Google Rejecting Emails as Unsolicited Email or Spam

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After the past few months I've arrived at the conclusion that Google has fallen out with me. I only have one GMail account which is mainly used for testing but I can no longer send to that GMail address from **valar.uk.net**, nor the few contacts I know that use GMail.

All attempts are rejected with a short text summary explaining that basically, I look like a spammer.

Here is the NDR (non-delivery report) from an attempt I made today, to my one and only GMail account:

```
<redacted@gmail.com>: host gmail-smtp-in.l.google.com[74.125.206.27] said:
    550-5.7.1 [77.74.192.2      12] Gmail has detected that this message is
    likely 550-5.7.1 unsolicited mail. To reduce the amount of spam sent to
    Gmail, this 550-5.7.1 message has been blocked. For more information, go to
    550 5.7.1  https://support.google.com/mail/?p=UnsolicitedMessageError
    ffacd0b85a97d-3861ecf38desi4713796f8f.3 - gsmtp (in reply to end of DATA
    command)
--396CDB27015.1733742143/valar.uk.net
Content-Description: Delivery report
Content-Type: message/delivery-status
Reporting-MTA: dns; valar.uk.net
X-Postfix-Queue-ID: 396CDB27015
X-Postfix-Sender: rfc822; pete@valar.uk.net
Arrival-Date: Mon,  9 Dec 2024 11:02:22 +0000 (GMT)
Final-Recipient: rfc822; redacted@gmail.com
Original-Recipient: rfc822;redacted@gmail.com
Action: failed
Status: 5.7.1
Remote-MTA: dns; gmail-smtp-in.l.google.com
Diagnostic-Code: smtp; 550-5.7.1 [77.74.192.2      12] Gmail has detected that
    this message is likely 550-5.7.1 unsolicited mail. To reduce the amount of
    spam sent to Gmail, this 550-5.7.1 message has been blocked. For more
    information, go to 550 5.7.1
    https://support.google.com/mail/?p=UnsolicitedMessageError
    ffacd0b85a97d-3861ecf38desi4713796f8f.3 - gsmtp
--396CDB27015.1733742143/valar.uk.net
Content-Description: Undelivered Message
Content-Type: message/rfc822
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 8bit
Return-Path: <pete@valar.uk.net>
DKIM-Signature: v=1; a=rsa-sha256; c=relaxed/simple; d=valar.uk.net;
        s=default; t=1733742142;
        bh=BRUzuRKLNpBZqcb1Auz7xyBX4n/qcKIoMxIrJV0jju4=;
        h=From:Subject:Date:To:From;
        b=fCNJ0FqbwtsG1SDnx1Xe4LXQy8CLlbE5iUoOPp1wuUbYzKe3zZSLY9Pd6Agfg0OWx
         H8lH/DNy1YgAxamPvL1PjbzSwcy9vJjkhSnnnEw0SbXQ/yZog3z+r6XIPksJjN7Zlv
         fzsMduiUnHi2f0NRdHxLF6ibIgKgxw3ML0wQVk0hhyjAZZohnq0wjXzD5Xb8ZAQJiB
         ERI2nybPf9QIbJX7vaKkJRpn+AZs1IVJNgF9eXtCNfREK5TWw0IJdwgWt5tGYHoiyh
         aNQcMxT/ruGIVvQCq9UCdyDpjnr6BmbAbFfzcvwSA1rddD0iAEJnKfmrYpIvQSpcSX
         pbRfS8GxEq7Rg==
From: Pete <pete@valar.uk.net>
Content-Type: text/plain;
        charset=us-ascii
Content-Transfer-Encoding: 7bit
Mime-Version: 1.0 (Mac OS X Mail 16.0 \(3826.200.121\))
Subject: Testing To Google
Message-Id: <6DBBB0C5-B0E7-4653-8960-579BAB5148BA@valar.uk.net>
Date: Mon, 9 Dec 2024 11:02:21 +0000
To: Pete <redacted@gmail.com>
X-Mailer: Apple Mail (2.3826.200.121)
Testing to Google, will no doubt bounce.
Pete.
--396CDB27015.1733742143/valar.uk.net--
```

Earlier on this year (2024) when I **could** contact GMail users, it became apparent that mail from **valar.uk.net** was being sent to the spam folder of these users. This could be down to the DMARC option I'd chosen at the time which was 'quarantine'. Obviously this isn't ideal as spam folders are often overlooked and sometimes even used as an excuse for not replying to mail.

Nevertheless at the time this occurred I asked contacts to add me to whatever whitelist/allowlist Google uses and hoped that would be a good workaround. I was still concerned that my emails were being classed as spam so decided to take a closer look in to how my mail system was configured and how various DNS records were created.

At this point I should mention that I have a couple of other domains which I've used as mail exchangers (basically mail servers) for **valar.uk.net** in the past. I do like to test out new configurations and switch my systems around to keep up to date with various software (always Unix-like) or to cut back on power usage at home. Before I had a static IPv4 address I would use a non-free smart host after my home-hosted mail server which Google seemed to like just fine.

To be fair, I have also created DKIM records in the past which have been malformed but were quickly corrected. I now use OpenDKIM to create and sign outbound email. These records all check out according to various online resources.

Fast-forward to today. My (non-open relay) mail server is a dedicated server located in a data centre with one assigned static IPv4 address. Domain and reverse IP look-ups match. I have SPF (sender policy framework), DKIM (domainkeys identified mail) and DMARC (domain-based message authentication, reporting and conformance) DNS records that have been checked multiple times by three or four online resources and all have been found to be valid. I can count the number of users of this mail server using only one hand.

Google are **still** rejecting my emails from **valar.uk.net** to the very few GMail contacts I know, misreporting them as spam as of **2024-12-09**; yet no-one at Google appears to give a flying one. Sound familiar?

Strangely (to me at least) Google are also sending me DMARC reports stating all is ok with mail communications from my mail server to whichever of their servers handles the communication at the time.

Here's one from Outlook.com (Microsoft's online email service) which I should state has never had a problem with mail communications from **valar.uk.net**.

Here's the current Google Postmaster tools verdict on the domain of **valar.uk.net** today (actually from 2024-12-07). I'm not concerned about the 'one-click unsubscribe' as I don't send out any emails anywhere of the type that would warrant an unsubscribe option (like a mailing list).

Please remember that Google themselves are saying that all is in order via their DMARC reports, so the 'needs work' results are incorrect. If you don't believe me, check the DNS records out for yourself if you have time. **I'd be interested to know** if you find any issues when every single other entity to whom I send mail has no issue big enough to justify a permanent rejection each time.

It's like one system at Google lags behind other systems so it takes a long time (months?) before they align. Perhaps that is intentional given the amount of actual spammers out there on T'Internet?

I'm not sure what else I can do other than wait it out. Could it be a 'reputation' issue where Google's servers have logged different domains acting as mail exchangers for **valar.uk.net** over a relatively short space of time, with some of them having temporarily incorrect DKIM records?

I should point out as well that I do have two support cases with Google which are currently in progress. Unfortunately I have no idea what they're doing as apparently there is no support for free services like GMail.

One last point, 'unsolicited' is a dubious word to use for email as how does anyone know you want to send them an email until you do? The correct term for spam (in my humble) is UBE (unsolicited bulk email); a substantial amount of unrequested emails which could apply to anyone and are usually trying to sell something.

Thanks for reading. Feel free to email me but know that I cannot respond if you're using GMail. :)

Pete.