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Impacts of Apple Mail Privacy Changes on Oracle Eloqua

A summary analysis of the impact and changes to Oracle Eloqua due to Apple's Mail Privacy Protection policy

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INTRODUCTION

Apple is expected to release a new Apple Mail Privacy Protection policy in mid-September. This change will affect various email marketing activities. In an effort to mitigate the impacts of this upcoming change for Oracle Eloqua customers, Oracle has provided solutions to the potential impacts within the following document. Additional details about Apple Mail Privacy Protection are discussed in [this blog](#).

WHAT IS MAIL PRIVACY PROTECTION?

Mail Privacy Protection (MPP) is a new privacy protection for the Apple Mail app in Apple's newest operating systems that provides recipients the choice to share their email activity with senders. These changes impact the following operating systems: iOS 15, iPadOS 15, WatchOS 8, and macOS Monterey.

At a high-level, Mail Privacy Protection performs the following:

- Hides the recipient's IP address
- Generalizes the recipient's location
- Hides (obscures) whether the recipient opened emails
- Makes email open times unreliable
- Hides (obscures) recipient's device information

For more information on Apple's announcement, review [this press release](#).

HOW DOES MPP WORK?

Apple delivers recipient privacy protections by doing the following things related to email content retrieval using the Apple Mail app. These actions directly affect our HTML Open Tracking feature, which relies on a personalized image URL hosted by Eloqua to gather Open activity tracking information.

#	MPP BEHAVIOR	DESCRIPTION
1	Email message content is requested without sharing the device's IP address.	This "hides" the recipient's true IP address and location. Apple requests the content through a proxy IP address instead of the recipient's, and the derived general location is of the proxy IP address.
2	Provides a generic user-agent string value when requesting email message content.	Prevents senders from knowing the type of device and app used to read the email. Our observations indicate the device's user-agent string is replaced with a generic value of "Mozilla/5.0". <i>Note: Our data shows that currently, <1% of Eloqua Open activities contain the "Mozilla/5.0" user-agent information today.</i>
3	Apple Mail may retrieve email message content any time after the message is delivered to the device.	Senders are unable to discern if a recipient opened the email or if the message was "opened" automatically by the Apple Mail app. Senders also will not know if the open time is correct.

IMPACTS AND SOLUTIONS

Mail Privacy Protection prevents senders from determining if an Open event occurred as a result of a recipient truly opening and reading a message or as a result of the Apple Mail app automatically retrieving the message content after the message is delivered to the device.

To mitigate MPP’s impact to Eloqua’s features, we will classify all Open activities with only “Mozilla/5.0” in their user-agent string as “Auto Open” activities; thereby enabling Eloqua’s features to continue working effectively. Additionally, we will add this information to Insight reports thereby allowing marketers to filter out the “Auto Open” activities from their reporting metrics. Additional feature enhancements will be added and announced at a later date.

Impact to Eloqua	Impact from MPP Behavior (refer to table above)	Solution
False-positive email open signals and an inability to separate from positive open signals	Primarily #3; also #1 and #2	We are classifying all Open activities with only “Mozilla/5.0” in their user-agent string as Auto Open activities. This will equally affect opens committed by the recipient and opens committed in an automated fashion by Apple Mail.
Increased number of total Open activities	#3	Because MPP may automatically open every email delivered to recipients, we expect significant traffic back to the Oracle Cloud. We have already taken steps to ensure that we have no interruption in data collection by expanding the capacity in multiple locations worldwide.
Obscured open time	#3	By classifying Auto Open activities, we will open this data to our customers in our reporting application. However, the advanced intelligence features that rely on Open activity data will also use Click activities to provide additional information on customer engagement and the best time to send. For non-Apple Mail app users, we will continue to capture open times that feed these AI algorithms and will adjust our algorithm to weigh Click activities once implemented.

Impacts to Eloqua Features

Impacted Feature	Cause of Impact	Impact	Solution
<p><u>Insight Reports</u> Insight provides you with a single place to analyze data from across Oracle Eloqua. Oracle Eloqua integrates Oracle BI EE to offer out-of-the-box reports, as well as features to create your own custom analyses and dashboards.</p>	<p>False-positive email open signals</p> <p>Obscured open time</p>	<p>Automated false-positive open activities could skew results for email open data only.</p>	<p>We will add Auto Open information to the email open activities which will allow marketers to filter against false positive opens.</p>
<p><u>Send Time Optimization (STO)</u> Optimal send time is calculated for each individual by recording when they opened their emails. Using that time, we apply an algorithm to identify the best send time for each individual.</p>	<p>False-positive email open signals</p> <p>Obscured open time</p>	<p>MPP will provide false-positive open activities and contaminate the overall open data.</p>	<p>By removing Auto Open events, we will no longer be recording open dates/times for emails affected by MPP. We will also implement click activities to provide additional information on customer engagement and the best time to send.</p> <p>For non-Apple Mail app users, we will continue to capture open times that feed the STO algorithm.</p>
<p><u>Fatigue Analysis</u> The Fatigue Analysis dashboard for Email looks at email opens to determine where each individual fits on the fatigue scale and maps them to a specific persona.</p>	<p>False-positive email open signals</p> <p>Obscured open time</p>	<p>The false-positive opens indicate engagement regardless of whether the recipient opened and read the email message. Including these false-positives will skew the results so that these individuals will not be considered Fatigued and could erroneously place them in the "Under Fatigued" category.</p>	<p>Our analysis shows that using Click activities instead of Open activities results in a reasonably consistent categorization compared to the current model that uses Apple Mail app Open activities. There is a slight impact on the Just Right and Saturated personas; when compared to the existing algorithm, we see around 3% fewer members in Just Right and about 3% more in Saturated. We will update the model in future to rely more on clicks and conversions.</p>

Impacted Feature	Cause of Impact	Impact	Solution
<p><u>Predicted Subject Lines</u> Predicted Subject Lines looks at historical Open rates on past subject lines to predict the Open rate on the potential subject line aggregated by the campaign.</p>	<p>False-positive email open signals</p>	<p>Automated false-positive open activities could skew results for subject lines.</p>	<p>Due to the aggregate nature of the metric and the planned removal of Auto Open activities, we will not make any changes in the short term.</p> <p>Additional feature enhancements will be added and announced at a later date.</p>

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