

Email, mobile and social benchmarks

Cross-channel metrics and approaches to Digital Marketing



Contents

- 2 Introduction
- 2 Creatures of habit
- 3 The intersection of deliverability and mobile
- 4 Making the case for mobile
- 5 Design trends across channels
- 6 From email to mobile to social
- 7 Concluding recommendations
- 7 About IBM Enterprise Marketing Management
- 8 About IBM Smarter Commerce

Introduction

Today's digital marketers are constantly challenged—there is no shortage of new mobile devices; each day more customers engage with their favorite brands on smaller screens and through social networks. To sustain a relevant digital conversation, marketers need to understand their company's channel mix and responses across these emerging platforms and networks.

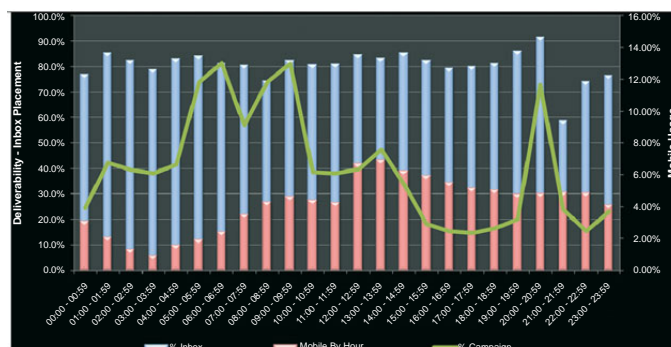
The internet is buzzing with content. As a marketer, it is difficult to have your digital voice heard. The global spam epidemic and competition for consumer attention make the battle for clicks in the inbox even tougher. The internet is awash in data—the more data you can gather and analyze about your customers' media consumption habits the more likely you can create engaging and compelling content.

Creatures of habit

By analyzing a customer's daily media consumption, marketers can benefit from a wealth of behavioral data. Our email benchmark research has shown that there are definite patterns and windows of opportunity. Email is still the foundational

cornerstone of every marketer's digital arsenal. However, to create a winning strategy, marketers must treat email not as a destination, but rather as a stepping-stone, or turnstile, into other digital channels.

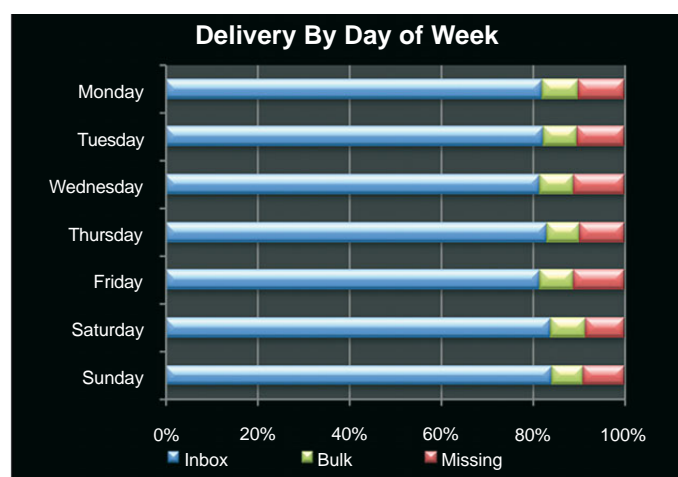
Marketers are also creatures of habit. IBM® Unica® studies show that the highest volume of campaigns occur in the morning, start to climb around the 3:00 AM mark and peak between 6:00 and 9:00 AM. However, as seen in the past, morning hours do not always have the highest deliverability. There are sustained higher peaks for deliverability after the noon hour and into the evening hours.



Additional techniques you can use are:

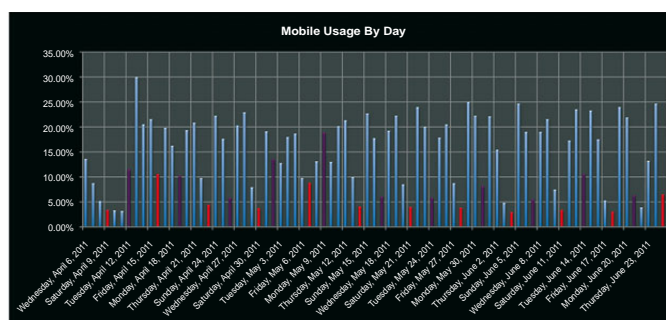
- A/B split test your segments and deliver them at different times of the day to see if your established delivery window is the best in terms of deliverability and response.
- Sending your campaigns at night for delivery the following morning. However, keep in mind, first in the inbox does not mean you are at the top. To the contrary, you are more likely at the bottom of a customer's list view.

Examine email cadence not only by the hour but also by the day. The data does not support the long-held belief that Tuesday through Wednesday are the best days to deliver email. The conventional wisdom assumed that Mondays are bad days to deliver emails because customers are busy catching up from the weekend. However, our data suggests that deliverability is highest during the weekend. Marketers probably made these assumptions long before the advent of the smartphone. The mobile web has made us far more connected today than ever before. Marketers must assume that between 10 - 30 percent (depending on the demographic and brand) of their customers are always connected.



- Fridays appear to have higher rates of emails that go missing.
- In light of potential deliverability issues, marketers who attempt to communicate with a people who only read email on the weekends, such as Saturday and Sunday, may want to consider other channels to drive conversions, including SMS.

Examining mobile usage across a range of days, you can see a continuing trend discovered in the previous benchmark: Saturdays appear to be the lowest for mobile engagement. The data reveals Tuesdays as another consistently low day for mobile engagement. This information contradicts the long-held wisdom that Tuesday is one of the best days to deploy email campaigns.



- Email and mobile are not separate channels. Treat mobile as an extension of email.
- Emails read on mobile devices are often opened in other email clients such as web and desktop email clients.
- If consumers are opening your emails on mobile devices, taking the time to read them, and clicking links within them, consider these customers more engaged than other segments and market to them appropriately.

The intersection of deliverability and mobile

The mobile phone continues to manifest itself not only as a communications device, but also as a part of every consumer's daily routine—even replacing devices such as the alarm clock. Mobile alarm clocks may in part be the driving factor behind the steady rise in mobile usage seen starting at 3 AM and hitting a morning plateau at 9 AM.

This behavior suggests that consumers are actively engaged with email through their mobile devices while commuting to work and then tapering off until they re-engage around lunch, when an even more impressive spike occurs.

- Identify and target your mobile customers when they are most active by tracking mobile usage for both your email and your website to determine who is accessing it, when they are accessing it and what type of device they are using to access.
- Consider mobile specific email templates that require a minimum of scrolling and resizing to read.
- Create bold and engaging buttons and links. Remember your mobile audience is just that, mobile, so your content is easy to interact with “on-the-go.”

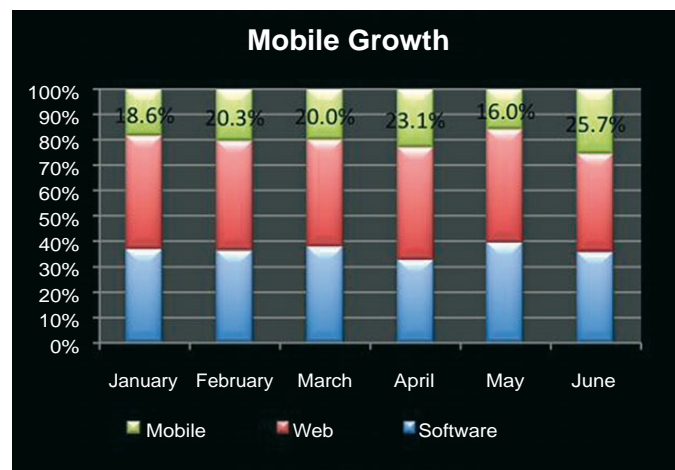
Making the case for mobile

Many marketers are still trying to make the case for their company to adopt or implement a mobile strategy. With tighter budgets, it is important to understand the potential upside in spending money on mobile audiences. Consider for a moment that nearly 38 percent of consumers in the US now own a smartphone according to Nielson.¹ North America isn't the only battleground for the mobile email market share: According to Nielson, smartphones dominate around 20 percent of the mobile market share in Asia.

The battle between mobile platforms continues to rage with three clear leaders: RIM's Blackberry, Google's Android and Apple's iOS. RIM has lost significant market share. Android has taken market share from Apple. While the phone wars smolder, the tablet wars are just starting, with numerous devices poised to hit the market in the coming months.

- Although tablets have unique rendering challenges and capabilities, the delivery challenge remains the same as other mobile devices because they are accessing the same email accounts. However, deliverability challenges aside, rendering challenges due to increased screen size and the nuances of the hardware persist in new forms.

- Tablets offer marketers a rich platform to communicate with their customers through a screen larger than a smartphone, images on by default on the market leading iPad and portability.
- Thirty-one percent of tablet purchasers cite the portability of the device over laptops and desktops according to Nielson.²



High mobile penetration coupled with the increasing popularity of cloud storage allows consumers to take their media with them and access it on any mobile internet ready device. The future is clear: Mobile is king.

Email is certainly the fastest entry point into the mobile channel, requiring little effort on the marketer's part because consumers are already reading their emails on their smartphones. Designing emails that work equally well in webmail clients, desktop email and on mobile devices guarantees a marketer's message will be read clearly across platforms and channels. Evidence of smartphone popularity is shown by the amount of time consumers are spending in mobile apps.

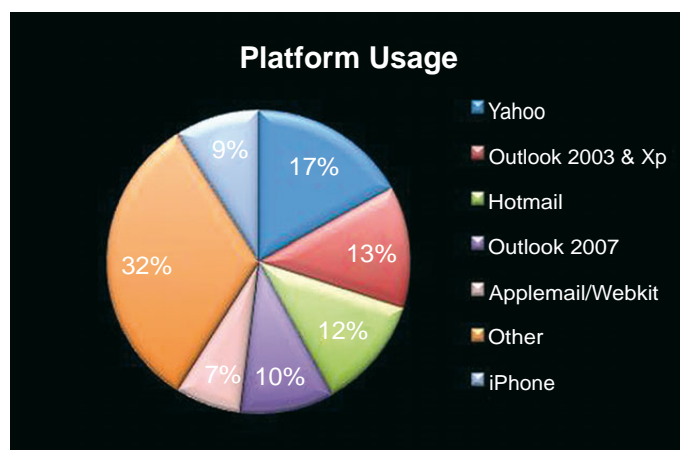
The mobile web represents an easy return on investment, for marketers who are willing to spend moderate effort to optimize their templates for cross-channel consumption.

Design trends across channels

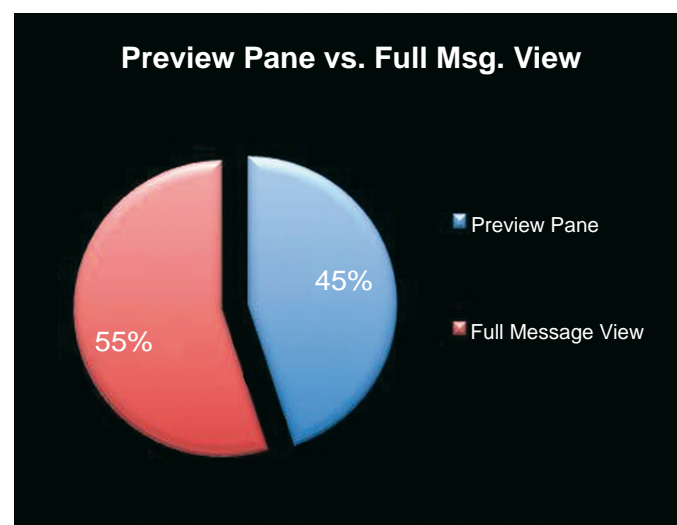
More marketers are beginning to see the value in creating emails optimized for cross-channel design and consumption. By keeping the emails smaller and restraining the number of offers they place in the body, marketers have the best chance to convey a uniform message across channels. An optimized email typically consists of a single column layout with larger buttons for easy interaction on a touch screen and has been thoroughly vetted against the world's leading web, desktop and mobile email clients.

More email clients are beginning to integrate social media as a widget or part of a panel of apps. As more traffic leaves the inbox for the social inbox thanks to Facebook email features, internet service providers (ISPs) are looking for incentives for customers to stay inside their webmail and, hopefully, click an advertisement.

- Optimized email design includes the positioning of a marketer's branding high and to the left to take into account the popularity of a vertical preview frame.
- Based on research and IBM Unica MailboxIQ metrics, the full message view, with a 55 percent share, is slightly ahead of the preview pane view. However, the full message view is not enough to forego top and left-aligned branding and positioning.



Globally, the most popular email clients have not changed much. Yahoo! and Hotmail continue to represent the largest and most dominant webmail clients. Outlook is still the dominant desktop email client with over a quarter of all email read in some form of Outlook email client.

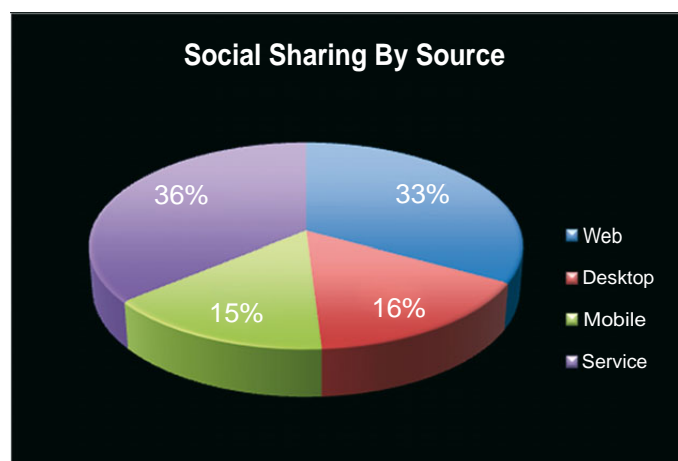


Web-based email clients are evolving towards parity with desktop email clients. More email clients have preview panes and other tools and widgets that have been long time features of desktop email clients. Thus, it is important to recognize the limitations of preview panes and organize content appropriately for preview panes.

Thoroughly test the inclusion of pre-header text, mobile version links and other content above the main body of the message. Overzealous marketers could be significantly pushing their content down the page, even below the fold at times!

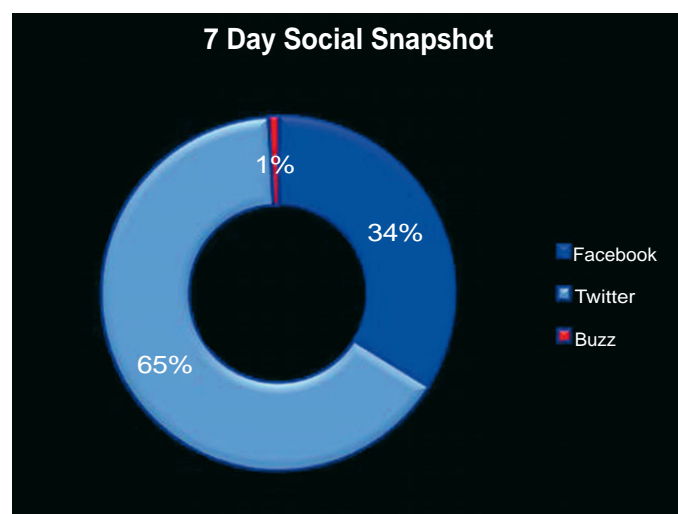
From email to mobile to social

Smartphones are content portals into the social networking realms defined by Facebook, Twitter and the newest contender: Google+. The content that fuels social networks makes email an ideal vehicle. Although many marketers are beginning to employ SWYNs (Share With Your Network links) embedded in emails in addition to websites, many marketers are surprised to discover how much unintended content is shared across Facebook and Twitter.



Twitter and Facebook are undeniably the largest and most important social networks in the world. Marketers strive to earn as many impressions. Based on data from the IBM Unica Social Email Analytics, which tracks email links as they spread across social networks, Twitter has a higher email to social penetration in a seven-day snapshot.

- The email penetration on Twitter is partly due to auto-tweeting technology and other services that drive traffic.
- To share links from a marketer's page, consumers must click the LIKE button on the Facebook page. The LIKE action implies consent to receive posts on their wall, an extra step in the content chain.
- Re-tweeting requires less engagement and engenders higher volume because of the relative brevity of the message, and how quickly tweets move across the social network.



Social networks are by definition amorphous and filled with noise. Marketers need to establish clear key performance indicators (KPIs) and track them to determine lift in their social presence. The decision to engage with social networks is not in the marketer's control; it is a foregone conclusion that every brand exists and is actively discussed, in various tones and quantities, on social networks. What marketers can do is to embrace the channel, create a set of measurable goals and work toward improving their marketing position, voice and reach in that channel.

Concluding recommendations

Each year marketing tension builds in anticipation of the holiday season. In addition, competition for conversions and revenues across digital channels increases year by year.

Marketers can achieve success into today's fierce market by using the wealth of data available about their customers. Marketers with the most robust customer profiles can take advantage of more channels and create a total messaging strategy that gives consumers the option of how they want to engage.

By sending email that consumers want to receive, marketers are fulfilling one of the primary tenets of cross-channel optimization: Relevancy. Without relevancy, the best designs go unnoticed because they fail to engage their intended audience. Without a template that renders well across devices and environments, the most engaging content is lost—effectively leaving advertising money on the table.

Listening is critical in determining and acting on a customer's digital desires. Social media presents marketers with a unique opportunity to listen to the conversations their customers are having about their brands.

Email marketers have relied on established metrics and benchmarks to help guide their actions. Social media as a new channel, fueled by mobile devices, presents new challenges to measurement and strategy. In order to create an effective strategy across channels, it is important to analyze each channel in relation to other channels in order to gain cross-channel insight. In some cases, this strategy takes a total departure from the "established" wisdom that urges marketers to focus on a single channel and saturate it with brand presence. However, new challenges represent new opportunities and the social and mobile channels offer new, invigorating engagement opportunities for marketers to connect with their customers. The mission now is to find the niches that extend your email marketing effectiveness and measure it every step of the way.

About IBM Enterprise Marketing Management

IBM Enterprise Marketing Management Suite is an end-to-end integrated set of capabilities designed exclusively for the needs of marketing organizations. Integrating and streamlining all aspects of online and offline marketing, IBM's EMM Suite empowers organizations and individuals to turn their passion for marketing into valuable customer relationships more profitable, timely and measurable business outcomes.

IBM Smarter Commerce: An integrated approach

IBM Unica products are part of the IBM Smarter Commerce™ initiative. Smarter Commerce is a unique approach that increases the value companies generate for their customers, partners and shareholders in a rapidly changing digital world. To learn more about Smarter Commerce, visit:

ibm.com/smarterplanet/commerce

For more information

To learn more about Unica eMessage 8.0, please contact your IBM marketing representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/software/info/unica



© Copyright IBM Corporation 2011

IBM Corporation
Software Group
Route 100
Somers, NY 10589
USA

Produced in the United States of America
November 2011
All Rights Reserved

IBM, the IBM logo, ibm.com, Unica, and Smarter Commerce are trademarks or registered trademarks of International Business Machines Corporation in the United States, other countries, or both. If these and other IBM trademarked terms are marked on their first occurrence in this information with a trademark symbol (® or ™), these symbols indicate US registered or common law trademarks owned by IBM at the time this information was published. Such trademarks may also be registered or common law trademarks in other countries. A current list of IBM trademarks is available on the web at "Copyright and trademark information" at ibm.com/legal/copytrade.shtml

Other company, product or service names may be trademarks or service marks of others.

¹ In US, Smartphones Now Majority of New Cellphone Purchases, June 30, 2011. Retrieved from http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/in-us-smartphones-now-majority-of-new-cellphone-purchases

² In US, Smartphones Now Majority of New Cellphone Purchases, June 30, 2011. Retrieved from http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/online_mobile/in-us-smartphones-now-majority-of-new-cellphone-purchases



Please Recycle
