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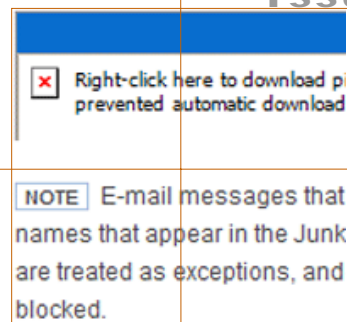
## BLOCKING PICTURES MAKES E-MAIL MARKETING DIFFICULT TO MEASURE

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E-mail marketing is easy and much used. A recent study by [Datran Media](#) shows that 83% of the companies considers e-mail marketing their most important strategy for 2007.

The advantage of e-mail marketing is the low cost and direct contact with the potential buyers. Anyone can get hold e-mails and add them to a subscription list, but this ease of use increases the spam.

Most countries have strict [Spam Laws](#) that makes it illegal to send unsolicited e-mails to anyone that the company do not already have a business relation with. According to [MessageLabs](#), 76% of all e-mail were spam.

In order to protect the user from spam, the mail servers and the mail readers are configured to filter out spam, some are never passed on to the user, and other e-mails end up in the junk-folder.

As an active e-mail marketer, you must first overcome the spam filter hurdle, and even then you are not sure if your e-mail reached its target.

Effectiveness of e-mail marketing is measured by e-mail marketing programs as feedback from the mail server and programs that the e-mail was received and read. E-mails that were not received are rejected by the mail server and in most cases an automatic response is triggered and which can be measured and the recipient can be removed from the subscriber list after a pre-set number of attempts.

To see if the e-mail reached the inbox and was opened, the e-mail usually contains links to pictures that are found on the internet. If these pictures are viewed, a request to open the picture is submitted and this request is monitored.

In the battle against spam, e-mail readers have the possibility to block such links to graphics, and the user can determine if the sender is trusted and/or if pictures should be shown.

A study on picture blocking in e-mail programs from [Promio.net](#) (April 2007), show that more than 30% of the users have selected to block pictures, and the conclusion is that Live-reporting of successful delivery of HTML mails is higher than can be measured.

To increase the measuring of e-mail marketing, the subscriber database should be based on voluntary (Opt-in) subscription and the subscribers should be asked to add the sender e-mail to their "Safe Senders List"

## References and more information

- Promio.net: **Studie zur Bildunterdrückung in E-Mail-Programmen**  
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<http://tinyurl.com/yvvmgd>
- EmailLabs: **Email Marketing Statistics and Metrics**  
<http://www.emaillabs.com/tools/email-marketing-statistics.html>
- Microsoft: **Block or unblock automatic picture downloads in e-mail messages**  
<http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/outlook/HP012300401033.aspx>

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