

Much Undo About Nothing?

Investigating why email retraction is less popular than apologizing

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How do people use email? Are we the only ones who sometimes send email and then have to apologize because there was something wrong in it?

The most diffused enterprise email systems allow for email retraction: i.e., users can prevent email messages from reaching their recipients as long as they have not been read.

We conducted an online survey and collected 259 responses. The sample is consistent with Italian population. A complete analysis is available in the paper, here we will point out the main findings.

Many email users:

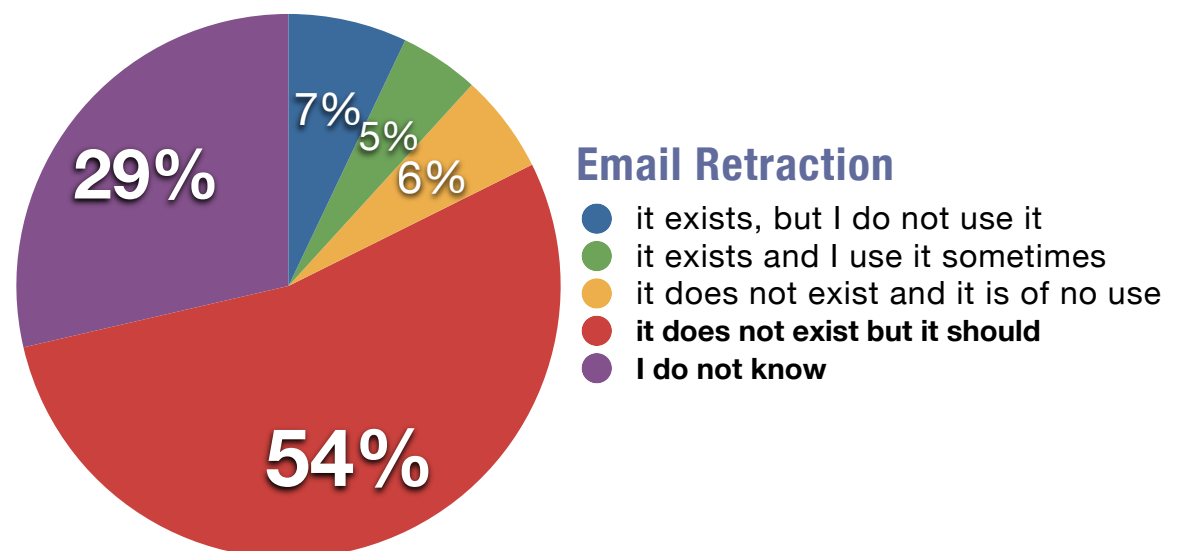
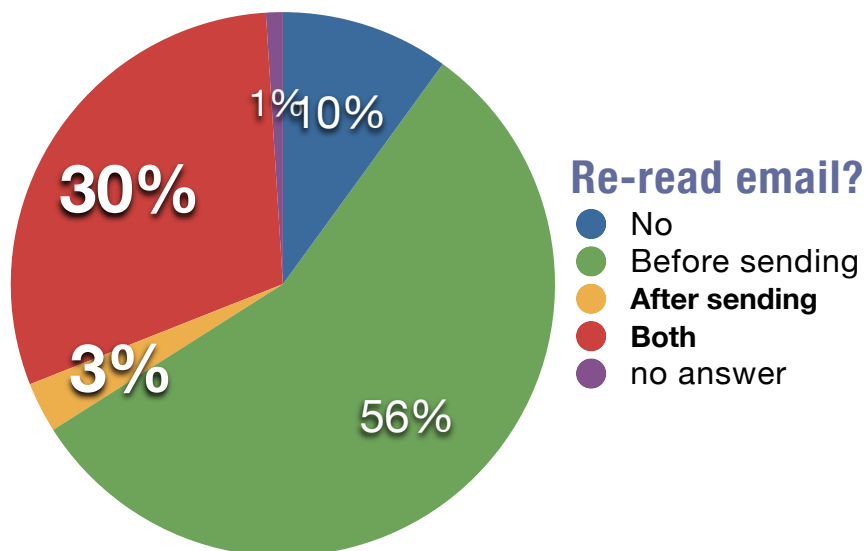
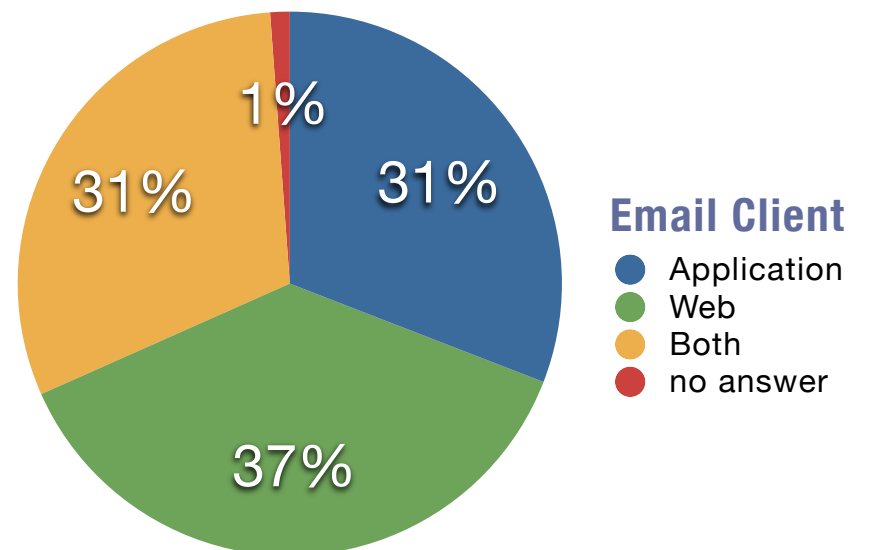
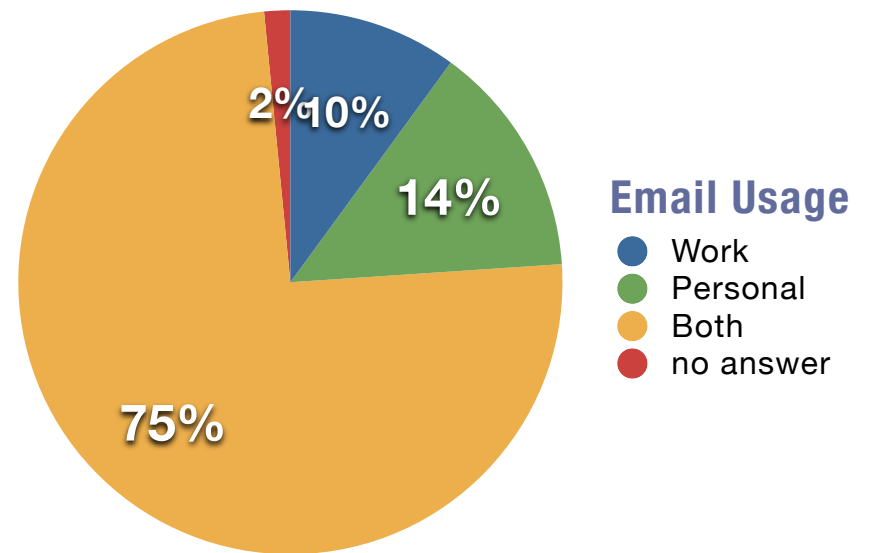
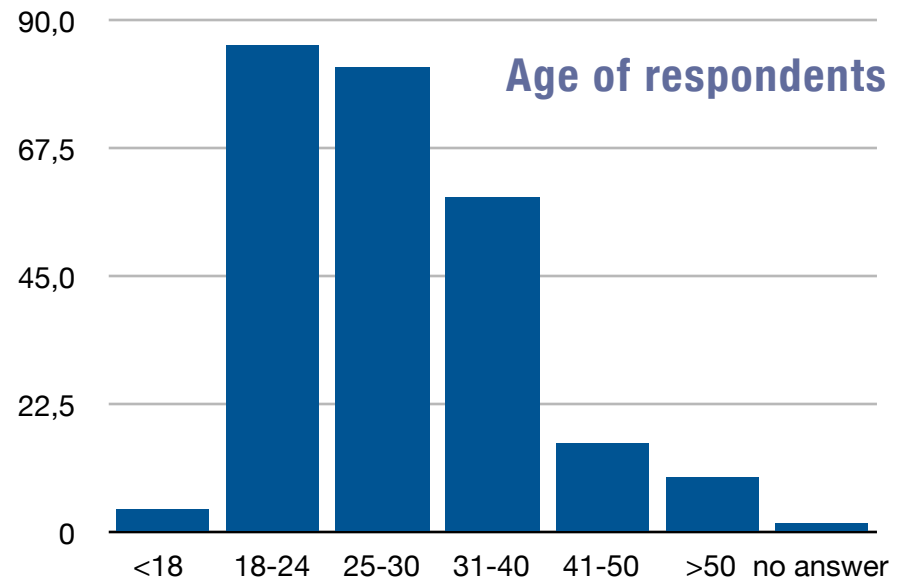
- don't know that email retraction is possible
- read again their messages after sending
- think retraction would be useful
- expect retraction to work exactly the way it does in enterprise systems, but on a global scale

So what?

We are developing a plug-in for Mozilla Thunderbird to implement a client-side protocol to retract email.

Messages will not be deleted from the recipients' inbox, and possible corrections will be contextualized.

We will help senders feel less ashamed of their mistakes, and save some recipients' time.



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