How to Fix and Prevent Invalid Email Addresses

by Amber Iven - Monday, May 18, 2020

https://www.searchbug.com/info/invalid-email-addresses/

Invalid email addresses are addresses that do not receive emails. An address could be formatted incorrectly, there could be a typo, the address could no longer exist, or it could be inactive. It is important to get invalid email addresses fixed or off your list as quickly as possible.

Invalid email addresses are like zombies: they're dead but actively eat away the life of your email campaigns. But there's an antidote: email validation, verification, and regular cleaning can help preserve the life of your email list. Without it, your data decays and threatens the life of your email list. Keep reading to learn how to keep invalid email addresses off your email list and make it into your customers' inboxes.

What makes an email address invalid?

There are many factors that can cause an email address to be invalid. They can be intentional, unintentional, or situational. Regardless, it's important to check the validity of an email address before adding it to your database (more on that later).

- Human error - Typos can occur at the point of entry by either the owner when signing up or by a company representative when entering the data.
- Formatting - Email addresses should consist of four parts: the local address, @, the domain name, and the domain identifier: sample@company.com, for example. If an email address is missing any of these parts, it will be invalid and there will be no inbox for messages to enter.
- Domain - There are instances when an email address meets the formatting standards but can still be invalid if the domain no longer exists. This might happen if a company goes out of business or changes names.
- Abandonment - When someone gets promoted, changes jobs, or creates a new account with the same or a different email provider, the original email address often gets abandoned for the new one. So even if emails are delivered to these addresses, they aren't opened.
- Spamtrap - Spamtraps are email addresses that mark emails as spam and try to block their delivery. These email addresses can make it onto your list if the address is obtained without permission or if you do not keep your email list cleaned and up to date. Recycled email addresses---or addresses that are abandoned---can become spamtraps, so you need to get outdated addresses off your list as soon as possible.
- Bots - Bots are automated systems that can be programmed to fill out online forms with fake or legitimate emails. To prevent having to sort through these if they make it on your list, consider adding a CAPTCHA to weed out robots from real people.

Knowing what makes email addresses invalid and how they can make their way into your database puts you in a better position to prevent them. You might not be able to recognize a fake, inactive, or abandoned address, but there are tools to help. Keep reading to learn more.

How They Hurt Your Marketing Campaigns

Without properly maintaining your email list, here is what's happening:

Say a hundred contacts join your email list. Some of those email addresses have been mistyped. Some of those email addresses don't exist; they're formatted incorrectly. Others are accounts that are rarely checked or accessed. At the end of the day, you send out 100 emails, but only a percent reaches an actual inbox and only a percent of *those* reach an active inbox.

By the end of the year, you lose [22.5%](#) of those valid email addresses. People get promoted, change titles, change jobs; companies go out of business; old email addresses are abandoned for new ones. All of these are common reasons why email [data decays](#) at the rate it does. What starts out as a valid email address doesn't always stay that way. To keep your list growing, make sure you add more contacts to your email list in a year than you plan to lose.

Each time you send an email that doesn't reach its destination, your bounce rate and deliverability suffer. A high bounce rate and low deliverability increase your chances of being flagged as spam.

Emails are marked as **spam** when they look like many recipients get the same irrelevant, inappropriate, unwanted, or intrusive messages. Recipients are likely to mark your emails as spam if you don't email ethically, provide valuable content and information, or clearly offer a way to opt out or unsubscribe.

The **bounce rate** is the number of emails returned by the recipient mail server. The email "bounces" back to you because it cannot be delivered. An email might bounce if the email address is invalid or it doesn't exist. There are other reasons, but these are the two that you can control and prevent.

Deliverability is the measure of how successful you are at landing your emails in your recipients' inboxes. The lower your deliverability, the higher your chance of being flagged as spam.

Do you really want to spend valuable time and money drafting and sending emails that no one will see?

How to Fix and Prevent Them

Because deliverability is so important to the success of your email marketing campaign, it's necessary to fix errors before they reach your database and get invalid email addresses out as soon as possible. This is referred to as email list [cleansing](#).

You can do this yourself if you have the time and patience. Depending on the size of your list, it can take hours or even days to clean an email list manually. Fortunately, there are tools available to help. Searchbug's [bulk email verifier](#) identifies valid, invalid, disposable, toxic, and catch-all email addresses from your list to prevent email bounces and increase email deliverability. It even identifies email addresses that are prone to marking emails as spam! Here's how it works:

1. Upload your CSV file
2. Identify name and email columns

3. Estimate the cost
4. Let the verifier do the work
5. Download the results

You can also validate email addresses before uploading them to your database. Searchbug's [email verification API](#) eliminates invalid email addresses, reduces email bounce rates, and avoids spamtraps to keep your database clean.

Invalid email addresses waste time, cost money, and hurt your reputation. The more valid emails you have, the higher your delivery rate. The higher your delivery rate, the better conversion rate you can expect. A good sender reputation, based on high deliverability and low bounce rate, sets you up for better success with subsequent marketing campaigns.

Don't let zombie email addresses eat the brains of your campaign. Invest in email validation and verification tools for both short and long-term success. If you're putting in the work to create an effective marketing campaign, make sure it gets seen!

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