Email Marketing Glossary

Access Providers
Enable consumers to connect to their network via a range of technologies, including dial-up, DSL, cable modem, Ethernet and wireless. Many access providers also offer hosting and email services. Examples: Comcast, AT&T, Time Warner Cable

Blacklist
A collection of URLs, IP addresses or email addresses that have been flagged as spammers. If you find yourself on a blacklist, you will be prevented from sending emails to all ISPs and mailbox providers under protection of that blacklist.

Bounce
A bounce occurs when a message is undeliverable to an email address. There are two types of bounces: soft bounces and hard bounces.

CAN-SPAM act
A law that sets the rules for commercial email, establishes requirements for commercial messages, gives recipients the right to have you stop emailing them, and spells out tough penalties for violations.

Email List (or Electronic Mailing List)
A list of names and email addresses that enables mass distribution of a single message.

Email List Management
The combined efforts of maintaining and building a high quality email list. A "high quality email list" is devoid of any addresses that would negatively affect the deliverability of emails.

Email Service Provider
A company that offers email marketing or bulk email services. Examples are MailChimp and Constant Contact. Not to be confused with Mailbox Provider.

Hard Bounce
A hard bounce occurs when the reason for the bounce is permanent, and the bounce will continue to happen every time you send an email to that address. For example, the email address might be misspelled, or the mailbox might no longer exist.

Internet Service Provider (ISP)
A business/organization that offers users access to the Internet and related services. Most commonly, ISP is used to refer to Access Providers.

Mailbox Provider
Provide email mailbox hosting services. Examples: Yahoo! Mail, Hotmail, Gmail, AOL Mail. Not to be confused with Email Service Provider.

Opt-in
When someone voluntarily signs up to receive your recurring emails. A practice associated with permission marketing.

Opt-out
When someone removes themselves from your email list, usually by clicking a link to unsubscribe.

Permission Marketing
A term popularized by marketing expert Seth Godin. The practice of obtaining a consumer's permission before sending them marketing messages. The opposite of interruption marketing.

Soft Bounce
A soft bounce occurs when there's a temporary reason why an email can't be delivered to an email address. For example, the user's inbox may be full.

Spam
Irrelevant or unwanted email messages (usually an advertisement) sent to a large number of recipients.

Spam Filter
A program used to detect irrelevant and unwanted email messages and prevent those messages from getting into people's email inboxes.

Spam Traps
Email addresses created by ISPs, security companies, email servers and other anti-spam organizations for the sole purpose of luring spam. Spam traps are hidden on the web in a way that they would only be picked up by spammers.