

Opt-out responses on the rise.

fast.MAP research

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Eight out of ten people always tick the opt-out box to avoid receiving marketing material from third parties and the percentages are increasing every year as people become less willing even to grant the companies they are dealing with permission to contact them again, according to research carried out in winter 2010.

Almost nine out of ten people (88 %) always look for the presence of opt-out boxes, a percentage which has gradually increased since the first *fast.MAP* Marketing-GAP Tracking Study in 2005 identified that 82 % of consumers always looked for it. By 2006, this had risen to 86 %.

When providing details about yourself do you always look for the opt-out boxes so your details are not passed on to a third party or used for marketing purposes? Source *fast.MAP*

Marketing-GAP Tracker, conducted 4th quarter 2010:

Year	consumer/ marketers 2010	consumer/ marketers 09	consumer/ marketers 08
Yes	88 6 <i>who got it right</i>	90 7 <i>who got it right</i>	86 9 <i>who got it right</i>

Only six per cent of marketers judged that between 81 % and 90 % of consumers would be so conscientious; 91 per cent thought it would be fewer; and even though the correct option has not changed for half a decade, 52 per cent of marketers still think less than half of consumers look for the opt-out box.

However, marketers' 6 % accuracy level does represent a slight improvement on 2005 when only 1 % selected the correct 10 % slot.

Do you tick the box to stop the company which sent the communication and other third parties from contacting you again? Source: *fast.MAP* Marketing-GAP Tracker, conducted 4th quarter 2010:

Year	consumer/ marketers 2010		con./ mark. 09		con./ mark. 08	
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Companies which sent the communication						
Always	27	28	25	20	18	4
Sometimes	70	71	70	69	79	94
Never	3	1	4	11	3	1
Third parties						
Always	79	33	77	36	68	38
Sometimes	18	63	20	55	30	59
Never	3	4	4	10	2	3



Consumers are becoming more and more determined to control which companies hold their personal data because they are concerned about security. An incredibly high number, 23 %, have experienced a security breach in last six months and 34 % hold the companies and organisations they have given information to responsible for its safety.

Such data security worries are far from unfounded. Even Governments acknowledge the growing danger of a criminal cyber attack which will target computer records to steal millions of pounds or a terrorist cyber attack to paralyse the systems which are part of everyday life.

Until now, damage inflicted by marketing data loss has been very low level, but only because those who wish to profit from or cause disruption by using data theft have yet to make a concerted attack.

But a perfect storm is brewing and the brands unlucky enough to be its target could be swept away – this is another Ratner moment just waiting to happen.

To avoid it happening to them, brands should be even more concerned about protecting the data security interests of their customers than they are about boosting their opt-in levels.

Because, not 'if' but 'when' this perfect cyber-storm occurs, companies which can not demonstrate they've done everything in their power to protect their customer data will find it impossible to recover the trust which this research shows is the key to customer confidence.

Companies which use marketing data should at very least be DMA members and rigidly stick to its code of practice. They should also be constantly testing and upgrading their data security or they risk being identified as a soft target by data thieves. Then, if they suffer a cyber attack, they will be at least be able to tell their customers they had done all they could to prevent it.

Horror stories about identity theft and data loss have alerted the public to the danger of allowing their personal details to be held by others. This is why almost eight out of ten shoppers (79 %) always tick the box to stop third parties from contacting them – an 11 % increase since 2008; a further 18 % sometimes tick the box.

Although they are more trusting with the company they are giving the information to, 27 %, an increase of two per cent year-on-year, always tick the box and 70 %, the same as in 2009, sometimes do.

Marketers got this almost exactly right, though they massively underestimated the number who always tick the third party box.

To access the 6th *fast.MAP* Marketing-GAP Report go to www.fast.MAP.co.uk

Methodology

28 questions were submitted into a fast.MAP online self completion survey, despatched on Sept28, 2010 to 1,430 adults recruited from the 30,000 fast.MAP wholly-owned, closed panel whose profile echoes that of the UK's population profile in age and gender.

A second panel comprising 200 marketers, drawn from the fast.MAP marketing professionals' panel, were emailed the same questions and asked to use their experience and expertise to anticipate how the consumers would respond.

