Hello.

If you are a blogger and new to MailChimp, you might be wondering how email marketing can benefit you. As it turns out, there are great opportunities for increasing audience engagement when bloggers introduce email.

People have different preferences when it comes to consuming information. Some want to visit your site directly and browse your latest posts. Others prefer skimming your content via RSS without ever navigating to your site. There's another group of people, however, that would rather read your latest blog updates directly from their email client. Maybe they don't follow enough sites to warrant setting up a feed reader. Or, maybe they just like the convenience of getting new content delivered right to their inbox.

A service like MailChimp helps you identify your audience and actively track their engagement by how often they open your emails, what they click, and what they share with their friends. In addition to promoting your regular blog content, there are other ways you can use email to engage your audience and track the effectiveness of your communications, too. You could send exclusive content to your mailing list—like special articles or sales. You could inform them about updates and news that may be outside the scope of your typical blog postings, or new items that might be for sale in your online store. The bottom line is this: When people sign up to receive updates from you, they're saying, "I'm interested in what you have to say."

This guide will explain everything MailChimp offers for bloggers. If you have questions or concerns that aren't addressed here, please feel free to contact our support staff. We're happy to help.

The Basics

MailChimp is a web-based application that works in most web browsers, which means you won't need to download or install any new software on your computer. To make sure that MailChimp works properly in your browser though, you should enable cookies, pop-ups, and JavaScript. When you watch our tutorial videos, you'll need the latest version of Flash.

Compliance tips

When you create a MailChimp account, you agree to comply with all anti-spam regulations and MailChimp's Terms of Use. These terms require that all lists be permission-based, consisting of subscribers who signed up through a mailing list signup form or have given explicit permission to add them to the list. You must have tangible, confirmable proof that the subscriber wants you to communicate with them. Be mindful of the following guidelines as you're getting started:

- Make sure the intent of the signup form is clearly identified. All potential subscribers should understand that, by submitting their contact information through the form, they are agreeing to receive bulk email from you.

- Due to the lack of tangible, verifiable proof of consent, email addresses collected verbally, from personal address books, or from social media followers are not considered viable opt-in methods.

- While it's *generally* okay to add existing customers (who have made a purchase from your online merch store, for example) to a bulk mailing list, they must be recent customers (having purchased a product in the past 6 months) or customers that have already been regularly receiving emails from you. Only use addresses that have requested to be added to a list.

- We do not allow any kind of third party lists in our system. This includes publicly available, purchased, rented, or partner lists.

- The CAN-SPAM law requires that a physical postal address be present in all sent campaigns. This can be a challenge for artists, musicians, writers, or bloggers who might not want to give out their home address, so it's often better to use a PO Box or the address of another person or organization with which you're affiliated. We recommend speaking to an attorney if you have any

specific questions about the validity of a potential address in regards to the CAN-SPAM laws, but [this article](#) will provide a few suggestions that have worked for other MailChimp users.

[This article can help you determine if your list is acceptable](#), but if you're still not sure, [contact our compliance team](#) for additional clarification.

Build Your Mailing List

The foundation of great email marketing is a clean, up-to-date list of subscribers who have opted in to receive your email campaigns. MailChimp makes it easy to present your readers with a variety of methods to sign up and receive email updates so they can keep up with everything happening on your blog.

Do you want to send out a special email to your subscribers on their birthday? Would you like your subscribers to be able to choose the frequency at which they receive your email updates? MailChimp has you covered there as well. Use groups, fields, and segments to send timely, relevant content to your readers when it's most convenient for them.

Signup forms

When you create a list in MailChimp, we will automatically generate a hosted, customizable, mobile-responsive signup form—along with an entire series of other forms and response emails—for you. You can share the link to this form on your website, across your various social media channels, or even with a QR code. Here's how to create your form in MailChimp:

1. From the MailChimp dashboard, click the **Lists** tab.
2. Choose which list you'd like to work with, and then select **Signup forms** from the list options.
3. Select **General forms**.
4. Next, customize the details of your form. Use the **Build It** tab to determine what information you collect in the form and the **Design It** tab to change the colors, add a header image, and more.
5. When the form is finalized, copy the **Subscribe form URL** located in the middle of the page, and link to it from the website you choose.

Looking for more details on designing your form and response emails? Check out this article from our Knowledge Base.

Embed code

In addition to the hosted form, we'll provide you with customizable embedded forms that you can add directly to your website, making it even easier for your readers to subscribe to your mailing list. From the **Lists** > **Signup forms** page, select the **Embedded forms** option.

If you are interested in creating and hosting your own signup forms, you'll find more information here.

Subscriber popup form

The subscriber popup is a customizable form option that automatically displays a MailChimp signup form in a popup modal on your website shortly after someone visits the page. The form can be designed, previewed, edited, and updated directly though the Form Builder, and all of your changes will be reflected in real time.

Signup form plugins

Is your blog powered by a service like WordPress, Squarespace, Tumblr, Moveable Type, Expression Engine, or Drupal? Would you prefer to integrate with Wufoo or CoffeeCup for an even more robust set of form design options? There are MailChimp signup form plugins available for these (and many other) programs that can help make integration a breeze.

Visit our Integrations Directory for download and installation instructions.

Do you have a WordPress.com site? By default, WordPress strips out form code, tags, and JavaScript for security, so it's difficult to make signup forms available for these blogs. The easiest solution is to add a link to your hosted signup form on

your blog instead.

Facebook signup form

Social media can be a vital tool for keeping in touch with your readers, and MailChimp makes it easy to add a signup form directly to your Facebook page . First, you'll need to connect your MailChimp and Facebook accounts. This can be done from the **Account > Integrations** area of your MailChimp account.

The initial connection will need to be made with your *personal* Facebook account. Once connected, the MailChimp form can then be added to any Facebook "page" that you administer.

When the connection between Facebook and MailChimp has been established, you can customize and assign signup forms to your Facebook pages directly from the **Facebook** section of the MailChimp **Integrations** page. In the **Page to use** drop-down menu, you'll select which Facebook page you want to configure. In the **List to use** drop-down menu, choose which list's signup form you want on the page. Then, to activate a **Signup form tab** on the Facebook page, select the **Yes** radio button.

In the **Form theme** drop-down, choose which form style you'd like. If you choose **My List's Theme (default)**, your signup form will look like the MailChimp-hosted form you've designed. If you select **Facebook-esque**, your form will blend more naturally into Facebook's overall appearance.

Importing your list

If you already have a list of readers that have opted-in to receiving email from you, there are several ways to import them into MailChimp. They include:

- Uploading a CSV or tab delimited text file.
- Copying and pasting your list from Excel.
- Importing contacts from your Mac Address Book with the help of our OSX app, MailChimp Import.
- Importing directly from a third-party application or program that integrates with MailChimp. For more details about our available integrations, visit our Integrations Directory. If your contacts are stored in an application or program that doesn't currently integrate with MailChimp, refer to that program's support documentation or customer support team for assistance in getting a CSV file of the contacts.
- Importing contacts using MailChimp's API. Keep in mind that the API is for experienced programmers and developers. If you do not currently have someone available to assist with this, consider reaching out to one of our third-party, for-hire MailChimp Experts to lend a hand.

If you only need to add a single email address to your list, you can do so by clicking the *add subscriber* icon on the Lists page .

Set Up an RSS Campaign

Building up a list of loyal subscribers is a great start, but now what? MailChimp offers a number of different options for creating beautiful email campaigns so you can stay in touch with your readers and provide them with your latest updates and most recent blog posts. In this guide, we'll focus on a few of the tools that can be especially valuable for bloggers.

RSS stands for "really simple syndication," and it's a great way for people to follow updates to your blog without having to check in routinely to see if you've posted anything new. A blog can be a great tool, but many people prefer to read updates in their inboxes instead. We think email and RSS work beautifully together, and we recommend that bloggers allow their readers to choose how they consume new content. MailChimp's RSS campaigns provide an easy solution for automatically sending your new content via email. Here's how to create one:

From your MailChimp dashboard, click the **Create Campaign** pull-down menu, and choose **RSS campaign**.

1. Enter the URL of your blog's RSS feed and decide how often you want the campaign to be delivered. You'll have the option to choose between daily, weekly, or monthly updates, you can choose the day(s) and time you'd like the campaign to be sent, and you can choose to automatically resize your RSS feed images so they fit within your template.. Click **Next**.

2. In the **Recipients** step, choose the list—or segment of a list—that will receive the campaign. Click **Next**.

3. Name your campaign, give it a subject, and review the additional tracking options on the preferences screen. There's also an option to auto-tweet or auto-post the campaign to Facebook from this screen. Click **Next**.

4. Choose a template for your campaign. MailChimp offers a variety of **Basic** templates and **Themes** in each account.

   ◦ **Basic** templates provide you with a highly-customizable blank layout, so

you can easily add your own styles and content using the drag and drop functionality of our Email Designer.

- **Themes** are predesigned, preconfigured templates that don't require any programming or design knowledge to get started. Simply pick a Theme, plug in your content, and you'll have a beautiful campaign. Themes come in two varieties—"drag and drop" and "classic." Drag and drop themes offer functionality similar to that of Basic templates, while only the color and content of the classic templates will be editable within the Email Designer. The template type will be displayed below each Theme, so you can easily differentiate between the two.

5. You can add our RSS merge tags to any style of template, but we do offer a few different templates that have been specifically designed for RSS campaigns. On the **Basic** tab, you'll find a Basic RSS and Right-Sidebar RSS template options available. On the **Themes** tab, simply select **RSS-To-Email** from the template categories drop-down menu to view all of the available options. If you'd prefer to design the template yourself or you have custom HTML that you'd like to upload, you can do that here as well.

6. Use our handy merge tag cheat sheet if you want to customize how your RSS feed is displayed in your campaign. Click **Enter Preview Mode** under the **Preview & Test** drop-down menu to pull in live content and see exactly how your campaign will look when it's delivered. You can also send tests of the campaign or use our Link Checker tool to make sure all the links in your campaign are valid from this menu. After you've completed the campaign design process, click **Next**.

7. Confirm the details of your campaign, send one final test, and if everything looks good, click **Start RSS**. Your first campaign will be delivered after your next blog post and at the frequency you determined during setup.

Adding RSS content to a Regular Campaign

If you'd like to add blog posts from any number of RSS feeds in a Regular campaign, you can utilize our *|FEED|* merge tags to do so. We'll cover merge tags in the next section, but this article from our Knowledge Base will give you a full walkthrough of adding RSS content to a regular campaign.

Customize With Merge Tags

Merge tags are pieces of code you can place in your email to add content dynamically. Instead of using copy-and-paste or manually entering information, drop a merge tag into your email and the information will be added for you.

Merge tags are especially helpful for RSS-Driven campaigns because after you add them to your template, you'll never need to worry about your campaign again. MailChimp will do all the work of collecting new content, formatting with merge tags, and sending at your specified times. That way, you can spend more time focusing on your blog.

Below is a sampling of the merge tags MailChimp offers for RSS-Driven campaigns. For the full list of **RSS-related** merge tags, check out this article. For a list of all the merge tags that can be used in MailChimp, take a look at our merge tags cheat sheet.

Preformatted RSS merge tags

MailChimp RSS merge tags relate to tags in your RSS feed, including the title, URL, and description of your blog and its individual posts. The group of tags in this section allows you to embed preformatted lists, summaries, or full content of your posts in an RSS-Driven Campaign.

`*|RSS:POSTS_HTML|*` or `*|RSS:POSTS|*`

Displays a list of your blog posts and their summaries in HTML format

`*|RSS:POSTS_HTML_FULL|*` or `*|RSS:POSTS_FULL|*`

Displays a list of your blog posts and their full content in HTML format

`*|RSS:POSTS_TEXT|*`

Displays a list of your posts formatted in plain text

`*|RSS:POSTS_TEXT_FULL|*`

Displays a list of your posts and their full content formatted in plain text

`*|RSS:RECENT|*`

Displays a linked list of the five most recent post titles made prior to the new posts pulled into your campaign since the last send

`*|RSS:RECENTxx|*`

Displays a linked list of the most recent post titles made prior to the new posts pulled into your campaign since the last send, based on the number given for "xx"

RSS channel merge tags

These merge tags pull the content from your RSS <channel> tag, which represents your blog as a whole. They can be used to customize how your RSS post list appears in your RSS-Driven Campaign.

`*|RSSFEED:TITLE|*`

Displays the title of your blog or RSS feed channel

`*|RSSFEED:DATE|*`

Displays the date your RSS feed was last updated

`*|RSSFEED:URL|*`

Displays the URL of your source RSS feed or channel

`*|RSSFEED:DESCRIPTION|*`

Displays the description of your blog or RSS feed channel.

RSS item merge tags

These merge tags pull the content from your RSS <item> tags, which represent your individual blog posts. They can be used to customize how your RSS post list appears in your RSS-Driven Campaign. For the full list, refer to our [Knowledge Base](#).

`*|RSSITEMS:|*` and `*|END:RSSITEMS|*`

These tags do not display anything, but are used to open and close the customized formatting for individual RSS items.

`*|RSSITEM:TITLE|*`

Displays the title of the RSS item, usually a blog post

`*|RSSITEM:URL|*`

Displays a text link to the RSS item online, which can be displayed as text or used in a hyperlink

`*|RSSITEM:CONTENT|*`

Displays a summary of the RSS item in HTML format

`*|RSSITEM:CONTENT_FULL|*`

Displays the full content of the RSS item in HTML format

`*|RSSITEM:CONTENT_TEXT|*`

Displays a summary of the RSS item in plain text format

`*|RSSITEM:CONTENT_FULL_TEXT|*`

Displays the full content of the RSS item in plain text format

Feedblock RSS channel merge tags

When you need to pull RSS content into different types of campaigns, you can easily embed or customize it using Feedblocks. These tags can be used to customize how your RSS post list appears in Regular, Plain-Text, and A/B Testing campaigns. The most widely-used tags are noted throughout the next sections, but for the full list, refer to our [Knowledge Base](#).

`*|FEEDBLOCK:URL|*` and `*|END:FEEDBLOCK|*`

These tags do not display anything, but are used to open and close the customized formatting for your feed content.

`*|FEED:POSTS|*`

Displays a linked list of your five most recent blog post titles

`*|FEED:POSTS[$count=x,$content=full]|*`

Displays a linked list of your blog posts, with optional settings for number shown and content type. "$content=full" displays the post's full content. Leave it blank to display the post's summary instead.

Feedblock RSS item merge tags

When you pull RSS content into a campaign using *|FEED|* tags, you can control which details appear and how they are formatted.These tags can be used to customize how your RSS post list appears in Regular, Plain-Text, and A/B Testing campaigns.

`*|FEEDITEMS:[$count=x]|*`

This tag doesn't display anything, but is used to open the customized formatting for your RSS items. "$count=x" represents the number of items from the feed that you would like to display.

`*|END:FEEDITEMS|*`

This tag doesn't display anything, but is used to close the customized formatting for your RSS items.

`*|FEEDITEM:CONTENT|*`

Displays a summary of the RSS item

`*|FEEDITEM:CONTENT_FULL|*`

Displays the full content of the RSS item

`*|FEEDITEM:CONTENT_TEXT|*`

Displays a summary of the RSS item in plan text format

`*|FEEDITEM:CONTENT_FULL_TEXT|*`

Displays the full content of the RSS item in plain text format

Frequently Asked Questions

My RSS feed isn't working. Am I doing something wrong?

If you're seeing a message that says your feed is invalid or the feed doesn't seem to be pulling the expected content into your campaign, there are a several factors that could be at play. This article covers the most common problems that users experience while setting up their RSS campaigns in MailChimp.

Note: Sometimes, even when you've been careful to avoid all the common RSS pitfalls, a temporary connection-related issue will crop up just as you're ready to send, preventing the delivery of your campaign. So, when an RSS campaign fails to send due to a connection-related issue with the feed, we'll attempt to send the campaign 3 additional times. The first retry attempt will occur immediately, followed by 2 subsequent attempts in 20-minute intervals.

Will my old posts be emailed out in my first campaign?

When you first set up an RSS campaign, MailChimp displays the last post that was added to your feed as an example. For daily sends, we won't send an email to your list until there's a new post in your RSS feed. Likewise for the weekly sends: If you've not posted for over a week, we won't send a weekly post until you make a new post. And similarly for monthly scheduled RSS campaigns in that if you've not posted for over a month, we won't send a monthly email until you make a new post.

If this is your first send, we only send the posts from 24 hours before your campaign was activated for daily, from the last 7 days for weekly, and the past 30 days for monthly. If you'd like to include those older posts, consider adding the *|RSS:RECENT|* merge tag to your campaign.

Will my campaign go out if I haven't posted anything?

Nope! We only send campaigns when there's new content in your feed. If you've set up a daily RSS campaign but didn't post anything new today, a campaign would not go out tomorrow.

How can I update, edit, and pause my RSS campaigns?

To update, edit, or pause your RSS campaign, go to the **Campaigns** page from the dashboard. Click the **Filter** button and choose **RSS campaign** from the **Type** drop-down menu. Locate the campaign you want to update, and click **Edit** to make changes. If the campaign is currently active, you'll need to [Pause](#) it before you can make any changes. This can be done by clicking the drop-down menu next to the **View Report** button for the campaign you'd like to edit and choosing **Pause**.

Keep in that mind once a campaign has been paused, you'll need to revisit the **Confirm** step of the campaign builder and click **Start RSS** before it will start sending again.

When you preview and send the email, you'll see your design populated with all the content from your feed. You can move the merge tags around, add more or delete some of them, or you can create your own template from scratch.

Get Social

Social networking can be an excellent medium for promoting your content and connecting with your audience. Through the use of our sharing features, merge tags, and integrations, MailChimp makes it easy for email marketers to use social networks to their advantage.

Quickly share any previously sent campaign, or integrate your account with Facebook and Twitter to automatically post your campaigns as they are delivered to your subscribers.

Use merge tags—along with the Social Share and Social Follow content blocks in our Email Designer—to give your subscribers an opportunity to share, like, or follow your content and activity across various social channels.

Social Profiles

Social Profiles is an optional paid add-on for lists that gathers publicly available social data about your subscribers that can be used to send targeted emails to them based on their age, gender, or their presence on social networks.

Track and Report

For a lot of email marketers, the best part of sending email newsletters is looking at the stats after a campaign goes out—it's kind of like checking out your blog comments. How many people opened your newsletter? How many clicked? What did they click? What didn't they click? Did they like the content?

Review your report information for every campaign you send—it's full of clues and feedback that will help you make adjustments and improve your future newsletters.

Standard reports

MailChimp's standard reports use neat, easy-to-read graphs, tables, and maps to show you things like opens, clicks, bounces, and unsubscribes. We even offer maps that show you where your readers live and which links they're clicking the most. To access your reports, go to the **Reports** tab in your MailChimp dashboard and click **View report** next to the desired campaign.

Social tracking

MailChimp's Social Stats allow you to watch your campaigns make their way around Facebook and Twitter. To find out how many people have Liked your campaigns, visit the **Reports** tab on your MailChimp dashboard. Select a campaign and click **Social**.

The Like stats are located under **Facebook Activity** and organized by subscriber. You can see how many times each subscriber liked your campaign, and how many other likes they generated.

You'll also notice an **EepURL Activity** section on the Social page of your

campaign reports. When you auto-post or auto-tweet your campaign, we're sharing a shortened EepURL link instead of a long campaign archive link. We'll track all of the clicks those links receive, identify the top 10 referrers generating traffic to the link, and display the locations worldwide where the click activity has occurred.

Comparative Reports

If you would like to dig even deeper into your data, check out MailChimp Pro's exclusive **Comparative Reports** feature. These reports will provide you with the flexibility to interact with your data just like our own research team would. You can analyze your performance over time by aggregating and comparing campaign results, or discover hidden trends by creating advanced segments within your reports—*after* sending a campaign. MailChimp does all the heavy lifting for you, eliminating the need to export and combine all of your data manually. When you're done, you can share your findings and schedule your reports to automatically regenerate as new results come in.

Resources

MailChimp offers a number of other tools and integrations that may also be a good fit for your blog. We've highlighted some of them here in this section, but for a full listing, visit our [Integrations Directory](#).

MailChimp Snap

[MailChimp Snap](#) is an app for sending quick, photo-based email campaigns directly from your iPhone or Android phone. Once you've downloaded MailChimp Snap and connected it to your MailChimp account, you'll take a photo—or select an existing photo from your camera roll or Instagram account—and add a quick link, title, and message to your campaign. Then, select one of the available layouts, determine your recipients, and you're ready to send. Once sent, you'll see the campaign on both the **Campaigns** and **Reports** pages within your MailChimp account.

To learn more about MailChimp Snap for [iPhone](#) or [Android](#), visit our Knowledge Base.

MailChimp Subscribe

Collecting new subscribers on your blog is easy thanks to MailChimp's signup forms, but what about when you're out meeting people at conferences or festivals? With MailChimp Subscribe, you can sign up new readers using your [iPad](#) or [Android](#) tablet without an internet connection. Simply design a customized form for your device, let users sign themselves up, then sync with your MailChimp account when you're back online.

Flash Issue

If you want to include your blog posts in a newsletter without using MailChimp's native RSS-Driven campaign features and merge tags, or you would like to curate blog content from multiple blogs, [Flash Issue](#) might be a good integration for you to explore. Flash Issue allows you to pull in content from specific RSS feeds by dragging and dropping within the integration. Save yourself time while still creating a custom newsletter and sharing all the hard work you put into your blog posts.

Education and Support

Bloggers always seem to have email newsletters on the top of their to-do list, but getting started can seem daunting or time consuming. We understand, and we offer a wide selection of educational materials to answer all of your questions and make the process as painless as possible. Type a keyword or question into the search bar on the top of the MailChimp site, and you'll be directed to a list of blog posts, Knowledge Base articles, features pages, demo videos, and guides that can help.

If you need one-on-one attention with your MailChimp account, you can contact our friendly in-house support team by visiting http://mailchimp.com/contact/support.