



Rackspace's Complaint Feedback Loop Reduces Spam Complaints

Improved customer satisfaction results dramatically



Industry

Email Hosting

Website

<http://www.rackspace.com>

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Project

Rackspace's Email & Apps division provides more than 1.6 million users. The company manages and maintains the email service and hosting infrastructure, freeing up IT resources and eliminating the need for customers to purchase email-related hardware, software, and security services.

Challenge

As a trusted email hosting provider, Rackspace Email & Apps has exponentially grown its client base by delivering on its promise to provide "a reliable and feature rich email experience" to its than 1.6 million+ users since its launch in 1999. As part of that promise, Rackspace dedicates significant time, money and resources to scaling and maintaining a sound infrastructure to maximize the email experience for their customers.

Rackspace also provides the best tools and services to improve the subscriber experience. One of these services, however, required a hefty amount of resources that, from a business perspective, didn't make much sense to build in-house. That service was a complaint feedback loop.

Email providers, like Rackspace, offer complaint feedback loops to other email providers, ISPs and authorized senders so they can better understand if subscribers do not welcome their emails. This data is collected via the "This Is Spam" button used by subscribers to report unwanted email. A complaint feedback loop makes these reports available to email senders, encouraging them to remove complainers from their list immediately, and allows senders to analyze the data to help reduce future complaints for their email campaigns. These same reports are also extremely useful to fellow ISPs and email providers, to help them detect and take appropriate action against any of their customers who are violating industry-wide policies against sending spam.

Without a feedback loop, Rackspace's subscriber complaints reported by the "This is Spam" button were only funneled to Rackspace's abuse help desk and an automated spam fingerprint management system. While this process is imperative to protecting subscriber mailboxes, Rackspace wanted to offer a complaint feedback loop service to allow reputable senders to stop unwanted mail from ever being sent to Rackspace customers, in addition to blocking it at the receiving end. Given the development resources needed for this project, and balanced against more immediate priorities, Rackspace decided to work with a leading vendor for the solution.



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Solution

Rackspace turned to Return Path for the answer. By implementing Return Path's Feedback Loop Service, Rackspace implemented a complaint feedback loop in a fraction of the time and cost it would take to build it in-house. After the simple integration process, both senders and peer ISPs are now able to register for the Rackspace feedback loop program via a Rackspace-branded sign-up page powered by Return Path (<http://fbl.apps.rackspace.com/>). This service also allows Rackspace to automatically check the reputation of feedback loop applicants; an added safeguard to keeping out spammers and others who might use the data in an inappropriate manner.

From there, Return Path does the rest. Return Path's feedback loop platform automatically processes all complaint messages, and sends feedback to Rackspace-approved senders who have requested that feedback. And, if senders have questions or issues about why their mail is causing complaints, Return Path is available to work with them to resolve those issues.

Results

In just four weeks, Rackspace was able to offer a fully serviced feedback loop to senders and peers, providing a seamless way for complaint data to be collected via the "This is Spam" button and delivered to the administrators of the system which sent the message. As a result of this increased efficiency, Rackspace was able to:

- Reduce sender interaction. Since messages submitted via the complaint feedback loop were being processed by Return Path, Rackspace no longer had to dedicate as many valuable resources to complaint administration. In turn, senders were able to receive valuable data to help them improve their best practices and stay off Rackspace's blacklists.
- Reduce customer complaints. After Rackspace customers were removed from the offending lists, Rackspace realized a noticeable reduction in spam complaints - a reliable barometer for customer satisfaction.
- Increase their standards for senders. Using this data, Rackspace was able to tighten their requirements for acceptable complaint rates for senders. After receiving this feedback, senders no longer have an excuse for high complaint rates. Those that do are blocked from future inbox delivery.

Fewer complaints translated to reduced costs, less manpower, and increased subscriber satisfaction due to less spam. Participating senders received better transparency to customer reaction to their messages, resulting in better, more accurately targeted mailings and reduced risk of their mail being blocked. In sum, reduced complaint rates scored a big win for everyone.

Customer Feedback

"We always knew a feedback loop would help us better manage subscriber complaints, and Return Path's feedback loop program helped us get up and running much quicker than if we had built it ourselves. Legitimate senders now have no excuse to send mail to our customers that generate high complaint rates."

— Bill Boebel , Chief Technology Officer, Rackspace

Looking for an effective way to help your business do more with less? Let Return Path host and manage your feedback loop. Please call 1-866-362-4577, or email receiverservices@returnpath.net for more information.



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