight
Multi level Marketing
Million Dollars
Opportunity
Compare
Removes
Collect
Amazing
Cash Bonus
Promise You
Credit
Loans
Satisfaction Guaranteed
Serious Cash
Search Engine Listings

The following words and phrases often don't result in immediate blocking but add to your "spam count" so try to avoid them as well:

Act Now!
All New
All Natural
Avoid Bankruptcy
As Seen On...
Buy Direct
Casino
Cash
Consolidate Your Debt
Special Promotion

Easy Terms
Get Paid
Guarantee, Guaranteed
Great offer
Give it away, Giving it away
Join millions
Meet Singles
MLM
No cost, No fees
Offer
One time
Online pharmacy
Order Now
Please Read
Don't Delete
Save up to
Time limited
Unsecured debt or credit
Vacation
Viagra
Visit our web site
While Supplies last
Why pay more?
Winner
Work at home
You've been selected