



Are They Open to Open?

Techniques to Increase Email Read and Click Rates

What we'll cover to help you increase your open and click rates:

Getting the Read

Best practices for increasing email open rate.

Getting the Click

Best practices for increasing click rate on your content.

Optimizing

A/B testing methods to define the best best practices.

Measuring

Using reports for tracking outcomes.

Bonus Content

Designing emails for accessibility.

The screenshot shows an email newsletter from SpringShare. At the top left is the SpringShare logo, and at the top right is a link to "View this email in your browser". Below the logo is a blue banner with white snowflake patterns, containing the text "December 2024" and "SPRINGY NEWS FOR PUBLIC LIBRARIES". The main body of the email starts with a welcome message: "Welcome to the December edition of SpringyNews for Public Libraries! Read on for a recap of recent news, plus everything you'll want to know for the month ahead." This is followed by a section titled "Recent & Upcoming Highlights" with the subtext "Some Springy things you might have missed, plus a few to look forward to." There are two featured items. The first is a "LEARNING LAB" titled "Learning Lab: Survey Responses" with a sub-header "Boosting Survey Engagement with SMS" and a "Webinar 12/11" tag. The text describes the challenge of reaching the right people and getting survey responses, mentioning Samantha Mears from MCLD. A "Register Now!" link is provided. The second item is a "SpringySession" titled "Final SpringySession of the Year!" with a sub-header "FROM PROPOSAL TO PRESENTATION" and a "Webinar 12/12" tag. The text invites readers to join a session on Thursday, December 12th, for a step-by-step guide to conference programs.

If you learn ONE thing from this, it's...

Best practice isn't a gimmick!

Implementing email best practices isn't the marketing department just trying new ideas. It's doing the right things in a way that will protect your ability to reach the inbox and moving the needle on your engagement in a meaningful way.

Best practice is the lifeblood of your most effective marketing channel.

Not following industry best practices can damage your deliverability to the inbox. Blacklisting, sender reputation loss, and a drop in email engagement can happen quickly, and recovery can take a long time.

Think long term by allowing best practices to guide your email designs, steer you away from shortcuts, and maximize your deliverability to the inbox.

OK, that's really two things.



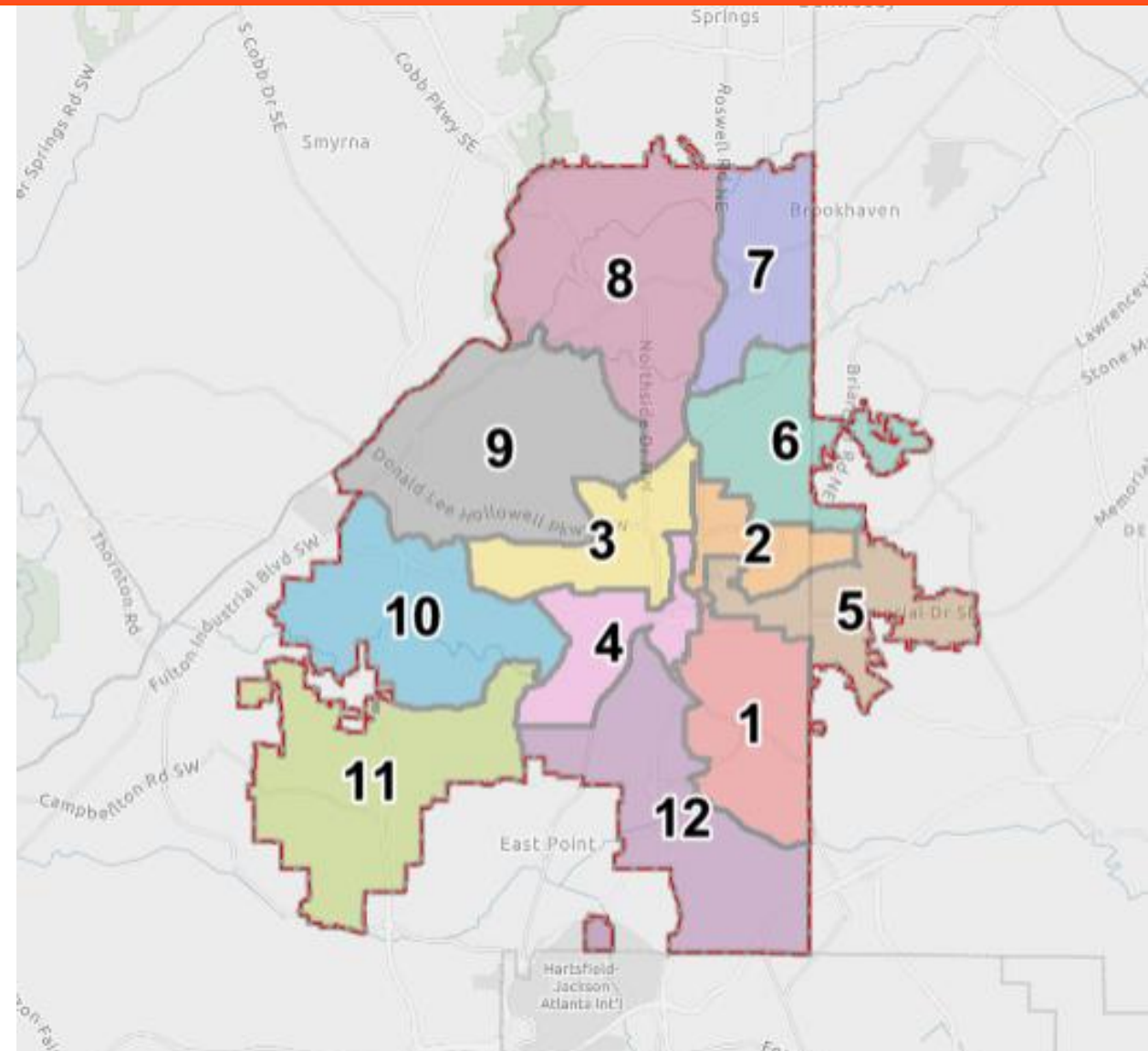
If you learn ANOTHER thing from this, it's...

Audience has the biggest impact on read rate/open rate

No two service areas are the same, in fact, it's not uncommon to find a dominant demographic existing between branches even. These, among other things, can influence willingness to open certain types of emails. Thus, any increase in open rate on any email is good.

Email type also impacts read rate

Some emails will naturally draw more interest than others. Transactional/Operational emails like an overdue notice tend to get a higher read rate than a newsletter since they relate to the patron's account.



Getting the Read

Four areas of focus for read rate improvement:

Timing

Sending when patrons are most likely checking email.

Inbox

Standing out from the clutter and avoid the junk box.

Content

Providing information that's relevant to your audiences.

Design

Creating an email that makes engagement easy.

Be sure you've "TICD" all four boxes to increase your open rates!



Timing: Send when patrons are most likely checking email

You have 40 seconds...

to capture the average adult's attention before they change tasks on their screened device. So, sending an email when patrons are more likely to be checking their inbox will help increase read rates.*

Try sending emails on a day and time with high average read rates:

- Good days to send: Monday-Wednesday**
- Good times to send: 9 AM-12 PM local time**

Note: *The above days and times have shown to produce good open rates across industries but are not meant to be the rule. Experiment to find the best send schedule for your library. See “Optimizing” section about A/B testing.*



Timing: Send when patrons are most likely checking email

The time is right...

for using artificial intelligence. Get your email into the inbox at the right time, automatically.

 Let the AI choose the best time during the next 24 hours 

By activating the send time optimizer, the system will determine the most effective time to send your emails on a per-person basis.

Note: *This feature is found in the “Schedule” settings for your Marketing emails. It is suggested to try this feature after having given the system some data to work from. Do this by first sending your newsletter at least 6 times on a consistent day of the week with a consistent send time, then try the feature.*



Inbox: Stand out from the clutter

Make a good first impression

It's important to apply tactics that will help your email stand out from the rest. A good **subject line** is the most important.



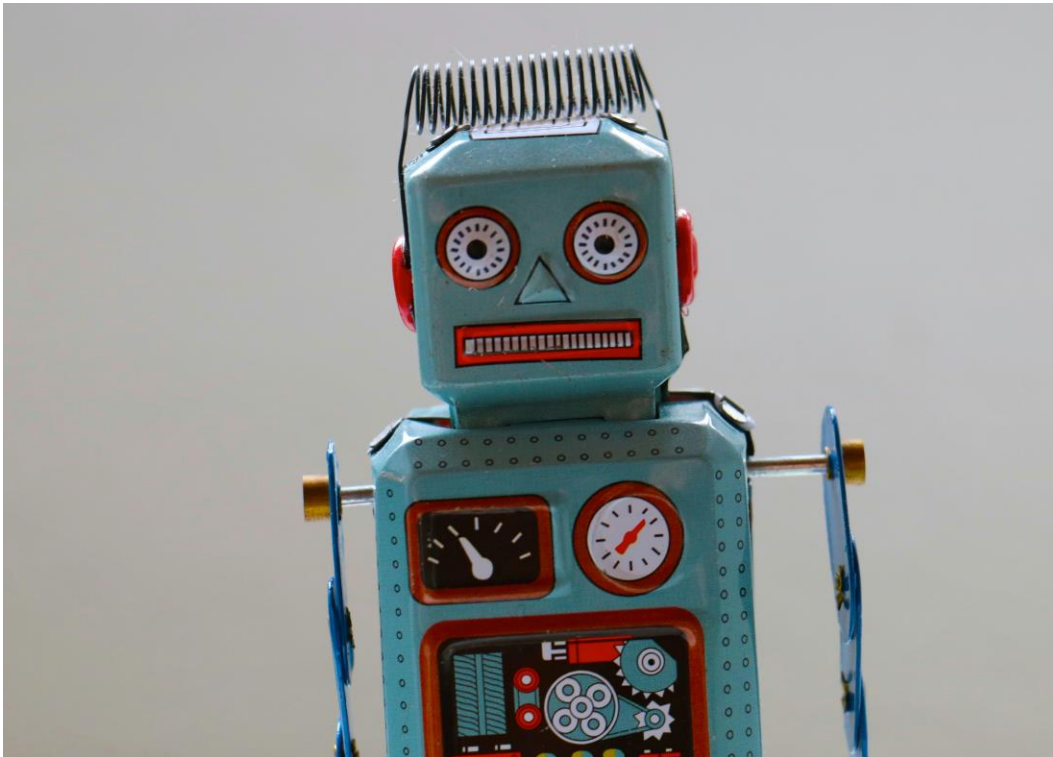
Try these best practices:

- **Subject line tester:** checks for SPAM words that may land your email in the junk folder - sendcheckit.com/email-subject-line-tester
- **Short, simply worded subject lines:** Up to 50 characters
- **Put the important words first**
- **Use the “Preheader Text” field:** Under the Subject Line field – use 85-100 characters – adds text after subject
- **Direct, actionable subject lines:** “See what’s happening at the library” (try, learn, join, make, come, look, find)
- **Personalization in the subject line:** “See what’s happening at the library, {contactfield=firstname|friend}”
- **Question as a subject line:** “Have you tried our ???”
- **Teaser subject line:** “You won’t want to miss this”
- **Emoji in the subject line:** emojipedia.org for free emojis
- **Name in the “From” line:** “Advanced” tab in email builder – “XYZ District Library - Jan Phillips”

Inbox: Avoid the junk box

Don't annoy the algorithm

It's important to apply tactics to both your subject lines AND email body that will help get your email into the inbox versus the junk box. Remember, the algorithm is always watching!



Try to avoid the following:

- **SPAM trigger words:**
 - Words that make exaggerated claims and promises
 - Words that create unnecessary urgency and pressure
 - Words that convey shady, spammy, or unethical behavior
 - Words that are jargon
- **Linking to sketchy websites:** *check its reputation first with global.sitesafety.trendmicro.com*
- **Typing in ALL CAPS**
- **Typing in CamelCase:** *This Is What Camel Case Is*
- **Using exclamation points in excess**
- **Using bright font colors in excess**
- **Using varying font sizes in excess:** *2-3 sizes max*
- **Using more images than text or images as the content**
- **Removing the unsubscribe link from the footer**
- **Removing the library's address from the footer**
- **Allowing bots to join your mailing list:** *Add a [ReCaptcha/captcha](#) to your email subscription form*

Content: Provide information that's relevant to your audiences

Give them what they want

Content that's relevant to your patron's demographic and interests will hold more value to them resulting in more opens, clicks and in turn, increased patronage.

Relevant content starts by segmenting your audience.



Try segmenting by patron data:

(depending on data availability from the ILS)

- *Age: 0-5, 6-12, 13-17, 18-65, 65+*
- *Patron type/code/category: adult, teen, child*
- *Card type: teacher, student, resident, non-resident, etc.*
- *Library branch*
- *Anniversary date*
- *Birthdate*
- *Expiration date*

Try segmenting by behavior:

(depending on data availability from the ILS)

- *Resources used/not used*
- *Those who have only used physical vs. digital resources*
- *Those who visited certain library pages (requires our tracking code on your site)*

Design: Create an email that makes engagement easy

Put yourself in their shoes

If a newsletter you receive has excessive text or is difficult to follow, would you open it the next time you got it?

*Maybe not. To help increase **future** email opens, give your patrons an easy email experience **today**.*

Try making it skimmable:

- *Use defined body sections - dividers and white space*
- *Use section headers and subheads*
- *Follow a “Z” and/or “F” visual hierarchy (examples on next slides)*

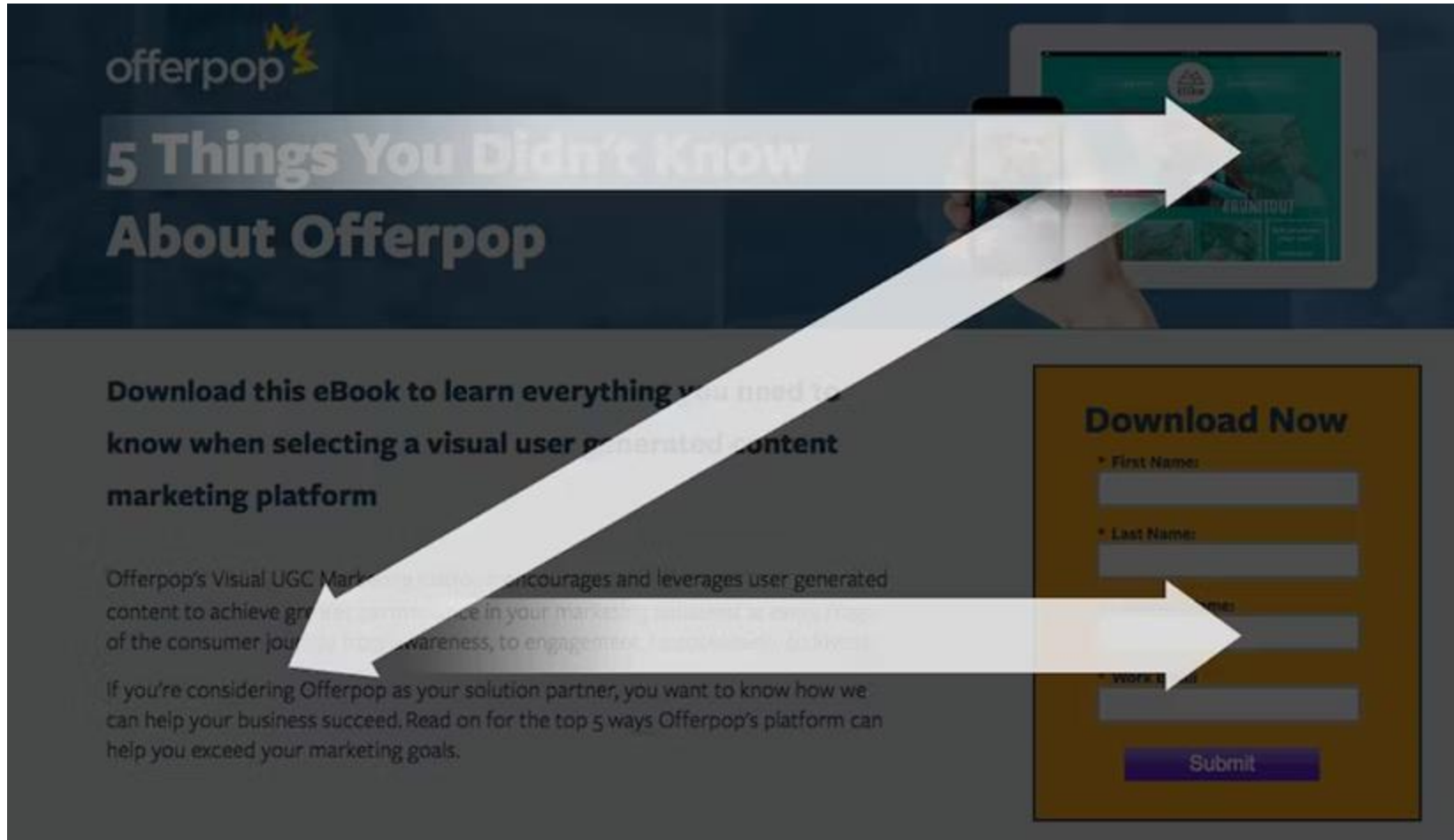
Try keeping it simple:

- *Use only a few body sections*
- *Keep body copy short (2 lines) - use a hook then send to the website for more info*
- *Use one CTA (call-to-action) per body section*



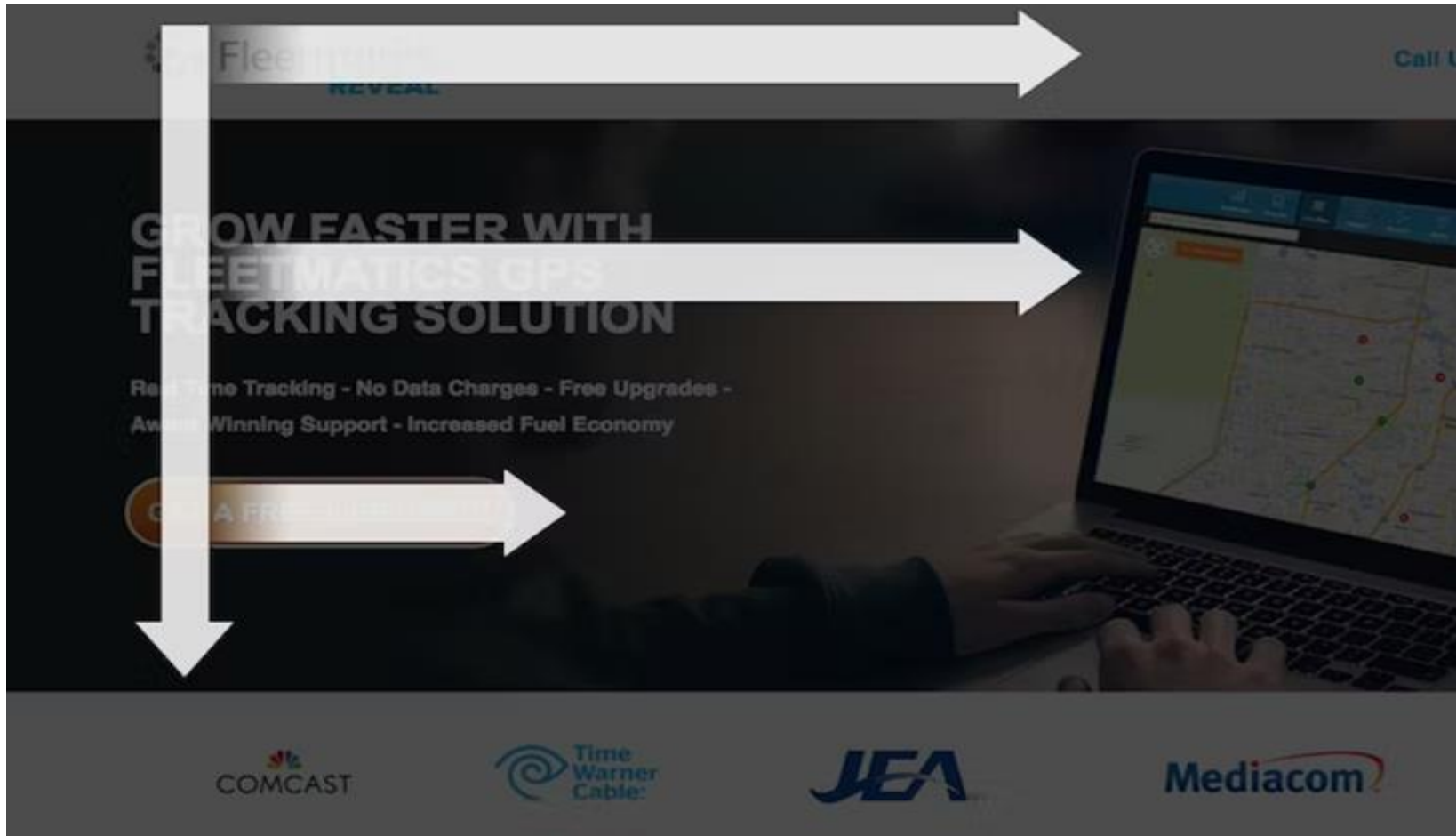
Design: Create an email that makes engagement easy

Example of a “Z” layout - a natural reading pattern



Design: Create an email that makes engagement easy

Example of an “F” layout - a natural reading pattern

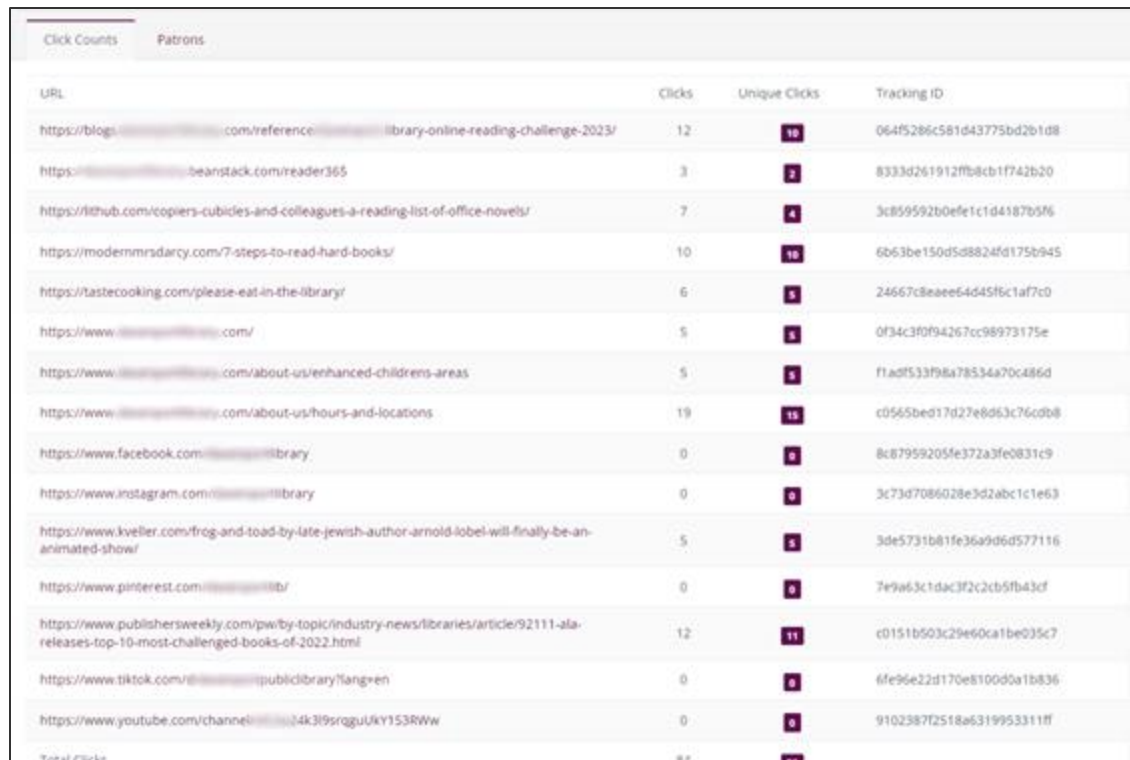


You can use a combination of both Z and F

Getting the Click

Click rate: A general measure of interest

“Click rate” in your system refers to “click-through rate”. These are clicks on your email content. **A click rate of around 2.4% is the industry average for non-profit services in general.*** We can shoot for that or higher.



URL	Clicks	Unique Clicks	Tracking ID
https://blog. com/reference/ ... library-online-reading-challenge-2023/	12	10	064f5286c581d43775bd2b1d8
https:// ... beanstack.com/reader365	3	2	8333d261912ffb8cb1f742b20
https://ithub.com/copiers-cubides-and-colleagues-a-reading-list-of-office-novels/	7	4	3c859592b0efe1c1d4187b5f6
https://modernmrsdarcy.com/7-steps-to-read-hard-books/	10	10	6d63be150d5d8824fd175b945
https://tastecooking.com/please-eat-in-the-library/	6	5	24667c8eae64d45f6c1af7c0
https://www. com/	5	5	0f34c3f0f94267cc98973175e
https://www. com/about-us/enhanced-childrens-areas	5	5	f1ad53398a78534a70c486d
https://www. com/about-us/hours-and-locations	19	15	c0565bed17d27e8d63c76c0b8
https://www.facebook.com/ ... library	0	0	8c87959205fe372a3fe0831c9
https://www.instagram.com/ ... library	0	0	3c73d7086028e3d2abc1c1e63
https://www.kveller.com/frog-and-toad-by-late-jewish-author-arnold-lobel-will-finally-be-an-animated-show/	5	5	3de5731b81fe36a9d6d577116
https://www.pinterest.com/ ... lib/	0	0	7e9a63c1dac3f2c2cb5fb43cf
https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/industry-news/libraries/article/92111-ala-releases-top-10-most-challenged-books-of-2022.html	12	11	c0151b503c29e60ca1be035c7
https://www.tiktok.com/@ ... publiclibrarylang/en	0	0	6fe96e22d170e8100da0a1b836
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC ... 24k3f9srgguUkY153Rww	0	0	9102387f2518a6319953311ff
Total Clicks	84	74	

Lean into click rate improvement

You need a good open rate to know you’re keeping your patrons informed but more importantly, you need a good click rate to know you’re providing content they care about, that they are more likely to take action on.

Metrics that guide content creation toward a higher click rate:

- Individual link click rate (see example)
- Asset download rate
- Post-click behavior via Google Analytics or the like

Note: Just like with open rate, the type of email can impact click rate. I.E. an overdue notice won’t necessarily be clicked.

Guess what?! Read rate improvement tactics impact click rate too:

Timing

Send when patrons are most likely checking email.

Inbox

Stand out from the clutter and avoid the junk box.

Content

Provide information that's relevant to your audiences.

Design

Create an email that makes engagement easy.

If you've "TICD" all four boxes...

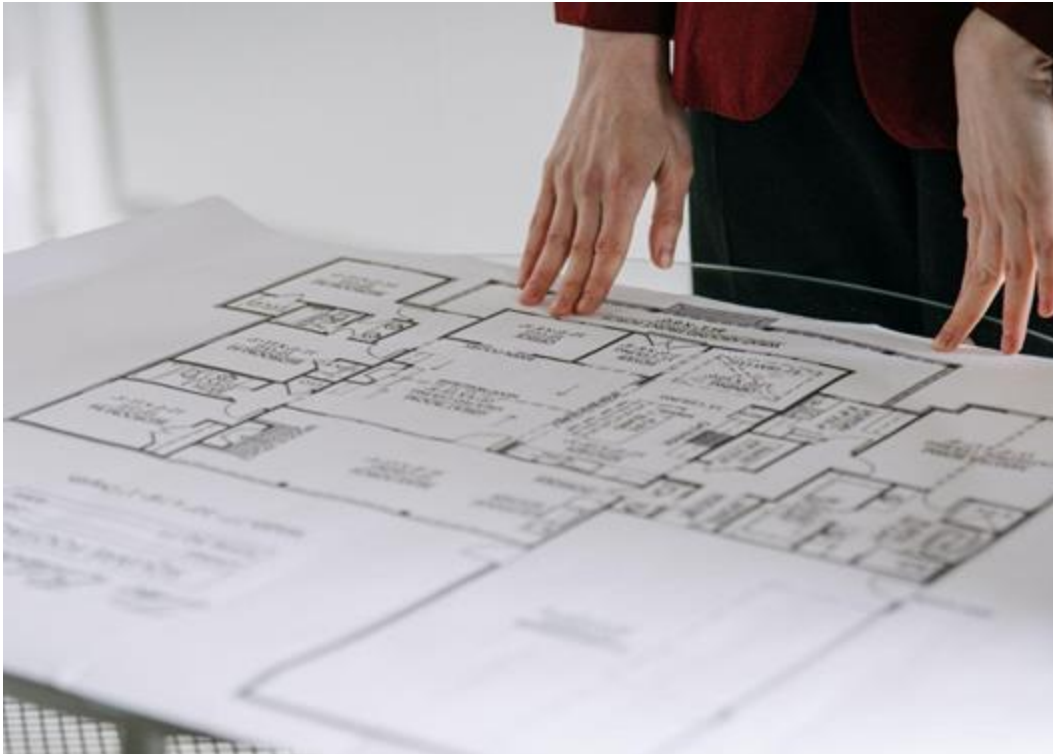
You may see an increase in opens and in turn, CLICKS.



Design: Specific email design tactics for a click-worthy email

If you build it [right], they will come

Beyond making a skimmable and simple layout, there is a range of email design tactics that can help make the click-decision easier as well as appealing for your patrons.



Try these best practices in your design:

- Personalization in the email headline (inside the email): "Check out these great library events, {contactfield=firstname|friend}"
- Write short, concise headers and subheads
- Focus on benefits more than features in body copy
- Include only a few CTAs (call-to-action)
- Use clear, direct CTAs: "Click to register," "Download your reading tracker"
- Even better, use 1st-person voice: "Sign me up!"
- Use button CTAs vs. linked text (use links for minor CTAs)
- Place the CTA on the right side of the email
- Use a button color that contrasts with its background and font color
- Use the same link for the picture as with the button
- Use images of people in relevant action to the section
- Use images of people not looking directly into the camera
- Feature images of the library vs. stock images

Design: Create an email that makes engagement easy

Good examples of using button CTAs, short concise sub-heads, few body sections, as well as “Z” and/or “F” patterns

hello October

Let the fun begin!

October is here, and Halloween is coming up quickly. The best way to get prepared for the cooler season is to visit your favorite BCPL location. Stock up on books to read while curled up on the couch, craft something new for the Halloween season, or join us for a festive program!

1. Central Library is open!

The wall is open and the doors are open! We have an awesome children's playroom, garden space for a major play area, a dedicated teen gaming area, 1000+ non-fiction titles for all occasions, a table lab for anyone wanting to get a little, and so much more. Come check out everything we have to offer!

2. Hogwarts O.W.L.s is back in session!

Immerse yourself in the magical world of Harry Potter all month long at weekly book-and-quiz events. From new O.W.L. prep classes every Thursday to magical bookends on our fall bookends and more. Don't miss the prep team and graduation party on Saturday, October 20th!

3. Join us for some Halloween fun!

Bring all your friends, family, and neighbors to a month full of reading, games, and spectacular activities. Enjoy the week of costumes, pumpkins, design a festive tote bag, share a craft, draw our pumpkin seeds, and a haunted house, and more!

Connect with Us: BCPL

SHOREWOOD-TRIST Public Library

SUMMER READING KICK-OFF PARTY
JUNE 1ST - 5-7PM

Join us for our annual Summer Reading Kick-Off Party! Come out for food trucks with Mr. Sally's and Hazel Marie's, live music, a video game truck, Soucity houses, games, giveaways, and more!

WHAT'S HAPPENING @ STPL

THIS JUNE, GET READY TO LEVEL UP YOUR READING!

Summer Read 2023

We will have reading programs, games, and reading challenges for children, teens, and adults! This summer, we have family fun with us!

Friends of the Library Puzzle Competition

Friends, teachers, and neighbors will welcome all our friends of the library to the puzzle competition! Register, solve by the library to win the \$10 prize, and gather your team of puzzle solvers!

PUZZLE COMPETITION!

OLD SCHOOL ARCADE BOOKMARK

Experience your favorite arcade games with this interactive and colorful bookmark! Registrants will be contacted when we are ready to be printed up.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

BEE GARDEN

Learn how to start a beehive garden that your neighborhood loves and share additional knowledge and resources.

How to Grow a Book

Agree with students, explore the joys of reading, and gain inspiration and motivation.

Let's Grow a Book

Learn how to start a beehive garden that your neighborhood loves and share additional knowledge and resources.

Connect with us: BCPL

MAR COPA COUNTY LIBRARY DISTRICT

NEWS & EVENTS
May 2023

Featured Collection

Check out our featured collection, featuring a variety of titles including fiction, non-fiction, and audiobooks. All titles are available for checkout at all library locations.

Summer Reading 2023!

Join us for our annual Summer Reading Kick-Off Party! Come out for food trucks with Mr. Sally's and Hazel Marie's, live music, a video game truck, Soucity houses, games, giveaways, and more!

Summer Plans

Vocabulary

If you're looking to get out of bed and read this summer, join us for our Summer Reading Kick-Off Party!

Story-cation

If you're looking to get out of bed and read this summer, join us for our Summer Reading Kick-Off Party!

4th-6th Grade

Join us for our 4th-6th grade Summer Reading Kick-Off Party!

Digital Magazines

Enjoy a variety of digital magazines available for checkout at all library locations.

Renew Your Card Online!

Upcoming Events

Connect with Us: BCPL

Comsewogue Public Library
Where Many Paths Meet

SUMMER KICKOFF!
Saturday, June 3rd
2 - 4 PM

REGISTRATIONS THIS WEEK

ADULT PROGRAMS THIS WEEK

Breathe Together

New English Speakers Friendly Conversation Group

Chess Club

Medicaid Enrollment Assistance

ENROLLMENT

Mah Jongg & More

ONLINE CALENDAR **IN-PERSON CALENDAR**

Have you attended one of our programs? We want your feedback!

Connect with us: BCPL

Optimizing

Optimizing: A/B testing methods to define the best best practices

One size doesn't fit all

Not every patron will open or click, but we can try for as many as we can by testing different email elements against each other. Find the elements that best trigger a desired action with A/B testing.

Try testing one element at a time:

- *Subject line with and without personalization*
- *Send days or send times*
- *Button CTAs vs. linked text*
- *And others*

How to nail your testing: *Document the elements you've tested along with the results in a spreadsheet. Keep the better-performing element as the new baseline and attempt to outdo its performance with something else. Rinse and repeat.*



Measuring

Measuring: Using reports for tracking outcomes

Are you on the right path?

How do you know which testing variant had the biggest impact on your desired patron action? Run a report to find out. Check for increases in reads, clicks, downloads, or form submissions between email variants.



Try a canned report:

The “Email Performance Summary Report” in the Reports section shows the read rate and click rate per email sent – the metrics of choice for most email marketers.

Try a custom report:

- Design a report of your own based on a variety of data sources including emails sent, downloadable assets, and form submissions
- Use the report builder to create automatic calculations to be included in your report (average read rate, total sends)
- Schedule a report to be sent to a specific email address on any frequency necessary
- Work with our Support Team for help creating complex reports

Designing for Accessibility

Designing for Accessibility: You're designing for many impairments

Vision Impairments	Cognitive Disabilities	Dyslexia	Photosensitive Epilepsy	Hearing Impairments
Accessibility Barriers				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low contrast • Small text • Color-only meaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clutter • Jargon • Unclear flow 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Serif fonts • Justified text • Tight spacing • White backgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flashing images • Animations/GIFs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audiovisual content without captions
Accessible Design Basics (many covered in prior slides)				
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High contrast • Large legible fonts • Alt text 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simple layout • Plain language • Whitespace 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sans-serif or dyslexic-friendly fonts • Left-aligned • Off-white 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No strobing content • Motion control options 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transcripts • Captions • Visual Cues

Review accessible design standards on www.digital.gov and/or <https://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG21/>

Foundations of Accessible Design: Color & Contrast



Contrast



Color

The Do's

- Use sufficient contrast between text and background (WCAG recommends 4.5:1)
- Check contrast using WebAIM.org
- Check contrast in Canva: From your design, Go to “File” → Click “Accessibility” and then “Check design accessibility”

- Blue/orange or blue/red palettes often work well for common color vision deficiencies
- Vary brightness and saturation to help distinguish colors
- Test color combos using WebAIM.org
- Check contrast in Canva: From your design, Go to “File” → Click “Accessibility” and then “Check design accessibility”

The Don'ts

- Don't use small fonts
- Avoid busy backgrounds

- Avoid combinations like green/red or blue/yellow
- Don't use color alone - combine color with text, shapes, symbols, textures, or patterns to convey meaning

Foundations of Accessible Design: Typography & Structure

Aa

Fonts and Spacing



Layout Comprehension

The Do's

- Use sans serif fonts – those lacking small decorative lines (serifs) at the ends of the letter strokes (Arial, Verdana, Tahoma, etc.)
- Minimum 12-point font size, 16+ for digital content
- Minimum letter spacing (kerning/tracking) should be at least 0.12 times the font size, while word spacing should be at least 0.16x the font size, and line height at least 1.5x the font size




- Use simple words, short sentences, and short paragraphs (2 lines max)
- Break text into smaller, digestible sections with headings and lists
- Put the most important information at the top, at the beginning of the sentence, at the beginning of the paragraph
- Use visual cues to guide the eye (see "visual hierarchy" slides)
- Reduce overwhelm with negative or white space

The Don'ts

- Avoid typing in ALL CAPS
- Skip condensed and script fonts

- Avoid irrelevant images and flashy animations
- Avoid excessive content – limit it to a few CTAs (calls to action)
- Don't use hyperlinks except for minor CTAs, use buttons

Foundations of Accessible Design: Images, Graphics, Icons

 Images	 Graphics	 Icons
The Do's		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Include alternative text tags ("alt text") for all images, describing what is seen in the image concisely• Use images of people in relevant action to the email section• Use images of the library vs. stock images	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Maintain high contrast color combinations• Keep the design simple and highly relevant to the email section• Consider starting with an accessibly designed template	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use simple, universally understood icons• Use text with icons to convey meaning (e.g., "Error" along with an 'X' icon)
The Don'ts		
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't overlay text on images as screen reader software cannot read it• Avoid images of people looking directly into the camera – proven to be creepy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't use text-only images• Don't use alt tags on decorative elements so that screen readers can skip them• Avoid combinations like green/red or blue/yellow• Don't use graphics as buttons	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid overusing emojis as screen reader software will read each one aloud = annoying and confusing• Don't use icons as buttons