

## Standardized Email Marketing Terms and Definitions

The Email Measurement Accuracy Roundtable of the DMA/Email Experience Council

Questions? Feedback? Please email us at [ema\\_rt@allthenewsfittoSEND.com](mailto:ema_rt@allthenewsfittoSEND.com)

Last Updated: May, 2010



The purpose of the S.A.M.E. Project or *Support the Adoption of Metrics for Email* is to create a standardized framework for the reporting of email metrics across the industry.

S.A.M.E. is not only an acronym for the project's name; it is also its goal – to have all email metrics reported by ESPs the same way under a uniform industry standard.

### Definitions related to current Delivery metrics

**Accepted:** Any email that is not rejected by a server, including emails delivered to the inbox, spam or junk folders or those are missing from those folders that did not receive a bounce reply.

$$\text{Sent Emails} - \text{Bounced Emails} = \text{Accepted}$$

**Accepted Rate:** The total amount successfully delivered to the server divided by the total e-mail deployed (unique records). The amount successfully delivered is the total amount attempted minus all failures, including hard bounces.

$$\text{Accepted Emails} / \text{Sent Emails} = \text{Accepted Rate}$$

**Bounce:** A message rejected by the receiving server. Typically bounces are referred to as either hard bounce, a delivery failure for permanent reason (e.g. a misspelled email address) or soft bounce, a delivery failure due to a temporary condition (e.g. mailbox is currently full).

**Inbox Placement Rate:** This is the ratio of emails that are delivered specifically to the recipient's inbox divided by the total emails sent.

## Definitions related to current Open metrics

**Confirmed Open Rate:** Is the percentage of unique confirmed opens divided by the total number of accepted emails. This metric may be calculated as total or unique, see the SAME Project Guide for details.

$$\text{Confirmed Opens} / \text{Accepted} = \text{Confirmed Open Rate}$$

**Email Render Rate:** The number of times an email is displayed (whether fully opened or within the preview pane) and recorded using a tracking image within an HTML format message and divided by the total and expressed as a percentage. While unique is the preferred method, this rate may be calculated using either the unique or the total email renders. See the SAME Guide for a detailed explanation.

$$\text{Email Renders} / \text{Accepted Emails} = \text{Render Rate}$$

**Average Recipient Render Rate:** The total number of times an email is rendered (whether fully opened or within the preview pane) and captured using a tracking image within an HTML format message divided by the unique number of emails rendered, expressed as a percentage.

$$\text{Total Renders} / \text{Unique Renders} = \text{Average Recipient Render Rate}$$

Aimed as secondary metric, it provides insight into the average number of times each recipient (that renders a message at least once) views an individual message. This may be of value to senders with deep content and/or content that has a long shelf life, (e.g. newsletters) assuming that a high number of renders per recipient is a positive for certain types of email programs. This metric may also be calculated using Confirmed Opens if that is more applicable for the sender.

## Definitions related to current Click metrics

**Click Through Rate (CTR):** The number of times a link is clicked from a message divided by the number of accepted messages. For example if a message is sent to 4 people and two people open the message, downloading the images. One of two that opened the email clicked on a link one or more times, the resulting CTR for that link is 25% (1 unique clicker/4 accepted emails = 25%).

$$\text{Clicks} / \text{Accepted Emails} = \text{Click Through Rate}$$

This metric may be calculated as Unique CTR, which refers to the number of people that clicked or total CTR, which refers to number of clicks for a specific link. Email marketers also often calculate CTR for the entire email to compare several emails within a campaign or across campaigns.

**Click to Open (CTO):** The unique number of times a link is clicked from a message divided by the unique number of confirmed opens for that message. For example if a message is sent to 4 people. Two people render the email, and one of those two click on a link one or more times, the resulting CTO is 50% (1 click /2 confirmed opens = 50%).

$$\text{Clicks} / \text{Email Renders} = \text{Click to Open Rate}$$

Again, this metric may be calculated as Unique CTO, which refers to the number of people that clicked or total CTO that refers to number of clicks for a specific link. The Click to Open rate may also be calculated for the entire email rather than an individual link.

### **Limitations of the new open definitions**

The Render Rate may underreport the number of people who seemingly looked at your email more than the Confirmed Open Rate. However, the Confirmed Open Rate may still underreport the true number. In reality, no reliable method for determining how many subscribers physically looked at your email exists. Both proposed metrics are estimates. Both are low estimates. The Confirmed Open Rate is simply a slightly closer estimate of the number of people who presumably looked at your email.