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**My Emails Are Not Being Delivered. Black Lists and White Lists Explained**

**By Karen Fegarty**

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Over 40% of all emails within your marketing campaign are not being delivered. You may not even be aware of this, as many ISPs will not send back a bounce message. In fact if you are sending messages to AOL customers, AOL is now blocking over 80% of the messages that come into their servers.

One of the main reasons that this is occurring is that your IP or Domain may be Black Listed. All major ISP's and many corporate email systems now check against Black Lists and will refuse to deliver any emails that come from an IP that is Black Listed.

But what exactly is a Black List?

DNS black lists are lists of domains and IP's that are known to originate Spam. Many anti-spam software programs used by corporations and ISP's use these lists to control Spam by refusing any email that originates from one of these domains or IPs.

Unfortunately there are many instances of false positives as there are few checks and often little objectivity when listing a particular IP. In order for a black list to know that a domain is sending Spam, the offence must be reported . It may take only one report via a web form for you to be listed.

You may be listed maliciously through one complaint of a client, or that of a competitor. Many Black Lists, as well, will list not only the IP that is suspected as spamming, but will list any IPs in that range of addresses. If someone using the same Internet provider as you is accused of spamming and is placed on a Black List, you may be listed as well.

## My Emails Are Not Being Delivered. Black Lists and White Lists Explained

DNS blacklists are usually maintained by anti-spam organizations or by individuals.

What are some of the most popular Black Lists that ISPs are using?

Some of these include:

MAPS – <http://www.mail-abuse.com/>

Spam Cop – <http://www.spamcop.net/>

SpamHaus – <http://www.spamhaus.org/>

SPEWS.org – <http://www.spews.org/>

ORDB.org – Open Relay Database – <http://www.ordb.org/>

How do I know if I am on a Black List?

Unfortunately, you really can't be 100% sure if you have been black listed. You may be on someone's black list and not even know it. There are, however, ways to check most of the lists.

One way is to check your server log when sending your campaigns. You will often see an email bounce notice indicating that the message has bounced because you are on a particular black list.

Many of the major black lists also allow you to enter your IP into a form on their site. These checks will tell you whether you appear, or not, on their list.

A useful tool, is the Black List Monitor. <http://www.blacklistmonitor.com> – It automatically checks your IP against most of the major Black Lists and tells you which ones you are listed on. It also gives you help in getting removed. All your IPs are constantly monitored for any changes, listings, or delistings.

But what is a White List and how can this help?

Many corporations and ISPs will create a white list. This is a list of trusted IP addresses that they feel confident will not send spam to their customers. If your IP is listed on a particular white list then your email messages will be delivered to the destination email address. It is important for reputable marketers to work with the major ISP's such as AOL to ensure that you are on their white list. For most, it can be a lengthy process, but well worth your efforts.

Other third-party email certification programs now exist. Bonded sender [www.bondedsender.com](http://www.bondedsender.com) is one such agency. By joining Bonded Sender, senders improve deliverability rates and differentiate their brand. Senders go through a formal application process, adhere to email standards and post a bond against potential complaints. Major ISPs such as MSN/Hotmail now check against Bond Sender's white list and allow these email to pass.

Knowing if you are on a black list, getting removed if you are and getting established on white lists is critical if you are email marketing. The more messages delivered equals more sales!

Author Karen Fegarty is with MailWorkZ the creator of Black ListMonitor— advanced service that continuously checks all the major blacklists for you, and then some. Don't be treated unfairly! Keep a handle on who may have you blacklisted. Get a free trial and find out more at <http://www.blacklistmonitor.com>.

### **Avoiding Blacklisting: Making Sure Your Email Gets Through**

**By Karen Fegarty**

We all know that email is probably today's most popular way to advertise. Every day our inboxes are filled with messages from people who want our business—whether we asked for the contact or not. Email is today's biggest communication factor; but why shouldn't it be? It's all but free to use, and it's almost instantaneous.

But there is one problem with advertising via email that you may not think of very often: blacklisting. All it takes is one complaint, and your ISP or domain name can be put on someone's black list. If you're on the black list, your emails are not getting through—and neither is your advertising message.

So how big of a problem is this? Well, AOL, one of the world's biggest Internet service providers, winds up blocking a whopping 80% of messages to its subscribers due to blacklisting. Your email could be the most legitimate message ever sent, but if one person forgets they signed up or decides to complain, you could be blacklisted. And for your business, the resulting slump in sales can be devastating.

What is a blacklist, exactly? A blacklist is a database of known Internet addresses (or IPs) used by individuals or companies sending spam. Various ISP's and bandwidth providers subscribe to these blacklist databases in order to filter out spam sent across their network or to their subscribers. Companies like AOL, MSN, and Yahoo all have very strict policies on spam, so many well-intended, legitimate emails never get through.

So how can you be sure you haven't been blacklisted? Unfortunately, you really can't be 100% sure. You may be on someone's black list and not even know it, and be added to and removed from black lists at the drop of a hat. The only way to prevent being blacklisted unfairly is to use today's technology to keep track of it all. There is cutting-edge software technology available that checks all the major black lists like Spamcop, MAPS, and SPAMHaus to ensure your domain or ISP hasn't been added.

Taking a few moments to understand and solve your potential blacklisting problem can mean a world of difference in your bottom line.

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