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How to navigate an evolving privacy environment

Apple's Mail Privacy Protection update will change the email marketing landscape forever. But the good news? Any marketing team that gets ahead of iOS 15 and adapts now will be well-positioned to take advantage of any new opportunities that result.

What is Apple Mail Privacy Protection?

To help users better control and manage access to their data, Apple is set to release several new **privacy-focused features** to Mail and Safari in iOS 15, iPadOS 15, macOS Monterey, and watchOS 8. There are three key feature names to know:

1. Mail Privacy Protection

This new feature helps users prevent senders from knowing when they open an email, and masks their IP address so it can't be linked to other online activity or used to determine their location.

2. Private Relay

A new feature in Safari for iOS allows users to connect to and browse the web in a more secure and private way by encrypting all traffic leaving the user's device.

Note: Private Relay is a premium feature included in the new *iCloud+* bundle.

3. Hide My Email

Users can share unique, random email addresses that forward to their inbox anytime they wish to keep their personal email address private, ultimately giving users control over who can contact them.

Note: Hide My Email y is a premium feature included in the *iCloud+* bundle.

How does this affect email marketing?

- **Open rates will be inflated.** Because Apple's servers will *pre-fetch* images referenced in emails ahead of the user actually opening the email on their device, open rates will be inflated. Apple will then reference its version of these images when/if the user opens the message. As image beacons (ie. tracking pixels) dictate the open time of a message, open rates will artificially be inflated.

- **Location-tracking features will be less accurate.** The changes regarding IP address masking will also affect geo-targeting features. So, if you're currently building a list based on the geographic region that a subscriber is located in, that will become less accurate over time. Specifically how less accurate it becomes won't be clear until the feature is available for wider use from Apple.

- **Engagement measuring and targeting based on opens are also impacted.** Using engagement criteria that target opens or automation steps that target opens will be less accurate than before. Also, device and client segmentation as well as building lists that use devices or operating systems will be less accurate than they used to be.

Pivoting your email marketing strategy beyond opens

Despite the headlines, the sky isn't falling for marketers. On the contrary, this pivot towards a more privacy-focused landscape opens the door for more potential brands can have. Here at Sailthru, we've got the strategic expertise to help you navigate and make those changes to your programs.

Measure success based on interactions like clicks

Mail Privacy Protection makes it impossible to accurately measure open-focused metrics like time of request, open duration, or opener location/timezone among your Apple Mail audience. So, prioritize metrics like clicks, conversions, and revenue generated to reset your email marketing benchmarks.

Collect your data directly from your customers

Until now, email marketers have been able to infer implicit customer data like location, timezone, device preferences, and more upon every open. So, don't be shy. Simply ask for the data you need and make the value delivered clear.

Prioritize long-term loyalty over short-term gains

In a world without open-centric email metrics, measuring success will be a lengthier process than it ever has. So, don't fight the trend — take advantage of it! A personalized drip series or campaign is a great way to influence buyer behavior over time.

And remember, email is very much alive

We've seen monumental shifts in the email industry. GDPR. Gmail's Promotional Inbox. Despite the the pandemic, email engagement rose 200% in 2020. So, despite times of uncertainty, we know email remains a tried-and-true method of communication that consumers trust.

Top retail and media brands trust Sailthru to elevate their marketing programs.

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