

Was This Double Opt-In List 100% SafeToSend?

Challenge

Online engineering platform GrabCAD.com was about to make a big announcement to its 600,000 members. And even though the organization employs the gold standard in email permission practices—fully confirmed, or double opt-in—executives did not want to risk any deliverability issues or make anybody angry. They needed to know their list was pristine.

The Solution

GrabCAD turned to FreshAddress's SafeToSend™ email deliverability solution. SafeToSend™ employs a multi-pronged approach to improving email data quality that confirms whether an email address is valid, corrects mistyped entries, and screens for toxic email addresses.

SafeToSend™ drastically reduces spam complaints and bounces, and flags toxic addresses for removal through a three-step process:

- STEP 1:** Check each address to confirm the account is valid and available to accept email
- STEP 2:** Correct typos, syntax errors, format issues, and other input errors
 - Protect client databases from damaging (but deliverable) addresses including
- STEP 3:** spamtraps, honeypots, frequent spam complainers, role accounts, disposable domains, bogus addresses, and malicious entries.

The Story

GrabCAD recently made a vast improvement to its three-dimensional computer-aided design model sharing tool. It would allow members to view and manipulate 3-D models without having to buy and download thousands of dollars' worth of software.

"This was a tenfold improvement," said Sara Sigel, community manager for GrabCAD. "So we wanted to let everybody know, but we consider ourselves an upstanding company so we wanted to make sure we were sending only email people wanted. We didn't want to email any addresses that were old or weren't working or that had any problems at all."

But there was a problem. "We actually don't send email to our full membership very often," said

The Story

Sigel. "As a result, we had a number of email addresses that we hadn't sent to recently. We were worried that some of those addresses might no longer be active."

As a result, before the announcement went out, executives at GrabCAD believed it was imperative they ensured their 600,000-name subscriber file was cleaned of bad and questionable email addresses.

Sigel uploaded GrabCAD's list to FreshAddress's SafeToSend™ system and within a very short period of time received a report saying that 85.8 percent of the company's email addresses were SafeToSend™. More importantly, the report tagged 4 percent of GrabCAD's addresses as unsafe to email. The rest were deemed iffy.

To be absolutely safe, GrabCAD sent its 3-D announcement only to the addresses deemed SafeToSend™. "We didn't even send email to the 'maybes,'" said Sigel.

The Results

GrabCAD had a somewhat surprising percentage of email addresses that SafeToSend™ deemed questionable or not safe to send. GrabCAD suppressed the dangerous and questionable addresses, emailed the SafeToSend™ addresses and achieved stellar deliverability.

A 0.4 percent bounce rate for one segment and a 1.4 percent bounce rate for the second, said Sigel. "We got a few unsubscribes but I like that because it means that person actually read the email. You'd rather hear someone complain than have that email marked as spam, which affects your reputation as a sender."

GrabCAD's experiences with data-services haven't always been so positive. Prior to FreshAddress, GrabCAD had employed a competitor. "It took longer than FreshAddress to process," said Sigel. "We got the same kind of report back but it was a little confusing what was in which category."

As with the FreshAddress results, Sigel said she didn't send to any of the "maybe" emails. "But when I sent to the 'complete-thumbs-up' emails, I got something like a 20 percent bounce rate. It was clutch-your-heart-at-the-desk horrible. Thank god it was a really small, test-the-waters send."

The competitor's results contained a boatload of false positives and false negatives.

"They [the competitor] scrubbed pretty much the same percentage of addresses that FreshAddress did, but I don't know what happened there," she said. "This was a nightmare."

The lesson: SafeToSend™ can drastically improve deliverability even for companies that use the gold standard in permission practices to build their email lists. While others make claims, FreshAddress delivers.