Making Apple Cider Out of Apple's iOS 15

Apple has released its highly anticipated iOS 15 update, which brings with it the most significant changes to email in more than a decade. Our email scientists dove into how these changes are impacting healthcare email marketing. The highlights of their findings are presented below in Q&A format. For answers to your specific questions, contact us.

Q&A

Q. DOES THE BURNER EMAIL CREATED USING HIDE MY EMAIL HAVE A STANDARD DOMAIN? CAN WE JUST FILTER THEM OUT?

A. Yes, the burner emails always use the domain icloud.com and the email addresses we've seen are typically random characters and contain a "." somewhere in the user name portion of the burner email address.

Q. WOULD IT BE USEFUL TO LOOK AT HISTORICAL APPLE USERS' INTERACTIONS WITH OUR EMAILS TO HELP INFORM OUR STRATEGY WITH APPLE IOS 15 USERS?

A. Looking back two years at all users who have opened on an iOS device is a useful exercise to determine your current potential Apple user base. This is the group you should watch for with adoption rates.

Q. DO ACTIVITIES AND RESULTS LOOK DIFFERENT BASED ON THE EMAIL SERVICE PROVIDER (ESP)?

A. Depending on what the different platforms are doing, you will see different results. If a platform ignores the iOS 15 opens, you may see slightly lower open rates. If a platform categorizes iOS 15 opens, then you may see a new segment like "image cache" or "Apple cache" for some of the opens.

Q. DOES THIS ONLY IMPACT A HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONAL (HCP) WHO'S RECEIVING AN EMAIL ON THEIR IPHONE OR TABLET THAT HAS IOS 15? IF THEY RECEIVE AN EMAIL ON ANOTHER DEVICE (DESKTOP/LAPTOP), DOES THIS IMPACT THEM?

A. The portion of Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) that fetches an email and creates a false open will impact any email that has been connected to the native email app on an Apple device running iOS 15 and where the user has opted-in to MPP. A user can connect any and all of their email addresses to that app. If that user opens in the native email app on the iOS 15 device, the header data will also be obscured. If they open the email somewhere else (in another email app, for example), that open will contain all of the normal header information.

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Q. DOES THE "REAL OPEN" DATA SHOW UP EVEN FOR IOS 15 DEVICES WHERE THE INITIAL OPENS HAPPENED AND WHERE IMAGES WERE ALREADY CACHED WITH THE "FALSE OPEN"? OR IS THE "REAL OPEN" ONLY ON OTHER DEVICES?

A. In the live release of Mail Privacy Protection (MPP), the images are not cached on the user's device, but they are cached to a regional server. So, when the user opens on the device the images are requested again and not read from the device cache. You will see both the open from the regional server and from the user. However, if the user's real open occurs in the native email app on the MPP-enabled iOS 15 device, it is difficult to distinguish between the regional server open and the user's open as the header data is obscured in both cases.

Q. DOES THIS ONLY APPLY TO NATIVE IOS EMAIL APPS OR DOES IT ALSO APPLY TO EMAIL APPS USED ON APPLE DEVICES WITH IOS 15, FOR EXAMPLE THE GMAIL APP, OR OUTLOOK APPS?

A. This only applies to the native iOS email app and only after they opt-in to Mail Privacy Protection (MPP).

Q. SO ANY EMAIL ACCOUNT THAT IS HANDLED THROUGH IOS MAIL APPS ARE SENT THROUGH THE PROXY? THE EXAMPLE YOU GAVE WAS GMAIL ON THE MAIL APP IS PROXIED. WILL ANY EMAIL ACCOUNT THAT IS HANDLED THROUGH IOS MAIL APPS BE SENT THROUGH THE PROXY? DURING THE WEBINAR, THE EXAMPLE PROVIDED WAS A GMAIL ACCOUNT ON THE MAIL APP THAT WAS PROXIED.

A. Correct. Any email address that a user connects to a Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) enabled iOS 15 device will be sent through the proxy on the way to the user.

Q. ARE YOU SAYING THAT IF ONE DOESN'T USE THE APPLE NATIVE EMAIL APP, WE'LL STILL SEE FAKE OPENS FROM THEM? DOES A USER HAVE TO BE ON WI-FI FOR FAKE OPENS TO HAPPEN?

A. If the user does not use the native email app, you will be safe and will not see fake opens from them. All other email apps, even on an iOS 15 device, are not impacted. The user does not need to be on Wi-Fi for a fake open to occur.

Q. ARE THESE CHANGES ALSO VALID FOR PATIENTS?

A. This is valid for any and all email users.

ACTUAL ADOPTION RATE (AS OF OCT 22, 2021):

| 5.71% | 3% | ~14% | 3% |
| Apple users | All users | Percentage of opens | Per email sent |

Q. IF WE DO CONTINUE TESTING SUBJECT LINE FOR ECHO CAMPAIGNS, HOW DO WE ISOLATE THOSE IOS USERS WHO DID NOT OPEN?

A. Because of the currently low adoption rate, the recommendation we would provide is to operate business as usual right now. As the adoption rate reaches a larger scale and as platforms adjust, we will be able to make additional recommendations and provide guidance around non-responder sends.

Q. I'M CURIOUS TO KNOW, DO WE HAVE ANY INDICATION AS TO WHEN ADOPTION RATES ARE LIKELY TO INCREASE? WILL THIS DEPEND ON HOW LONG IOS 14 IS SUPPORTED?

A. If the adoption rate remains steady, then the adoption rate at the end of year would be around 20% for Apple users, which would be ~11% opt-in rate of all of our HCPs. However, this is an educated guess based on the current adoption rate.

Q. IS THERE ANY BENEFIT THAT WE ARE SEEING BECAUSE OF THIS UPDATE? WE ARE SEEING EMAILS OPENED ON ISPS THAT PREVIOUSLY NEVER SHOWED EMAILS BEING OPENED. SHOULD WE CONSIDER THIS AS A FALSE POSITIVE OR IS IT A REAL OPEN?

A. Currently, we do not see a benefit that this update provides to marketers either in the short term or long term. However, it also does not hinder us nearly as much as we had anticipated. In the short term, inbox providers like Gmail and Yahoo are also still making adjustments; increased deliverability is a side effect of higher engagement from the iOS 15 users, though a portion of that engagement is not real. These mailbox providers will continue to adjust and deliverability will return to normal in time.

Q. CAN YOU PLEASE CLARIFY WHAT IS PULLED FROM THE CACHE AND WHAT IS PULLED FROM THE ESP DURING THE REAL OPEN? IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU SAID THE PIXEL IS PULLED FROM THE ESP. IS THAT TRUE OF ALL IMAGES?

A. If the images are hosted on your platform and full paths are provided in the HTML, then the cache will pull from your server and the user's open will also pull unique images from your server.

 ## Authors

Jerrad Rickard,
Vice President, Email Product Lead

Jacob Aguilar,
Director, Email Services

To learn more, watch the on-demand webinar from DMD, an IQVIA business, "Making Apple Cider Out of Apple's iOS 15 Update, Snapshots from The Road of iOS 15 Beta Through Post-Launch and Beyond."

On-demand Webinar

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