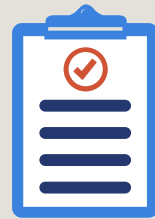# 2018 Email Marketing & Unsubscribe Audit
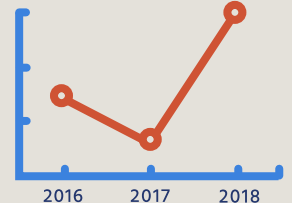
Overall Results

74% of top retailers

qualified as "Best of Class," scoring 80% or higher and being CAN-SPAM/CASL compliant, up from 2017

10 Retailers had perfect scores

(vs. 9 retailers in 2017 and 12 in 2016).

2016   2017   2018

Signup Practices

↓**31%**

↓**25%**

31% pop up a screen to solicit subscriptions and 25% make a promotional offer for signups, both down from 2017

↑**12%**

↑**15%**

12% require re-entry of the email address and 15% require account creation, up from 2017

4%

Only 4% used CAPTCHA to reduce the risk of bot signups and "list bombing"
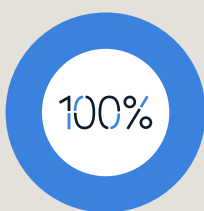
Email Authentication and Security

Adoption of email authentication to help prevent business email compromise attacks, including spoofed and malicious email, improved in all areas.
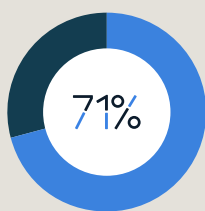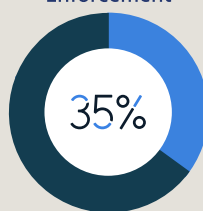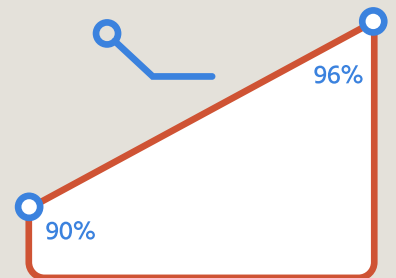
SPF	DKIM	DMARC	DMARC Enforcement
100%	100%	71%	35%

Opportunistic TLS adoption, which encrypts messages in transit between mail servers

96%

90%

Thereby helping to prevent eavesdropping, rose from 90% to 96%.

Mailing Practices

3.5% sent only a confirmation with no follow up

74.5% sent both a confirmation and a newsletter or promotional message

4.0% did not respond

18.0% sent only newsletters or promotional messages

The mailing cadence varied from

3 PER DAY
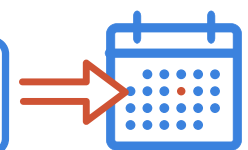
To one per month.

51% of retailers automatically stopped sending after no engagement (ranging from 1 day to 180 days, averaging 73 days), a significant multiple of the 19% seen in 2017.

https://otalliance.org/2018-email-marketing-unsubscribe-audit

OTA Online Trust Alliance an Internet Society initiative

Unsubscribe Practices

UNSUBSCRIBE

Clear and conspicuous unsubscribe links were observed in 84% of retailer emails, a significant improvement after a steady decline to 76% in 2017.
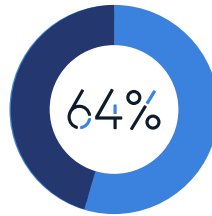
T ✓
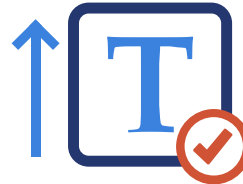
Small text sizes for the unsubscribe link were used by one-third of retailers, but 10% increased text size to exceed minimum guidelines.

29%

64%

Readability of unsubscribe links improved slightly,
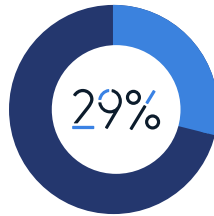
Though 29% still had unsubscribe text with contrast ratios below minimum W3C guidelines

And 64% were below W3C enhanced guidelines

For **77%** of Retailers

the word **UNSUBSCRIBE** itself was the link to click

69%

used an encrypted session for the unsubscribe page, an increase from 52% in 2017. Encryption prevents the email address and other information from being sent "in the clear."

5.8 DAYS AVG.

29% set an expectation for the unsubscribe timeframe, ranging from "next few minutes" to 10 days, averaging 5.8 days, all improvements over 2017.

UNSUB.

53% of retailers presented the unsubscribe link in a standalone single-word footer

UNSUB.

24% presented it as part of a standalone sentence

**23%** presented it within a paragraph of text, making it harder to find.

Unsubscribe Results

89% ✓

stopped sending messages immediately after the unsubscribe request was submitted (versus waiting the permitted 10 days), an improvement from 88% in 2017 and 86% in 2016.

Total violations of CAN-SPAM / CASL were 3.2% (6 retailers), a reduction by nearly half compared to 5.7% (11 retailers) last year.
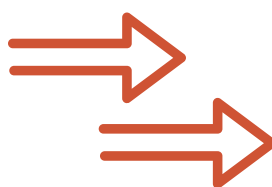
Three mailed more than 10 days past the unsubscribe request, a drop from 8 in 2017 and 11 in 2016.
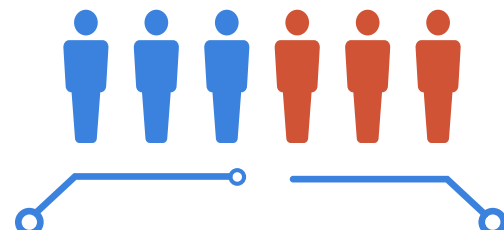
Three did not list a physical address in their email as required by CAN-SPAM and laws in other countries (consistent with 2017).