

Email Benchmarking Report

2023

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Customer Engagement

DM
Data &
Marketing
Association **A**

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/ Introduction

Welcome to the DMA UK Email Benchmarking Report 2023, the latest publication in the DMA's long-running series of email industry insight reports.

These reports are intended to help marketers make the case for email marketing in their ever-more challenging budgeting sessions, while also helping them to plan more effective and efficient campaigns.

Hot on the heels of the [Consumer Email Tracker 2023](#), which covers consumer usage of and attitudes towards email marketing, we're delighted to release direct supply-side performance data from 2022 which establishes industry-wide email campaign metrics through which advertiser campaigns can be benchmarked.

When assessing the delivery, open, click-through and click-to-open rates established across B2B and B2C campaigns across a range of sectors, it is important to contextualise these benchmarks with the following key considerations:

1. The Email Benchmarking Report contains aggregated, directly reported supply-side data from eight key industry players. As such, it uses a very different methodology to the self-reported consumer data that underpins the DMA's Consumer Email Tracker. When answering the survey that informs the latter report, consumers will largely consider emails only from their ten 'best-friend' brands. In contrast, the Email Benchmarking Report covers the entire spectrum of emails delivered: from the top ranks of most engaging emails to the long tail of less engaging content. The email channel is expanding with **volumes up 20% year-on-year** - substantial growth considering that they had already doubled during the pandemic. **The long tail is therefore longer than ever**, meaning advertisers must fight even harder than ever to make their emails stand out.
2. This year's Email Benchmarking Report arrives against the backdrop of email marketers having to contend with the **profound impact on open-rate tracking triggered by the changes to Apple's Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) policy**. These changes mean that pixel fires are not generated if emails are delivered to spam, or if devices are not connected to wifi or a power source. Because of these factors, it is estimated that automated fires now happen in around 85% of all instances, boosting open rate metrics accordingly. This makes year-on-year comparisons for open rates and click-to-open rates very difficult. To all intents and purposes, we are at year zero for tracking these metrics, as a hard trend-break comes in to play.
3. The current economic situation presents a challenging environment for any response-based channel. As the [DMA CMO Measurement Toolkit](#) highlights, **performance marketing effectiveness has declined by 60% during the past three years**, hampered by muted levels of consumer demand. Readers of this report will note that email performance has held up relatively well against this backdrop.

With these key considerations in place, marketers have access to a range of robust email performance benchmarks through the DMA and its eight key contributors. Being able to contextualise marketing performance is more important than ever in when business performance is under pressure, and the DMA welcomes the conversation that this report will stimulate.

Ian Gibbs – Insight and Planning Director, DMA

/ Foreword – Email Council

The email channel remains highly popular. Consumers rate email because of relevance and trust, while marketers love its measurability and revenue effectiveness. Both dimensions are reflected in this report – marketers who put their email subscribers first measure the benefits through improved deliverability, higher open rates, and more click traffic.

But what are these benefits actually worth? The last DMA [Marketer Email Tracker](#) showed the average lifetime value of an email address is **± £36**. It also showed each program sends an average **± 4** emails per week to each subscriber. The churn metrics we report for the first time in this document suggest a typical email address spends **± 2.5** years on a sender's list. Put these numbers together and average revenue *per email* is around **± 7p**.

Now we can extrapolate the value of the other email KPIs in this report. It means each open is worth **± 20p** (allowing for some adjustment for Apple MPP!) while each click is worth in the region of **£3.50**. Seriously impressive, when you think about the value of email performance like this!

Smart marketers can use these numbers to secure hard-to-win budget. If they know the dynamic content solution they want to deploy delivers another **10K** clicks per month, **£35K** of incremental will make it much harder for their CFO to object!

Of course, there's a flip side. Revenue metrics also highlight the cost of getting it wrong! A **1%** reduction in deliverability means a **£700** revenue hit for every million emails sent. Or **£7,000**, when you recognise that **10%** of permission-based UK marketing emails are placed in spam!

As this report highlights, performance marketing in general has endured a tough three years. However, readers will see email has weathered the storm far better than other channels, and now generates more traffic (and revenue) than ever before.

As you read through this report ask how your program's performance measures up against these benchmarks. Then ask where you can do better, because the magic of incremental gains means even small improvements yield big returns!

It doesn't mean email marketing is a licence to print money. Those core principles of relevance and trust mean it's a channel that should be nurtured and respected. When this happens, the benefit will be repaid in kind!

Guy Hanson
Deputy Chair of DMA Email Council
Vice President of Customer Engagement, Validity

/ Sponsor Foreword – Deployteq

At Deployteq, we're honoured to have sponsored this year's DMA Email Benchmarking Report 2023. With twenty-three years of experience as a marketing automation platform and creators of the leading Email Benchmark in the Netherlands, we understand the importance of data-driven marketing. The insights provided in the following pages are truly priceless for any marketer.

This year's Email Benchmarking Reports arrives when email marketers grapple with significant changes from Apple's Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) policy. The impact of MPP on open rate tracking has been profound to say the least. While this might make year-on-year comparisons for open rates and click to open rates challenging, we're almost two years in, which allows us to now start benchmarking these figures, giving us a clear view on the landscape of success metrics for the coming years.

The current economic situation also presents a challenging environment. With the burden of rising living costs and consumers actively opting out of email subscriptions to resist temptation, marketers must double their efforts to generate responses to their email campaigns and overcome the hurdles posed. And this is a challenge we know all too well. With Deployteq's growth into the UK market, statistics like these really help us to understand our audience and give a realistic view on what our success looks like. And as the email channel continues to grow, we're confident we can provide real value to marketers in these challenging times.

The Email Benchmarking Reports 2023 provides valuable data and analysis to help businesses refine their email marketing strategies. The report's insights shed light on the evolving landscape of email marketing, from the changing dynamics of engagement to the impact of MPP and economic factors. We're grateful to the DMA for allowing us to contribute to the development of this report and participate in the collective effort to navigate these challenges.

Use this document as a reference and starting point when curating the perfect omnichannel marketing strategy. Above all, use it to compare and optimise. Ask yourself the right questions and listen to your customers; your results will follow closely.

Pauline Buil - Marketing Director, Deployteq

Acknowledgements

A special thank you to the Research Hub of the DMA Email Council for its expertise and support in developing this report. Contributors and members of the hub include:

- Guy Hanson, VP of Customer Engagement, Validity
- Kostas Karagkounis, Deliverability Operations Lead, SAP Emarsys
- Russell Dawson, Senior Deliverability Strategist, DotDigital
- Saravanan Subburam, E-Commerce Content Manager, Pearson

Nor would this report be possible without the participation of companies that take the time to collate their metrics and share them with the DMA. As such, we'd also like to thank the teams at this year's participating businesses:

- Dotdigital
- SAP Emarsys
- Validity
- Deployteq (deliverability metrics for market context only)
- Campaigner
- Ometria
- Profusion
- RedEye

A note on methodology

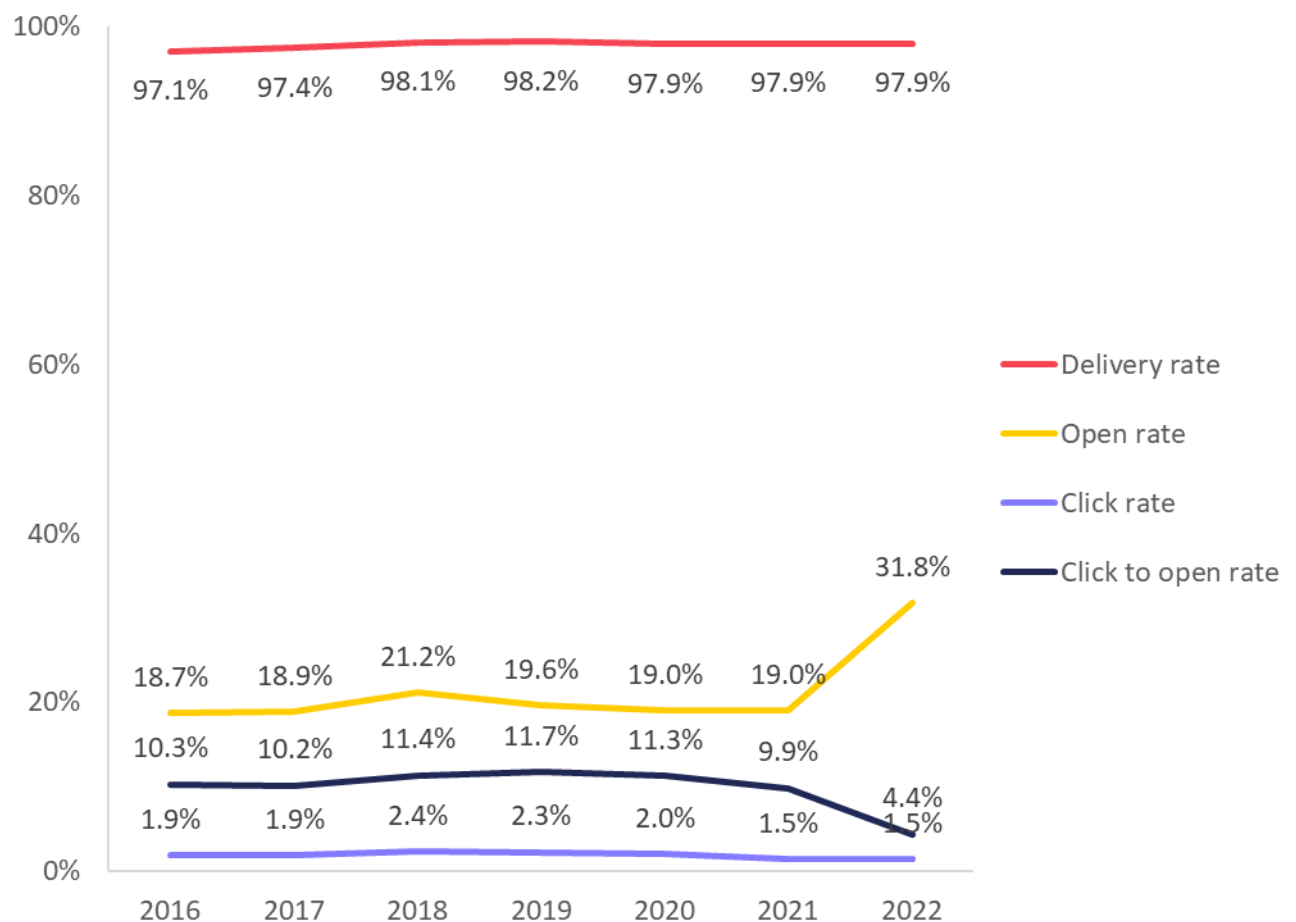
Along with the profound impact that Apple MPP has had on our ability to create year-on-year comparisons for open rate and click-to-open rate benchmarks, it is also worth noting a couple of other methodological considerations when reading this report:

- While we strive to retain a consistent pool of submissions each year, this is not always possible. This creates challenges in building a consistent data set to compare year-on-year, especially for submissions containing metrics which deviate significantly from the average. As such, some outliers have been removed from the historical data to create trends that are as comparable as possible. For this reason, some historical data will not match that reported in the 2022 Email Benchmarking Report.
- Not every submission provides the same level of detail, especially when breaking down benchmarks by B2B vs B2C campaigns, and by different industry sectors. The sum of various sub-group analyses (e.g. B2B vs B2C) may therefore not add up to the overall industry total reported.

/ Overview

In this section, we provide an overview of the key metrics collated within this report, including the long-term trends and the in-year ranges these averages sit in. Deeper detail for each metric - including industry insights and commentary, along with B2B/B2C and sector analyses - appears subsequently in dedicated chapters.

Email Benchmark Averages, 2015-2022



It's a curiously mixed picture of email performance in this year's report, and only on closer inspection do the trends become clearer.

Open rates are the immediately noticeable metric of the four main benchmarks set out in the chart above. During 2022, the rate virtually doubled compared to 2021 – reaching 31.8% by the end of the year. As we'll see later in the report, the answer lies in Apple's Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) policy. With these changes taking place in late 2021, about a quarter of the impact was noted in 2022's benchmarking report. This year however, we have a full picture of the impact of these changes and such is the ongoing penetration of the iPhone and associated email accounts, it isn't surprising that MPP has caused a spike in open rates.

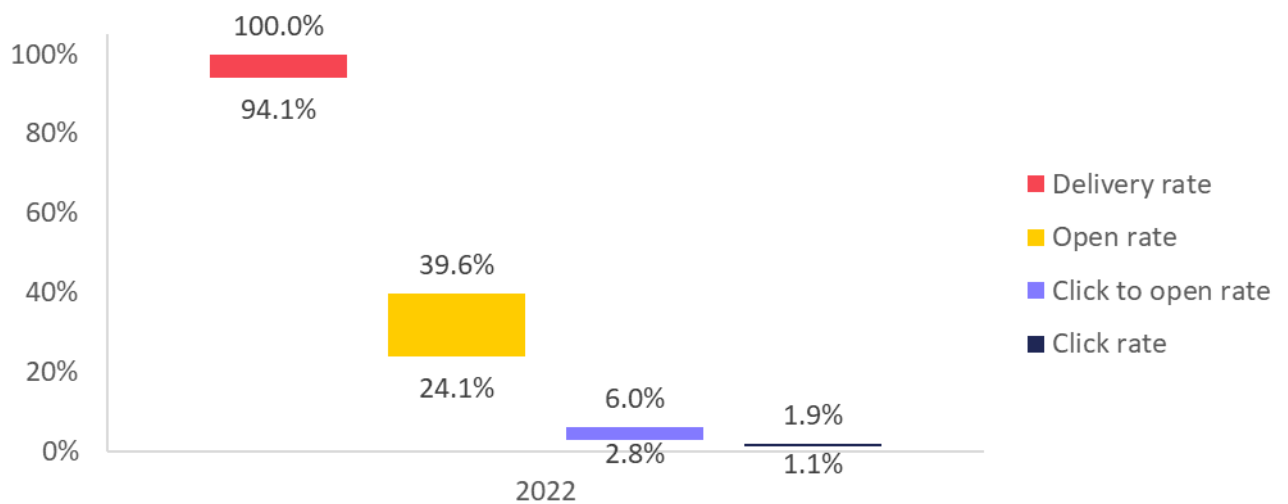
Just as open rates rocketed, click-to-open rates more than halved year-on-year, from 9.9% in 2021 to

4.4% in 2022. These variations happened at a time when click rates remained stable year-on-year at 1.5%. It's a purely mathematical story in many respects: if opens are up, and CTRs flat, click-to-open can only drop.

For their part, click rates are still lower than they were pre-pandemic, but this metric should be seen in the context of total email volumes increasing by up to 20% last year (substantial growth considering volumes had already doubled during the pandemic). A measure of 'click fatigue' must be taken into account – a simple matter of more emails being received, and email cut-through therefore being harder to achieve.

Finally, at the beginning of the email journey, deliverability rates were stable at 97.9% in 2022. While B2B campaigns performed below this average, B2C performance held up well.

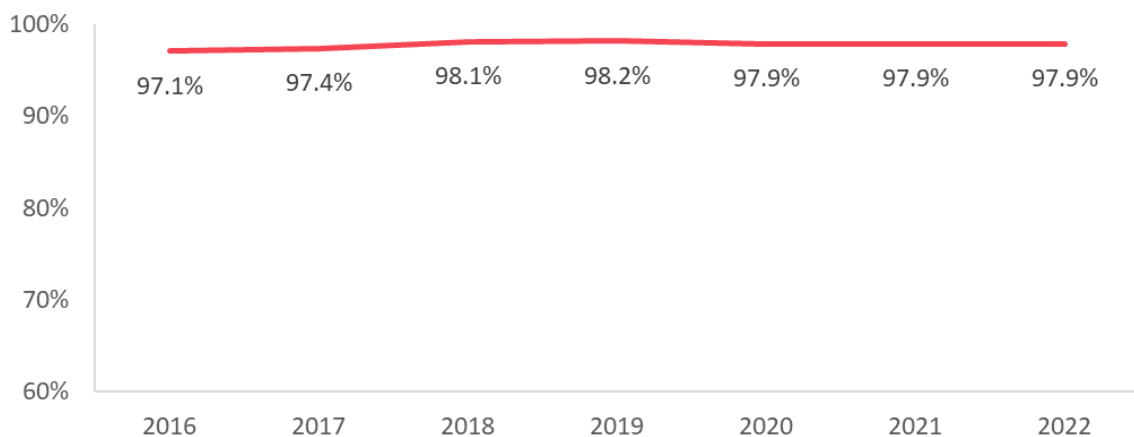
Email Benchmark Ranges, 2022



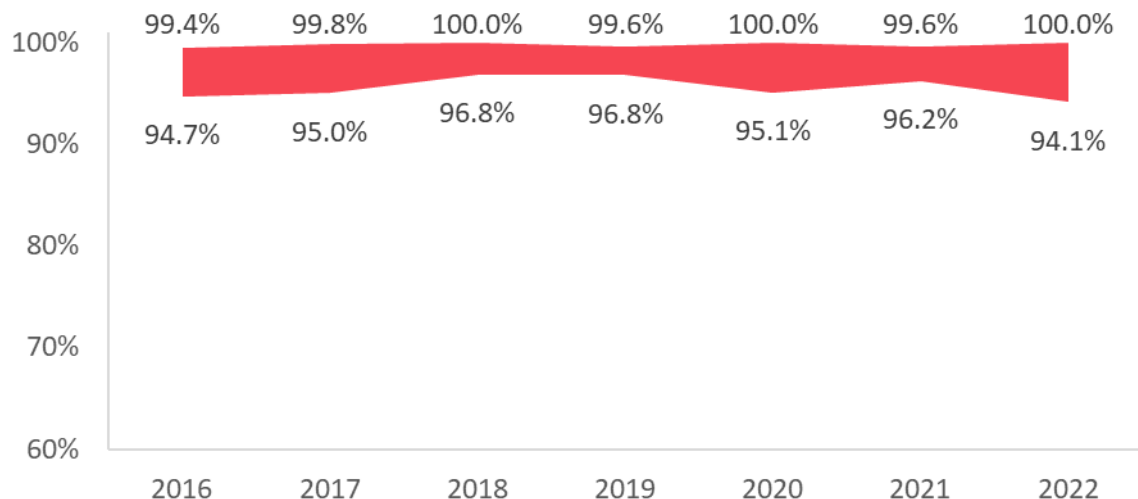
/ Delivered

The following section takes a closer look at the start of an email's journey to the recipient's inbox. This key step is vital to overall campaign performance, as without successful delivery there will of course be no further engagement.

Delivery Rate Average, 2015-2022



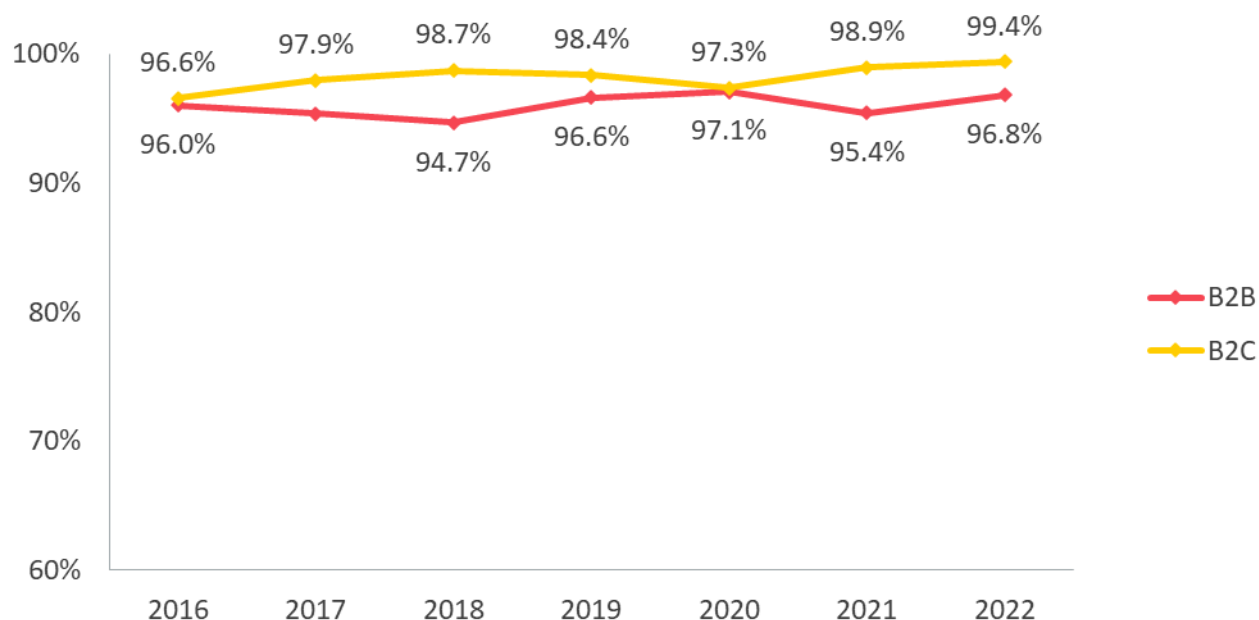
Delivery Rate Range, 2017-2022



In 2022, the delivery rate average remained stable at 97.9% - not yet returning to pre-pandemic levels. The range of variance between the reported number has also widened to between 100% and a lower figure of 94.1%.

While stable deliverability metrics are positive, it means that, on average, more than 2% of email messages are bouncing from every send. Best practice requires hard bounces to be suppressed, so this carries a significant opportunity cost when the average lifetime value of every email address is around £36 (DMA Marketer Email Tracker 2021).

Delivery Rates by B2B/B2C, 2017-2022



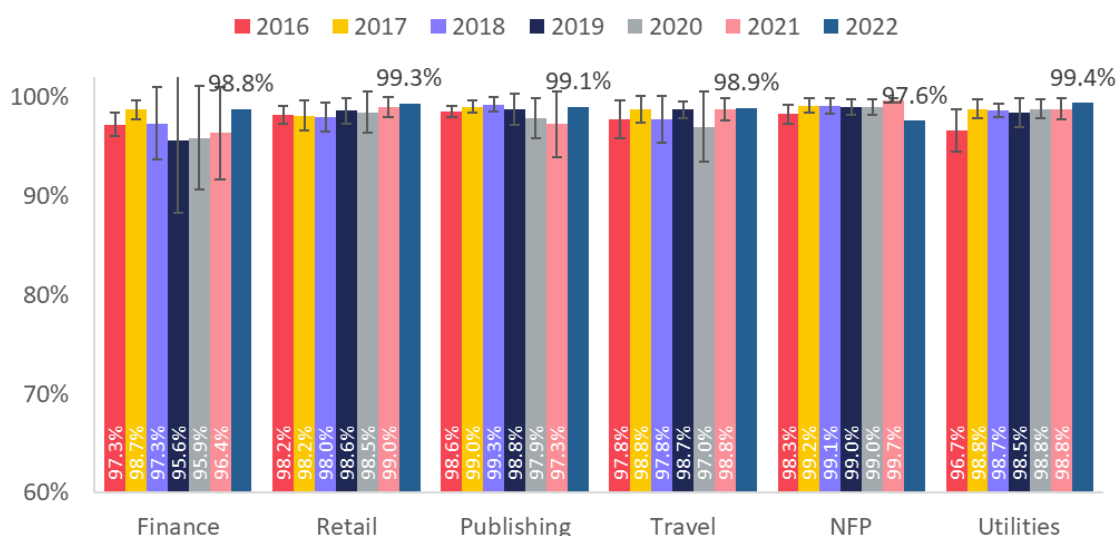
For emails sent in a B2C context, 2022 represented a positive year for deliverability with the 99.4% recorded - a year-on-year increase from 98.9% - being the highest rate of any since 2016. B2B emails also achieved a more positive performance than 2021, rising to 96.8% in 2022.

These positive trends suggest email marketers, and deliverability specialists in particular, are taking the right steps to manage B2C campaign management challenges posed by Apple MPP (see Opened section), such as broadening engagement metrics and excluding auto-generated opens.

Despite B2B's slightly improved performance, the continued growth in people working remotely and general churn in the workforce since the pandemic began is still posing challenges: mailing lists become outdated faster, for instance. Meanwhile, more people logging on remotely has resulted in stringent spam-filtering tools being applied. This has the dual effect of better protecting employees from cyber-attack tactics such as phishing scams, but makes reaching their inboxes a generally much harder task for B2B email campaigns.

The increase in volumes of work emails per person also means users are more likely to receive brand communications, placing greater emphasis on email marketers understanding and addressing such issues.

Delivery Rates by Sector, 2017-2022



Looking across the sectors available within the benchmarking data, nearly all experienced an increase year-on-year. Utilities (99.4%) and Retail (98.9%) reached new heights for delivery rates in 2022.

Unlike in 2021, a positive performance has returned to the Finance sector, with delivery rates increasing to a comparative high of 98.8% after several years of stubbornly low deliverability. As with Utilities, at a time of economic difficulty for many recipients, this is an important increase in messages arriving at their intended destination.

Only Not For Profit (NFP) saw a decline, down from 99.7% in 2021. This trend will be a worry for email marketers operating in a sector where the ability to raise funds is more vital than ever. Engagement may have declined among a less committed, cash-strapped audience; this, in turn, leads to a vicious circle of NFPs sending to broader, less engaged audiences in a bid to boost donations.

Expert Opinions

- “Email marketers in the B2C space have become better prepared by excluding auto-generated opens from their engagement definitions and broadening their engagement metrics to maintain strong delivery practices.”

Saravanan Subburam, Pearson

- “B2B email deliverability faces unique challenges from stringent spam filters, organisation-level filtering, higher email volumes, targeting difficulties, and the emphasis on relationship-based communication. All of this makes B2B comparatively harder than B2C email delivery. To overcome these challenges, B2B marketers must focus on maintaining high-quality mailing lists, segmenting content, implementing proper authentication protocols, and consistently monitoring deliverability metrics.”

Russell Dawson, DotDigital

- “There may be a cause-and-effect relationship with the introduction of Apple MPP in September 2021. Open rates no longer provide a reliable measure of subscriber engagement, but many senders are still using these data points to support recency management. There is a very real risk of programmes sending to audiences they believe to be substantially more engaged than is the case.

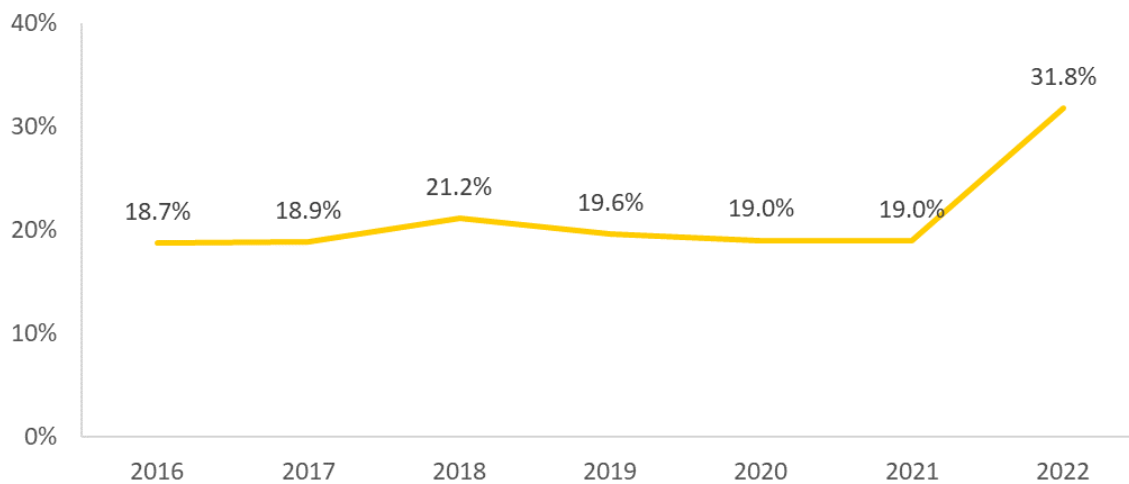
This results in declining deliverability, because they are not achieving the best practice that mailbox providers like Microsoft and Gmail expect of them as responsible senders.”

Guy Hanson, Validity

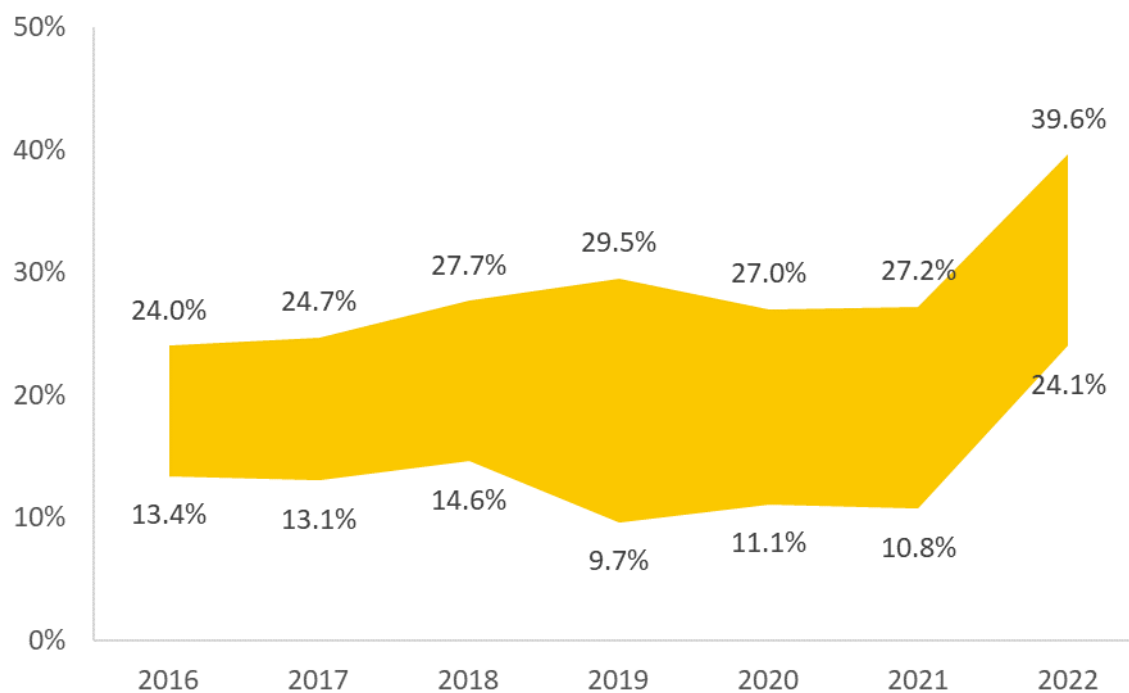
/ Opened

This section covers the first interaction a recipient usually has with an email: opening it.

Open Rate Average, 2015-2022



Open Rate Range, 2017-2022



As referenced earlier in this report, marketers' ability to measure open-rates with confidence was significantly impacted in 2021 with Apple's Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) coming into force. [According to Apple](#), MPP "...hides your IP address, so senders can't link it to your other online activity or determine your location. And it prevents senders from seeing if and when you've opened their

email.”

To explain further, when someone opens the fully up-to-date Mail app on their Apple device, they are shown a message prompting them to either ‘Protect Mail activity’ or ‘Don’t protect Mail activity’, with neither being pre-selected. The protection is, therefore, not turned on by default and people must actively make a choice – although the wording is likely to push people towards opting in. Their choice is automatically synced to all devices associated with the same Apple ID.

For emails, Apple first routes emails through a proxy server to pre-load message images (including tracking pixels) before serving them to readers. So even if readers don’t open those messages at any point, most of them will appear as ‘opened’ to the sender.

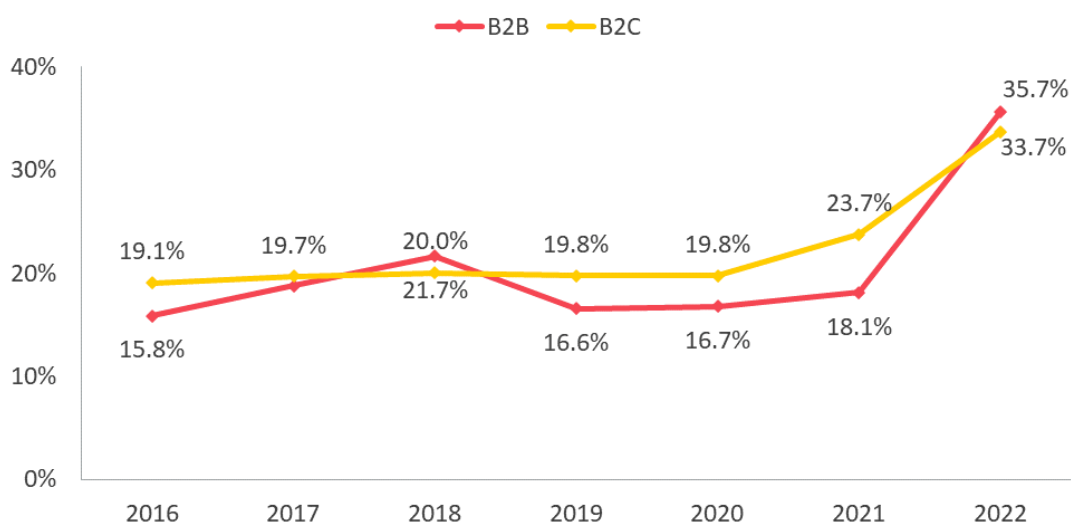
In our previous report using 2021 data, we were yet to witness the full impact of MPP among a population with high mobile device penetration – and Apple products in particular. This year is a different matter altogether, as it is based on the first full year of data to assess MPP’s initial impact.

Overall, open rates rocketed to almost 32% by the end of 2022, up from 19% in 2021. Now we have the first real evidence that MPP is affecting open rates – but email marketers should still treat this with a dose of caution. Until we have another full year at least of open rate data it is impossible to discern a clear trend caused by Apple’s policy.

The DMA is not the only organisation monitoring the effects of MPP. The Global Data & Marketing Alliance, of which the DMA is a member, also recognises the spike in open rates due to MPP in its [2023 International Email Benchmark](#) report. It also notes how nationally enforced privacy legislation impacts deliverability and engagement metrics. For instance, email marketers in some countries which have adopted a new generation of privacy regulations have responded to tougher rules by ensuring cleaner mailing lists. They are achieving lower bounce rates, but also better open, click-through and click-to-open rates than their counterparts in other regions as a result.

To gain a better understanding of the impact of open rates on engagement, and ‘fake opens’, brands should devise methods to access accurate readings that exclude pre-fetched opens. By segmenting recipients who frequently open emails without clicking, visiting their website, or converting over a specific period, advertisers can gauge how it affects their overall list, and adapt email strategies accordingly.

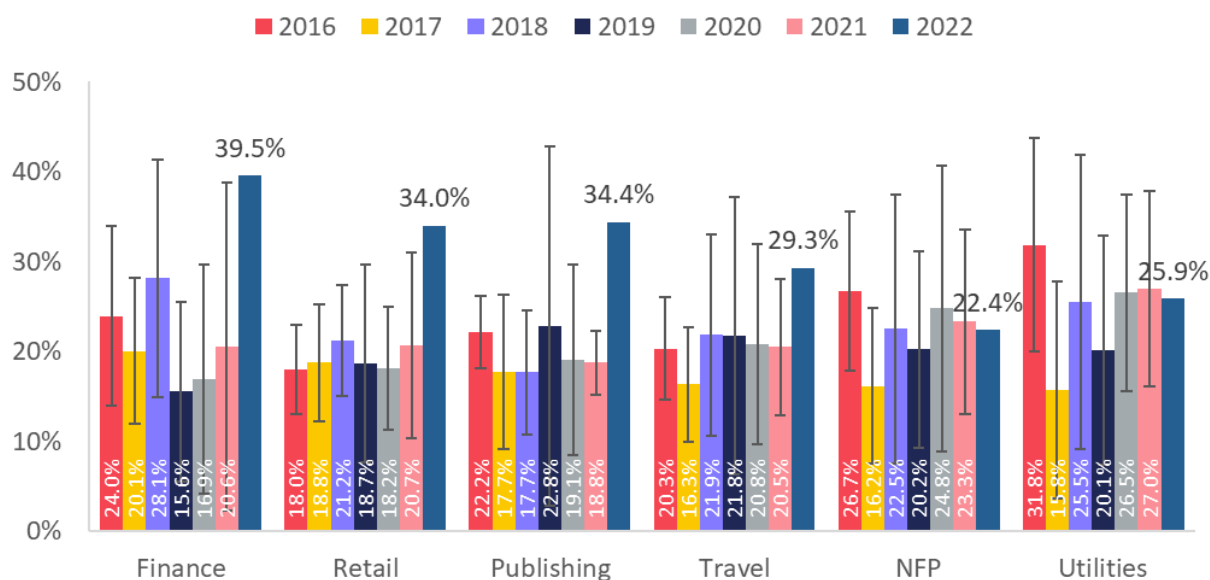
Open Rates by B2B/B2C, 2017-2022



In parallel with steeper open rates generally, emails sent to consumers (B2C) have also seen a notable rise in reported open rates. They reached 33.7% in 2022, compared to 19.8% in 2021.

However, messages sent in a B2B context appear to have risen even faster, from 18.1% to 35.7%, and have even overtaken B2C opens. This remarkable increase compared to the previous year indicates that B2B audiences have also been markedly impacted by a combination of Apple MPP (with greater Apple device access among B2B users); Gmail pre-fetching; and the adoption of BIMi email specification. As B2B delivery rates improve, real opens are also likely to rise.

Open Rates by Sector, 2017-2022



Looking at the sector analysis, Finance, Retail, Publishing and Travel all saw open rates increase to a large extent – the latter reversing its decline during the years affected by the pandemic. Continued growth in Finance and Publishing can be linked to the active involvement of brands in both industries during the cost-of-living crisis; providing support or financial assistance by communicating key information through email newsletters and daily digest emails to keep subscribers informed.

Not For Profit (NFP) and Utilities, however, experienced slight year-on-year declines. Both sectors have been impacted during the cost-of-living crisis.

In reality the picture is probably even worse for these sectors. Their rates likely include their MPP inflation, so the real decline is almost certainly more pronounced. As explained in the previous section, NFPs are struggling with the economic climate, with many consumers less likely to engage.

As for Utilities, the decline may well be associated with indifference. Consumers have had little incentive to seek out better deals which seemed harder to find after the price cap was removed. They would also have been less likely to want to open and engage with emailed account statements.

Expert Opinions

- “The only surprising aspect of the sharp increase in open rates is that it is not bigger. 2022 provided us with the first full year of reporting since the introduction of Apple’s MPP, which has caused massive open rate inflation from Apple Mail users. As of June '22, iOS had just over 50% of the market share of mobile operating systems in the UK. The DMA’s Consumer Email Tracker reported that almost 80% use their mobile devices to engage with marketing emails. However, we also know that MPP doesn’t automatically fire the tracking pixels in all instances (e.g. the emails were placed in spam/junk, or subscribers’ devices weren’t wifi connected). If we combine these parameters, we would have probably expected overall open rates to

double in 2022, whereas we are only reporting a two-thirds uplift. A potential reason for this is that some sending platforms have updated their reporting to 'normalise' the skew that has been introduced by MPP, while others continue to report the total pixel fires they are seeing."

Guy Hanson, Validity

- "To determine the importance of open rates, first compare them with conversion metrics to see if there is a direct correlation. This analysis will help you decide how much emphasis to place on your open rates, rather than simply disregarding them as an inflated vanity metric."

Russell Dawson, DotDigital

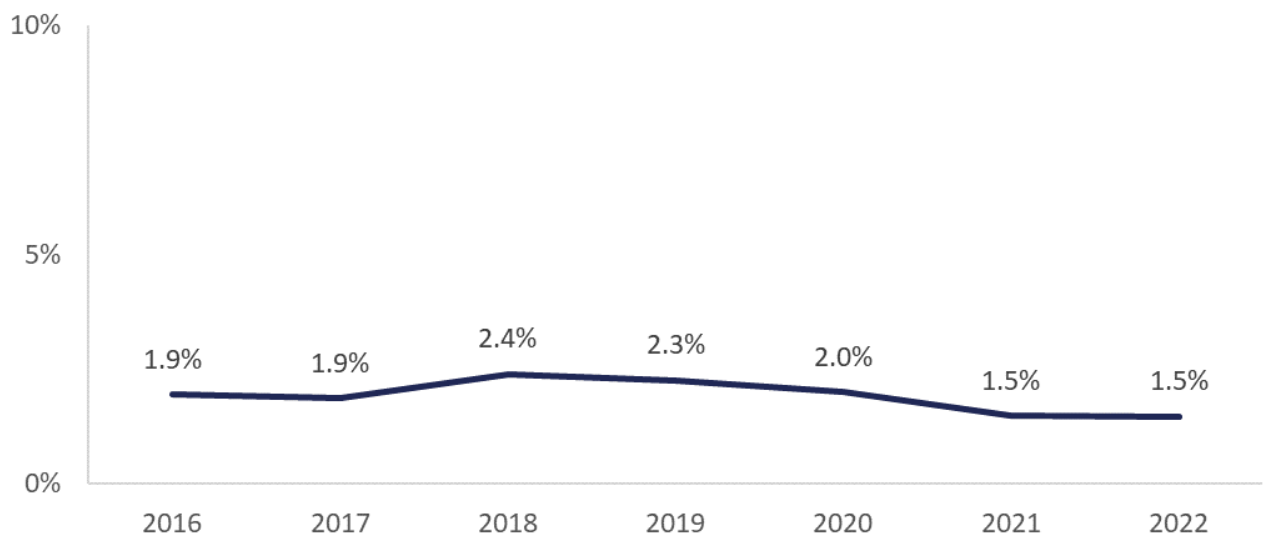
- "With energy prices soaring over the past year, energy suppliers and comparison sites urged consumers to avoid switching and stay on their current tariffs, while being protected by the price cap. This meant fewer opportunities for brands to send marketing messages, replaced by more information around account services and energy prices, that may not always have required the recipient to take action."

Saravanan Subburam, Pearson

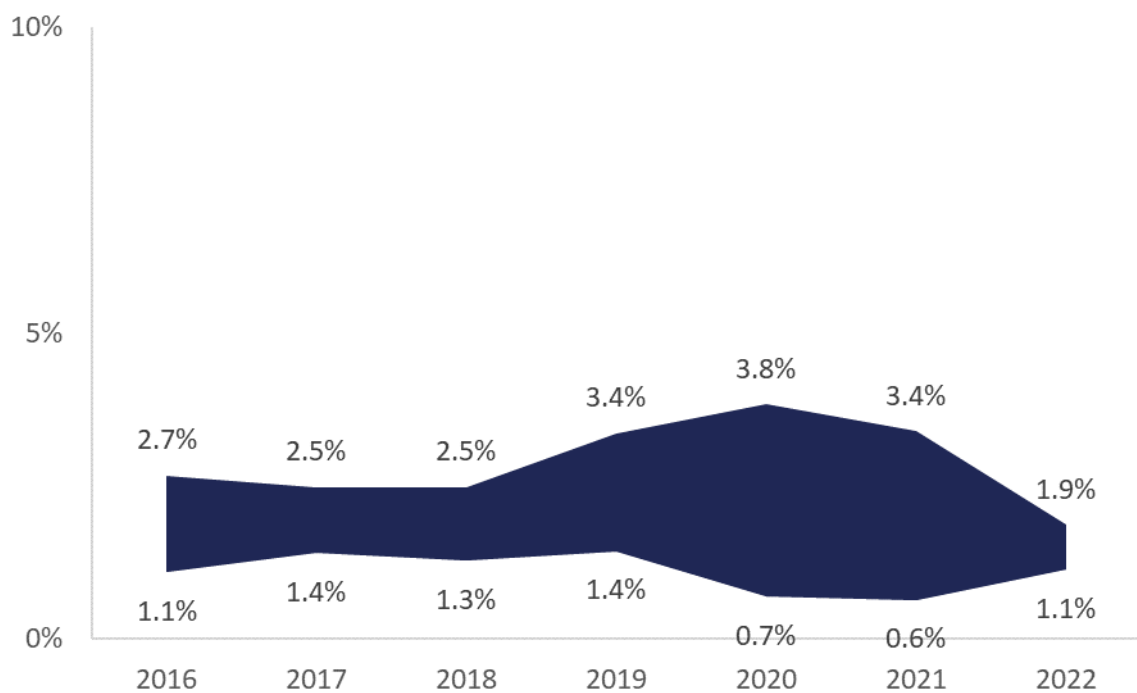
/ Clicked

The challenges to measuring open rates with certainty have led many marketers to focus more on driving engagement through click-through-rates – the focus of this section’s benchmarks.

Click Rate Average, 2015-2022



Click Rate Range, 2017-2022



Clicks have remained stable year-on-year, at 1.5%. This is lower than the rate reported in the [Consumer Email Tracker](#), but it is worth noting that these benchmarks employ a very different

methodology to the self-reported consumer data that underpins the tracker report. When answering the survey that informs the latter report, consumers will largely consider emails only from their ten 'best-friend' brands. In contrast, the Email Benchmarking Report covers the entire spectrum of emails delivered: from the top ranks of most engaging emails to the long tail of less engaging content. The way in which consumers respond (or don't respond) to this long-tail can differ markedly from how they respond to emails from their favoured brands.

In one sense, this similar level of performance to 2021 might disappoint some email marketing professionals – particularly when the click rate lags that garnered in other markets. The flat line is also surprising at first, because many senders responded to Apple MPP with a greater focus on clicks: optimising them for usage, and including additional click-through opportunities. The economic climate will be playing a role, with consumers less likely to respond to sales messages that they simply can't afford.

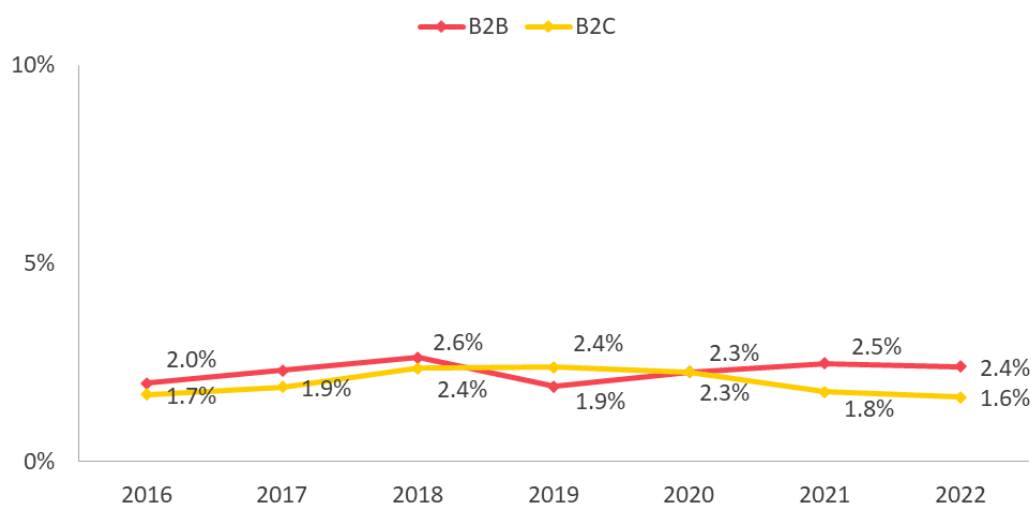
However, it should be remembered that email volumes have also increased by 20% year-on-year. This means the total volume of website traffic generated by click-through traffic has still risen by at least one fifth.

This volume increase also adds weight to the argument that consumers are becoming choosier about which messages they click on – or perhaps they simply don't have time to carefully consider every email. Although it is getting harder to stand out from the clutter, the more your brand can do so, the better its clicks will be, even if clicks are only one of several ways consumers respond to emails (for example, emails might raise levels of brand awareness without any direct behavioural response recorded).

Meanwhile, the significant narrowing shown on the click-through range chart above may be reflective of several competing trends. At the upper end, we know from the DMA's Consumer Email Tracker that while subscribers actually reported an increased likelihood to click, they also have a limited range of 'best friend' brands they will do this for.

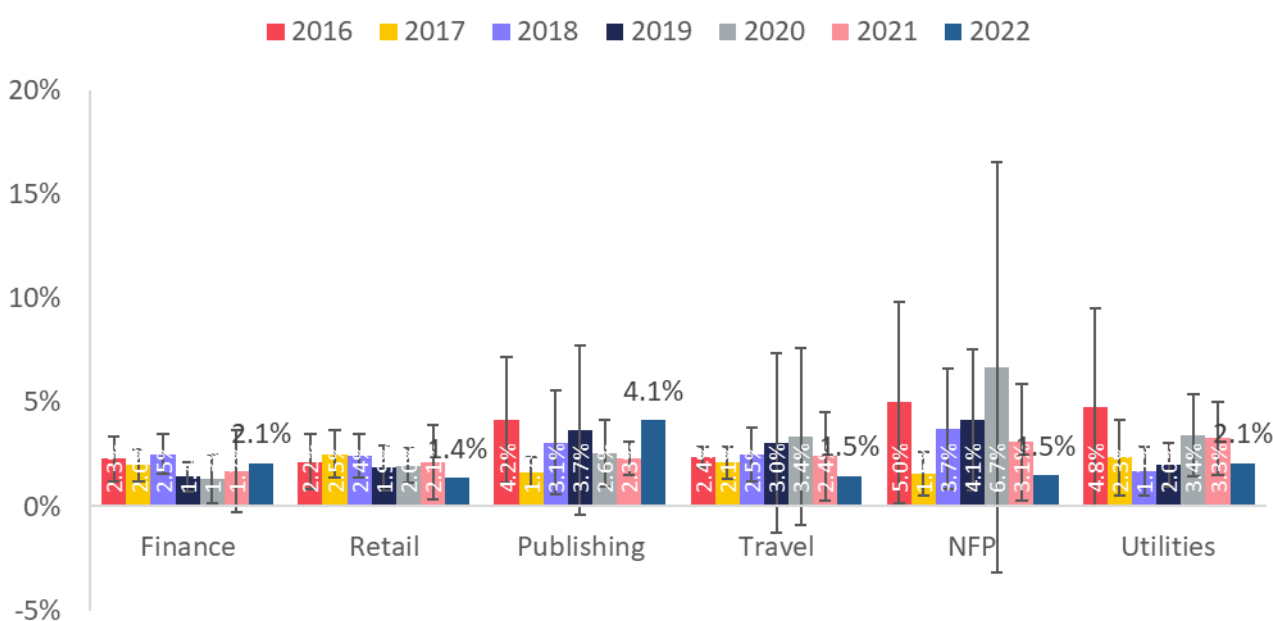
We also know there has been a big increase in single offer promotions, reducing the likelihood of click-through activity from any individual email. At the lower end, while click rates have increased, we must be aware that clicks also include negative actions like unsubscribing - and that opt-out rates may be increasing for these senders.

Click Rates by B2B/B2C, 2017-2022



Following the concern as to whether B2C's open rates have been boosted by Apple's MPP changes, click rates for these consumer emails saw a slight decline in 2022. At 1.6% there has been a gradual erosion of response over the past four years. Meanwhile, B2B emails are almost flat at 2.4%. In challenging economic times, it is harder to elicit response from consumers. The DMA's [CMO Measurement Toolkit](#) reports on a 60% decline in performance marketing effectiveness over the past three years as the cost-of-living crisis has dampened consumer demand. It is against this backdrop that B2C click rates have struggled in 2022, yet at the same time they have actually held up well against the overall performance marketing industry.

Click Rates by Sector, 2017-2022



The best-performing sector was Publishing, which enjoyed a big increase from 2.3% to 4.1% year-on-year. It is potentially a beneficiary of reduced appetite for out-of-home entertainment. Finance was the only other industry to see an increase, to 2.1% click-through-rate in 2022. This possibly highlights increased demand for better deals on mortgages, personal loans and savings products during the cost-of-living crisis.

Last year, retail was the top-performing sector due to a post-pandemic recovery. However, this year's report is a different picture, dropping to an average rate of 1.4% due to ongoing economic challenges and tighter household finances. As explained in the [DMA's CMO Measurement Toolkit](#), performance marketing effectiveness has dropped across the board.

Expert Opinions

- "In email marketing, allowing subscribers to [choose their preferences](#) for content frequency and relevance creates a two-way conversation. This builds trust and encourages the sharing of first-party data for better segmentation and personalisation. The significance and gain of click-through rates in measuring email marketing success is likely to become a major discussion point."

Russell Dawson, DotDigital

- "We shouldn't lose sight of the fact while click-throughs are a common response to interesting emails, they are by no means the only way they respond. As the DMA's [Consumer Email Tracker](#) shows, alternative actions could include visiting senders' websites directly, visiting a physical store, or phoning a customer service rep (to name just a few). Accounting for these alternative (equally positive) actions means overall email effectiveness is at least *double* that reflected *solely* by click-through rates."

Guy Hanson, Validity

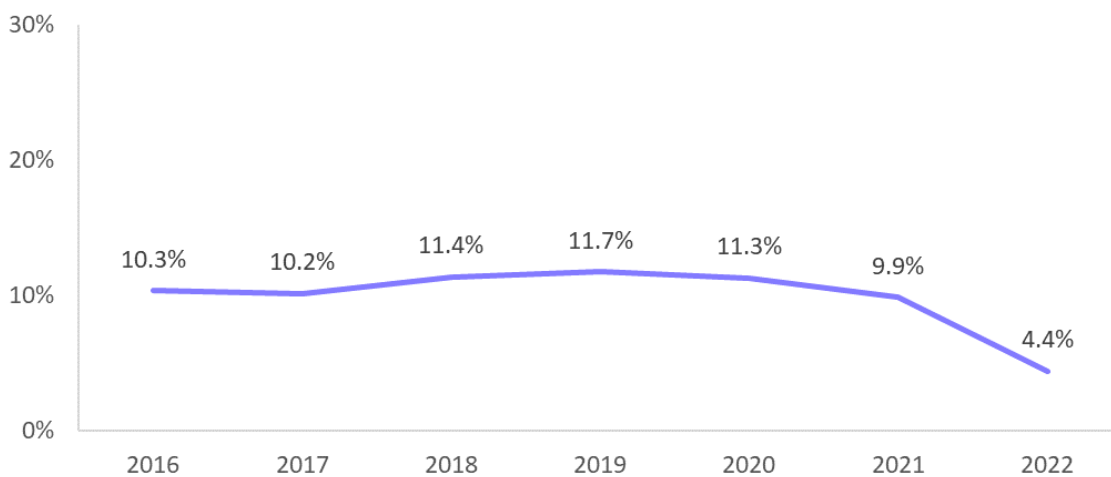
- "Apple recently introduced a beta version of [Link Tracking Protection](#), which removes user-identifiable information from URLs. As a result, email marketers will focus on click rates, creating innovative and personalised emails that capture attention and become a habit for users."

Russell Dawson, DotDigital

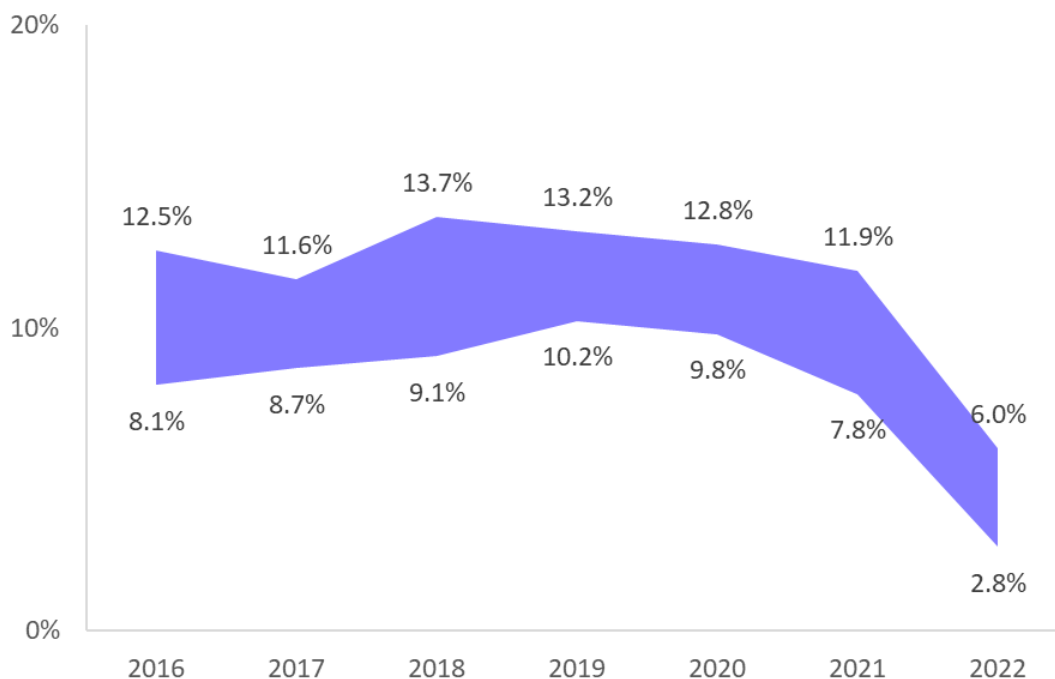
/ Click-to-Open

Finally, this reports at the ratio between two of the metrics collated every year, opens and clicks. This can tell us a lot about whether the promise a subject line offers is fulfilled by what's found within. It is also worthwhile noting at the beginning of this section that the figures reported here are created from an average of the click-to-open rates for each individual provider, which is then used to create the industry average. More information can be found in the methodology section at the end of this report.

Click-to-Open Rate Average, 2015-2022



Click-to-Open Rate Range, 2017-2022

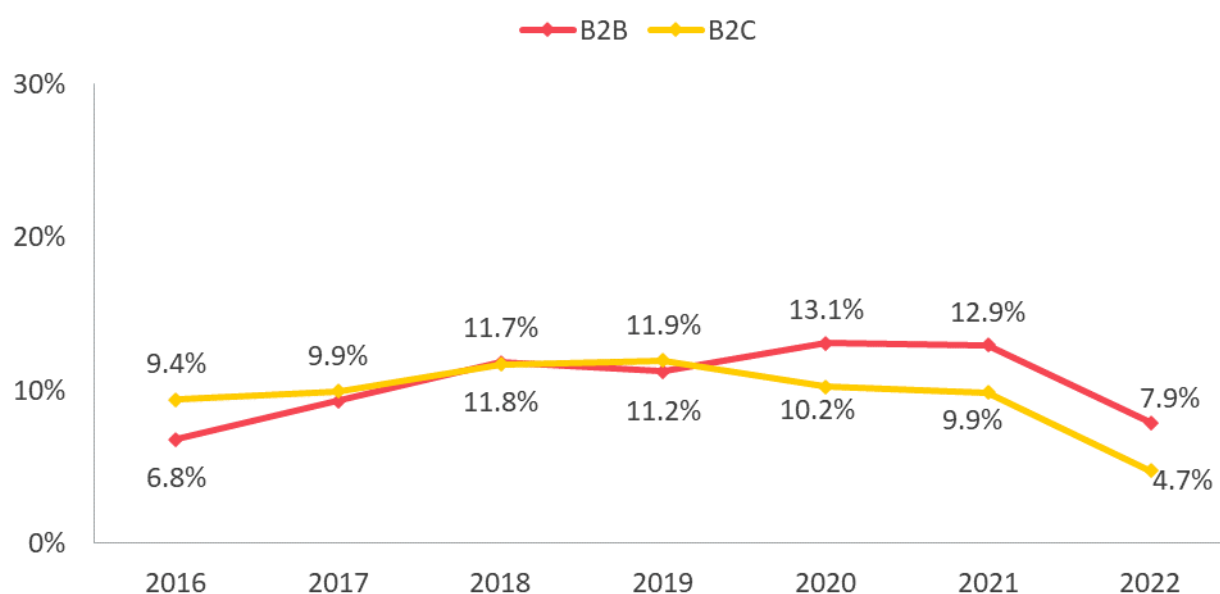


As previously noted, with open rates spiking and click-through rates stable, the only way click-to-opens can trend is downwards. Year-on-year they have reduced from 9.9% to 4.4%, continuing something of a decline since the beginning of the pandemic.

Yet click-to-open remains an important engagement metric, despite the impacted caused by Apple's MPP. True open rates reflect the ability of senders to ensure messages are delivered, generate recognition and trust, and articulate a compelling offer in their subject lines.

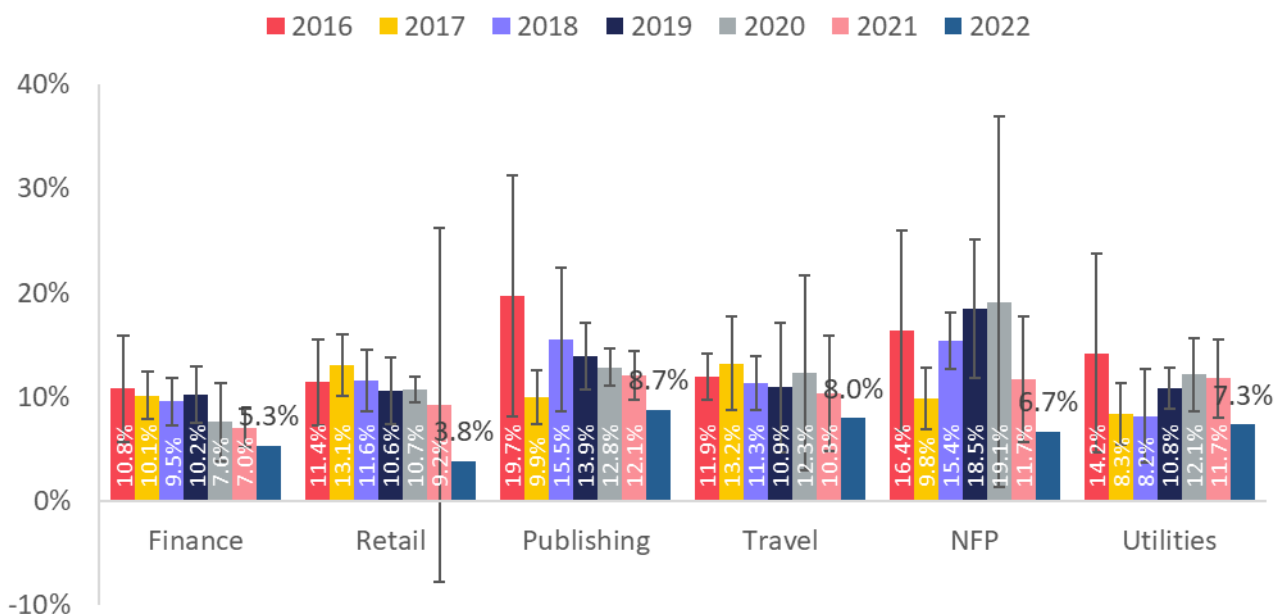
Clicks are generated by content that is engaging, relevant, personalised, and generally meets the needs and interests of subscribers. Click-to-open measures the ratio between the two: was the initial promise created by the email matched by the subsequent reality? When this metric is trending upwards, senders are getting better at achieving this. Although MPP has resulted in a downward trend, note how the drop in percentage terms between upper range and lower range is much less steep, revealing that some senders do a significantly better job of generating subscriber engagement.

Click-to-Open Rates by B2B/B2C, 2017-2022



While B2B and B2C CTOs have both declined, B2B rates have held up better than B2C – a factor of the better click-through-rates recorded in the latter.

Click-to-Open Rates by Sector, 2017-2022



In parallel with the average rates, click-to-opens dropped in all sectors. Publishing and Travel performed best but still declined, while retail dipped from 9.2% to 3.8% year-on-year.

To improve email marketing performance, marketers should continuously monitor their email data, allowing them to detect trends, assess individual campaign success, or compare various campaigns.

It is essential to A/B test and utilise multivariate testing for different aspects of email campaigns, such as subject lines, design, and content, to identify what works best for the audience. Regularly testing and refining email marketing strategies helps pinpoint areas for improvement and implement changes to boost authentic open and click-through rates, resulting in higher click-to-open rates. At the same time, marketers should bear in mind that as reported by the [DMA's Consumer Email Tracker](#), the single biggest driver of opens is recognition/trust of the sender.

Expert Opinions

- “Click-to-open rate is a valuable metric that shows the effectiveness of email campaigns by measuring user engagement after an email is opened. However, as we’ve already seen, Apple’s MPP has impacted the metric’s accuracy, as it prevents senders from tracking whether subscribers have opened their emails, which can often lead to imprecise calculations. Removing the pre-fetched opens in click-to-open reports isn’t always possible in campaign reporting.”

Russell Dawson, DotDigital

- “As mentioned in several sections of the report, the open rates discrepancy caused by Apple’s MPP also skewed this valuable metric. If you would like to have correct attribution to your marketing program, then you should also use other combined metrics - such as direct purchases, website traffic, and clicks (only). That way, you can better understand the efficiency of your email marketing program and get closer to the truth of how successful it is.”

Kostas Karagkounis, SAP Emarsys

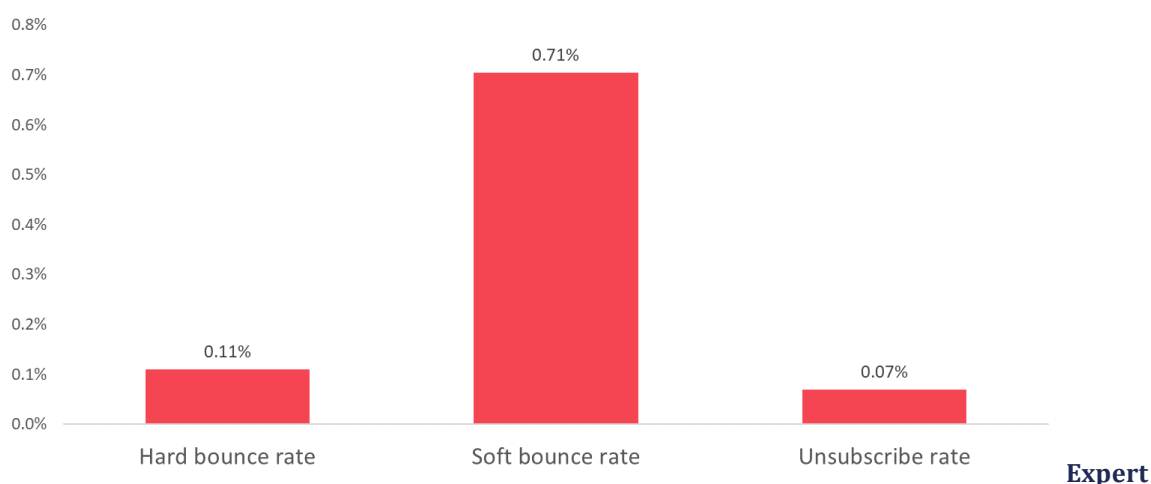
- "Travel shows the smallest drop in click-to-open rates. This sector is well-known for its use of highly engaging imagery - selling the dream! - as well as engagement driving technology like dynamic content. While the challenge to get emails opened is a real one, the chance of persuading potential travellers to make a booking once they are engaged becomes much higher. Other sectors can learn much from brands in this industry."

Guy Hanson, Validity

New Metrics for 2022

For the first time, the DMA's Email Benchmarking report is able to publish benchmarks for hard and soft bounce rates and unsubscribe rates. Over time it is hoped that details for these metrics will be provided at the same depth as the other metrics present in this report.

Hard and soft bounce rates, and unsubscribe rates 2022 (%)



Expert Opinions

- “Keep an eye to your soft bounced contacts. There are many regional ISPs that give away small mailbox size, and they are used as secondary emails by users; meaning they do not check them regularly. If you see that you are caught up in that category, it is better to exclude sending for a while – a couple of weeks, for example - and give time to the user to clean up the mailbox. If you still get soft bounces over time, and no other indication of activity for those contacts, then it is safe to exclude them from further campaigns.”

Kostas Karagkounis, SAP Emarsys
- “Whenever I look at these numbers I like to remind readers about what I think of as the ‘law of small numbers’. These metrics are so small they don’t merit any real attention – until you remember the average UK program sends an average 3 emails per week to each subscriber. That’s more than 150 emails per year, meaning there’s a 17% chance of that subscriber hard-bouncing during a 12-month period, and an 11% chance of unsubscribing. That means almost 1/3 of you hard-won subscribers are going to churn – and that’s before we also consider the impact of spam complaints, where 0.1% is a good run rate. Suddenly these numbers take on far greater importance, especially when the average value of an email address is ~£36! Effective list validation, regular data hygiene, and the provision of meaningful preferences are all essential best practices when it comes to protecting that most valuable asset – your email list!”

Guy Hanson, Validity

Methodology

Data was provided voluntarily by email marketing service providers (ESPs), including DMA members and non-members. The average for all the emails sent, delivered, opened (uniques) and clicked on (uniques) for each ESP was then used to equate an overall industry average.

The sample covers more than 280 billion emails sent from January 2022 to December 2022 by eight different organisations, as detailed in the opening pages of this report. These participants have a wide range of clients across various industries at disparate volumes. This report should be used as a guideline only for email performance. Only aggregate figures have been reported.

The data was collected, collated and analysed by the DMA Insight department. The report was written and designed by the DMA Insight department and in-house design team. The DMA and the Research Hub of the DMA Email Council reviewed the findings to ensure relevance to the current state of the email industry.

/ About the DMA

The Data & Marketing Association (DMA) comprises the DMA, Institute of Data & Marketing (IDM) and DMA Talent.

We seek to guide and inspire industry leaders; to advance careers; and to nurture the next generation of aspiring marketers.

We champion the way things should be done, through a rich fusion of technology, diverse talent, creativity and insight – underpinned by our customer-focused principles.

We set the standards marketers must meet in order to thrive, representing more than 1,000 members drawn from the UK's data and marketing landscape.

By working responsibly, sustainably and creatively, together we will drive the data and marketing industry forward to meet the needs of people today and tomorrow.

www.dma.org.uk

/ About the DMA Email Council

The DMA's Email Council is the home of email intelligence for the UK, leading the UK's marketing industry in innovative and cutting-edge email practices, breaking the mould and challenging the status quo.

The DMA Email Council exists to provide clarity and simplicity to marketers when it comes to email legislation and regulation, and to support marketers at all levels, from the classroom to the boardroom, throughout their practical and aspirational professional development.

To help shape the future of email marketing, contribute to the discussions here or email email@dma.org.uk to find out more about the council and its work.

Get to know the Email Council [here](#).

Find content produced by the Council [here](#).

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