

SPAM free emails

Here are some rules and suggestions about composing email messages to before publishing to the world.

1. Never send a html message without using multipart alternative so you can also include a plain text version with it. I noticed the email sent from "share video" is html but there is no plain text version for it. Use an email library like phpmailer or swiftmailer if you don't want to deal with implementing MIME yourself.

2. Always set a Content-Transfer-Encoding header in your message or message parts. For text or html message parts the encoding should be quoted-printable otherwise some email clients might break the lines of your messages if they are longer than 76 characters. That's especially bad when you include links in your message and the links are broken. A library like phpmailer or swiftmailer knows how to encode messages with quoted-printable but if you're looking for speed you should look into http://php.net/quoted_printable_encode it's a lot faster than any code written in php that I have seen so far.

3. Don't use < or > in the sender or any other address. The email addresses in the headers should be in the format: Name <email_address>. Name should not contain < or > . I noticed the invitation message has this and it's wrong.

4. Don't send messages as if a user of mydomain.com sent it from it's own email account. I noticed the "share video" email is sent like that. The problem is that when you send messages like that email authentication is broken. (your server is not authorized to send messages on behalf of google, yahoo, hotmail, etc) and your messages gain more spam score. Use an email address @mydomain.com so the message can be authenticated through SPF and signed with domainkeys/dkim when that will be implemented.

5. Bounce processing, unsubscribes and spam complaints.

a) bounce processing. Why? If we continue to try to send messages to an invalid address ISPs will mark your IP as a spam source. So we have to make sure we don't try to send another message to an address that we know it's invalid (some error messages will indicate this). For some addresses we will never know for sure that they are invalid and for these we can try once more or two times at most. Processing bounce messages is very complicated because there is no standard bounce message format and even if there would be there are so many email servers out there that it would be impossible to implement on all. I can offer a script I use on my system for bounce processing but I'll need to talk to a developer about implementing this in the system because in order to use it the messages will also have to be sent a bit differently (look up VERP - Variable Envelope Return Path)

b) unsubscribes. mydomain.com sends (on behalf of it's users) unsolicited invitation messages to people that have no relation to mydomain.com . In order for these messages to not be considered spam (not legally anyway) the messages need to include a simple way to unsubscribe from such notifications. All respected social networks have this. Users that don't have a way to unsubscribe will just hit that "Spam" button and the more do that the less chances your messages will have to reach inbox.

c) complaints: users of yahoo, hotmail, aol and other webmail providers have an option to mark messages as spam. This has two implications for you as a sender:

i) The number of complaints affects the behavior of the ISP's filters (more complains means more spam score) thus less chances to get in inbox

ii) Continuing to send messages to the people that complained by clicking the spam button will increase your spam score even more. This is why you have to subscribe to feedback loops and process the spam complaints to remove the addresses that complained from your database (or at least mark them to never send messages to them again) .

Processing feedback loops correctly also requires VERP usage. I already have the script for processing and I can assist with integrating it into your system.

I let this one at the end but it's actually even more important than the others. We cannot contact yahoo support and ask them to whitelist us if we don't have a way of processing bounces, unsubscribes and we're not subscribed to their feedback loop. will need an abuse@mydomain.com address created as soon as possible and then I will subscribe you to the most popular feedback loops.

Best regards
Liju Mathew