warmy
Email Channel. Reliable.

December 2025

Google SMTP vs API Sending

Email deliverability is shaped by a complex interaction of technical standards, sending behavior, and engagement signals.

Our research indicates that email placement in inboxes is not random and it follows predictable patterns when certain foundational elements are established. In the following report, we will outline key factors that influence performance, supported by data from our internal studies.

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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Overview

In this report, we compared two ways of sending email through Google - using the standard SMTP relay and the Google API. These are based on real sending statistics collected over a full year across all major mailbox providers.

This research focuses on aggregate performance: how often emails land in Inbox vs Spam/Promotions, differences between the two methods, and whether there is any visible long-term advantage in choosing one approach over the other at scale.

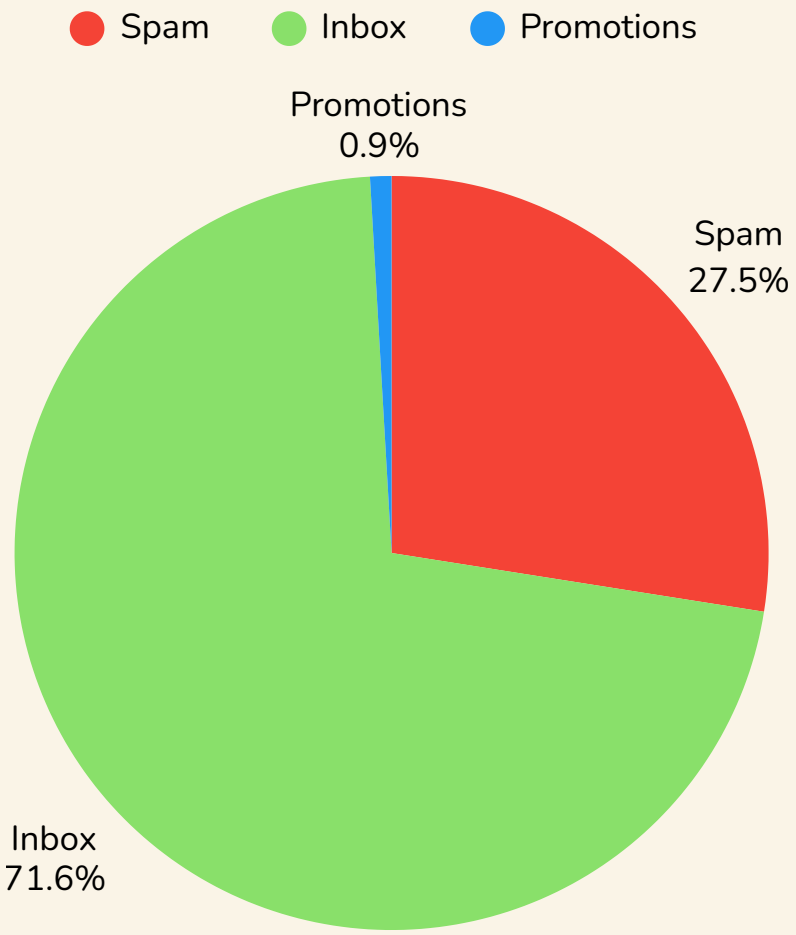
Keywords

- **Google SMTP sending:** This is when you send emails through Google using the classic SMTP protocol (for example via smtp.gmail.com). Your tool or server “logs in” like a normal email client and sends each message over an SMTP connection. It’s simple to set up and works with almost any email software, but you have less direct control over things like per-message limits, detailed error responses, or advanced features. In this research, “SMTP sending” means all traffic that went out through Google’s SMTP relay.

- **Google API sending:** This is when you send emails through Google using the Google API instead of SMTP. Your system talks to Google via HTTPS requests and sends messages in a more “programmatic” way. This method is usually used by apps and platforms, gives more structured responses from Google, and can integrate better with Google’s security and quotas. In this research, “API sending” means all traffic that was sent via the Google API endpoints rather than SMTP.

Google SMTP sending

The results shown here are derived from a large dataset of real sending activity observed across our internal statistics.



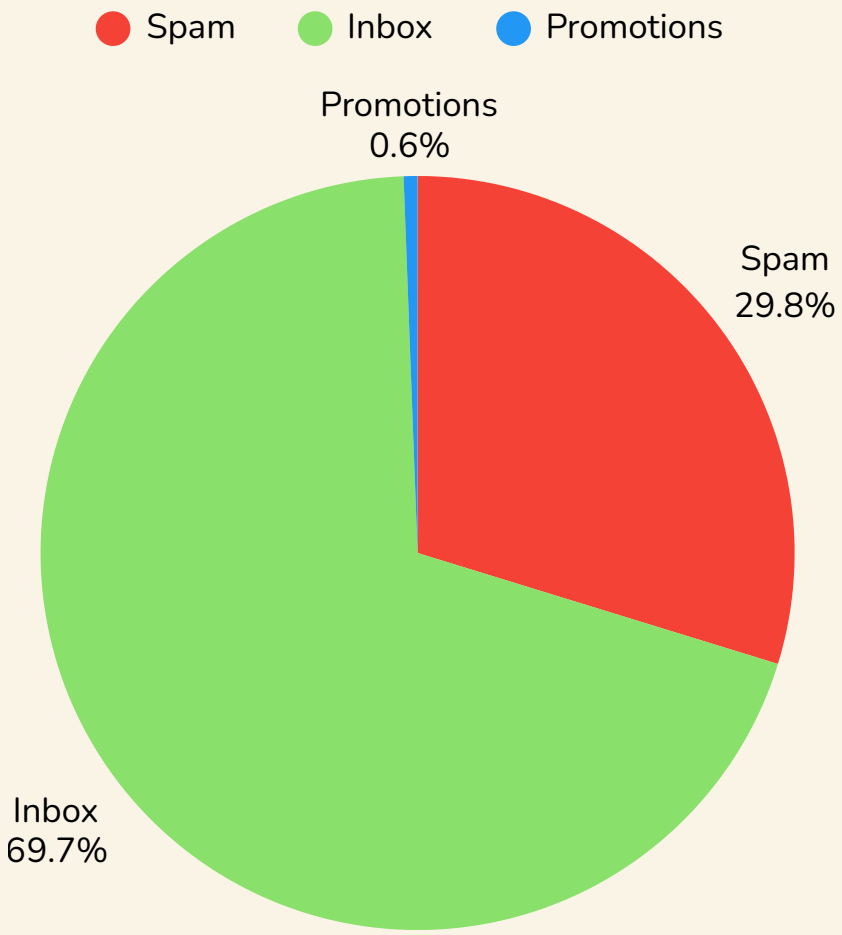
Here we see how emails were delivered when they were sent through Google SMTP over the same period. Most messages reached the inbox, with a smaller share going to spam and almost none to Promotions.

- Inbox: **71.6%**
- Spam: **27.5%**
- Promotions: **0.9%**

Compared to Google API sending, **SMTP** shows a slightly **higher inbox** rate and slightly **lower spam** rate in this dataset.

Google API sending

The data in this graph is derived from extensive internal sending statistics collected over a long period of time.



This chart shows how emails were delivered when they were sent through the Google API, based on all messages in our dataset for the year. Overall, most API-sent emails reached the inbox, while **a smaller but still noticeable share** was filtered as spam.

- Inbox: **69.7%**
- Spam: **29.8%**
- Promotions: **0.6%**

In simple terms, about **7 out of 10 emails** sent via the Google API arrived in the **inbox**, **almost none went to Promotions**, and around **3 out of 10** were treated as **spam**.

Summary

Google API sending :
Total analyzed: more than **5 million** emails

- Inbox: **69.7%**
- Spam: **29.8%**
- Promotions: **0.6%**

Google SMTP sending :
Total analyzed: more than **2 million** emails

- Inbox: **71.6%**
- Spam: **27.5%**
- Promotions: **0.9%**

Key findings:
Across both methods, results are very similar:

- Roughly 7 out of 10 emails reached the inbox.
- Around 3 out of 10 were filtered to spam.
- Promotions stayed under 1% in both cases.
- SMTP shows a slight advantage: a bit higher inbox rate and a bit lower spam rate. However, the difference is modest.

In this dataset, switching from Google API to Google SMTP **doesn't significantly change deliverability**.

The real performance drivers remain the same: sender reputation, list quality, content, and engagement.

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Auto All-In-One Tool For Email Deliverability To Make Your Email Channel Reliable

We are passionate about solving email deliverability challenges and making email a reliable channel for every business

325+
Years Of Combined Email Deliverability Expertise

9 countries
Home To Our Talented Team

95+
Countries Have Daily Active Users In Warmy