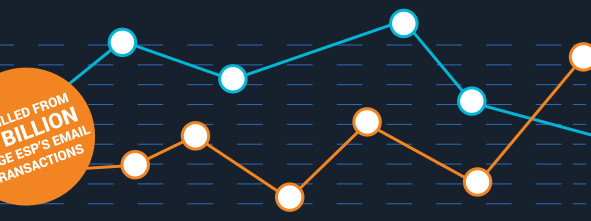
Q2 2025 Postmastery's Email Delivery Benchmark

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 fifth 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 April to June 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.

This report offers a more comprehensive analysis, incorporating billions of additional email transactions from newly partnered senders, resulting in a deeper and statistically robust insight. The expanded dataset offers greater accuracy, making this report a critical tool for navigating the evolving landscape of email deliverability.

Key performance indicators

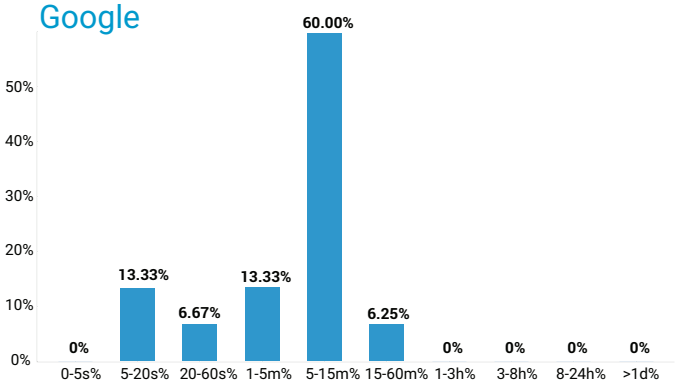
MAILBOX PROVIDERS	DELIVERY RATE	BOUNCE RATE	DEFERRED RATE	AVERAGE DELIVERY TIME
GOOGLE	99.42	0.58	0.34	00:05:34
OUTLOOK	99.74	0.26	0.13	00:04:09
YAHOO	99.75	0.25	0.09	00:02:58
OFFICE365	99.51	0.49	0.22	00:01:19
ICLOUD	98.86	1.14	0.36	00:04:55
SEZNAM	99.94	0.06	0.06	00:00:22
BTINTERNET	99.86	0.14	0.15	00:00:17
MIMECAST	93.86	6.14	13.30	00:03:14
PROOFPOINT	98.67	1.33	2.35	00:09:06
VIRGINMEDIA	99.88	0.12	1.61	00:02:13
PRODIGY	99.85	0.15	0.04	00:00:44
GMX	99.49	0.51	0.10	00:00:20
ORANGE	99.35	0.65	0.07	00:27:53
COMCAST	97.86	2.14	17.66	01:01:56
ZIGGO	99.70	0.30	0.18	00:01:01

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.

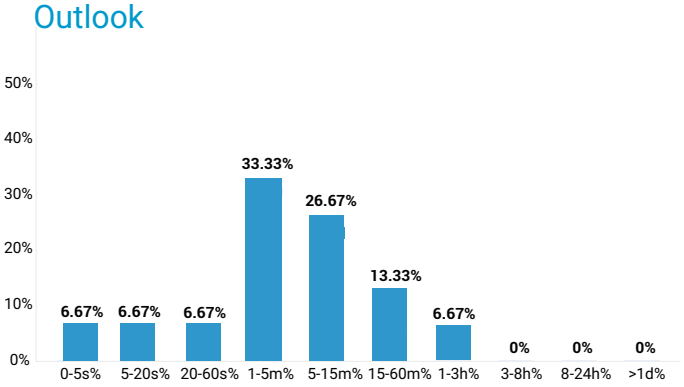
Average Delivery time distribution of top-5 MBP

Distribution of Average Delivery times by Senders per Delivery time buckets.

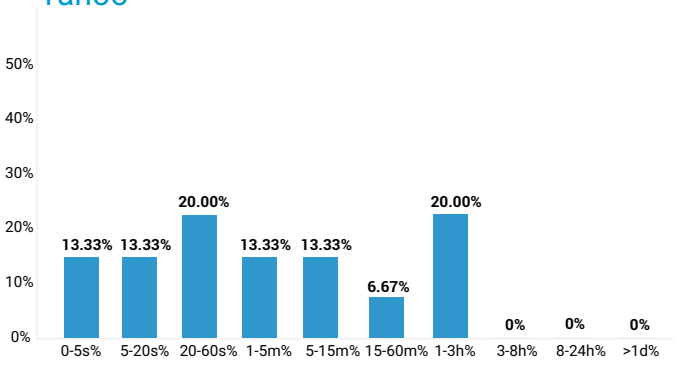
Google



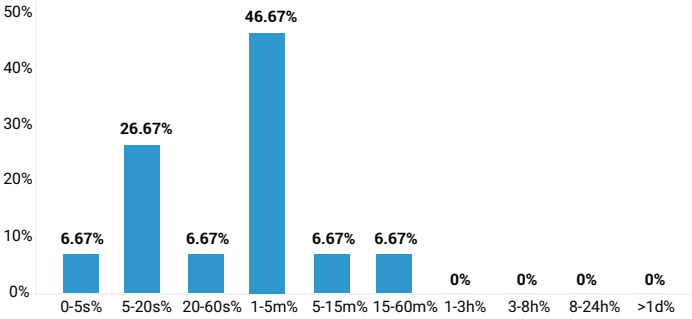
Outlook



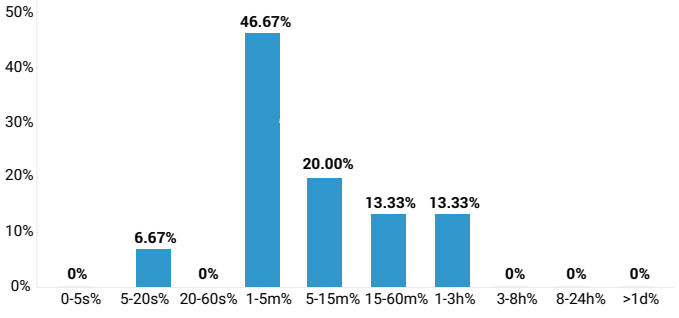
Yahoo



Office 365

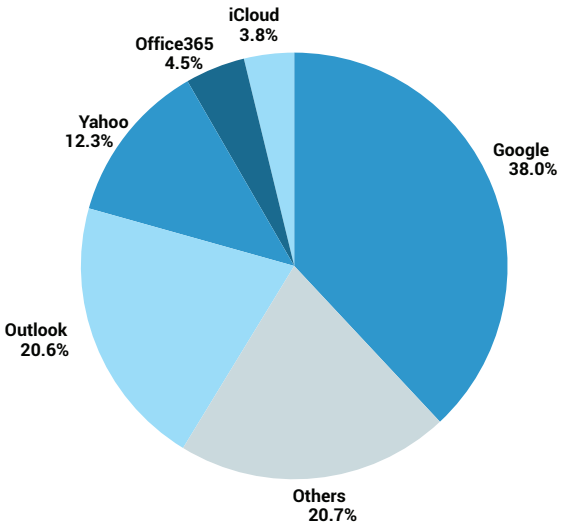


iCloud



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 5.7.515 Access denied, sending domain
domain.com doesn't meet the required authenti-
cation level. The sender's domain in the 5322.
From address doesn't meet the authentication
requirements defined for the sender. To learn
how to fix this see: https://go.microsoft.com/
fwlink/p/?linkid=2319303 Spf= Fail , Dkim=
Pass , DMARC= Pass
```

```
550 5.7.515 Access denied, sending domain
domain.com doesn't meet the required authenti-
cation level. The sender's domain in the 5322.
From address doesn't meet the authentication
requirements defined for the sender. To learn
how to fix this see: https://go.microsoft.com/
fwlink/p/?linkid=2319303 Spf= Pass , Dkim=
Fail , DMARC= Pass
```

These two bounce messages started appearing after Microsoft's recent policy changes. (Which are detailed here)

The main factor is that Microsoft has introduced stricter requirements for senders it categorizes as High-Volume. Specifically, they now require both SPF and DKIM to pass and be aligned, exceeding DMARC's standard (which only needs one to pass).

To understand what's happening, it's important to distinguish between SPF failures and DKIM failures:

- **SPF failures (Spf=Fail, Dkim=Pass, DMARC=Pass)**
  If you check your logs, you'll likely notice that all the SPF failures reported by Microsoft are asynchronous bounces. These typically occur when messages are originally delivered to other domains and then forwarded to Outlook accounts without ARC. Because forwarding breaks SPF, Microsoft now rejects these emails, even if DKIM and DMARC still pass.

- **DKIM failures (Spf=Pass, Dkim=Fail, DMARC=Pass)**
  DKIM-related rejections are more complex to diagnose. One cause is encoding problems in headers, such as raw 8-bit characters or missing fields. Microsoft sometimes "repairs" these headers before verifying the DKIM signature.

  Unfortunately, this process can break an otherwise valid DKIM signature and cause the message to be rejected (even if SPF and DMARC still pass). When this happens, the bounce rate is usually quite significant.

Another potential cause is **intermittent DNS resolution issues within Microsoft's own infrastructure**. This seems to be an internal problem on their side. Unfortunately, there isn't much you can do besides waiting for them to improve DNS reliability or adjust their strict policy, which goes beyond established standards.

While it hasn't been definitively confirmed, CNAME usage (which requires extra DNS lookups) may make the issue worse. You might be able to mitigate this somewhat by increasing the TTL of your DKIM DNS records (up to 24 hours), which could help improve lookup consistency on Microsoft's end.

Besides Microsoft's (arguably questionable) decision to enforce requirements beyond standard DMARC, the bigger issue here is that the error messages you see in your logs, particularly those mentioning DKIM, don't clearly indicate the actual cause of the messages being rejected in the first place.

Deferrals

Google

```
450 4.2.1 The user you are trying to contact
is receiving mail at a rate that prevents
additional messages from being delivered. Please
resend your message at a later time. If the user
is able to receive mail at that time, your
message will be delivered. For more information,
go to https://support.google.com/mail/?p=Receiv-
ingRate
```

Yahoo

```
450 User is receiving mail too quickly tnmpmscs
```

iCloud

```
421 4.7.1 Messages to *****@icloud.com deferred
due to excessive volume. Try again later -
https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT204137
```

The deferral messages above occur when a recipient gets too many emails in a short timeframe. This often points to problems with list acquisition practices and may signal an active list bombing attack.

We strongly recommend configuring your MTA to treat these errors as hard bounces after the initial attempt to avoid damaging your reputation, even though they are technically considered temporary.

It's also advisable to investigate whether your registration forms have been exploited. Make sure all signup forms are properly protected against bot abuse.

POSTMASTERY & INDUSTRY
QUARTERLY NEWS

Yahoo Postmaster(y) Page: **AT&T domains moving to Yahoo Mail**

As of late June 2025, AT&T started updating the MX records for its consumer domains to point directly to Yahoo's inbound mail servers: mx-att.mail.am0.yahoodns.net.

Read More at The Postmastery Blog

Orange Postmaster(y) Page: New spam rate thresholds starting mid-August

On June 12th, Orange published some updates on its Postmaster Page for Large Senders. As Orange announced at the Deliverability Summit in Amsterdam, the Spam Rate threshold will be gradually reduced to 0.3%, as required by other Mailbox Providers such as Google, Yahoo and Microsoft.

Starting mid-August 2025, 0.6% or above spam reports rate might trigger some protection mechanisms.

Read More at The Postmastery Blog

Orange Spain announces the end of its email services: What all senders need to know ahead of September 5, 2025

Orange Spain has officially announced the permanent shutdown of all its email services as of September 5, 2025.

Read more at The Postmastery Blog

Outlook Deliverability: **A silent shift with serious consequences**

Starting on June 17th, 2025 at 11:10 UTC, multiple high-volume senders began experiencing a sudden surge in DKIM failures on emails sent to Microsoft domains (Outlook, Hotmail, etc.).
These bounces occurred even though SPF, DKIM and DMARC were properly configured.

Read More at The Postmastey Blog

In conclusion, this report gives a clear snapshot of the average MBP email delivery performance and with this report senders can map their delivery performance against performance from others; a great baseline for improvement.
Interested in more insights, data or want to be included into the reports? Let us know at: info@postmastery.com