

E-Newsletter Glossary

The following terms are commonly used by those responsible for editing and producing e-newsletters. If you are new to e-newsletter creation and production, you may find this helpful when meeting with technically savvy colleagues or reviewing the e-newsletter [how-to](#) and [content](#) and [design](#) best practice documents.

Advance: A centralized database, maintained by University Advancement, that includes contact information and contact preferences (where known) for anyone who has ever donated to the University of Washington. It also includes contact information for a large number of alumni. Managed by the Advancement Records Management team, it is the most reliable, comprehensive, and accurate UW database for contact information currently available. You can [request reports](#), or aggregations of names meeting certain criteria, from Advance once you have completed the [Confidentiality Form](#).

Anchor links: Linked text that sends you to another section within the e-newsletter itself, rather than a Web page. (You can [see an example of anchor links](#) in the first section of the middle column on the Student Guide Web page.)

Alt text: Text that describes a graphic or photo used in an HTML e-newsletter (see example to right). This text is visible if you place your mouse pointer over the image or if the image doesn't appear or is "broken." Its purpose is to explain to the reader what the image is, which is helpful if the image doesn't appear or the recipient is visually impaired and uses a screen reader to read the e-newsletter.



Accessibility: A design principle that helps ensure that subscribers with disabilities, especially visual impairments, can successfully read an e-newsletter. (Learn more about this topic by visiting the [Web Accessibility Initiative Web site](#).)

Back-end: The technology that allows your e-newsletter to reach subscribers. For e-newsletters, the back-end typically refers to servers, which are the computers that send packets of digital information to subscribers' e-mail inboxes that then reassemble to appear as the e-newsletter. E-newsletter editors rarely have responsibility for or access to back-end technology, but it is helpful to be aware of its function.

Blacklist (see also: **Whitelist**): A list of "from" e-mail addresses that a mail server or Internet service provider (ISP), such as AOL or Comcast, will block because the sender's message is suspicious or displays indications that it is spam.

Bounces/bounce-backs: E-newsletters that were not successfully delivered to some subscribers. This usually occurs because a subscriber's e-mail address has been recorded incorrectly (it might include a typo) or no longer exists.

Note: When is a bounce not really a bounce? When it's a "soft bounce." A soft bounce is an auto-reply from the recipient's e-mail address, such as when that

recipient's inbox is full. You can find more about how to interpret statistics like bounce-backs in the [how-to manual](#).

Call to Action (CTA): Asking the reader to do something. All the content in your e-newsletter, especially headlines and linked text, should ask the reader to do something—whether it's something as specific as "Sign up for an event" or as general as "Learn more." This promotes engagement with the content and the University, and it helps extend your interaction with subscribers beyond their e-mail inbox.

Here are examples of common CTAs in e-newsletters:

- "Register for an event"
- "Tell us what you think"
- "Watch the video"
- "Find out more"
- "Get the answer" (a good CTA for a frequently asked questions section)
- "Find more articles about [insert topic]"
- "Download a course catalog"

CAN-SPAM Act: Also known as the [Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing Act](#), this federal law "establishes requirements for those who send commercial e-mail, spells out penalties for spammers and companies whose products are advertised in spam if they violate the law, and gives consumers the right to ask e-mailers to stop spamming them. The law, which became effective January 1, 2004, covers e-mail whose primary purpose is advertising or promoting a commercial product or service, including content on a Web site." Nonprofits, such as the University of Washington, are not the primary target of this law. However, it is good business practice to comply with the spirit of this law to the greatest extent possible. (For example, see [opt out](#).)

Cascading style sheets (or CSS): A markup language used to describe the presentation of a document. Its most common use is to define the style (including colors, fonts, and layouts) of Web pages written in HTML.

Click-through rates: The number of individual headlines in an e-newsletter that readers clicked, divided by total number of e-mails successfully sent. This gives you an indication of how effective your content was at compelling readers to want to learn more. (The education industry standard click-through rate is 6%–8%.)

E-mail client/e-mail program: The software program (such as Outlook or Outlook Express) or Web-based program (such as Hotmail or Yahoo) a subscriber uses to receive and send e-mail messages.

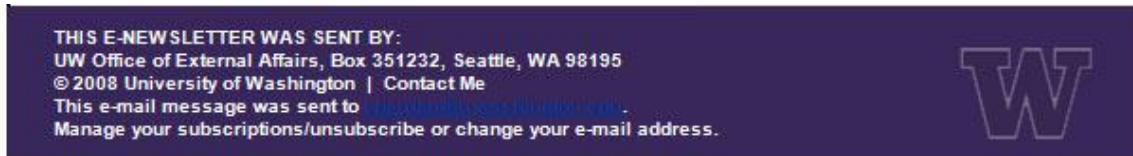
E-mail distribution software/e-mail marketing software: This is the software you use to send your e-newsletter out to subscribers. It pulls all the elements of the newsletter together, such as the HTML code and the subscriber information and sends that information to servers, which then deliver the information to subscribers' inboxes. An example of this type of software is [Convio](#), which is currently the e-mail distribution program of choice for Creative+Communications, UW Marketing, the UW Alumni Association, and University Advancement.

Embedded link: Also known as [hypertext](#), are links that are attached to text or images but do not appear as full [URLs](#) in the content itself. For example:

[This is an embedded link](#)

And this is a URL: <http://www.washington.edu/>

Footer: The section at the bottom of an e-newsletter that typically includes a copyright year, a "Contact Us" link, a link to a privacy policy, and a link to unsubscribe or update your profile information. Here is the footer from the UW: Open for Business e-newsletter:



Greek: When used as a verb (usually by a designer), this means including nonsensical text (that is actually Latin) to demonstrate the approximate amount of text a section of content should contain. Here's a snippet of "greek" text: *lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consetetur sadipscing elitr, sed diam nonumy...*

Hypertext Markup Language/HTML: Computer code (the same code typically used to write Web pages) that allows you to include graphics, photos, embedded links, and different font sizes and formats (among other things) in your e-newsletter.

Masthead: A design element at the top of the e-newsletter that introduces the name of the e-newsletter—and mentions the University of Washington! It can also include information such as frequency and volume and issue number. [View an example](#).

Message testing: Splitting your subscriber list up into smaller groups and sending slightly different versions of the e-newsletter to each group to see which version performs better. For example, you could split your list in half and use different Subject lines in each of the two e-newsletter versions you send. One Subject line could tout an upcoming event and the other could tease a news item. Then examine the [open rates](#) and other metrics to determine which Subject line led to better performance numbers. Gaining this kind of insight helps you begin to hone in on what interests your readers the most.

Metrics: Measurements of reader behavior. These usually include click-through rates, [unique click-throughs](#), [open rates](#), [opt-outs](#), [bounces](#), [spam reports](#), and forwards. You can find more about how to metrics in the [how-to manual](#).

Open rates: The number of subscribers who opened the e-newsletter once it appeared in their inbox. Using this metric to measure the success of an e-newsletter is a hotly debated topic. That's because many e-mail programs, such as Outlook, have preview panes where you can view what's in an e-mail message and click the links inside it without ever actually opening it. Still, open rates can give you some insight into reader behavior: If the open rate is high, that probably means that readers want to look at it full size, either because they find the design appealing or the design is too wide to fit completely in the preview pane. You can find more about interpreting open rates in the [how-to manual](#).

Opt in: A method that allows readers to subscribe to an e-newsletter—typically in the form of an e-mail invitation or a check box on a Web page. It is wise to offer this

option if you have subscribers whose e-mail addresses came from an outside source or a database that restricts access to its information. Otherwise, recipients who aren't expecting contact from you might consider your e-newsletter to be spam. Here's an example of opt-in language: "Did you receive this e-newsletter from a friend? Why not [sign up](#) to receive your very own copy? It's free."

Opt out: A method that allows readers to unsubscribe from your e-newsletter. The federal [CAN-SPAM Act](#) requires that the sender "provide a return e-mail address or another Internet-based response mechanism that allows a recipient to ask you not to send future e-mail messages to that e-mail address, and you must honor the requests." Here's an example of opt-out language: "To unsubscribe from one or more of our e-mail lists or to change your e-mail preferences, [visit your personalized subscription management page](#)."

Personally identifiable information (PII): Includes (but is not limited to) e-mail address, name, address, telephone number, and credit card number. While it isn't usually necessary to collect PII from your subscribers, except for e-mail addresses, you may sometimes link to sites that collect it, such as event registration sites. It is important to protect your subscribers from possible identity theft and the University from liability. You can do that by complying with the [University's Privacy Policy](#).

Privacy policy: A legally binding set of guidelines that helps ensure the protection of subscribers' personally identifiable information. It is good business practice always to include a link to a privacy policy, such as [the University of Washington's](#), in your e-newsletter.

Seed List: A list of the e-mail addresses of people on your e-newsletter team who will be testing your e-newsletter before it gets sent to subscribers. This terminology is commonly used in e-mail distribution programs, such as Convio.

Spam report: A report about an unwanted or deceptive e-mail message that the recipient, a mail server, or an Internet service provider (ISP) sends to the [Federal Trade Commission](#). Most e-mail distribution software will note as part of its [metrics](#) whether and how many times your e-newsletter was reported as spam. This number is likely to be zero or well under 10 reports, since your e-newsletter is coming from a nonprofit educational institution. Still it's a metric to keep an eye on, in case there is a sudden spike in the number of reports. ([See the content best practices document](#) for more details on spam reports.)

Special Edition/Alert: An issue of an e-newsletter that is released at a date and time other than its established publishing schedule. Special editions usually contain breaking news or information that is important for your readers to have before the next regularly scheduled issue.

Text only: An e-newsletter that contains no graphics or embedded links. It is important to offer a text-only (non-HTML) version of your e-newsletter because some e-mail programs cannot translate HTML (e.g. Web Pine). Also, some subscribers prefer text-only files because they typically take less time to download and take up less space in inboxes. Most e-newsletter mailing software can automatically detect whether a recipient's e-mail program accepts HTML or not, so it is not necessary to determine that ahead of time. However, it is good business practice to offer subscribers the option to receive text or HTML on your e-newsletter subscription page.

Tracking links: Also known as redirects or go-links, these are unique links—usually auto-generated by the software you use to send out the newsletter—that allow you to determine how many times subscribers clicked each link in your e-newsletter. For example, in the e-newsletter *UW: Open for Business*, a headline that linked to the Business & Industry site, <http://www.washington.edu/research/industry/expert.html>, changed to: <http://engage.washington.edu/site/R?i=yQe31b3-HArqjTeCNQnRKQ..>, which is a tracking link generated by the e-mail distribution program Convio. You can find more about interpreting the data that tracking links provide by consulting the [how-to manual](#).

Unique click-throughs: The number of times subscribers click an individual link in the e-newsletter.

Uniform resource locator (URL): It means exactly the same thing as "Web site address." More specifically, a URL defines the route to a file on an Internet server.

Whitelist: A list of "from" e-mail addresses that a mail server or Internet service provider, such as Comcast or AOL, will accept as incoming mail because the sender's message has a low probability of being spam. Most e-mail programs, such as Hotmail and Yahoo, give the e-mail recipient the option to keep their own form of whiteless by giving them the option to mark your e-newsletter as "not spam" or "not junk."