

Email Newsletters: Doing it Right

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Join Together



1. Why Use Them & What Are They For?

- Cost effective, highly scalable
- Speed and flexibility
- “Viral” nature – easily forwarded
- Integrated with your website

1. Why Use Them & What Are They For?

- (Advocacy & Organizing)
- Relationship Management
- Expand your audience
- Drive up repeat website visits

Whoah, there, buddy...

Um, what is it, exactly?

- E-mail publishing channel
- Generally non-interactive*
- Highly structured HTML format and/or text format designed for “scannability”
- Usually focused on sending recipients to a website or websites
- Regular, consistent publishing schedule
- Self-serve subscriber model

Back to “Why and “What for?”

Relationship Management: Who

- **Your “customers” = who you want as return visitors to your website and frequent consumers of your information**
- Members
- Grantees
- Your funder(s)
- Community leaders, activists
- Researchers
- Allied organizations
- Board members, other internal audiences

Relationship Management: What

- **In general:** offer frequent information about what you are doing with your customer's investment of time, interest, or support.
- Program updates, new resources
- Skill and knowledge building information
- Needs & opportunities
- Publication notices
- Alerts
- Announcing milestones

Expanding Your Audience

- Capture new website visitors with up front “email updates”
- You can easily add new audiences without adding much cost:
 - Media
 - Policy Makers
 - General public
 - Professionals and advocates in related work
 - (Etc.)

Drive up Website Traffic

- Users don't have to remember to visit
- Highlight important new content
- Remind people of important “old” content
- It reaches people when they are at their computer and ready to visit

2. Okay, Okay, So How Do I Do It?

- Publishing Options
- Building Your Email List

Publishing Options

- Your own email software (very limited)
- Free online email publishing services (some limitations)
- Paid email publishing services
(few if any academic institutions really have email newsletter capacity)

Paid Email Publishing Providers

- Ad free
- They handle sign up, unsubscribe, address changes (integrates w/ your website)
- Can be low cost (~ \$25/month)
- Faster and more reliable
- Keep up with best practices
- Dedicated spam filter (blocking) efforts

Building Your Email List

- On your website (online subscribing; viral marketing tools like “tell a friend”)
- Print publications
- Exhibits at conferences
- Faxback or postpaid forms
- Individual staff contacts, phone calls
- **But:** Get permission

Put your email
newsletter front
and center on
your website

CADCA - Microsoft Internet Explorer

File Edit View Favorites Tools Help

Back Forward Stop Reload Home Search Favorites Media Print Mail Downloads

Address http://www.cadca.org/ Go Links

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Where Community Coalitions Turn for the Tools They Need

Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America

Online Store Member Login Search Search our Site

QUICK LINKS

- Start a Coalition
- Greenhouse Program
- Legislative Alerts
- Satellite Broadcasts
- National Leadership Forum
- Contact Us

COALITIONS ONLINE

Sign up for Coalitions Online:

Your Email

Sign Up

[DEA Demand Reduction Program Saved](#)

[CADCA Sponsors Free Community Coalition Training](#)

[Free Anti-Drug Education Guide for High School Teachers](#)

[Non-profits Can Lobby](#)

[CADCA To Map Out Coalition Activities State by State](#)

[Apply for the Forum XIV Scholarships and Awards Now](#)

[NHTSA Award Nominations Now Being Accepted](#)

CADCA HIGHLIGHTS

Register Today for CADCA's National Leadership Forum XIV

Don't wait until the last minute to sign up for the largest gathering of substance abuse prevention and treatment professionals in the country! National Leadership Forum XIV, Community Coalitions...Local Actions=A World of Results, takes place **January 20-23, 2004** at the Washington, DC Renaissance Hotel and the new Washington Convention Center.

Come demonstrate your local actions and see them transformed into a world of results as we celebrate the power and promise of community coalitions. Register now [\[click here\]](#). For more information about the Forum and conference tracks [\[click here\]](#).

CADCA CALENDAR

December 2003

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

National Leadership Forum XIV
January 20-23, 2004,
Washington, DC
[Register Online Now!](#)

Internet



Put your email
newsletter front
and center on
your website



Coalitions Online 12/04/03 - Message (HTML)

File Edit View Insert Format Tools Actions Help

Type a question for help

Reply Reply to All Forward

This HTML message contains script, which Outlook cannot display. This may affect how the message appears.

From: CADCA [CADCA@lb.bcentral.com] Sent: Thu 12/4/2003 5:39 PM
To: List Member
Cc:
Subject: Coalitions Online 12/04/03

Coalitions Online

December 4, 2003

Email to a friend! Print this page

This Week In Coalitions Online

DEA Demand Reduction Program Saved
In response to the HUNDREDS of letters faxed to Congress from CADCA's website regarding DEA's critical demand reduction program, the House receded to the Senate in the FY 2004 Omnibus Appropriations bill, fully funding the DEA's demand reduction activities for FY 2004. [\[Read more\]](#)

CADCA Sponsors Free Community Coalition Training
CADCA and the Northeast Counter Drug Training Center (NCTC) announce free training for community coalitions in Ft. Indiantown Gap, PA, and Volk Field, WI. There is absolutely no charge for these valuable courses and the NCTC will cover lodging and meals for all who register for training. All you need to do is get there! [\[Read more\]](#)

Free Anti-Drug Education Guide for High School Teachers
A free drug-prevention guide, Anti-Drug Education with The New York Times: Focus on Marijuana, which features worksheets, appendices and additional resources. The guide is designed to help teens recognize the risks of marijuana use and develop skills to resist using illicit drugs. [\[Read more\]](#)

Non-profits Can Lobby
According to a Washington Post article titled, The Lobbying Law is More Charitable Than They Think, describes how a vast majority of nonprofit organizations believe they cannot lobby and therefore do not. According to the article, not only can

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National Leadership Forum XIV

January 20-23, 2004

Coalitions Online

Your Email

Sign Up

December 2003

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3. Doing it Right

- Format, Content and Design
- Permission based
- SPAM Blocking: avoiding false positives
- Subscriber management
- Staff resources for technical and editorial support

Warning: Short Sermon Ahead

Disclaimer: I am not referring to
any SALIS member's newsletters.
Really.

What Email Newsletters are NOT:

- It's not a message with a Word or PDF document attached
- It's not a message announcing that the real newsletter is on your website
- It's not something you send to every single person for whom you have an email address

Format: HTML vs. Text

- HTML Only
- Text Only
- Offer Both (user selects)
- Increasingly safe to default to HTML

HTML

Pros:

- Most readable
- Hyperlinks to content
- Better click throughs

Cons:

- Longer download time
- Spam blocking
- Email reader compatibility (limited problem)



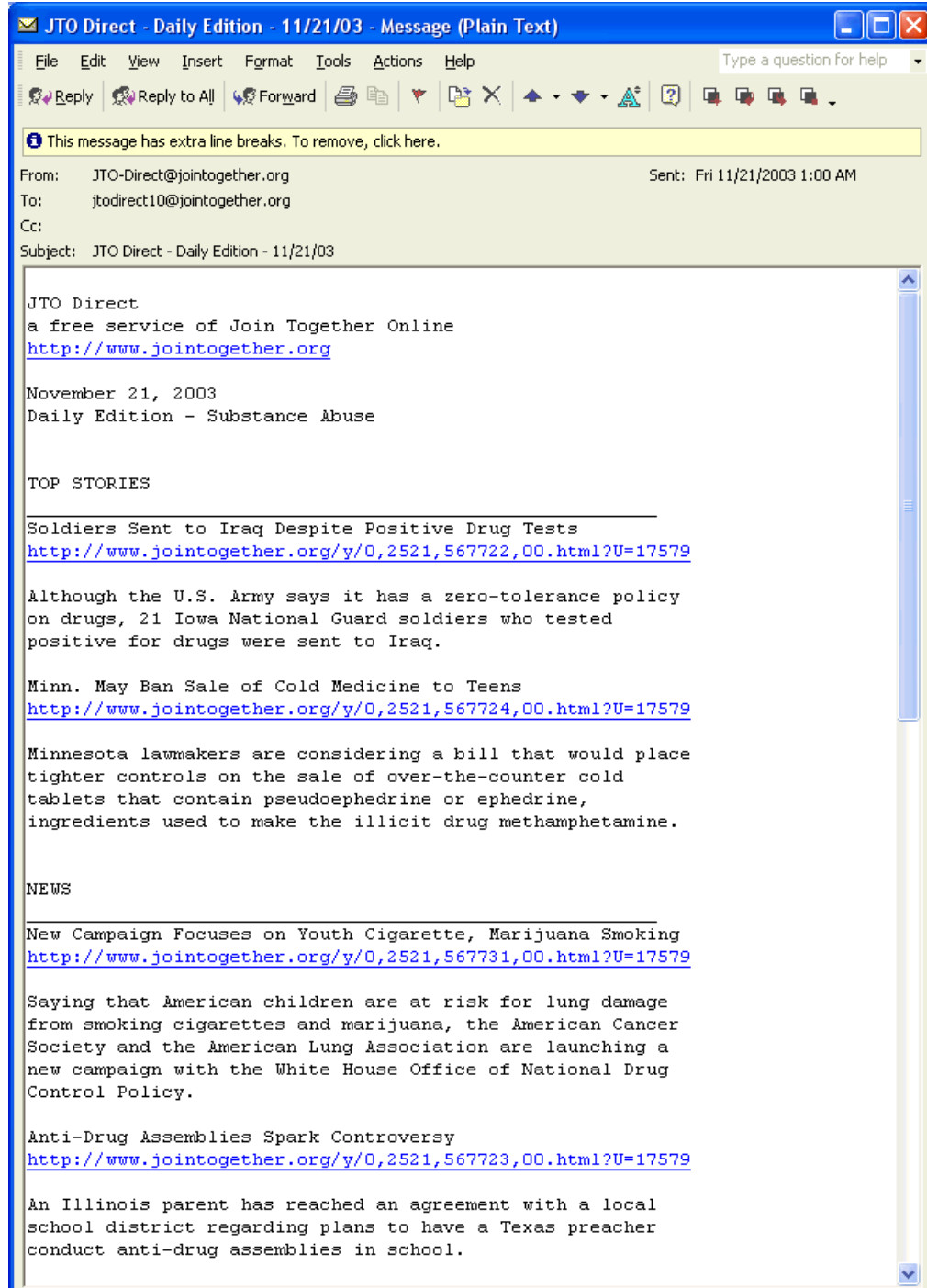
Text

Pros:

- Short download time
- Email software compatibility
- Less likely to be blocked as “spam”

Cons:

- Harder to scan
- Lower click throughs
- URLs may or may not be clickable



Permission Based Email

- “Opt in” is **essential**
- Let the user know what you will do with their address and stick to it
- Confirmed opt in:
 - **Pros:** best way to protect yourself from spam blocking/blacklist; narrows to a list of very interested users
 - **Cons:** cuts your subscription completions
 - JTO: 28% of initial signups don't confirm
 - These may not be your high value “customers” anyway

**JOIN TOGETHER ONLINE**

Take Action Against Substance Abuse and Gun Violence

[About Us](#) | [Site Map](#)

Search



About Us

[Web Services](#)[Policies](#)[Support Us](#)[Contact Us](#)[Home](#) > [About Us](#) > [Web Services](#) > [JTO Direct](#) > Sign-Up

JTO Direct

One Last Step: Check Your Email

We will now send you a message to confirm that you want to receive JTO Direct. This step is intended to reduce spam and unwanted email pranks.

- Check your email now and click the confirmation link in the message we sent.
- If you do not click the link, your subscription will not be activated.
- Look for an email from JTO-Direct@jointogether.org with the subject "Please confirm your JTO Direct subscription (action required)"

If you do not receive this confirmation request within a few minutes:

- **Did you make a mistake when you typed your address?** Return to the [subscription page](#) and enter your address again.
- **Are you using a spam filter?** The newsletters will be sent with jto-direct@jointogether.org as the "from" address. Please add this address to the whitelist to ensure that you will receive the newsletter.



JTO Direct

Email alerts



The latest news & funding headlines, sent to your inbox.



Features

[New Book Says Science Provides Answers to Gun Violence](#)

[CADCA Expert Outlines 'ABCs of Advocacy'](#)

JTO Community

316 [Web Plugin](#) sites.

19,442 [JTO Direct](#) subscribers.

RSS Feed [Available](#)
XML

INBOX: Please confirm your JTO Direct subscription (action... (1 of 152)

Move | Copy | This message to

Delete | Reply | Reply to All | Forward | Redirect | Blacklist | Message Source | Save as | Print

Back to INBOX <>

Date: Thu, 22 Apr 2004 00:12:40 -0400

From: "JTO-Direct@jointogether.org" <JTO-Direct@jointogether.org>

To: "test10@erichelmuth.com" <test10@erichelmuth.com>

Subject: Please confirm your JTO Direct subscription (action required)

Please click here to confirm that you want to receive the JTO Direct newsletter:

<http://www.jointogether.org/conf/0,1180,166215,00.html?key=TEWkZjM3Q5Hfo>

YOU MUST CLICK THIS LINK to activate your subscription.

If you do not want to receive JTO Direct, do nothing. You will be automatically removed.

If you cannot click on the link above, copy and paste it into a web browser. If you need help, please reply to this message.

Sincerely,

JOIN TOGETHER

Join Together/Boston University School of Public Health
One Appleton Street 4th floor
Boston, MA 02116

Delete | Reply | Reply to All | Forward | Redirect | Blacklist | Message Source | Save as | Print

Back to INBOX <>

Content

- Keep your audience in mind
- Don't overwhelm readers
- Keep it short – 4 to 5 items for most uses
- Consider a table of contents
- Keep the “voice” consistent and lively, with personality.

Content

2 Basic Content Styles:

- All material in the email (less common, but sometimes appropriate)
- Headlines and summaries that are linked to the full stories on a website (most common)

Frequency

- Pick a frequency and stick to it
- What frequency do you have the staffing resources for?
- What frequency will your users tolerate?

Layout and Design

- Best way to learn: sign up for great email newsletters and imitate!
- Benefits of professional design for HTML newsletters
- Make it easy to scan; let the user decide what is important to read

Email Subject Line

- Make it recognizable and consistent (prefixes are useful)
- Make it interesting – highlight what's new
- Make it concise – assume only the first 4 or 5 words will appear
- Avoid spam filter triggers
- Don't be deceptive

Spam Filtering (Blocking)

- Growing problem for email publishers, both commercial and nonprofit
- AOL is a major concern
- Be prepared for challenge/response systems (Earthlink, etc)
- Know best practices, have a proactive stance (<http://www.bestprac.org>)
- Always keep it in mind when troubleshooting delivery problems.



JOIN TOGETHER

Spam Filtering (Blocking)

- Filters operated by:
 - end user in their email software
 - IT staff on the company network
 - ISPs (AOL, Earthlink, etc)
- Your subscribers may or may not know that their mail is being filtered, and/or how to allow your email through
- Your most loyal readers may tell you the mail isn't arriving, but most will not

Spam Filtering (Blocking)

- Be ready to coach subscribers; encourage “whitelisting” (trusted sender)
- This will require staff resources; it’s a growing cost of email publishing.
- Spend some time researching and testing: Yahoo, AOL, Hotmail accounts, Outlook Express, Mac mail



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Spam Filters & Subject Lines

- Make sure there is both a name and a valid email address
- DON'T USE ALL CAPS
- Avoid punctuation
- Avoid imperative verbs
- Don't use You, Your, I, or Me
- Avoid the word Free

Spam Filters & Content

- **Avoid the color red**
- Avoid too many “spammy” phrases (click here, amazing, free, etc)
- AVOID ALL CAPS
- Avoid symbols like \$&@*
- Don't overdo punctuation
- Do include contact and unsubscribe info

Subscriber Management

- Make it easy for the user to unsubscribe
- Unsubscribe immediately or before next newsletter
- Confirm the unsubscribe on screen or in email
- Monitor your bounce backs and “reply to” messages; keep your list clean
- Email publishing service providers will do much of this for you

Technical Support

Have one person who can...

- Change subscriptions
- Troubleshoot
- Advise users to work with their IT people

Editorial Support

- Users mostly want to know someone is listening
- Solicit suggestions & constructive feedback
- Accept criticism graciously
- More openness to tips and critiques =
 - more credibility
 - more loyalty and viral marketing



JOIN TOGETHER

4. Suggested Resources

General “How To” Resources

- Ezine-Tips.com (<http://ezine-tips.com>)
- TechSoup (<http://www.techsoup.org>)
- BoldFish Notes
(http://www.boldfish.com/BF_emguide/bf_notes.html)
- Principles of Best Practice
(<http://www.bestprac.org/principles/mlp.htm>)
- DotOrg Media (www.dotorgmedia.org)
- GroundSpring.org Learning Center
(<http://www.groundspring.org/learningcenter>)

Suggested Resources

- **Providers (sample)**

- Low to Mid Range (starting at ~ \$25/month)**

- Topica (<http://www.topica.com>)
 - GroundSpring (www.groundspring.org)
 - Sparklist (www.sparklist.com)
 - Opt-in Communicator (<http://www.opt-in-communicator.com>)
 - EmailFactory (<http://www.emailfactory.com>)

- Mid Range (less than \$250/month)**

- BulletPass (<http://www.bulletpass.com>)

- High End**

- Convio (integrated services for nonprofits) <http://www.convio.com>
 - BlueStreak (<http://www.e2communications.com>)
 - Sevista (<http://www.sevista.com/>)

Suggested Resources

- **Permission based Email**
 - Avoidable Opt In Email Mistakes: 8 Mistakes to Avoid
(http://www.boldfish.com/BF_emguide/Notes/8mistakes.html)
- **Beating SPAM False Positives**
 - SPAM Filters Run Amuck – Is Your Message Getting Through?
(<http://www.iprofitsystems.com/articles/spamfilters.html>)
 - Words and Phrases that Trigger Some Spam Filters
(http://www.wilsonweb.com/wmt8/spamfilter_phrases.htm)
 - SPAM Filter Trigger Words
(<http://www.andreaoneill.com/spamtriggers.html>)

THE END

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