██████████████████████████████ andrew@emailexpert.org) Dennis Dayman (technical.dayman@rocket.com,   ,

Call with Gmail Speaker April 29, 2014, at 4:00 ET/1:00 PT

1 Attachment, 26 KB

<u>Upcoming Full Member Call with Sri Somanchi of the Gmail Anti-Spam Team</u>

Sri Somanchi of the Gmail Anti-Spam Team will be a guest speaker on April 29 at 4:00 ET/1:00 PT. An Outlook Invite will follow.

<u>Sri will address</u>:

- The New Gmail FBL
- What was learned in early trials?
- Dual DKIM signing: how and why
- Questions – See Below

Members will be expected to have read Andrew Bonar's article (reprinted below) and to have reviewed the Gmail FAQ's and technical implementation details prior to the call.

<u>Please Submit your Question in Writing to Jim and Me Prior to the Call</u>

If you have any questions regarding the Gmail FBL or anything else regarding deliverability on Gmail, please send your questions to Jim and me in writing.

As is our custom when hosting a speaker from the receiver community, we allow them the courtesy of seeing and approving questions in advance so that they know for sure they won't feel "ambushed" and made to feel uncomfortable by our membership.

Best regards,

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<u>Article by Andrew Bonar</u>

==Gmail Feedback Loop: From AN ESP Perspective==

Andrew Bonar - EmailExpert.org

Author Note: Thanks to the team at Gmail and at Port25 for their support in helping me research and produce this article

Working for an ESP I was lucky enough to be invited for early enrolment in the Gmail Feedback Loop late in 2013, like <u>other early adopters</u> we have found it very useful. I would like to share some of the experience we have gained in these past 6 months with the membership in the hope that it may be of some use.

In case you have not already had the opportunity, I have requested permission for members of the ESPC to be able to apply for the FBL. Here is the URL for ESPs to sign-up: <u>goo.gl/NDAGcv</u>

The Gmail feedback loop is described by some as a pseudo-feedback loop; this I consider an unfair description. It is true that they do not follow the ARF format. However, as that has been abused in the eyes of some ISP's, it is not a surprise that a platform as sophisticated as Gmail would look to come up with a proprietary system for helping bulk mail platforms to identify miscreants on their network.

Example Gmail FBL Report

Date	Identifier	Spam_Rate
03-17-2013	a1	1.7%
03-17-2013	a2	0.89%
03-17-2013	b1	2.5%
03-17-2013	c1	3.5%
03-17-2013	c2	2.0%
03-17-2013	ESPid	1.0%

While I will not go too much into the details of technical implementation -- that is best left to the Gmail Team to deal with -- I will touch on a couple of aspects of implementation requirements to illustrate how we have used it and found it beneficial.

Access the FAQs hereto learn more about the technical aspects

Gmail offers the opportunity to include up to 3 Unique Identifiers in mail sent to Gmail. In our case, what we have decided to use these identifiers for are:

· Message-ID/Campaign-ID;
· Sender-ID; and
· LIST-ID/Segment-ID.

As the FBL is not meant for unsubscribing complainers (the List-Unsubscribe header can help there), but rather for finding outliers on your system that are abusive or have serious issues with their program, you get no reports if certain thresholds are not met. Accordingly, inserting a "Recipient ID" would simply prove to be a waste of time.

This enables us to see if the issue of high complaints only pertains to a specific campaign, a specific list or indeed across all Client activity.

To elaborate, if a client only receives FBL complaint data when sending to a particular list or segment, we are able to identify that this is where the issue lies. If a client uses multiple sender identities, for example across different brands, the Sender-ID component, if recurring for only one brand, helps you further whittle down the issue. If the client ID is recurring in complaints across multiple campaigns and lists, then you know the sender has bigger issues that you must contend with.

Dual DKIM Signing

If a portion of your outbound mail is signed with DKIM that is client specific and not a shared ESP DKIM key, then that portion of your mail will need to be dual DKIM signed. That is to say: DKIM signed by both your client and you as an ESP.

There have been discussions and arguments for and against this across the industry. There are those very much in favor. *"As dual signature is the most appropriate way to sign, Message Systems has supported this out of the box since inception."* Barry Abel, Message Systems.

It is true to say for many the requirement for Dual DKIM signing this is a barrier to implementation, however the benefits, I believe, outweigh the resources required for implementation.

It is different, and does require we get our head around what may be a difficult concept initially and require a somewhat troublesome implementation.
If your using a commercial MTA, then you may need to upgrade to a recent version. Port25, Message Systems, DRG Green Arrow, and others confirm they support Dual DKIM signing. If you have 'rolled your own MTA' and use OpenDKIM, it is supported out of the box.

The most important fact is that multiple DKIM signing is supported by the RFC (rfc6376) and is covered in some detail in Section 4.

Why would you bother? From Gmail: *"It is safe to assume that anything that gets reported in the FBL, irrespective of the spam rate, is a cause for concern and has the potential to disrupt the deliverability of the rest of your email."*

How is it handled in practice?

<mark>Gmail</mark> only includes the results of one DKIM key in the results header, and will have it listed as passing, if any one DKIM key passes their checks, regardless of the position of the key. So, if one passes and one fails, or if one passes and the other one is weak, they will list it as passing. If the topmost key is weak and the bottom most key is bad, they return a weak key result. If the topmost key is bad and the bottom most key is weak, they return a fail result. So, as long as you have one key that passes, you will get a pass result.

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D. Reed Freeman, Jr.
Morrison & Foerster LLP
2000 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW | Washington, DC 20006-1888
P: 202.887.6948 | C: 703.304.2974
RFreeman@mofo.com | www.mofo.com