

Patrons not Receiving Email Notices

Unless there is a general failure of notices to run on a particular day, email notices are being sent out. But errors are possible. There are numerous reasons why a patron might not get an email notice. OWLS has no way of knowing if a notice was delivered to the patron's inbox.

What OWLS can tell from the mail log files is if a message was sent to a specific email address at a specific date and time and if the patron's email provider accepted the message. Once the message is "handed off" to the patron's mail provider, OWLS has no control over what happens after that.

What to do if a Patron says they are not getting email messages:

- Confirm the correct email address in CARL account.
- Ask if they are getting some messages but not others?
- Make sure they check their spam and junk folders etc.
- Check the Notice History of the patron account.

Do you want OWLS to follow up?

Email OWLSnet help with the following information:

- The patron card number.
- Is the patron not getting any notices or just not getting some?
- What notices did that patron not get? If you can tell us the item, all the better.
- Provide a likely date range – our mail log only goes back 1 month.
- If the item is still on hold, take a screenshot of the item record if possible, or call OWLS.

What will OWLS do?

- OWLS can check the mail log to see if the patron has been sent any email in the past month.
- OWLS cannot see the actual message. OWLS can tell the date and time a message was sent to a particular email address and if it was successfully received by the patron's email provider.
- OWLS can also see cases where CARL attempted to send the notice but it was rejected by the patron's mail provider.
- IF helpful, OWLS can send log file information for you to share with your patrons. Depending on their email provider, this information may be able to help them.

What if OWLS cannot find a record in the mail log file?

This is where it gets tricky. Because this is a complaint that often comes after the fact, it can be difficult to piece together enough information to demonstrate that there is a real problem in CARL. To do this, ideally, we would need to show clearly an example of an item in CARL on hold for a patron (set to receive email notices) and no record in the log file. If a patron says they didn't get a notice, and you still have the item on the hold shelf, take a screen shot of the item record in CARL if possible or contact OWLS. This is the best way we could actually show that notices were not sent. Remember, our first assumption is that notices are being sent. This will

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also be TLC's first assumption. There is little we or they can do unless we can provide good evidence to the contrary.

Suggestions

Our options are limited, but here are a few things you can suggest.

1. If the patron has another email account, you can add a secondary email. However, only the primary email will be used to send notices. The secondary (Email2 field) is only informational, so be sure to flip them in the record:

Email:	<input type="text" value="mkomp@owlsweb.org"/>	Er
Email2:	<input type="text" value="alee@owlsweb.org"/>	

This might help determine if the problem is with a particular provider. If a library wanted to, and a patron was willing, you could, temporarily, add the library address to receive the email. You would then have a record of if/when a notice was sent. This is not a good long-term solution, but it could help you either show a patron that the messages are being sent or help us determine if there is a real problem.

2. For Patrons with smartphones, recommend Shoutbomb. Patrons can use Shoutbomb in conjunction with email notices. This doubles their odds of getting their notices. One selling point for Shoutbomb is that hold pickup notices go out in the morning and in the afternoon (around 4:30). Holds coming in before 4:00 pm will trigger an afternoon notice. What's not to like about that!

3. Recommend that they check their InfoSoup account once a week.

OWLS understands that this can be very frustrating for patrons and staff. OWLS will gladly do what we can to help determine if notices are being sent or if there is a reason they are not getting through. Our tools, however, are limited and with the way email works, much is out of our control.