



Project Plan: Email Delivery Project
Created by: HaleStorm Media (Heidi Hale)
Created for: Project ID: 737977
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SUMMARY OF INVESTIGATION

Infusionsoft Email Servers

We started the investigation by first understanding how Infusionsoft's email servers are setup. I first spoke to Infusionsoft customer service. They explained to me that all of their mail servers are under the IP range of **208.76.24.0/22 (An IP address is a unique number that every computer connected to the internet is assigned – so Infusionsoft and other companies like this have hundreds of servers (or computers) that only send email)**. I then asked to speak with James Thompson, the Infusionsoft Email Systems Manager, who spoke to me about the major overhaul in their email server infrastructure last year.

After my conversation with Mr. Thompson and researching the company on my own, I found that the Infusionsoft Systems team begun a migration of their previous production mail server IP addresses to a new range in September, 2010. Although this “warming” of new IP addresses will be a good long-term solution for Infusionsoft, they did note in their September 10, 2011 blog post:

*In addition, in the long-run, we will now own these IP's so we can take them with us to scale with our business and we won't need to go through this “warming” period again. This is the smart long-term solution to providing a good email sending platform for our customers, but will have some **short-term negative effects, mainly being some email message may take a little longer to end up in the recipient's inbox.***

Again, this delay was most dramatic at Yahoo. Some ISPs take longer than others to develop a reputation, but overall we saw the IP relationship establishing to take no more than a day or two for most providers, but up to approximately a week for others.

[-http://www.infusionsoftstatus.com/09/2010/infusionsoft-mail-ip-changes-ip-warming/](http://www.infusionsoftstatus.com/09/2010/infusionsoft-mail-ip-changes-ip-warming/)

Now that I knew that Infusionsoft had begun a major overhaul of their email server infrastructure, I then needed to find out what exactly that meant. Prior to this overhaul, customers were segmented into groups of (10). Each group would share (1) mail server IP address. However, if only one client of the group of (10) were to send out spam, that meant that the other (9) clients' email delivery rates would be negatively affected in exactly the same manner – as everyone is sharing the same email server.

Infusionsoft recognized the negative effect and decided to move forward. One of many changes

the Email Systems team made to improve deliverability was to shift its email architecture onto a message management platform. The new platform allowed the team to establish three groups of IP addresses to send from:

- **Group #1. Transactional emails**

This first group of IP addresses was used to send invoices, order confirmations and other transaction-based emails for Infusionsoft's clients. Thompson's team wanted to isolate these emails because they had some of the best performance metrics of any email type, and because getting them delivered was critical to Infusionsoft's clients.

- **Group #2. Single opt-in lists**

This group of IP addresses was reserved for client lists that were built using unconfirmed- or single-opt-in tactics. The team isolated this group because its lists generated a higher number of spam complaints. Grouping them would prevent the complaints from hurting the reputations of IP addresses that sent emails to more qualified lists.

- **Group #3. Double-opt-in lists**

This final group of IP addresses was reserved for email lists that were generated with confirmed- or double-opt-in tactics. These lists generated fewer problems than single-opt-in lists, and therefore benefited by being associated with each other rather than with lists of lower quality.

- **Why this matters:**

The Email Systems team noted that the delivery rates between Group 2 and Group 3 originally differed by as much as 5 percent, but is now down to about 1 percent. "However," James Thompson, Email System Manager says, "we are talking about averages here on millions of emails, so that does add up."

So even if your company is relying on a shared IP address from a provider, it can still be in the best interest of your deliverability to build high-quality lists with confirmed opt-ins.

Next, I noted every IP address in the range of **208.76.24.0/22** that the Infusionsoft Customer Service gave me. I then tested each IP address to see if they were listed on any blacklists and also checked the Return Path SenderScores and the Cisco Senderbase Delivery Scores. I found 38 IP addresses listed on 5 different blacklists 50 times. I am not sure which IP address are in which tier listed above (transactional emails, double-opt ins, or single-opt ins), as Infusionsoft would not reveal this information.

Solution: By providing the attached spreadsheet to the Email Systems team at Infusionsoft, the mail server IP addresses that you are sharing with other Infusionsoft clients should be able to be removed in a few days, if not faster by the Infusionsoft team.

Email Design

Now that I knew that Infusionsoft is partly responsible for the email delivery problem(s) you have experienced, I still wanted to audit your email design. I chose (11) email templates from your library – marketing and transactional-based emails. I first looked at the HTML code of the emails and the email template settings. Next, I sent each of the (11) emails to my Litmus email testing account.

Findings

1. NO Text Version – In every email audited, I found that there was not a text version.

When creating message to send to your list, you should always include a plain-text version, even if you do also include HTML.

There are two major reasons why:

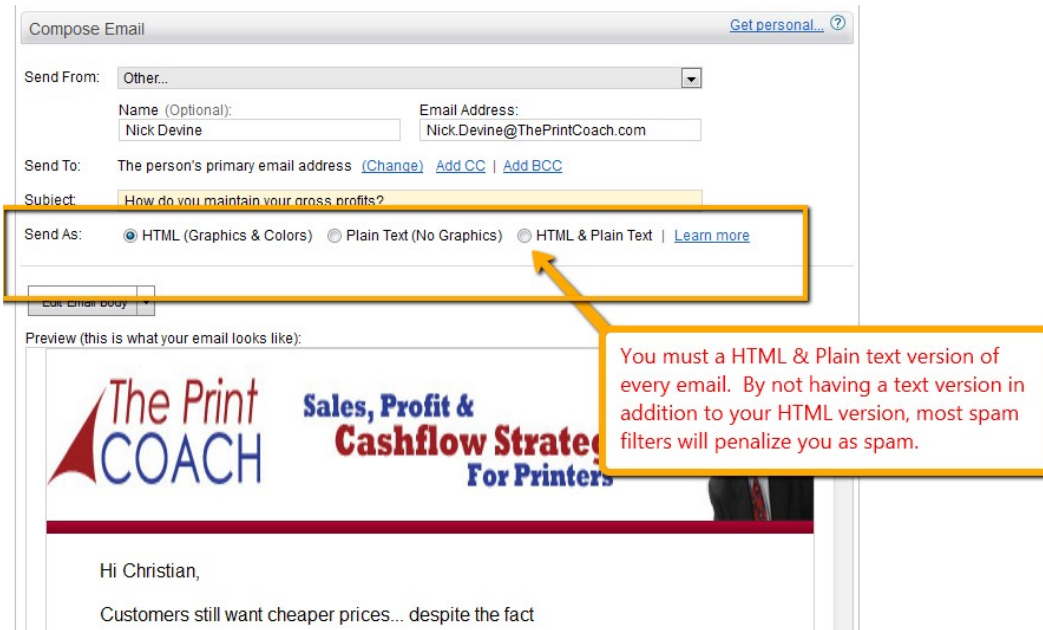
- Some subscribers will not be able to view a readable copy of HTML-only messages. Although most people use e-mail applications that support HTML messages, some don't, and many provide their users with an option to disable them.
- HTML-only messages are more likely to be content filtered.

Spammers often send messages that include only an HTML version with an image in it. To ISPs, HTML messages that contain both versions look more credible, which will improve your email delivery rates.

When both versions are included, they are sent together as your messages go out. If a subscriber has the option to display HTML turned on, they'll see that version by default.

Meanwhile, if a subscriber chooses not to display HTML or can't, they'll see the plain-text version automatically, all while minimizing the possibility of your message being filtered.

Also, the text version of your message is sometimes added in the 'email preview', which is found next to the email subject. Please see attachment for visual.



2. All Email Messages failed Postini, which is another server-side spam filter, now owned by Google.

All image URLs tested do not use SSL.

Solution: Replace "http://" with "https://". Postini considers non-SSL image references spammy.

All hyperinks from emails do not use SSL.

Solution: Replace "http://" with "https://". Postini considers non-SSL links spammy.

Postini

Failed with a score of 0.01348

- Some of your image URLs do not use SSL. Replace "http://" with "https://". Postini considers non-SSL image references spammy.
- Some of your links do not use SSL. Replace "http://" with "https://". Postini considers non-SSL links spammy.

Postini is another server-side spam filter, now owned by Google. Like MessageLabs it is in use mainly by large organisations.

3. Emails not formatted to fit in mobile devices

According to Litmus Email Analytics, March 2011, 9.29% of all email opens are on mobile devices – 2-15% on individual campaigns and 30%+ for niche audiences.

All emails tested from your Infusionsoft account are not either appearing in the correct size, or because you are not providing a text version, the message isn't appearing at all in the following mobile devices:

- Android 2.2 (not rendered correctly)
- BlackBerry (no rendered correctly)
- BlackBerry Text (no text version of email)
- Windows Mobile 6.5
- Symbian (*Symbian* is a mobile operating system (OS) and computing platform designed for smartphones and currently maintained by Nokia.)

Solution(s)

1st Recommendation:

Optimize your email for mobile devices with the @media query

- no extra click
- suitable for newer phones with HTML capability
- may require more advanced coding know-how

Tutorial:

<http://www.campaignmonitor.com/blog/post/3163/optimizing-your-emails-for-mobile-devices-with-media/>

2nd Recommendation: Link to a “mobile-friendly” text version


- usually a modified plain text version
- often the first step in a testing phase
- requires an extra click
- no longer truly mobile-friendly, due to extra click

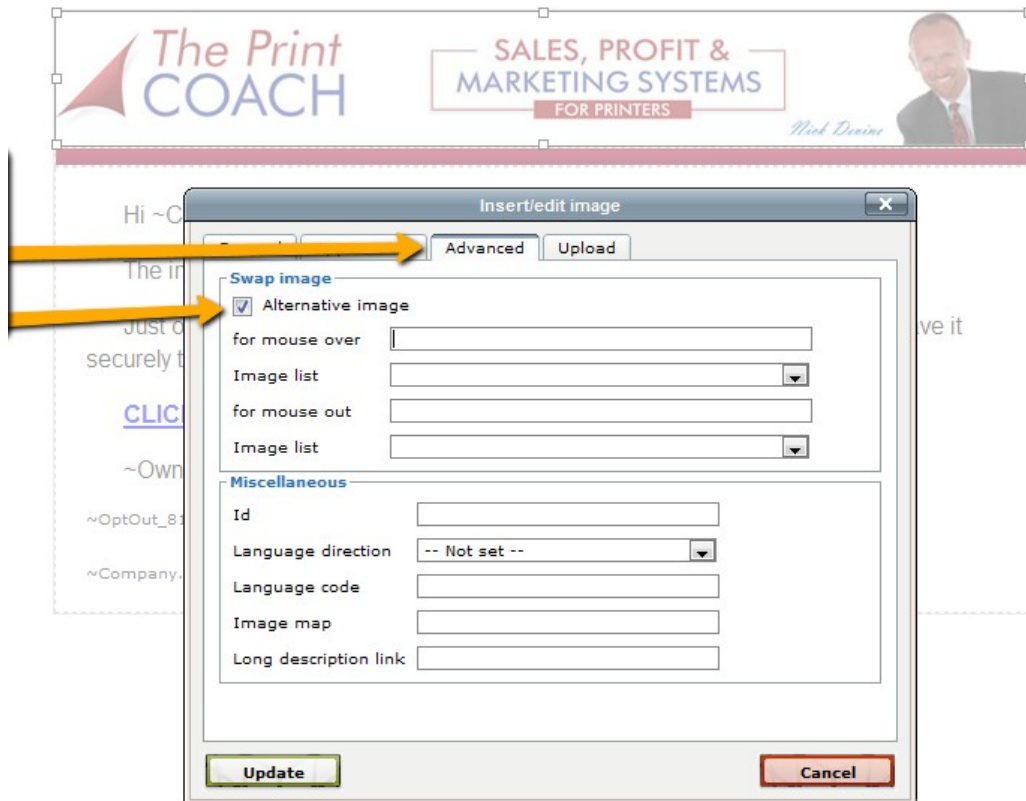
3rd Recommendation: Link to mobile-specific version

- requires extra resources (more design/production time)
- requires an extra click

4. No 'ALT text'

Alt text is meant to be an **alternative information** source for those people who have chosen to disable images in their browsers and those user agents that are simply unable to “see” the images. It should describe what the image is about and get those visitors interested to see it. Without an alt text an image will be

displayed as an empty icon:  In Internet Explorer. Alt text also pops up when you hover over an image. Last year **Google** [officially confirmed](#) that it mainly **focuses on an alt text when trying to understand what an image is about.**



5. Use a consistent sender address & remove the 'powered by Infusionsoft logo on the bottom right-hand corner.

The name and email address that you use to send emails is very powerful, so take advantage of it. I see that you use several different 'from' addresses, so keep this in mind. Be clear and consistent about who your emails are coming from to allow people to add you to their safe sender list. Also make sure the email address is active and monitored for when prospects respond.

Also, contact Infusionsoft support and have them remove the 'Powered by Infusionsoft' logo from all of your outgoing emails. All automated marketing systems will do this for you, if asked.

6. Write a strong but short subject line.

Short and direct subject lines perform best. People are comfortable hearing direct messages from brands they trust in their inbox. Above all, make it relevant and attractive for your audience to receive your emails. Aim for 25 characters or fewer, unless you are sure that a longer subject line is crucial to the message.

Try the Litmus Subject Line Checker: <http://litmus.com/resources/subject-line-checker>

5. Optimize images for fast loading.

A chunky email is one that has slow-loading, big images inside of it. While pretty much everyone is on broadband these days, you want to consider the mobile devices (iPhones, BlackBerries, Androids, etc.) your recipients use. Mobile devices often support HTML messages and will try to show images whenever possible. Compress and resize images to fit the email for your recipients. An awesome and super-easy tool for this is Smush.it, powered by Yahoo. You'll notice a massive improvement in the download speed of images.

6. Have your call-to-action in 1st paragraph of both HTML and text versions.

Nobody wants to read long emails, so get out the editing pen. Especially since the first sentence of your email text version is used for the email preview, have the call-to-action first.

7. Manage frequency carefully.

Less is more, especially when it comes to email. By limiting the number of emails you send, you can spend more time creating meaningful content. Plus, the fewer the number of emails you send your recipients, the more often they'll open them. Respect your recipients' time and they'll honor yours.

TO DO LIST

1. Submit the spreadsheet I have created, "Infusionsoft Mail Server IP Delivery & Blacklist Report" to the Infusionsoft Email System team. Follow up with your ticket or the person at Infusionsoft every week until it's done.

2. Regularly test the IP addresses your self at the following websites:

- http://www.senderbase.org/senderbase_queries/rep_lookup
- First sign up for an account, or else it only gives you some of the information you need. Next, enter each IP address in the window at this site: <https://www.senderscore.org/index.php>
- Enter each IP address into the window at <http://www.mxtoolbox.com/blacklists.aspx>

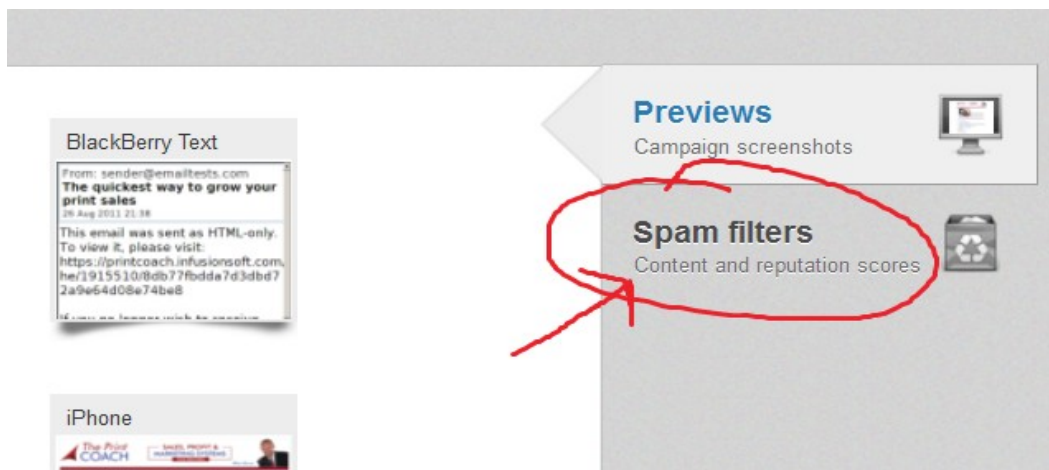
3. See your Litmus email test results online at the following web addresses:

- Email Test #1: "How do you maintain your gross profits?"

<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/29b8475/screenshots>

- Email Test #2: "About YOUR ORDER...GTS Time Management"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/ccc548e/screenshots>
- Email Test #3: "The 4 Profit Drivers in printing companies"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/aa8a734/screenshots>
- Email Test #4: "Member Video – how to convert estimates into orders"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/ccdedae/screenshots>
- Email Test #5: "Member content...How a UK printer is growing profitably with W2P"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/0411785/screenshots>
- Email Test #6: "Member Video – how to sell more to your clients"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/6f26877/screenshots>
- Email Test #7: "The information you have requested has arrived"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/89f94c2/screenshots>
- Email Test #8: "Reach decision-makers get appointments"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/111ef38/screenshots>
- Email Test #9: "Member Video...Time to Stop Competing on Price"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/f70b98c/screenshots>
- Email Test #10: "Member Video – your winning pitch"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/eb62789/screenshots>
- Email Test #11: "The quickest way to grow your print sales"
<http://clicktowin.litmus.com/pub/2e05275/screenshots>

When opening each link, be sure to click on 'Spam Filters' section of the test.



3. Consider signing up for an account to test and preview your email campaigns on a regular basis, as Infusionsoft's 'spam checker' only tests against (1) major spam filter and is not reliable.

Delivered By
INFUSIONSOFT

Trackable Links, Double Opt-in Links, and
[Unsubscribe or Update](#) (Opt-out Link)
[Add Attachments](#)

Spam Score: **0** 0-5 = good | 6-10 = Fair | 11 and up = Spam

Score provided by SpamAssassin and does not guarantee email deliverability.

Test this Email

Send a test to: Litmus Test [\(Select a different person...\)](#)

clicktown.561315a.new@emailtests.com

Email Readiness

Ready to Send?

This feature only tests against SpamAssassin, while Litmus tests against 16 server-side filters and ISP filters.

4. Implement the suggestions from the *Email Design* section of this report.