

Why Do My Emails Look Different in Outlook?

Best Practice Tip

We send out a lot of survey invitations and there's one thing we always want you to keep in mind: **tl;dr**. Say what?

That is internet shorthand for Too Long; Didn't Read. The best way to have the most impact in an invitation is to keep it short and simple. An invite to a survey with minimal styling and a succinct message will likely have a higher response rate.

We do our best to make our emails look great in all email clients but, as in life, some things are simply beyond our control. One variable that can commonly make email campaign messages display differently from what you saw in your testing is Microsoft Outlook. While we don't want to go around pointing fingers, it's known that Outlook renders HTML code in their own unique way that differs from other email clients.

The 2007, 2010, and 2013 versions of Outlook use Microsoft Word to render the HTML and since Word was built with print as its primary focus, it can cause some unexpected rendering of elements and text. The 2003 version of Outlook doesn't have this problem because it uses Internet Explorer to render the HTML. Unfortunately for all of us, most people aren't using an 11-year-old version of the software!

One thing you can do is try and determine which version of Outlook the majority of your potential respondents are using so you can design and test for that specific version. But please know that most designers will tell you that getting an email to look the same across email clients is probably more difficult than getting a website to look the same!

We know of a few things that you should avoid in your HTML emails:

- Background Images
- Animated GIFS (serious bummer, we love GIFS)
- Images taller than 1700px

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