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Evaluating Seed List Impact on MS365 Deliverability

This research aims to evaluate whether using an Outlook seed list enhances email deliverability to MS365.

The study compares bulk email sending using both established seed lists and new seed lists to determine differences in inbox placement, sender reputation impact, and optimal sending volumes.

Additionally, the research investigates how Custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability perform when sending emails to these seed lists and whether their impact on deliverability varies depending on the seed list type.

About Warmy and the Research Team

Warmy is the leading email deliverability technology, helping businesses improve their inbox placement, sender reputation, and overall email performance. Powered by AI-driven strategies.

The Warmy Research Team is a dedicated group of email deliverability-certified experts focused on analyzing and optimizing email-sending practices.

Through continuous testing, data-driven insights, and innovative methodologies, they uncover factors that impact deliverability and translate findings into actionable improvements for Warmy's platform. Their expertise helps businesses navigate the complexities of email deliverability with confidence.

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Key findings

- **The new seed list** performed marginally better overall than the established seed list.
- **The new seed list** demonstrated more stability towards the end of the study, with fewer drastic fluctuations compared to the established seed list.
- **Custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability** caused severe instability across both seed lists, reinforcing their ineffectiveness for bulk sending.
- **The new seed list** recovered faster than the established seed list — the new (Flow 5) seed list improved deliverability by 50% in 5 days, while the established (Flow 4) only improved by 30% in the same period. That makes it a 20% spread in the speed.
- Once again, the data from this research that **lower bulk sending volumes** correlated with better deliverability, while excessive volume increased filtering risks.

Research Technical Details

Key Hypotheses of the research:

- **Using an Outlook seed list improves MS365 deliverability** compared to non-seeded sending.
- **The established seed list and the new seed list** will show distinct deliverability trend**s.**
- **Email volume influences sender reputation and inbox placement,** with an optimal range that avoids spam filters.

Tested Factors:

- Inbox placement rates
- Sender reputation impact
- The effect of Custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability overall
- Bulk-sending volume influence

Methodology

Flows Tested:

- **Flow 1: Control Flow** – Establishes baseline deliverability using sender addresses with known reputations.
- **Flow 2: Bulk Sending via established Seed List** – Uses 175 Outlook mailboxes in the established seed list.
- **Flow 3: Bulk Sending via the new Seed List** – Uses 175 Outlook mailboxes in the new seed list.
- **Flow 4: Custom SMTP Mailboxes with Bad Deliverability + Established Seed List** – Tests inbox placement using custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability, using an established seed list.
- **Flow 5: Custom SMTP mailboxes with Bad Deliverability + New Seed List** – Tests inbox placement using custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability, using the new seed list.

Senders & Receivers:

- **Senders:**
  - Flows 1–3 used Custom SMTP addresses.
  - Flows 4–5 used Custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability.
- **Receivers:**
  - Emails were sent to Outlook mailboxes in the respective seed lists.

Tools & Metrics:

- **Tools Used:**
  - **Warmy Placement Checker** – Tracked inbox vs. spam placement.
  - **MX Toolbox** – Used to monitor sender reputation and blacklist status.

Metrics Analyzed:

- Inbox vs. spam folder placement rates
- Bounce rates
- Sender reputation trends
- Deliverability fluctuations over time

Results

Baseline (Flow 1: Control Flow):

- MS365 Placement Rate: 100% throughout the test period.
- This confirms that under normal conditions, deliverability is strong for well-configured senders.

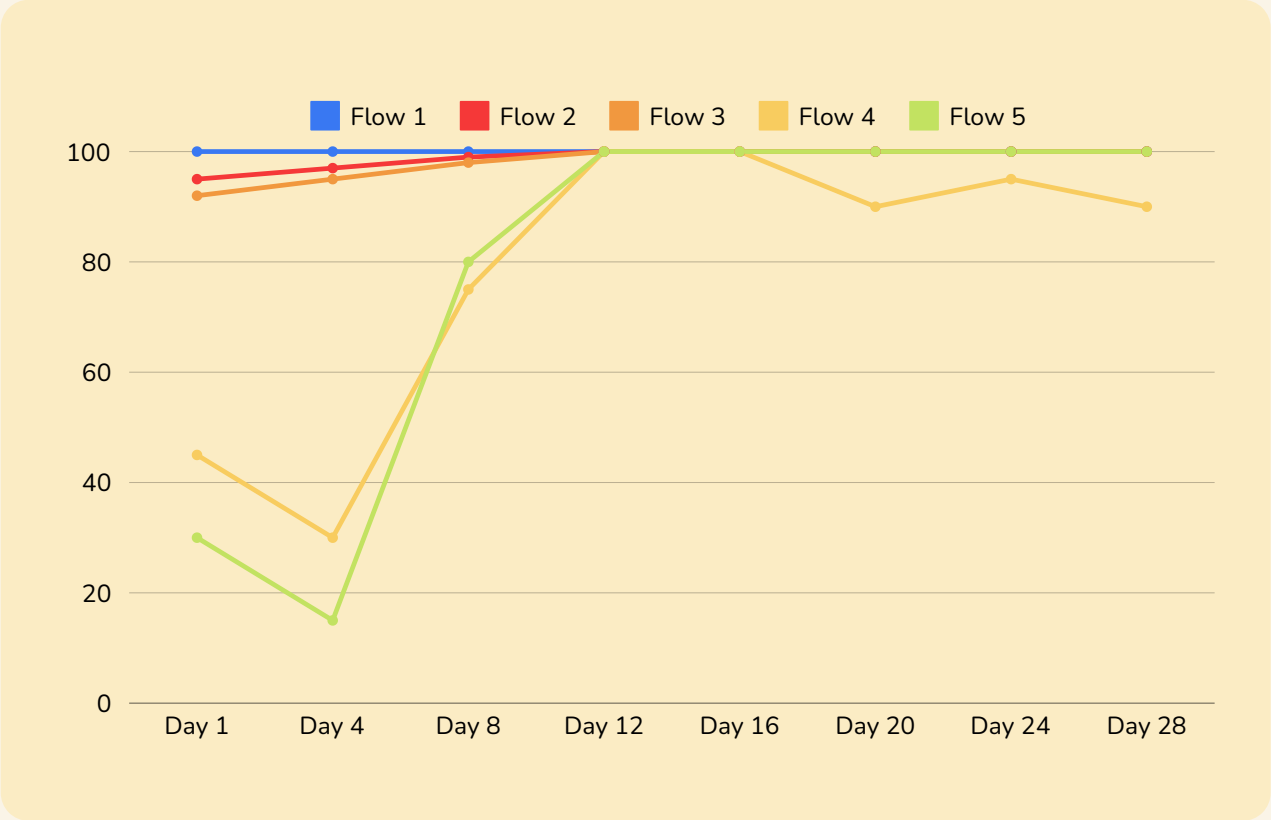
Bulk Sending with established and new Seed Lists (Flows 2 & 3):

- Early-stage findings: The established seed list had a higher starting deliverability, but this was likely due to a better baseline rather than any effect of seeding itself.
- Mid-to-late-stage findings: The new seed list performed slightly better towards the end of the study, showing fewer fluctuations and greater stability.

Custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability Impact (Flows 4 & 5)

- **Flow 4 (Established Seed List + Bad Deliverability SMTP):**
  - Started with 45% placement and increased to 75% over 5 days (30% spread).
  - Delivered sporadic performance, fluctuating between high and low placement rates.
- **Flow 5 (New Seed List + Bad Deliverability SMTP):**
  - Started at 30% placement and increased to 80% over 5 days (50% spread).
  - Achieved the same final placement result up to 20% faster than Flow 4 with an established seed list.

MS365 Placement Rate Progression Across Flows Over Time



This chart visually represents the MS365 inbox placement rates over a period of 28 days for different test flows.

The study compares bulk email sending performance using both established and new seed lists, as well as the effect of Custom SMTP mailboxes with bad deliverability within the presented timeframe.

Conclusion

- **The new seed** list demonstrated better long-term performance compared to the established seed list. While the established (classic) seed list had a higher starting deliverability, this was likely due to a better initial sender reputation rather than the effectiveness of the seed list itself.

- **The new seed** list showed greater stability over time, with fewer fluctuations and a steadier deliverability rate.

- **When using custom SMTPs with bad deliverability**, the new seed list recovered faster than the established seed list—Flow 5 improved by 50% in 5 days, whereas Flow 4 improved by only 30% in the same timeframe.

- **Custom SMTPs with bad deliverability** create severe deliverability issues and are not viable for bulk sending, leading to highly unstable inbox placement rates.

- **Bulk email sending** should be carefully managed—lower sending volumes correlated with better inbox placement, while excessive volume increased filtering risks.

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Years Of Combined Email Deliverability Expertise

9 countries
Home To Our Talented Team

95+
Countries Have Daily Active Users In Warmy