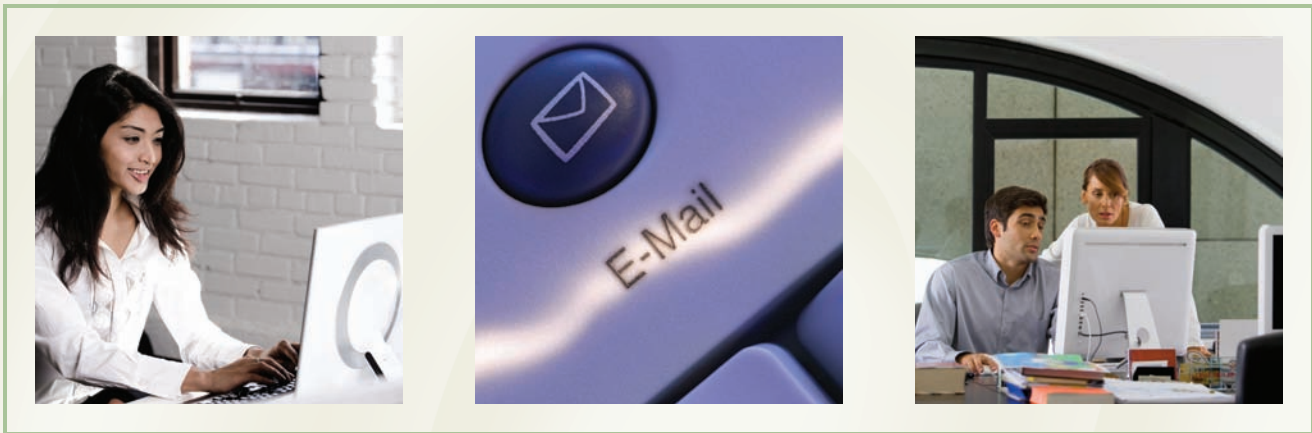


Email Trends in the Education Market 2009



A Comprehensive Analysis of the 2007-2008 School Year

By Gretchen W. Rigol and Christopher Ziemnicki



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Email Trends in the Education Market 2009:
A Comprehensive Analysis of the 2007-2008 School Year

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▶ INTRODUCTION

Market Data Retrieval (MDR) provides a comprehensive array of direct sales and marketing solutions, powered by the most complete, up-to-date, and accurate databases of information about schools, districts, colleges and universities, libraries, early childhood, and related education markets. Many companies with products and services for education markets utilize MDR's e-marketing programs to reach prospective new customers and to augment their customer files with email data from MDR's databases.

The first two chapters in this report summarize information about MDR's clients' use of various products to reach the education market during the 2007-2008 school year. Chapter 1 describes prospecting campaigns deployed by MDR through its E@quire service on behalf of education marketers. Chapter 2 provides supplemental data about two of MDR's specialized products—DM-Optimizer, a service that provides clients with direct mail and corresponding email lists for multi-channel marketing, and E@ppend, a program that appends email addresses to a client's customer list. Both chapters include descriptive data about the companies utilizing these services and detailed information about the characteristics and measurable results of the campaigns launched during the year. Trend data is included to illustrate changes in this market space over the past several years.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 provide current information about educators' attitudes and use of email in their professional work. In November 2008, similar surveys were sent to the following three groups:

- K-12 Teachers
- School District Administrators
- College and University Faculty

The email lists used were drawn from MDR's database and reflected the overall composition of educators in these three groups. While teacher surveys had been conducted in the past, this was the first time that separate surveys were deployed to district administrators and to faculty in higher education.

This report provides benchmark data against which education marketers can review and evaluate their own marketing efforts. Included is information about trends and specific implications and recommendations based on the findings to help marketers make the best use of e-marketing as part of their overall marketing efforts.

▶ EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Email has become a way of life for both education marketers and their customers. Just a few years ago, email was viewed by many as a peripheral method of communication, but this report clearly illustrates how central email has become to both marketers and educators. Highlighted below are key findings about MDR's major e-marketing services during the 2007-2008 school year and from recent survey data collected from educators themselves.

Prospecting Email Campaigns

There were 5,258 prospecting campaigns deployed to the education market during 2008,¹ an increase of 40% compared with 2007. The average campaign size was 7,398, slightly lower than last year.

The average recorded Open rate was 12.3%. This traditional measure of effectiveness has become less meaningful in the past five years as increasing numbers of educators utilize email browsers and security systems that do not support the tracking of whether an email message was actually opened.

The highest average Open rates were experienced by small, targeted campaigns. As a group, publishers tended to launch the smallest campaigns and have the highest average Open rates of any industry.

Prospecting email campaigns are deployed throughout the year, but the most popular months are March and October. The highest average Open and Click-Through rates were observed in July (a month with very few campaigns) and October.

About one in four prospecting campaigns came from companies that market primarily to the higher education market. The average size of these campaigns was just over 3,000 names, and the average Open rate was 17%.

A new measure, the Click-Through to Open Ratio, is introduced in this year's report as a new approach in assessing the effectiveness of email campaigns. In 2008, the Click-Through to Open Ratio was 0.21, meaning that of those individuals for whom it was possible to track Open rates, 21% also recorded a Click-Through. Resellers and publishers had higher Click-Through to Open Ratios than other industries.

¹ Throughout this report, 2008 will be used to refer to the 2007-2008 school year, 2007 refers to the 2006-2007 school year, and 2006 refers to 2005-2006.

Multi-Channel and Customer Campaigns

Companies that used both email-only and synchronized direct mail and email campaigns saw significant improvement in the results of their multi-channel campaigns. Average Open rates for the combined direct mail and email campaigns were 3.6% higher than the email-only campaigns, and the average Click-Through rate was 10.6% higher.

Average Open rates for email campaigns to customers were 15.9%, and average Click-Through rates for customer campaigns were 4.0%. In 2008, the number of customer campaigns increased by 34% over the prior year.

Teachers' View of Email

Virtually all teachers check their school email at least daily. Overall, more than eight out of ten look at their email several times a day, and more than 90% have access to their school email from home via VPN or Webmail.

More than three-fourths (76%) of teachers check their school email at least weekly during the summer break. This represents an increase over prior teacher surveys.

Nearly one-half (45%) of teachers report receiving two or fewer email offers in an average school day; only 9% reported receiving more than ten offers per day. This represents a slight increase in the number of email offers compared with two years ago.

Most teachers (92%) are likely to open an education-related email solicitation if they recognize the sender. Well over half are likely to open such emails if the subject line has a topic related to the teacher's area of specialization or is an offer of teaching resources related to the teacher's subject.

The proportion of teachers making a purchase as a result of an email solicitation has quadrupled in the past decade and is now 52%. Teachers are most likely to respond to email offers from companies from whom they had already purchased or a company from whom they had already requested or received information.

District Administrators' View of Email

More than 90% of administrators check their email at least several times a day. Half of those check it all day long, whenever there is time, including nights and weekends. The majority of administrators also check their email on a daily basis during the summer.

More than one-fourth (27%) of administrators have access to their office email via a wireless device, such as a BlackBerry or an iPhone. Ninety-three percent also have access to their district email from home via VPN or Webmail.

District administrators receive more education-related email offers than teachers, with 29% of administrators receiving more than ten in a typical day. On the other hand, about one-fourth receive two or fewer such offers per day.

Sixty-five percent of administrators have purchased at least one educational product or service in the past 12 months as a result of an email advertisement. Overall, 15% reported having purchased four or more products as a result of email.

College Faculty Views of Email

Virtually all faculty check their email at least daily. The vast majority of college faculty (95%) have access to their institutional email from home via VPN or Webmail. They check their email frequently when not on campus, with 84% checking it at night, 76% checking it on the weekends, and 71% checking it over vacations and between semesters.

Nearly one-half of faculty receives two or fewer education-related emails in a typical day. Only 14% reported receiving more than ten such offers a day.

More than one-half of college faculty report having purchased an educational product or service as a result of an email advertisement during the past 12 months. More experienced faculty are more likely to make such a purchase than faculty just beginning in the profession.

▶ **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction	1
Executive Summary	2-4
Table of Contents	5-6
List of Charts	7-8
List of Tables	8-9
Chapter 1 Prospecting Email Campaigns 2007-2008	10-29
Overview	10
Summary of the 2007-2008 School Year	10-12
Campaign Size	13-14
Companies Sending Email to the Education Market	15-17
Characteristics of Campaigns by Company Type	18-19
The Higher Education Market	20
Time of Year for Email Campaigns to Educators	21-23
Day of the Week Email Campaigns Sent to Educators	24-25
Click-Through to Open Ratios	26-28
Lessons Learned From 2008 Prospecting Campaigns	29
Chapter 2 Multi-Channel and Customer Campaigns	30-35
Overview	30
Email and Direct Mail Campaigns	30-31
Customer Campaigns	32-34
Lessons Learned From Multi-Channel and Customer Campaigns	34-35
Chapter 3 Teachers' View of Email	36-53
Overview	36
Teachers' Use of School Computers	37-39
Teachers' Email Habits	39-40
Teachers' Use of Email to Communicate With Various Groups	40-41
Average Number of Email Offers Received in a Day	42
Attributes Related to Teachers' Decisions to Open Email Solicitations	43-44
Purchases as a Result of Email Solicitations	44-45
Effective Email Offers	45-46
Communication Preferences	47-48
Value of Specific Offers and Messages Sent by Email	49
How Teachers Treat "Junk Mail"	50
Access to and Frequency of Checking School Email When Not in School	51
Technical Characteristics of School Email Accounts	52
Lessons Learned From Teachers' Email Survey	53

Chapter 4	District Administrators' View of Email	54-69
	Overview	54-55
	Computer/Internet Use by District Administrators	56-57
	Administrators' Email Habits	58
	Administrators' Use of Email to Communicate With Various Groups	59
	Average Number of Email Offers Received in a Day	60
	Attributes Related to Administrators' Decisions to Open Email Solicitations	61-62
	Purchases as a Result of Email Solicitations	62
	Effective Email Offers	63
	Communication Preferences	64-65
	Value of Specific Offers and Messages Sent by Email	65-66
	How District Administrators Treat "Junk Mail"	66
	Access to and Frequency of Checking District Email When Not in the Office	67
	Technical Characteristics of District Email Accounts	68
	Lessons Learned From Administrators' Email Survey	69
Chapter 5	College Faculty Views of Email	70-85
	Overview	70-71
	Computer/Internet Use by College Faculty	71-72
	Email Habits of College Faculty	73
	Faculty Use of Email to Communicate With Various Groups	74
	Average Number of Email Offers Received in a Day	75
	Attributes Related to Faculty Decisions to Open Email Solicitations	76
	Purchases as a Result of Email Solicitations	77-78
	Effective Email Offers	79
	Communication Preferences	80
	Value of Specific Offers and Messages Sent by Email	81
	How Faculty Treat "Junk Mail"	82-83
	Access to and Frequency of Checking College Email When Not on Campus	83
	Technical Characteristics of College/University Email Accounts	84
	Lessons Learned From Faculty Email Survey	85
Appendix A	Guide to Dealing With Email Creative Rendering Under Outlook 2007	86-88
	About the Authors	89
	About MDR	89

List of Charts

Chart 1.1	Percentage of Prospecting Campaigns by Size	13
Chart 1.2	Open and Click-Through Rates by Size of 2008 Prospecting Campaigns	14
Chart 1.3	Percentage of 2008 Prospecting Campaigns by Types of Publishing Companies	16
Chart 1.4	Percentage of 2008 Prospecting Campaigns by Types of Technology-Related Companies	16
Chart 1.5	Percentage of 2008 Prospecting Campaigns by Types of School Supply Companies	17
Chart 1.6	Average Prospecting Campaign Size by Company Type	18
Chart 1.7	Average Open and Click-Through Rates by Company Type	19
Chart 1.8	Average Number of Emails Per Campaign by Month	22
Chart 1.9	Average Open and Click-Through Rates of 2008 Prospecting Campaigns by Month	23
Chart 1.10	Percentage of Emails Delivered by Day of Week	24
Chart 1.11	Average Open and Click-Through Rates by Day of Week	25
Chart 1.12	Click-Through to Open Ratio by Campaign Size	27
Chart 1.13	Click-Through to Open Ratio by Company Type	28
Chart 2.1	Percentage Change in Open and Click-Through Rates by Companies Conducting Both DM-Optimizer and E@quire Campaigns	31
Chart 2.2	Customer and Prospecting Campaigns – Average Open and Click-Through Rates	32
Chart 2.3	Average Open and Click-Through Rates of Customer Campaigns by Company Type	34
Chart 3.1	Frequency of Use of School Computer	37
Chart 3.2	Percentage of Teachers Who Frequently Use Their School Computers for Specific Purposes	38
Chart 3.3	How Frequently Teachers Check Their School Email	39
Chart 3.4	Number of Education/School-Related Email Offers Received by Teachers in an Average School Day	42
Chart 3.5	Percentage of Teachers Purchasing an Educational Product or Service as a Result of an Email Solicitation	44
Chart 3.6	Percentage of Teachers Making at Least One Purchase as a Result of an Email Solicitation	45
Chart 3.7	Percentage of Teachers Indicating They Were Likely to Respond	46
Chart 3.8	Value of Marketing Communication Channels – Percentage of Teachers Finding Specific Information Most Valuable	47
Chart 3.9	How Often Teachers Check Their Junk Email	50
Chart 3.10	Email Usage During Summer Break	51

Chart 4.1	Percentage of District Personnel Working With Specific Grade Levels	54
Chart 4.2	Educational Level of District Personnel	55
Chart 4.3	Frequency of Use of Office Computer	56
Chart 4.4	How Frequently District Administrators Check Their Email	58
Chart 4.5	Number of Education-Related Email Offers Received by Administrators in an Average Day	60
Chart 4.6	Percentage of Administrators Purchasing an Educational Product or Service as a Result of an Email Advertisement	62
Chart 4.7	Percentage of Administrators Indicating They Were Likely to Respond	63
Chart 4.8	Percentage of Administrators Valuing Different Marketing Communication Channels	64
Chart 4.9	How Often Administrators Check Their Junk Mail	66
Chart 4.10	Email Usage During Summer Break	67
Chart 5.1	Percentage of College Faculty Working With Specific Degree Levels	70
Chart 5.2	How Frequently College Faculty Check Their Email	73
Chart 5.3	Number of Education-Related Email Offers Received by Faculty in an Average Day	75
Chart 5.4	Percentage of College Faculty Purchasing an Educational Product or Service as a Result of an Email Advertisement	77
Chart 5.5	Percentage of College Faculty Making at Least One Purchase of an Educational Product or Service as a Result of an Email Solicitation by Years of Teaching Experience	78
Chart 5.6	Percentage of Faculty Indicating They Were Likely to Respond	79
Chart 5.7	Percentage of Administrators Valuing Different Marketing Communication Channels	80
Chart 5.8	How Often College Faculty Check Their Junk Email	82
Chart 5.9	Email Usage During Summer Break	83

List of Tables

Table 1.1	Summary of 2008 School Year Prospecting Campaigns	10
Table 1.2	Percentage of Total 2008 Prospecting Campaigns by Company Type	15
Table 1.3	Average Size, Open Rates, and Click-Through Rates of Companies That Market to Higher Education	20
Table 1.4	Number and Percentage of Campaigns Deployed by Month	21
Table 1.5	Click-Through to Open Ratios	26
Table 2.1	Companies Conducting Both DM-Optimizer and E@quire Campaigns	30
Table 2.2	Percentage of Total Customer Campaigns and Average Size by Company Type	33
Table 3.1	How Frequently Teachers Read and Respond to Email	40

Table 3.2	Frequency of Email Communication With Various Audiences – Percentage of Teachers Indicating the Least and Most Communication	40
Table 3.3	Frequency of Teachers’ Communication With Education Associations and Vendors of Educational Products	41
Table 3.4	Attributes Related to Opening Emails	43
Table 3.5	Percentage of Teachers Ranking the Value of Each Communication Channel	48
Table 3.6	Value of Specific Marketing Offers and Messages	49
Table 3.7	Percentage of Teachers Using Various Email Client/Browsers	52
Table 4.1	Percentage of District Administrators Rarely or Often Using Their Computers for Specific Purposes	57
Table 4.2	How Frequently District Administrators Read and Respond to Email	58
Table 4.3	Frequency of Email Communication With Various Audiences – Percentage of Administrators Indicating the Least and Most Communication	59
Table 4.4	Percentage of Administrators Likely or Unlikely to Open Email Solicitations With Particular Characteristics	61
Table 4.5	Value of Specific Marketing Offers and Messages	65
Table 4.6	Percentage of Administrators Using Various Email Client/Browsers	68
Table 5.1	Years of Teaching Experience	71
Table 5.2	Percentage of Faculty Rarely or Often Using Their Computers for Specific Purposes	72
Table 5.3	How Frequently Faculty Read and Respond to Email	73
Table 5.4	Frequency of Email Communication With Various Audiences – Percentage of Faculty Indicating the Least and Most Communication	74
Table 5.5	Frequency of Faculty Communication With Education Associations and Vendors of Educational Products	74
Table 5.6	Percentage of College Faculty Likely or Unlikely to Open Email Solicitations With Particular Characteristics	76
Table 5.7	Value of Specific Marketing Offers and Messages	81
Table 5.8	Percentage of Educators Having Junk Mail Folders in Their Institutional Email Service	82
Table 5.9	Percentage of Faculty Using Various Email Client/Browsers	84



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