

Q1
2025

Postmastery's Email Delivery Benchmark

Compare your email delivery performance with the performance of others...

DISTILLED FROM
11 BILLION
LARGE ESP'S EMAIL
TRANSACTIONS

Postmastery is pleased to present the next edition of our Email Delivery Benchmark report, building on the insights from our previous analyses.

This report offers a refined analysis of email delivery metrics, incorporating billions of additional email transactions from newly partnered senders to deliver an even more robust and comprehensive overview of email performance.

Conducted from January to March 2025, this study evaluates the most recent delivery trends across leading ESPs.

By assessing key metrics such as delivery rates, bounce rates, and deferred rates, this report provides industry professionals with actionable benchmarks to optimize their strategies in an evolving digital landscape.

In this edition, we have highlighted a few bounce and deferral messages that had significant volume during this period and are of particular interest.

We conclude this report with an update on Outlook and a reference from a Postmastery customer.

Key performance indicators

MAILBOX PROVIDERS	DELIVERY RATE	BOUNCE RATE	DEFERRED RATE	AVERAGE DELIVERY TIME
GOOGLE	99.42	0.58	0.14	00:03:16
OUTLOOK	99.86	0.14	0.14	00:05:56
YAHOO	99.82	0.18	0.06	00:03:28
OFFICE365	99.32	1.16	0.22	00:02:08
ICLOUD	98.94	1.07	0.30	00:04:48
SEZNAM	99.97	0.03	0.03	00:00:07
BTINTERNET	99.18	0.82	1.01	00:08:41
MIMECAST	97.86	2.82	19.00	00:02:39
PROOFPOINT	99.00	1.21	2.02	00:07:48
VIRGINMEDIA	99.75	0.34	0.64	00:02:17
PRODIGY	99.40	0.61	0.47	00:00:27
GMX	99.70	0.30	0.15	00:00:22
ORANGE	99.02	0.99	0.06	00:34:09
COMCAST	98.77	1.25	16.46	00:37:28
ZIGGO	99.80	0.20	0.48	00:02:11

➔ **Note:** All metrics in this table are the median values of the sender cohort considered for the Benchmark. Delivery rate is the percentage of messages delivered compared to messages sent. Bounce rate is the percentage of messages that bounced compared to messages sent. Deferred Rate is the percentage of unique delivery attempts compared to messages sent. Average delivery time is the total delivery time divided by the number of messages delivered.

Delivery Rates: Stability with Some Shifts



Google edged up slightly to 99.42% (from 99.39% in Q4).

Outlook recovered from its Q4 dip, improving to 99.86% (from 99.78%).

Yahoo held steady at 99.82%.

Office365 ticked up to 99.32%, regaining ground lost in Q4.

Mimecast and Comcast, however, continued to show lower delivery efficiency, with Comcast at 98.77% and Mimecast at just 97.86%.

Notably:

Seznam continues to be the top performer with a near-perfect 99.97% delivery rate, maintaining its status.

Bounce Rates: Mixed Signals Across Providers



Google saw continued improvement in bounce rate (now 0.58% vs. 0.62% in Q4), reinforcing the impact of stronger sender authentication compliance.

Outlook significantly dropped to 0.14%, a marked improvement from Q4's 0.22%.

Office365, while improving slightly (1.16% from 1.64%), still presents elevated bounce rates tied to IP reputation and authentication issues.

Mimecast remained a challenge for senders with a persistently high bounce rate (2.82%), though slightly better than the 4.56% observed in Q4.

Notably:

Authentication remains a top driver of bounces. **Gmail** continues to reject unauthenticated mail, with 550 5.7.26, 5.7.30, and 5.7.27 errors dominating bounce logs.

Deferred Rates: Rate Limiting Still Common



Google deferred rate dropped further to 0.14%, likely showing better adaption by senders to Gmail's strict policies (Q4: 0.18%).

Yahoo also improved, now at 0.06% (Q4: 0.09%).

Office365 remained mostly stable at 0.22%.

However, **Mimecast** (19.00%) and **Comcast** (16.46%) are still throttling aggressively, and **BTinternet** continues to see elevated deferral (1.01%).

Notably:

Gmail's 421 4.7.x deferral messages remain prevalent, often triggered by volume anomalies, lack of alignment, or domain reputation issues.

Reporting Formats

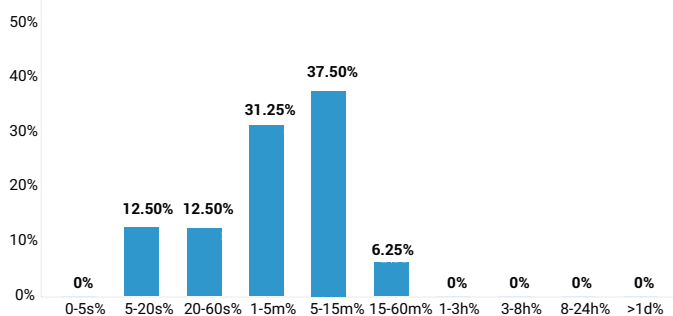
In this edition of the Delivery Benchmark, we're experimenting with new ways to visualise the data, ranging from bar charts and the usual box-and-whisker plots to alternative presentation formats. Our aim is to make the information as clear, actionable, and insightful as possible for email professionals across all levels. We'd love your feedback: What works well for you? What feels unclear or unhelpful? Are there visual formats or reporting styles you'd like to see in future editions? Help us shape the benchmark to better serve the community by sharing your thoughts, we want this report to be as useful to you as possible, and your input will play a vital role in making that happen.

Send your feedback to info@postmastery.net

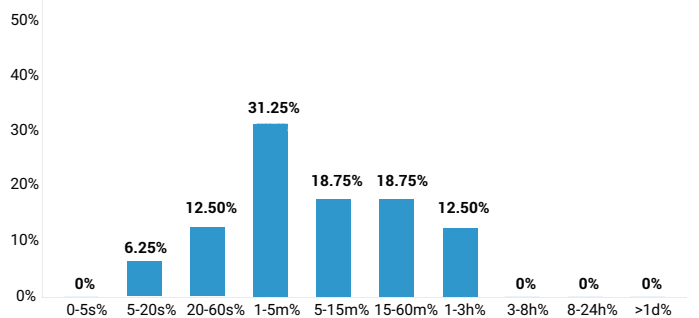
Average Delivery time distribution of top-5 MBP

Distribution of Average Delivery times by Senders per Delivery time buckets

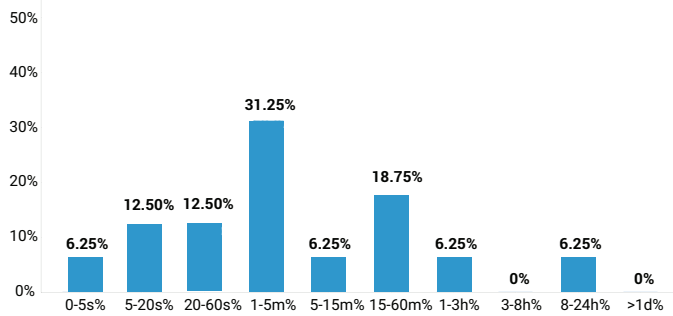
Google



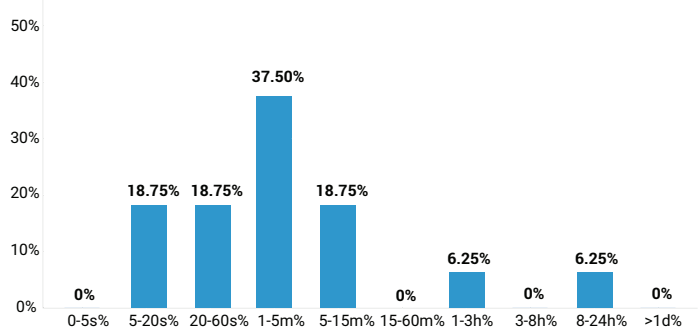
Outlook



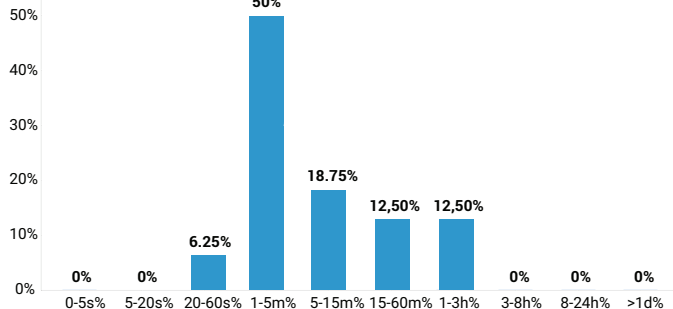
Yahoo



Office 365

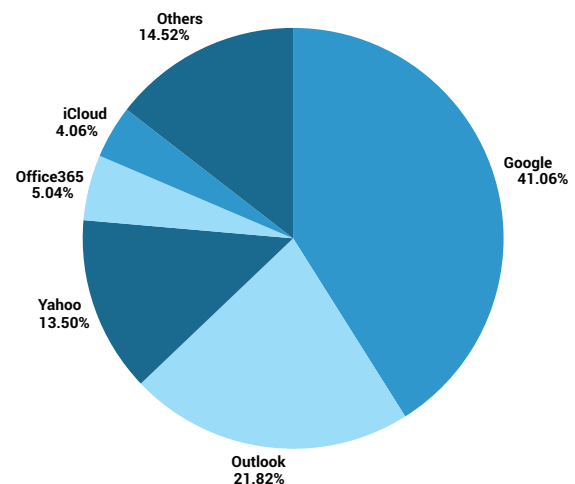


iCloud



Mailbox providers distribution

Distribution of Mailbox providers within the sender cohort considered for the Benchmark.



SMTP Message of the Quarter

We've highlighted a few bounce and deferral messages that had significant volume during the period and are of particular interest.

Bounce

550 5.7.26 Your email has been blocked because the sender is unauthenticated. Gmail requires all senders to authenticate with either SPF or DKIM. Authentication results: DKIM = did not pass SPF [domain.com] with ip: [xx.xx.xx.xx] = did not pass For instructions on setting up authentication, go to <https://support.google.com/mail/answer/81126#authentication>

550 5.7.30 Your email has been blocked because DKIM authentication didn't pass for this message. Gmail requires all email bulk senders to authenticate their email with DKIM. Authentication results: DKIM = did not pass To set up DKIM for your sending domains, visit <https://support.google.com/a?p=turn-on-dkim> To learn more about Gmail requirements for bulk senders, visit <https://support.google.com/a?p=sender-guidelines>.

550 5.7.27 Your email has been blocked because SPF authentication didn't pass for this message. Gmail requires all bulk email senders to authenticate Authentication results: SPF [domain.com] with ip: [X.X.X.X] = did not pass To set up SPF for your sending domains, visit <https://support.google.com/a?p=setup-spf> To learn more about Gmail requirements for bulk senders, visit <https://support.google.com/a?p=sender-guidelines>.

Significant changes were introduced across the email industry in early 2024, with major providers like Google and Yahoo enforcing stricter requirements for bulk senders.

For those sending more than 5,000 emails per day, the following practices are now expected:

- Use proper authentication methods such as DKIM, SPF, and DMARC.
- Provide a simple one-click unsubscribe option and honor requests promptly (within two days).
- Keep spam complaint rates below 0.3% to maintain good deliverability.

The messages above illustrate some of the newer error responses introduced by Gmail as part of its (now not-so-recent) policy changes regarding authentication.

While most senders have since aligned with the requirements, these errors continue to account for a noticeable volume.

Deferrals

452 4.2.2 The recipient's inbox is out of storage space. Please direct the recipient to <https://support.google.com/mail/?p=OverQuotaTemp>

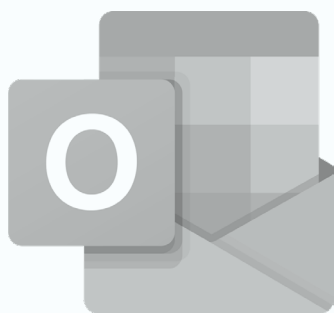
Although this message—indicating that a recipient's inbox is full—may appear straightforward, it's often underestimated. It ranks among the most frequent deferral reasons in our user data and is typically a sign of suboptimal MTA configuration and/or sunset policies.

A large number of full inboxes on your list poses a serious risk to your sender reputation with Gmail, as it leads to repeated failed attempts.

We recommend configuring your MTA to treat these errors as hard bounces after the initial attempts, despite them being categorized as transient.

In terms of sunset policy, we advise removing affected recipients after 2 to 3 consecutive failures across separate sends.

POSTMASTERY & INDUSTRY QUARTERLY NEWS



Outlook Postmaster(y) Page: **New Rules** starting May 5

Starting May 5, 2025, Microsoft will require high-volume senders (5,000+ emails/day to Outlook.com, Hotmail.com, or Live.com) to have valid SPF, DKIM, and a DMARC policy of at least "p=none" with alignment.

Non-compliant emails will be rejected with a 550 5.7.515 error. Microsoft also recommends clear unsubscribe links, clean lists, and sending only to users who've given consent.

Read More:

→ <https://www.postmastery.com/outlook-postmaster/>

How Omeda transformed email delivery with Postmastery

Omeda improved its email delivery by migrating to PowerMTA with Postmastery's help. The project involved transitioning from a custom MTA to a more scalable setup, with enhanced monitoring through the Postmastery Console.

This led to faster delivery, better issue detection, and more efficient operations.

Read More:

→ <https://www.postmastery.com/how-omeda-transformed-email-delivery-with-postmastery/>

