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Apple announced a while back that it was going to stop its mail application from letting businesses track whether people open marketing emails. I heard one podcast I follow and like – the Target Internet podcast – call this "Apple Mailgeddon". That's a trifle over-dramatic, but why not?

Announcements like this are not uncommon. This time it's Apple. Next time it might be Google. Or Microsoft. Or Yahoo (does Yahoo still exist)?

All of them are doing this to preserve our privacy. Or, if we're being honest, it's to return some of the privacy that's been stripped away from us like air from the Moon.

This is a good thing. Like the demise of third-party cookies, we should welcome it. Our position is that monitoring is OK as long as you restrict it to your own premises, be they digital or physical.

So yes, we think it's OK to notice what people do on your own website. That's like a shop assistant noticing what you look at in a store. Or a bartender noticing you're near the end of your pint and asking if you want a refill.

So this Apple announcement is not bad news. From a technical perspective, what they're going to do is block the pixel image that's used to track your responses to email. That'll stop people being able to tell if an email was opened. Other providers will probably follow suit.

Lots of people are worried though. They shouldn't be. Here's why

- First of all, open rates are a terrible metric to track. Emails get opened by virus checkers. Or preview views. Even when opened by a human, it's a weak sign of engagement. So it won't do you any harm to ignore open rates. Some people think it's a good metric to judge a subject line by but open rates are as affected by the recipient's mood and workload as they are by the subject line.
- Secondly, the activity you want to track is the activity that happens on your website as a result of an email. Do they click on the link that takes them to one of your web pages? Do they download something? Do they follow links to other pages? If so, pages about what? This is valuable insight into what interests a visitor. It's the opposite of pointless open rates. And it's not under threat from privacy measures like Apple Mailgeddon.
- Thirdly, this is why you need marketing automation. It's marketing automation that watches website activity. Marketing automation is your digital shop assistant. Unlike a pixel that just tells you if an email has been opened, marketing automation will tell you what visitors do **after** they open your email.

What Apple's Mailgeddon does mean is that any email app that reports open rates (and that's all of them) will be even less reliable in the future that it already was. They'll either under-report opens because they can't detect them anymore or they'll over-report them because the mail client is triggering the detection pixel on every email it sees (that's what Apple's going to do).

It's time for a change of tactics.

Next steps.

1. The DIY route. If you want to avoid the problems that will be caused by Apple Mailgeddon, you need:
   a. A marketing automation platform. We recommend [Zoho Marketing Automation](#) but you could also use HubSpot or Salesforce Pardot or a host of others.
   b. Decide which topics you want to track. What are the main products or services you offer? How could you group them together? As an example, we track "brand", "lead generation", "research" and topics like that on our website.
   c. Update the pages on your website so their URLs contain the topic they relate to. You can skip this step if the URL contains the topic naturally ([forbesbaxter.co.uk/brand-marketing/](#) is about brand). Sometimes though, you do need to add the topic a little unnaturally, like [forbesbaxter.co.uk/using-sales-and-service-data-for-better-marketing-lead/](#).
   d. Setup triggers in your marketing automation system so it monitors activity on those pages.

    e. Setup thresholds in your marketing automation system so actions happen when a visitor shows a certain level of interest in a topic. The action could be directed to the visitor (a pop-up or chatbot) or to yourself (call the contact for a follow-up).

    f. A more comprehensive description of this process can be found here.

2. The Assisted route. If you don't have the time, people or system to do this yourself, well, that's what we're here for. Give us a call. We're surprisingly friendly.

Remember, Forbes Baxter Associates is a marketing development agency so we develop your in-house marketing skills while we help you grow your business.

Some links to servcies you may find useful

Marketing Strategy	**Events & Webinars**	**Marketing Department**	**Training & Developing**
Brand Marketing	**Lead Generation**	**Market Research**	**Marketing Automation**