



Maximizing E-mail Deliverability in EMEA

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Overview

EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa), with its diverse economic regions and broad range of languages and cultures, also has varied anti-spam and data security regulations, best practices and technical requirements when it comes to how Internet Service Providers (ISPs) manage e-mail delivery. This makes delivery assurance a very complex task for marketers and e-mail service providers (ESPs) sending e-mail into the inboxes of EMEA customers and prospects. This white paper will examine the issues involved in e-mail deliverability in EMEA specifically associated with ISP relations, and how e-Dialog is addressing those issues to maximize e-mail delivery on behalf of its marketing clients.

E-mail as a business-critical global communications tool

Consumers are becoming much more receptive to content-rich e-mails. According to Forrester Research in its October 2005 report entitled, “B2C E-mail Marketing in Europe: 2004 – 2010,” more than 11 million households came online in 2004, many of them to start using e-mail. Furthermore, broadband penetration among online households in Europe grew by 60% from 2004 to 2005. Looking ahead to 2010, Forrester expects broadband to hit 41% penetration, or 67% of those online that year. To top it off, broadband penetration extending outside of the primary markets – UK, France and Germany – will exceed 45% in the Netherlands and Scandinavia thanks to large total online customer bases, competitive markets and relatively low broadband prices.

This widespread consumer acceptance of e-mail is driving organizations to further develop its sophistication as a marketing communications channel and use it as an affordable, business-critical tool to build customer relationships and expand business all over the world. This requires that marketers work even harder to find a place in the consumer’s inbox — a critical task that requires solid ISP relations.

Complex and fragmented ISP landscape in EMEA

Compared to the U.S. for example, where the top-five ISPs tend to cover well over 75% of a typical e-mail marketer’s domain distribution, the EMEA region has many smaller-sized markets each with their own unique languages, cultures, telecom providers and requirements. For instance, the European Internet Services Providers’ Association (EuroISPA) represents the interests of more than 900 ISPs across the European Union, and the UK’s leading trade association for ISPs has more than 100 members. These ISPs range in market distribution size from very large to very small and often represent more than one consumer domain.

One of the consequences of this size difference is that some ISPs are so small compared to ISPs in other countries that they aren't typically considered top-tier targets for ISP relations or problem resolution by an ESP. However, these small ISPs sometimes can represent a large percentage of consumers in that country, making the market coverage for that domain very significant to any given marketing team.

To further complicate matters, each ISP has specific technical requirements for how to send and receive mail, such as authentication/reputation management, sending speed, number of simultaneous connections, feedback loops, white list programs, etc. European countries also have varying laws around issues such as data protection, for example, creating additional dissimilarities for how ISPs block and filter mail. And they have varying attitudes and expectations revolving around spam; impending legislative changes and new anti-spam technologies repeatedly create new challenges. And while spam is a large concern, ISPs in EMEA have several further top priorities, ranging from fighting illegal content to lobbying against hosting responsibilities, securing service capacities, and integrating new technologies and offerings, all the while managing operations and re-organizations due to constantly occurring merger and acquisition activity.

Extensive ISP relations capabilities required

So while ensuring e-mail delivery to customers and prospects is business-critical to marketers, it is very complex in EMEA. In order for marketers to adapt to all of the changing market demands, expand into new markets based on priority customer locations, and resolve any deliverability issues quickly, they need strong relationships with hundreds of ISPs as well as insight into all of their specific requirements. The best solution is to gain broader reach and improved interaction with a significant number of the highest priority ISPs (not necessarily the largest, but the most important based on clients' consumer domain distribution), ideally through a centralized resource that can aggregate data and information so as to maximize efficiencies and economies of scale. These benefits can be achieved only by having numerous deliverability specialists capable of speaking local languages and understanding country-specific viewpoints and requirements. Marketers need to work with an ESP that can fulfill these conditions.




The e-Dialog Solution - Sender Score Receiver Alliance

In January 2007 e-Dialog expanded its partnership with Return Path, a leading e-mail performance management company, to found the Sender Score Receiver Alliance (SSRA) and offer enhanced ISP relations and deliverability services to marketers in EMEA. The SSRA is composed of three charter members, Return Path, e-Dialog and eCircle, and its mission is to provide senders and receivers in EMEA with an avenue to communicate and interact so as to ensure the best possible consumer e-mail experience.

As the original charter member, e-Dialog works closely with Return Path to define the program's direction and help marketers navigate the increasing complexity of e-mail delivery assurance in the fragmented Pan-European market. By combining resources with Return Path and other ESPs, e-Dialog clients have access to unrivalled deliverability services in EMEA at a distributed cost, specifically through the following features and benefits:

- ❖ **Numerous deliverability specialists.** Localized access to more ISPs within each market builds extensive ISP relationships and empowers e-Dialog clients to e-mail confidently into markets where their customers exist and quickly launch into new markets as their demands dictate. In addition, this access facilitates a regional-centric approach to solving delivery issues as opposed to a domain-volume approach. For example, problem resolution is handled based on the distribution of clients' consumer domains and not on the overall size of an ISP compared to ISPs in other countries.
- ❖ **A deep understanding of each ISP's specific requirements and industry points of view.** With more access and far more specific details on more ISPs, e-Dialog obtains advance information on any changes or announcements from the ISP community. This helps clients adjust quickly to shifting market dynamics, legal requirements and delivery criteria. In addition, e-Dialog is able to test how e-mail messages render in many of the leading ISP browser interfaces. This enables the ESP and its clients to proactively make adjustments to their e-mail sending practices.
- ❖ **Centralized point of communication.** Information on technical requirements, delivery criteria and problem resolution can be communicated once and shared by many.
- ❖ **Improved collaboration between the sending and receiving communities.** With trusted partnerships building between ISPs and ESPs, both ends of the delivery spectrum gain a mutual understanding of each other's attitudes and expectations, common goals and unique differences. In addition, Return Path is providing receiver services and tools free of charge to ISPs in EMEA. These services will help aggregate data from the receiver community, such as complaints, feedback loops and reputation scores, in order to further deter spam and reduce false positives, thus building stronger relationships between the two communities.

A decorative orange banner at the top of the page. It features a central white envelope icon, a grid of smaller white envelope icons, and a background of binary code (0s and 1s) and a globe graphic.

e-Dialog's presence in Europe continues to increase at the same time as its clients' broaden their reach. The company is sending e-mail to hundreds of different domains in multiple languages, making it extremely advantageous for the company to be a charter member of the SSRA. In addition to its current full range of services that enhance e-mail deliverability (see Appendix A), the company has partnered with Return Path for more than two years to supplement its internal delivery monitoring tools and provide reputation and certification services to its clients. The SSRA is an extension of e-Dialog's partnership with Return Path and its commitment to provide effective, value-added client services. Today, the SSRA enables e-Dialog to maximize inbox delivery to the important ISPs in the UK, France and Germany. With the programme operating successfully, it will ultimately expand into adjacent markets as dictated by the industry and the charter members.

Take the Next Step ...

To find out more about e-Dialog and its deliverability services, visit www.e-dialog.com or contact Peter Duffy, Sales and Marketing Director, on +44 (0) 20 3219 6220 or Rick Buck, Director Privacy/ISP Relations, on +1 (781) 372-3317.

About e-Dialog

Established in 1997, e-Dialog is a proven provider of precision e-mail marketing solutions. Through a unique combination of marketing intelligence and precise relevance technology, e-Dialog enables some of the world's most recognized brands, such as Boots, British Airways, Dell, Hewlett Packard, the Royal Bank of Scotland group of companies, Tesco, Avis, BMG Music Service, the NFL, and Reuters, to maximize long-term customer value with contextually targeted communications. The company's service offerings empower large, multifaceted companies like these to enhance permission-based e-mail marketing efforts through fully integrated, cross-channel communications, including dynamically printed direct mail, RSS and mobile messaging.

JupiterResearch ranked e-Dialog the top performing e-mail marketing provider among service-oriented ESPs based on business value and market suitability in both 2005 and 2006. In September 2006 e-Dialog was the first e-mail service provider to achieve certification for ISO 27001:2005, the global information security standard. e-Dialog is a privately-held company with offices in Boston, London, New York and Seattle. Investors include Flagship Ventures and Commonwealth Capital.

Appendix A

e-Dialog Deliverability and ISP Relations Services

e-Dialog has an extensive international deliverability and ISP relations team led by the company's director of privacy and ISP relations and supported by representatives in the engineering, response management and professional services departments. The purpose of this team is to ensure e-mail delivery on behalf of clients and to advocate proactively and reactively as laws, regulations and technologies that impact e-mail change. This team also builds and maintains direct relationships with all of the major ISPs, block list and reputation/accreditation service providers.

In addition, e-Dialog account teams work consistently with clients to optimize all facets of e-mail campaigns that might have an impact on a marketer's IP reputation, including best practices for opt-in programs, increasing campaign relevancy and improving subsequent end-user experiences, processing complaints and opt-out requests and ultimately, increasing deliverability.

e-Dialog's deliverability and ISP relations services include the following:

Data Hygiene: An essential component to deliverability, initial preparation of data includes address assessment and validation, opt-out suppression, undeliverable/bounced address definitions and management. Using clean data helps boost an IP reputation and avoid deliverability issues.

Delivery Monitoring and Optimization: e-Dialog relies on a multifaceted approach to optimizing deliverability, which includes using a series of proprietary reporting tools supplemented with delivery assurance monitoring tools from its partner Return Path. e-Dialog is also a charter member of the Sender Score Receiver Alliance (SSRA), a program that delivers localized access to hundreds of ISPs in EMEA. Additional tools include:

- ❖ Spam Assessment – Each message is evaluated by eight spam rating software tools (McAfee SpamKiller, Microsoft Outlook 2003, Norton AntiSpam, SpamAssassin, BrightMail, Postini, MessageLabs and IronPort) that report the likelihood that the message will be filtered. Steps can then be taken to reduce the message's spam score before it is deployed.
- ❖ Inbox Delivery – e-Dialog monitors more than 100 ISPs and 500 seed lists globally to track filtering and delivery to an inbox or spam folders.
- ❖ Block List Monitoring – e-Dialog scrutinizes more than 225 block lists on an hourly basis against all of its IP addresses to monitor where they might be listed.



- ❖ Domain Block Monitoring – e-Dialog checks for domain blocking on an hourly basis. It tracks the domains that are blocking mail so the appropriate action can be taken for clients.
- ❖ Real-time Pulse Reporting – Available to view through e-Dialog's eReports application, these reports on undeliverable mail are generated as the mailing is deployed. The codes that define the bounce rationale from the receiving mail system are also categorized and reported by domain and by type, in multiple languages if needed.
- ❖ Whitelisting/Feedback Loop Programs – e-Dialog IPs are whitelisted and in feedback loop programs with all ISPs offering such services, including America Online, Juno/NetZero, MSN/Hotmail, RoadRunner, Verizon and Yahoo.
- ❖ Campaign Preview Monitoring – Tools check the content for rendering in at least 11 different browser types for link integrity, HTML errors and spelling errors.
- ❖ Private Domain Names – e-Dialog allocates dedicated IP addresses to all clients and uses this domain name in the "from" address. No other client has use of this private sub-net and therefore cannot cause issues in delivery in another client's mail. The sub-net is still part of the e-Dialog address space, thus allowing e-Dialog to leverage its established ISP relationships.
- ❖ Authentication / Accreditation / Reputation – All e-Dialog IPs are SPF, Sender ID and Domain Keys/DKIM authenticated. In addition, e-Dialog helps clients consider one or more of the leading reputation/certification programs (Sender Score, GoodMail and Habeas). These services help separate fraudulent from legitimate e-mail at the ISP level, thus enabling the valid mail to be delivered and improving the marketer's IP reputation. Long term, these efforts improve customer relationships, enhance ISP relations and preserve e-mail as a viable marketing channel.

Problem Resolution Process: Despite all of the company's best efforts, occasionally something causes a problem with an ISP. e-Dialog has a proven methodology for addressing these issues that includes problem discovery, impact assessment, steps to resolution and client communication.

Participation in Industry Associations:

- ❖ Direct Marketing Association (DMA)
 - Rick Buck, director of privacy and ISP relations, is vice chairman of the DMA's Ethics Policy Committee
 - Simone Barratt, managing director e-Dialog UK, is a member of the DMA E-mail Experience Council and co-authored the DMA paper "E-mail Marketing Best Practice Guidelines"
 - John Rizzi, president and CEO, sits on the DMA Marketing Technology Council
 - John Polcari, vice president of sales, is on the DMA's Retail Marketing Council
 - Ben Ardito, account director, is on the E-mail Experience Council's education committee



- ❖ E-mail Measurement Accuracy Coalition (EMAC)
- ❖ E-mail Processing Industry Alliance
- ❖ E-mail Sender & Provider Coalition (ESPC)
- ❖ Institute for Spam & Internet Public Policy (ISIPP)
- ❖ International Association of Privacy Professionals (IAPP)
- ❖ Messaging Anti-abuse Working Group (MAAWG)

Legislation Compliance: While not serving as legal council, e-Dialog keeps clients up to date on the fine distinctions and changes in laws and regulations impacting e-mail campaigns, including:

- ❖ CAN-SPAM
- ❖ CA Privacy/Disclosure Laws
- ❖ Children's Protection Registries
- ❖ EU Data Protection Act
- ❖ Canada PIPEDA
- ❖ Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations
- ❖ FTC Safe Harbor

Thought Leadership:

- ❖ CAN-SPAM Congressional Hearing – In 2003, e-Dialog president and CEO John Rizzi testified before Congress regarding anti-spam legislation. The hearing addressed the ethical and legal implications of commercial e-mail.
- ❖ Best Practices – e-Dialog routinely publishes white papers and POV documents on industry developments and makes corresponding recommendations for executing e-mail marketing programs to best comply with legal standards and to ensure clients are sending the right message to the right person at the right time.