

JICWEBS

Email Traffic Reporting Standards

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Industry agreed measurement



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SECTION A: ABOUT THIS GUIDEBOOK

HOW THE STANDARDS ARE DEVELOPED AND CHANGED

The needs of ABCe subscribers, and the industry as a whole, change constantly. In order to meet those needs and stay abreast of industry developments, the industry-agreed standards are continuously evolving. It is the industry itself, via JICWEBS (the Joint Industry Committee for Web Standards) fed into by the ITG (the Internet Technical Group) that sets these standards.

JICWEBS (www.jicwebs.org) is a body created by the UK and Ireland media industry. Its purpose is to ensure independent development and ownership of standards for measuring on a site-centric, census basis audience reach, frequency and activity levels including the use of advertising on electronic media. If you would like JICWEBS to consider any aspect of these rules (particularly Section B and Appendix 1) please contact them at info@jicwebs.org.

Changes to the industry standards must be approved by JICWEBS. We will inform you of changes and update this guidebook, downloadable from the Subscribers' Area of our website (www.abce.org.uk). We advise you to check our website regularly to ensure you are using the latest version.

SECTION B: JICWEBS REPORTING STANDARDS

This section details the industry-agreed standards and requirements set out by JICWEBS for all email traffic audits.

B1 MAIL SERVER CONFIGURATION

The mail server must be configured as a minimum to run the SMTP protocol. Audit certificates will also make reference to "bounces" or "NDNs"; these are notifications that mail is undeliverable.

From RFC 821: "If a server-SMTP has accepted the task of relaying the mail and later finds that the forward-path is incorrect or that the mail cannot be delivered for whatever reason, then it must construct an "undeliverable mail" notification message and send it to the originator of the undeliverable mail (as indicated by the reverse-path)."

Delayed transmissions are specifically excluded from this "bounce" total.

B2 DATA LOGGING

The list owner must be able to supply, as a minimum, a sample list of addresses conforming to the basic SMTP model – "foo@bar.com" - from its database. It may be appropriate to send the auditor a list of all addresses relating to the email service being audited.

These Reporting Standards make very specific reference to "address user"; one person may, of course, have many email addresses, and a particular email address may redirect the message body to more than one person (such as administrator@foo.com, support@bar.org etc.).

The list owner must produce an SMTP server log (or logs) showing all activity related to the mailing, including:

- start time;
- end time;
- total emails sent out;
- number of NDNs (bounces) received.

This data should be supplied, and the claimed statistics generated, at least 24 hours after the end time of the mailing, to allow NDNs to be registered.

It is also the responsibility of the list owner to ensure that their data complies in full with all requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. ABCE is registered with the Data Protection Registrar.

Whatever their nature, data collection servers must be date and time synchronised, preferably to GMT, so that their log files' date and time stamping is aligned. The raw log provides the specific data regarding each file or transaction processed by the server.

Appropriate log file archiving procedures must be in place to substantiate your claims for the certification period.

The original (raw) log files must be retained for at least the current, and preferably for the prior, Certification Periods.

B2.1 Consistency of Log Format

The media owner must not change the format of log files during the audit period. Any third parties managing log files must also be made aware of these requirements.

B3 CERTIFICATION

B3.1 Minimum Reporting Standards

These are as follows:

- Statement of the total emails served, Gross Distribution, Net Distribution and Percentage Bounced for each mailing.

Once a first audit certificate has been published, public certification must be renewed annually. JICWEBS recommend that at least 2 audits are completed annually, each with a minimum certification period of one calendar month. Any longer audit periods must be in units of calendar months.

B3.2 Certificate Release and Layout

At least the following information must appear on all email certificates released into the public domain:

B3.2.1 Certificates for a Single Mailing

These must show:

- Name of the email service;
- The mailing covered by the certificate and the dates on which it started and ended;
- A description of the mailing content - the media owner's statement;
- Contact details for the media owner;
- The total emails served in the mailing, including
 - Gross distribution;
 - Net distribution;
 - Percentage bounced;
 - Any additional metrics certified for that mailing, e.g. Registered Addresses.
- Definitions of all metrics used in the certificate and any from which they may derive, to assist users of the certificate;
- A statement of auditor's opinion.

B3.2.2 Certificates for Multiple Mailings

These must show:

- Name of the email service;
- The period covered by the certificate (e.g. "January-December 2010");
- A description of the mailing content - the media owner's statement;
- Contact details for the media owner;
- Total number of mailings certified;
- Averages of all metrics certified for the period, including
 - Gross distribution;
 - Net distribution;

SECTION C: ABCe AUDIT REQUIREMENTS

- Percentage bounced;
- A statement summarising the dates and times of distribution of the mailings;
- A table showing audited metrics for each mailing on a separate line, including as a minimum:
 - Start and end dates;
 - Gross distribution;
 - Net distribution;
 - Percentage bounced;
 - Any additional metrics certified for that mailing, e.g. Registered Addresses.
- Definitions of all metrics used in the certificate and any from which they may derive, to assist users of the certificate;
- A statement of auditor's opinion.

Additional information such as logos or further data analysis (e.g. averages, traffic by date) may be included on the certificate at the media owner's discretion and with the agreement of the auditor.

APPENDIX 1: JICWEBS STANDARD EMAIL TRAFFIC METRICS

X1.0 INTRODUCTION

ABCe, working with the IFABC (International Federation of Audit Bureaux, <http://www.ifabc.org/>) international standards working group, has developed a set of definitions that are the effective world-wide standard for Web traffic audits. Definitions for metrics specific to the internet industry in the UK and Ireland are controlled and developed by JICWEBS, the Joint Industry Committee for Web Standards.

The metrics seek to give measurements of reach, volume, frequency and level of interaction. Each set of metrics below falls into one of these general categories.

IMPORTANT: These definitions can change from time to time. Please check that you have the latest version of this document by checking the version number and date against those of the version published on the ABC website.

The JICWEBS standard definitions are given in **bold**.

Note on Averages

All Averages are produced by taking the sum of each day's traffic divided by the total number of days.

Hence the Average Percentage Bounced shown on a certificate for multiple mailings will be the total Gross Distribution for all mailings divided by the total NDNs for all mailings. It is **not** the average of each Average Percentage Bounced.

X1.1 METRIC DEFINITIONS

DISTRIBUTION (NET):

The total number of emails successfully sent as part of a single campaign/distribution to all (SMTP) addresses on the distribution list.

This number excludes EMAILS BOUNCED (see below).

DISTRIBUTION (GROSS):

The total number of emails sent as part of a single campaign/distribution to all (SMTP) addresses on the distribution list.

This number includes EMAILS BOUNCED (see below).

DUPLICATION:

The total number of identical SMTP addresses in the distribution list expressed as a percentage of the gross distribution, rounded down to the nearest whole number.

This means exact, case-insensitive duplication of addresses.

DISTRIBUTION STARTED:

The date and time expressed in hours and minutes (GMT) when the first email in a campaign/distribution was sent to the first address on the distribution list.

This would be the timestamp of the first message in the mailing.

DISTRIBUTION ENDED:

The date and time expressed in hours and minutes (GMT) when the last email in a campaign/distribution was sent to the last address on the distribution list.

This would be the timestamp of the last message in the mailing.

EMAILS BOUNCED:

The total number of emails in the gross distribution that generated an NDN (Non-Delivery-Notice) measured at least 24 hours after the time of the last email sent in that single mailing.

Any SMTP hard delivery error (e.g. "Address owner not recognised", "Delivery Failure") counts as a bounce. Re-queuing or delayed delivery (aka "soft bounces") do not count.

PERCENTAGE BOUNCED:

The total number of emails in the gross distribution that generated an NDN measured at least 24 hours after the time of the last email sent, expressed as a percentage of the gross distribution.

REGISTERED ADDRESS:

A contactable SMTP address in the distribution list that has requested the email service.

This is not a measure of individual people or addressees, because an individual address user may have more than one registered email address.

OPT-IN:

A unique SMTP address that has been added to the distribution list as a result of a positive action by the address user.

This action includes, but is not limited to, the address user clicking on a subscription link or sending a subscription email.

DOUBLE OPT-IN:

A unique SMTP address that has been added to the distribution list as a result of a confirmation email sent as a reply to the list owner by the address user after the user has previously opted in.

This differs from Opt-In as the address user specifically has to confirm their interest in subscribing by sending a confirmation email as a reply to the list owner.

EMAIL OPENED:

A file, or combination of files, sent to a valid User in an HTML email as a result of that User's request being received by the server.

Such Emails Opened may include Preview Pane renderings of the email.

EMAIL REFERRAL IN:

A Page Impression representing an arrival at a website by a valid User from a hyperlink embedded in an email.

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The destination website must be able to present auditable evidence of such arrivals.

X1.8 AD METRICS

See the ABCe Guidance Notes for Ad Audits.

X1.9 SMS METRICS

See the ABCe Guidance Notes for SMS Audits.

X1.10 WEB TRAFFIC METRICS

See the ABCe Web Audit Rules and Guidance Notes

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Industry agreed measurement



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ABC
Saxon House,
211 High Street,
Berkhamsted,
Hertfordshire, HP4 1AD.
Tel: + 44 (0) 1442 870800
Email: abcpost@abc.org.uk

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