

Email Analytics in 2022

A Survival Guide



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You spend time, money, and resources on your email marketing. You rely on it to help drive business and revenue. In fact, if you're like the marketers we surveyed for our [2021 State of Email Report](#), it's the channel you rely on the most for marketing effectiveness.

But evolving email capabilities like personalization and dynamic content, privacy changes, and the looming [end of third-party cookies](#) are changing how marketers approach their email marketing strategy—and how they measure campaigns.

We at Litmus created this guide to help you do just that.

Read on to understand:

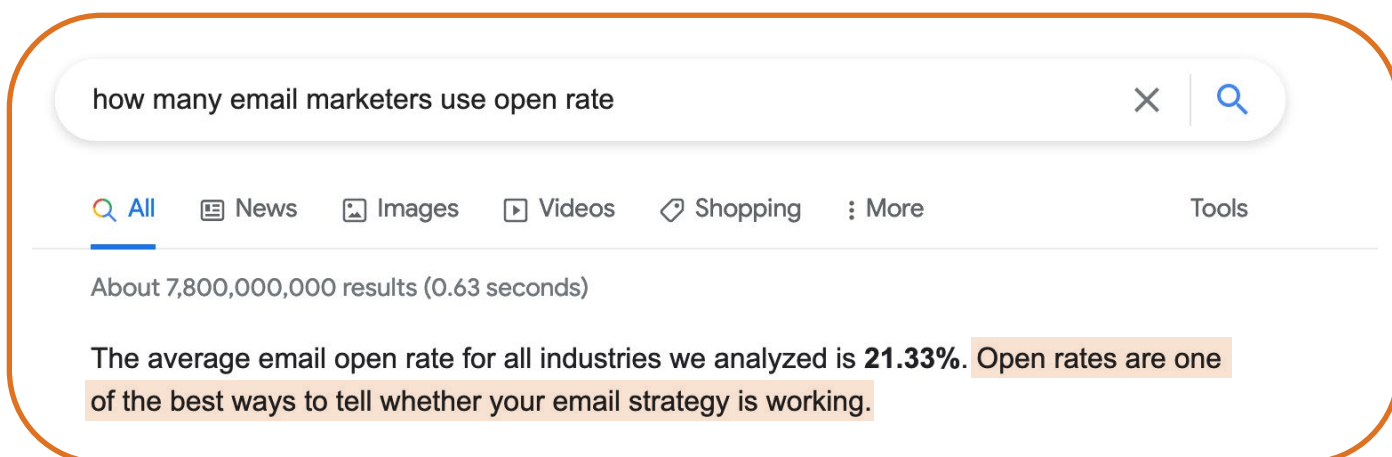
- Why marketers are changing how they measure email effectiveness
- How to calculate and track meaningful email metrics
- Which email metrics resonate with different audiences and why

The changing face of email analytics

For years, core metrics like email open rates were a staple in nearly every email marketing program. Open rates rose to popularity, for a few reasons:

- They're easy to obtain, included in most ESP reporting tools
- They're an easy metric to understand
- They can look rather impressive on an email campaign reporting dashboard

While some in the email marketing community have long argued that the open rate is little more than a vanity metric, it's remained one of the most popular. A simple Google search of "how many email marketers use open rate" sums up what we once all thought about it, right there in black and white.



But since [Apple's Mail Privacy Protection](#) (MPP) went into effect in September 2021, the reliability of the open rate has been called into question. In fact, some in the email marketing community have started to [debate the significance of the open rate entirely](#).

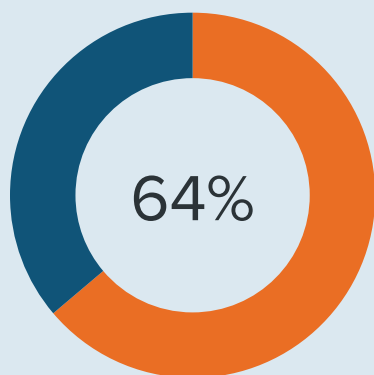
By using email analytics, you may be able to tell what email content your subscribers engage with, when, where, and on what type of device. You can also gain insight into which email clients the majority of your subscribers use, and how subscribers interact with your message.

These data points don't just contribute to your email marketing; they can (and should) help inform your entire omnichannel strategy.

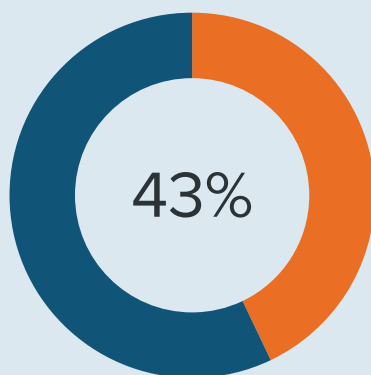
How MPP has catalyzed a fresh take on email analytics

Apple's MPP could impact any email opened from the Apple Mail app on any device with Apple's latest operating systems—no matter which email service is used (such as Gmail, or a work account). But, it doesn't affect other email apps used on Apple devices (like the Gmail app on an iPhone). Ultimately, the impact MPP has on an email marketing program depends on its unique audience and how they engage with email.

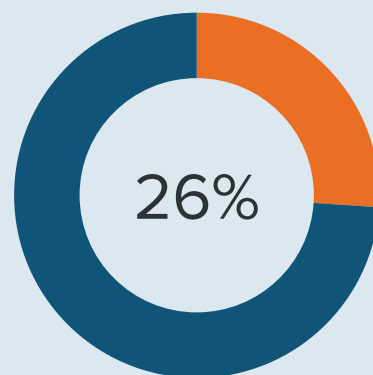
Before MPP went into effect in September 2021...



[64% of marketers](#) said they were concerned with the impact it would have on their email analytics and means of measuring campaigns



43% were planning to change how they measure email performance



26% weren't sure

As of April 2022, our [email client market share report](#) revealed that 53% of Apple Mail has in fact, been impacted by MPP. Some marketers are seeing inflated open rates as a result, and some have lost access to analytics like time of open, device, and subscriber location. Now that [Gmail is prefetching images](#) under some specific circumstances, the validity of those open rates are being called into question, too.

If open rates aren't the metric they once were, what is?

Because open data is leveraged in many aspects of email marketing programs, like informing [email deliverability](#) and disengagement, it may never cease to be part of your email analytics entirely. But these changes do create an opportunity to place greater focus on other aspects of your strategy, including subscriber re-engagement campaigns and retention.

41% of email marketers send re-engagement emails. The most popular retention tactic? Milestone emails.

—Litmus 2021 State of Email Report

Reconsidering email metrics: which matter most to your business?

The changing significance of some email metrics is an opportunity to reconsider which ones really are meaningful to your business, and which are most important to measure.

At the end of the day, you want to see results from your email program—and there are plenty of email metrics beyond the open rate that help you gauge that. Consider what you really want your audience to do when they receive an email from you, and set up your list of key performance indicators (KPIs) accordingly. This is also a chance to realign your organization's KPIs with your email program KPIs. Consider which metrics will contribute to longer term goals, including how to obtain more [zero and first-party data](#) you can use to deepen personalization efforts, subscriber retention, and engagement.

To kick start that shift in thinking, consider which of these metrics might help achieve that. (And use these handy formulas to help calculate them!)



Email Metrics Formulas

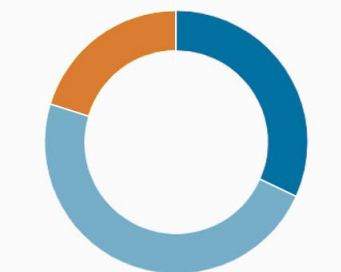
Email read rate/read time

The [read rate](#) is how long someone has spent reading your email. The definition of “read” depends on your email tool, but in most cases, it’s having an email open for eight+ seconds.

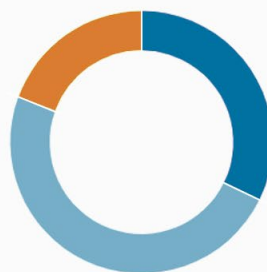
Read rates give you more insight into your email openers. Are they opening to delete? Are they just scanning your email? Or are they so absorbed by your message, they take their time with it?

Pro Tip: With [Litmus Email Analytics](#), you can also see who has skimmed (2-7 seconds) or glanced (less than 2 seconds). This information can help you target different elements of your email—like length and call-to-action (CTA) placements, based on the amount of time different segments of your audience might give your message.

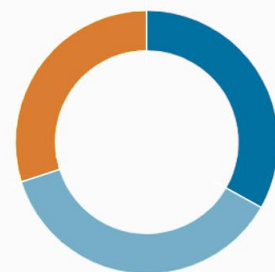
Total Engagement ⓘ



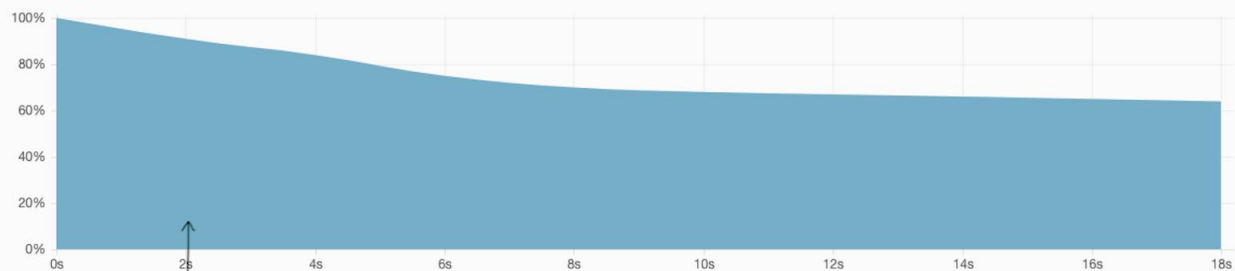
Mobile Engagement



Desktop Engagement



Detailed Engagement



91% of your readers spent longer than 2 seconds looking at your email

Click-through rate (CTR)

Click-through rate is an engagement metric that indicates how many people clicked on an element within your message (like a hyperlink, a call to action, or an image).

Click-through rate = (number of emails clicked / number of emails delivered) x 100

Because CTR leaves opens out of the equation (and therefore won't be impacted by MPP or Gmail prefetching), it's a more stable look at email performance.

Unsubscribe rate

The unsubscribe rate measures how many people opt out of your emails. (Depending on your email platform, it might also record those who click your unsubscribe link).

Unsubscribe rate = (number of unsubscribes / number of emails delivered) x 100

Pro Tip: A high amount of unsubscribes can signal the need to revisit your email cadence to reduce fatigue, or explore how to use segmentation and personalization to give subscribers the kind of content they want.

As data plays a more important role in email marketing, reducing subscriber churn will become a top priority for email marketers.

Bounce rate

The email bounce rate is how many of your sent emails weren't delivered.

Bounce rate = (number of emails bounced / number of emails sent) x 10

Pro Tip: Dig into your bounce rate to distinguish between [hard and soft bounces](#). (Your follow up may differ depending on which is higher).

Spam complaint rate

The spam complaint rate can put your emails in the junk folder; it measures how many people report or [mark your email as spam](#). Using certain phrases, links, excessive use of symbols, and several emojis in a subject line could cause your email to be flagged as spam. If you're ever in doubt, test!

Spam complaint rate = (number of spam complaints / number of emails delivered) x 100

Pro Tip: Anything above 0.1% is cause to re-evaluate.

Deliverability rate or inbox placement rate

The [deliverability rate](#) is how many of your emails land in the inbox vs. the junk or spam folder. A high deliverability rate means your emails often make it to the inbox.

Deliverability rate = (number of non-junked emails delivered / number of emails delivered) x 100

Pro Tip: If your inbox placement rate is less than 80%, reconsider how to send the right content to the right audience at the right time.

Conversion rate (CVR)

The [email conversion](#) rate measures how many people took the action you wanted them to from your email (think form fills, completed purchases, and similar types of engagement).

Conversion rate = (number of conversions / number of emails delivered) x 100

Revenue per email (RPE)

Revenue per email (RPE) is far easier to calculate than return on investment (ROI), and can provide insight into the direct monetary value of your email program.

Revenue per email = revenue generated from the send / number of emails delivered

Pro Tip: This revenue calculation can also help you better compare sends, and gain insights into the value of testing and segmentation strategies. For example, sending more emails will not necessarily lead to more RPE.

Revenue per subscriber (RPS)

Revenue per subscriber (RPS) looks at the value of an email subscriber. Include all of your active subscribers, even those you don't always send to. Look at a specific point in time, like last month or year to calculate the revenue generated and monitor trends for more insight.

Revenue per subscriber = revenue generated / number of active subscribers

Subscriber lifetime value (LTV)

Subscriber lifetime value (LTV) measures the value a subscriber brings for the amount of time they are on your email list.

Subscriber lifetime value = [daily, weekly, monthly, annual] revenue per subscriber x average number of [days, weeks, months, years] a subscriber stays on your list

This metric can help you understand the lifetime value of a person's email subscription with your brand, and the impact their subscriber relationship had on your email program during that time.

You can also calculate subscriber LTV per acquisition cost and source to determine which sources are (or aren't) working.

Return on investment (ROI)

How much [value your email marketing program delivers vs. how much it costs](#).

Return on investment = (email revenue – email marketing cost) / email marketing cost

This cost considers your tools, team, and resources. When done correctly, for every \$1 you spend on email marketing, you can expect to receive \$36 in return. Evaluating your ROI can help you get more for your money.

Email list size or growth rate

Email list growth is how many email addresses you are acquiring instead of churning.

List growth rate = (monthly new subscribers – monthly churned subscribers) / list size) x 100

Use the monthly time period or one that makes sense for your business.

Pro tip: Your [email list strategy](#) will only deliver results if you monitor what's being added and investigate how to get the most of the data you can access. Pay attention to how you treat your current subscribers and how you welcome new ones.

Churn rate

How many people are removed or suppressed from your email list (includes unsubscribes, bounces, manual removals, or even unengaged subscribers).

Churn rate = (monthly churned subscribers / list size at beginning of month) x 100

Pro Tip: [Re-engaging subscribers](#) before they become inactive will become increasingly important to protecting your deliverability.

Subscriber acquisition cost

How much it costs on average to get one new subscriber (useful for paid ads, giveaways, or co-marketing campaigns).

Email subscriber acquisition cost = marketing or ad cost / number of new subscribers

Pro tip: For further analysis, dig into your subscriber acquisition sources. This can provide insight into not only costs, but also potential spam issues.

Email production time

How efficient is your email marketing process? Where can you make improvements?

Keep track of:

- Actual time to complete each task (For example: 90 minutes to code one email)
- Time period from email conception to execution (For example: 14 days to create and send one email)

Pro tip: Streamline your workflows and reduce email production time by automating processes whenever possible.

Email mistakes or error rate

A high error rate may mean you need to slow down or improve your QA process.

Error rate = (monthly number of emails sent with an error / monthly number of emails sent) x 100

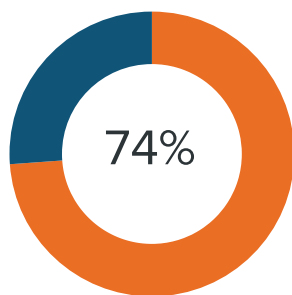
Pro tip: [Testing your emails](#), checking links, and considering email service providers (ESPs) help get your emails to the inbox, and protect your brand reputation.

Embrace reliable email analytics tools

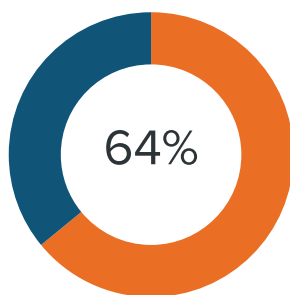
When we surveyed marketers for our [State of Email Analytics Report](#), the majority relied on in-house analysis (74%) or tools provided by their ESP (64%).

Email analysis methods

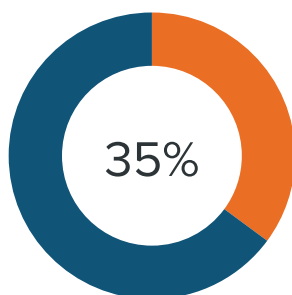
Percentage of respondents who use each email analysis method



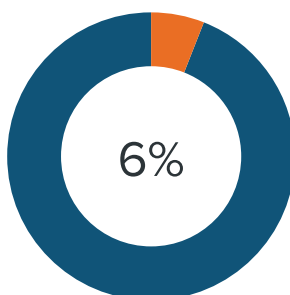
In-house analysis



ESP dashboards



Third-party analytics



Agency or consultant analysis

More insight leads to more informed decision-making, particularly now that privacy policies are changing the type of data captured in an email.

Some ESPs like Sendgrid, Eloqua, and Klaviyo also provide updates to help customers identify MPP-impacted opens, and tools like [Litmus Email Analytics](#) provide full visibility into your audience—Apple Mail and otherwise.

Marketers who use third-party analytics tools see a 25% higher ROI than those who don't.

Alternative Metrics You May Not Measure (But Should Consider)

Percentage of clients who view your emails in Dark Mode

- [Dark Mode](#) is taking over the inbox. Making sure emails look great in this reading environment can be a big challenge for email marketers without visibility into how heavily their subscribers are using it.

Which email client/device your audience opens messages in

- Our [Email Client Market Share](#) reports that Apple is the top email client—but every audience is different. At Litmus, for example, fewer of our clients open emails using mobile compared to industry benchmarks.
- Applying device analytics can help you optimize how you present your calls to action. Experimenting with “click to shop” (computer) vs “tap to shop” (mobile) can illustrate what’s most effective.
- These insights can also indicate where to prioritize your QA/troubleshooting efforts and help guide your design and development decisions.

Make your email analytics easily digestible (and actionable)

Analytics can inform wise strategic decisions and smart tactical improvements. But they can also lead to false conclusions and analysis paralysis without a cohesive lens with which to view them. Once you decide which metrics you'll measure, consider how to apply them in reports that will make sense to you and your team, so all those analytics become actionable.

Put your email analytics into action with these three broad approaches

1. Email list health

This will tell you everything you need to know about your [email list](#) and database, and provide insight into actions that may help you course-correct or keep the momentum going.

Analysis to consider:

- Where are your most engaged and active subscribers coming from?
- What's happening over time to the size of your audience?
- How are you growing your email list?

2. Email engagement

Dig into what your audience is doing once they've clicked on your email to truly understand how you can deepen the relationship, and correctly apply segmentation and personalization. What's happening with your subscribers in other channels, and what are they doing once they respond to the CTA in your email?

Look at your engagement metrics by campaign type to dive into performance as it relates to your targeting.

3. Unsubscribe/bounce/deliverability

Focusing on these metrics can be a proactive signal to reconsider some elements of your email strategy that aren't working, when you still have the chance to course-correct.

Sharing Meaningful Email Analytics Within Your Organization

Brands that always share email results to their entire organization see a 28% higher ROI from their email marketing program.

—Litmus State of Email Analytics Report

Knowing the ins and outs of your email analytics is important. But the same metrics that provide “aha” moments to your email team won’t necessarily resonate when reporting results to your CMO. According to the [“Forging the Future of Customer Experience” report](#) by the CMO Council and Teradata, 91% of marketers say there’s an expectation by senior management that marketers drive measurable growth. Identify which of your email metrics correlate to the priorities of your senior leaders, and translate how they contribute to driving results.

Use these best practices to weave your email analytics into a story executive leadership wants to hear.

1. Think impact

An email program’s contribution to revenue (or whatever the business is being measured on from the bottom of the funnel) is meaningful to executive leadership. Metrics like how many emails were delivered, open rate, click-through rate, and click-to-open rate don’t tell the full story.

Focus on metrics that speak to how email is contributing to improvement, lift, and the bottom line.

2. Visuals matter

Identify and show visuals that make your email story interesting enough to engage your audience, and prompt them to easily absorb what they’re looking at.

3. Don’t bury the headline

Focus on the metrics that show how email is helping to drive pipeline, sales, and revenue. Save detailed campaign metrics for the smaller team; keep the high-level analytics for those who can use it to drive strategy.

Sharing email results

If email metrics aren't shared, does the email even count?

Brands that say email marketing is very important to company success are more likely to be consistent in sharing results within their marketing teams, and with the broader organization. And those that always share results with both marketing and non-marketing departments report a 28% higher email marketing ROI than those that don't.

Frequency of sharing email results

The percentage of respondents by frequency of sharing email results with marketing and non-marketing teams



Get the reliable insights you need to make your future email campaigns more effective.

With [Litmus Email Analytics](#), you can quickly identify your most successful emails to amplify your results and apply learnings that up-level your strategy. It's never been easier to see what's resonating with audiences so you can make the design, development, content, and campaign decisions that deliver bigger results for every email you send.

Join the 700,000+ marketers who use Litmus to build and test quality emails, maintaining a great brand and subscriber experience, every time.

See what's really going on in your email analytics when you [try it for free](#) today!



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A little about us

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