mailchimp FOR MUSICIANS

MailChimp

a guide for musicians

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HELLO.

Chances are, you've got a lot going on. You're recording an album, booking shows, playing shows, making videos, signing multi–million dollar recording contracts…how do you keep track of it all? More importantly, how do your fans keep track of it all? MailChimp's email–marketing tools make it fun and easy to send email newsletters, manage your mailing lists and track your performance. Have a new song or video to share? You can do it with MailChimp. Want your fans to share your updates with their own social networks? MailChimp makes it dead simple. Curious about where your most loyal supporters are located? You can find out with just a couple clicks. In this guide, we'll cover all those features and more, and we'll show you how to use them effectively.

And did we mention that you can send up to 3,000 emails per month completely free? That's right, **FREE**. No credit card, no expiring trial and no hidden fees or commitments. You get access to our amazing features—including powerful reports, list management, awesome templates and more integrations than you can shake a stick at. And if you need to send more, we've got affordable options monthly plans and pay–as–you–go credits.

Please note that this document is intended to serve as an introductory guide to MailChimp's features for musicians. There's a lot more we can do, and you may have questions about some of our other features. If your questions aren't addressed here, feel free to contact our support staff at mailchimp.com/support. We'll be happy to assist you.

"The MailChimp monkey makes me smile every time I login. MailChimp is one of the few tools out there that truly makes my job easier. Thanks, MailChimp!" –Emily Joyce, Associate Producer, **Austin City Limits**

BUILD YOUR MAILING LIST

With MailChimp, you can present your fans with lots of opportunities to sign up and receive email updates so they know about your tour dates, release dates and free songs.

Sign-Up Plugins

You can easily add a sign-up form to your website or blog with plugins for WordPress, TypePad, Moveable Type, Expression Engine and Drupal. Go to mailchimp.com/plugins for downloads, descriptions and installation instructions.

Sign-Up Forms

If you don't use one of the services above or would like to customize your sign-up form to put on your website or MySpace page, you can easily create a form in the MailChimp application. Here's how:
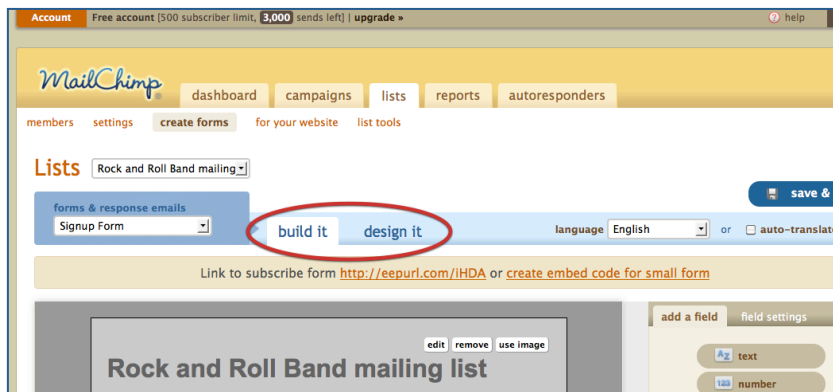
1. From the MailChimp dashboard, click the *Lists* tab.

learn more at mailchimp.com
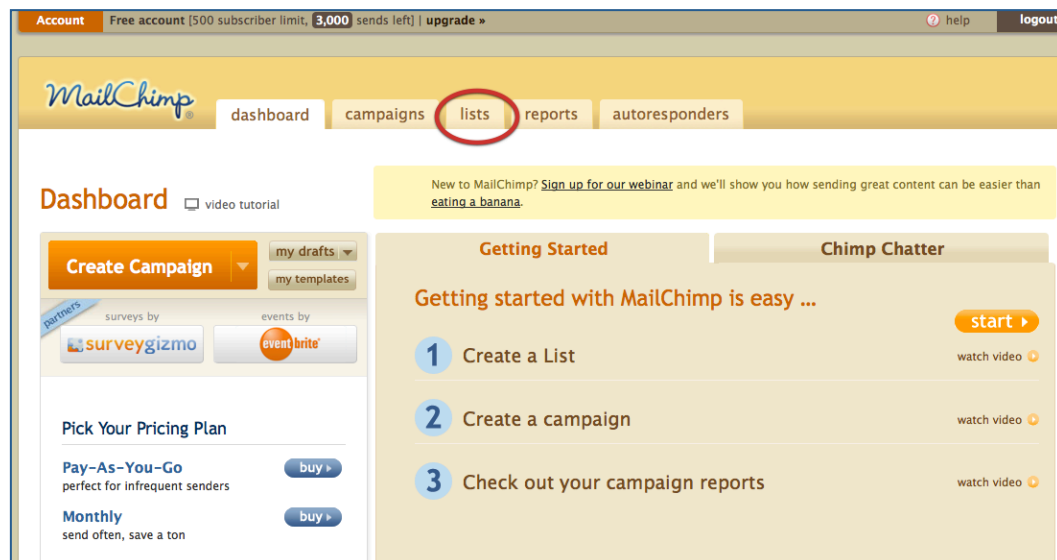
2. Choose which list you want connected with the sign-up form, and click **Forms** in the list options.
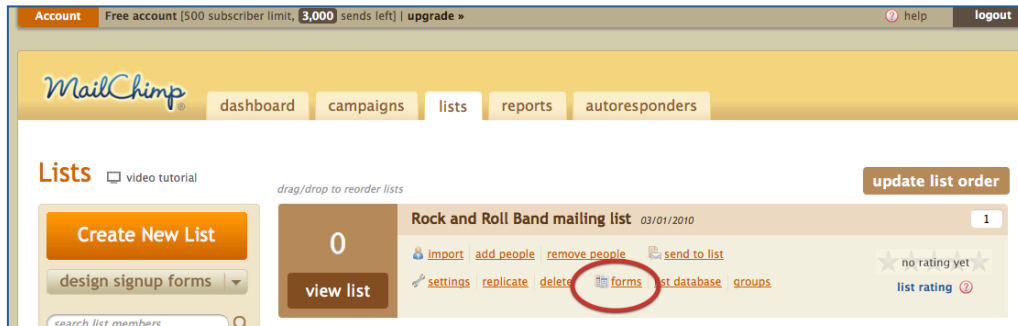
3. Customize the details of your form. Use the **Build It** tab to determine what information you collect in the form and the **Design It** tab to change colors, header and more.

4. When the form is finalized, just copy the **Link to Subscribe Form** located in the middle of the page, and link to it from the website you choose.

*learn more at mailchimp.com*
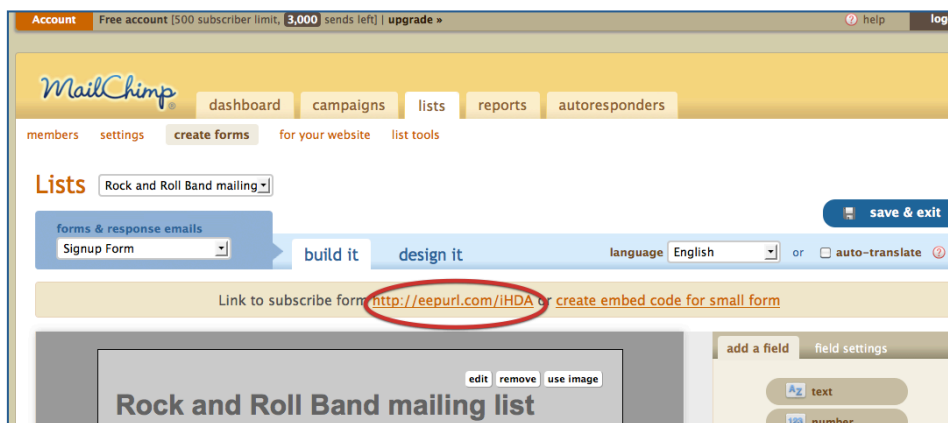
Embed Code

If you'd rather keep your fans on your own site than direct them to an external landing page to sign up for your newsletter, you can use our embed code to create a customized sign-up form on your website. The embed code provides more customization options than the sign-up form, too. Creating the code is a simple process, and it will make signing up for your newsletter easier for your fans.

Just follow the steps for building the subscribe form. Then click **Create Embed Code for Small Form** next to the link to subscribe form in the Sign-Up form builder.
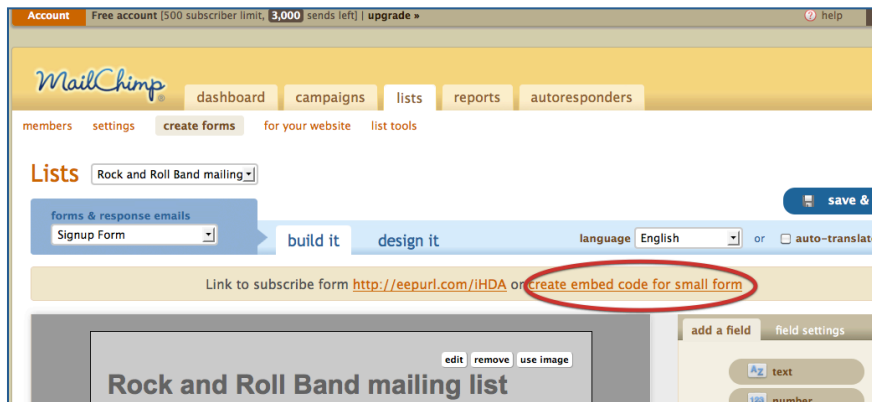
Copy and paste the code into the appropriate place on your site. If you're a TypePad user, you can send the code directly to your blog with the **Send to TypePad** button.
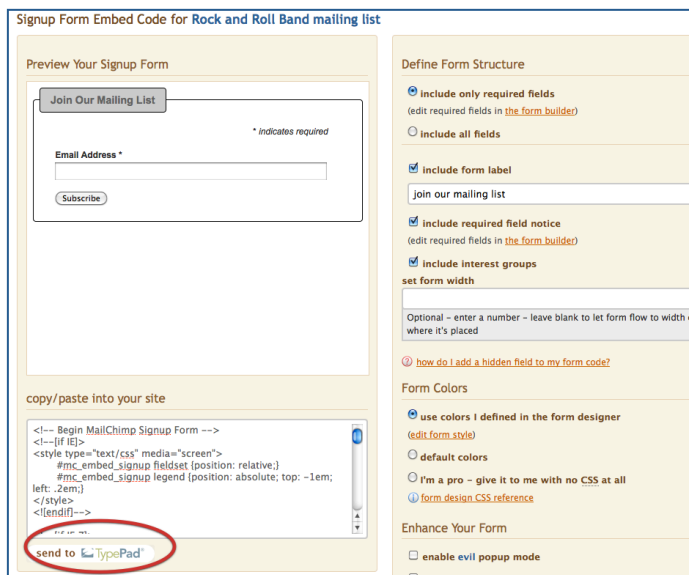
Evil Popup Form: Use with Caution!

If you want to actively recruit fans to sign up for your newsletter, MailChimp offers a way to make your sign-up form pop up on the page so that people visiting your website will be forced to make a decision. Just check **Enable Evil Popup Form** on the embed-code page, then paste the embed code (described above) into your site. When the box is checked, you can then decide how soon you want the form to pop up after someone navigates to the page (it loads after two seconds by default). When people navigate to the page where the code is embedded, they'll be presented with the popup form at the interval you've chosen.

If you choose **Send to Entire List**, you'll go immediately to the next step, where you'll set up the details of the newsletter. (We'll get to segmenting later.)

1. This is the name of your newsletter internal to MailChimp, so make sure it's descriptive.
2. This is what will appear in the subject line when people receive your email.
3. The "from name" is the person or organization that sends the email.
4. If people click "reply" on your email, this is the default address where their replies go.
5. If you want to personalize your email with your subscribers' first names, keep this box checked. *|**FNAME**|* is the basic merge tag that dynamically inserts first names.
6. You can track who opens your emails and what links they click by checking these boxes. Tracking is helpful for analyzing how effective your newsletters are.
7. MailChimp authenticates newsletters by default, which means that we insert a bit of code that acts like a license plate, letting spam filters know that we're playing by the rules.
8. If you use Twitter, MailChimp can automatically tweet your newsletter for you. The first time you check this box, we'll authenticate your Twitter account, and after that, you're connected forever. When we automatically post to Twitter, we include the subject line from your newsletter and a link to the web version of it.
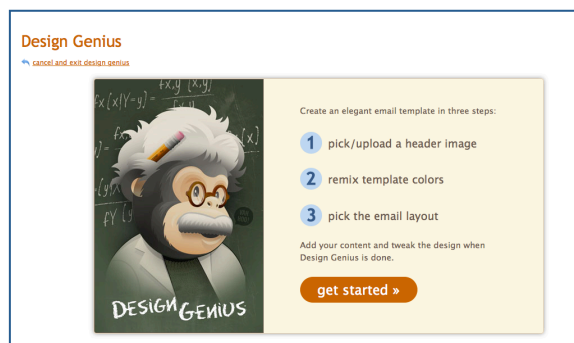
Design Your Email
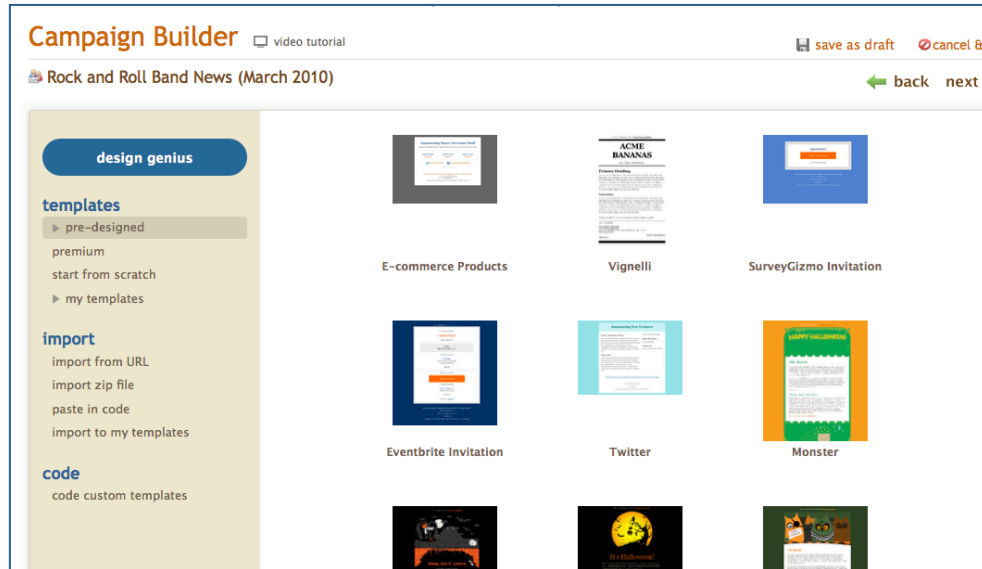
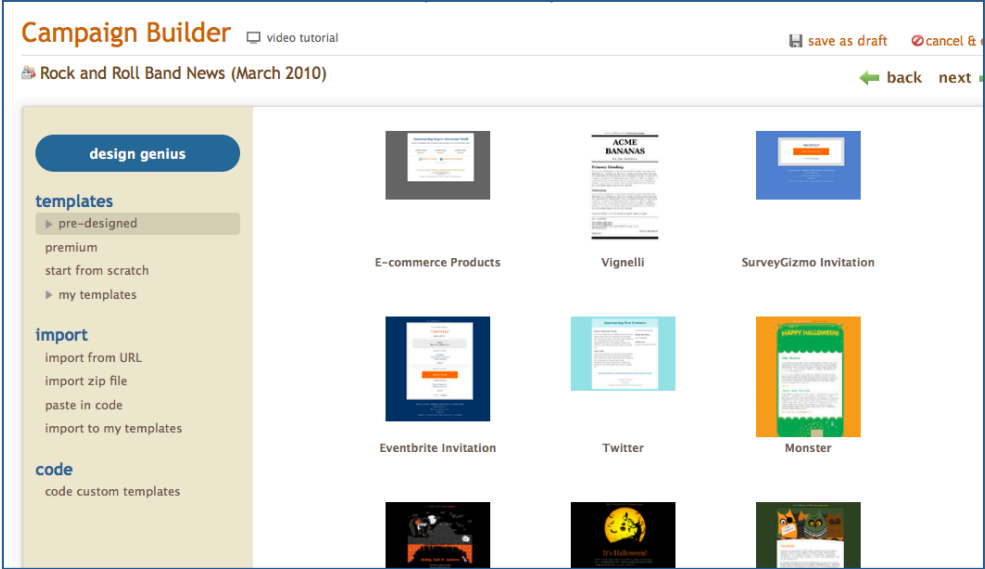The next step is to design your email. There are several ways to do it.

1. **Design Genius** is an easy way to put together your own template. We'll go through Design Genius in the next step.
2. You can also choose one of our pre-designed or premium templates, but for general music newsletters, you're more likely to find something that suits you with Design Genius.
3. If you or someone on your staff is a web designer, you can create your own templates and import them into MailChimp.
4. Similar to importing, you can code your own templates if you're tech-savvy.

If you choose Design Genius, MailChimp will take you step-by-step through your newsletter design.

Design Your Email

The next step is to design your email. There are several ways to do it.

1. **Design Genius** is an easy way to put together your own template. We'll go through Design Genius in the next step.
2. You can also choose one of our pre-designed or premium templates, but for general church newsletters, you're more likely to find something that suits you with Design Genius.
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If you choose Design Genius, MailChimp will take you step-by-step through your newsletter design.


9
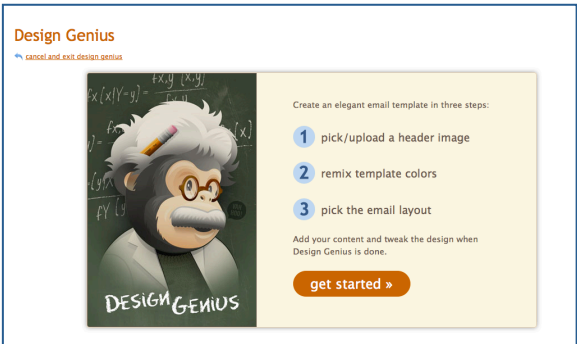
The first step in Design Genius is to choose a category. Select *Music and Bands* and you can choose among several basic headers. You can also upload your own image.
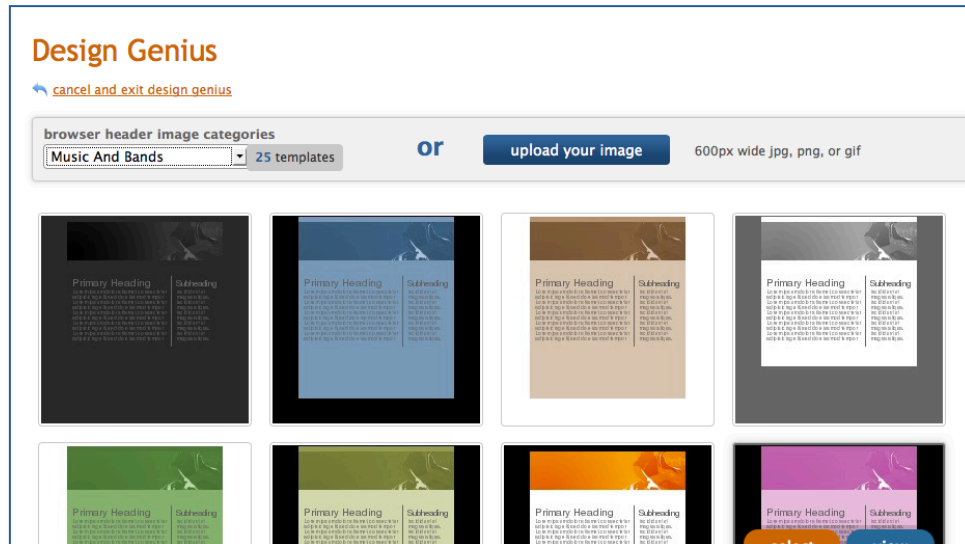
In this step, choose the basic color palette for your newsletter. You can refine it later if you want. Don't worry about editing the text right now, either. We'll do that soon.

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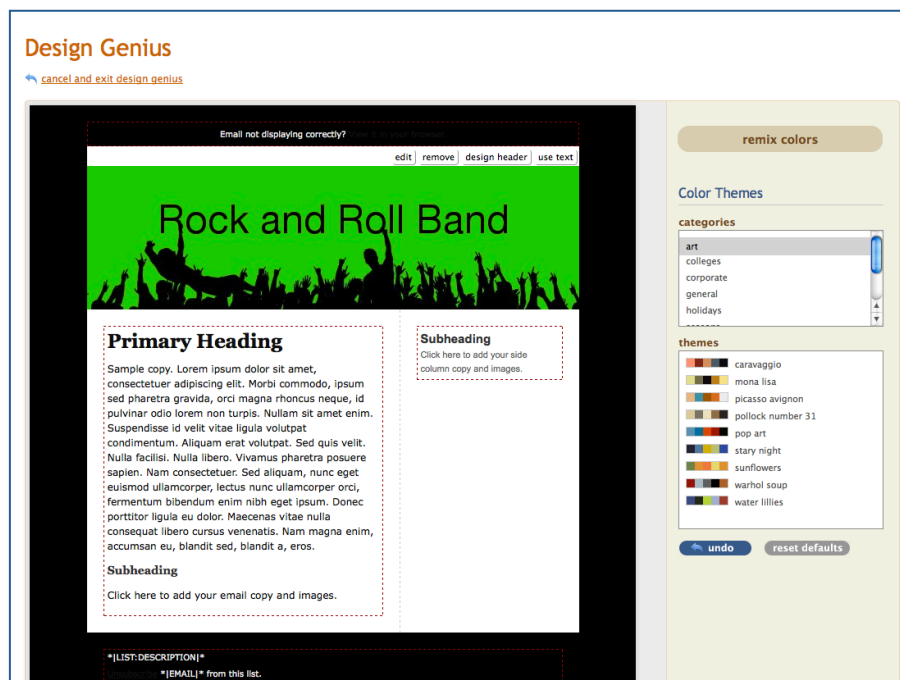
The final step in Design Genius is to choose the layout for your newsletter. Depending on the content in the newsletter, you'll choose a basic, postcard style, left column or right column layout to suit your campaign.
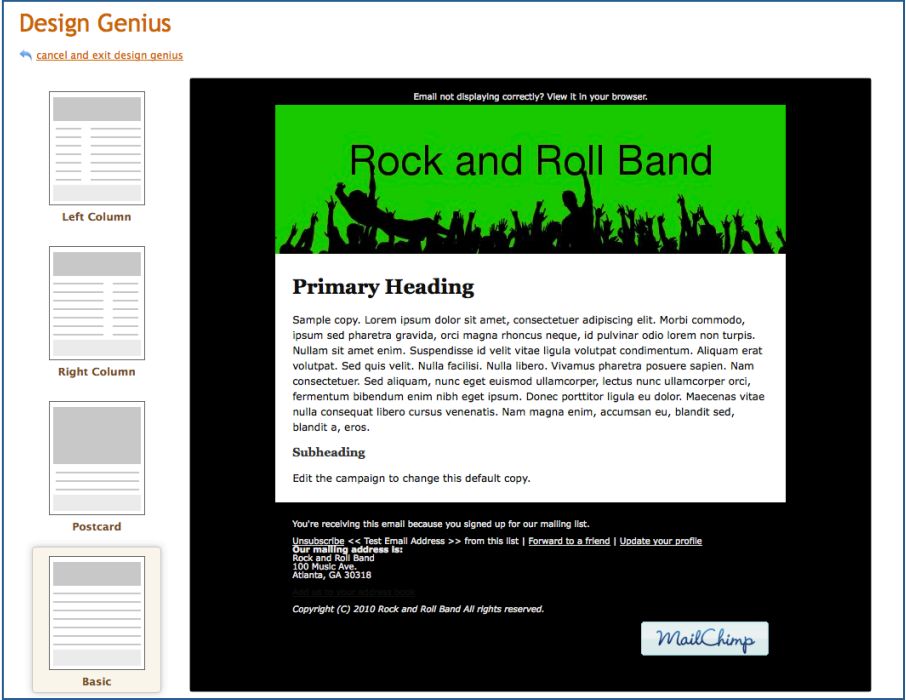
When you click *Save & Add Content*, we'll ask you to give your template a name.
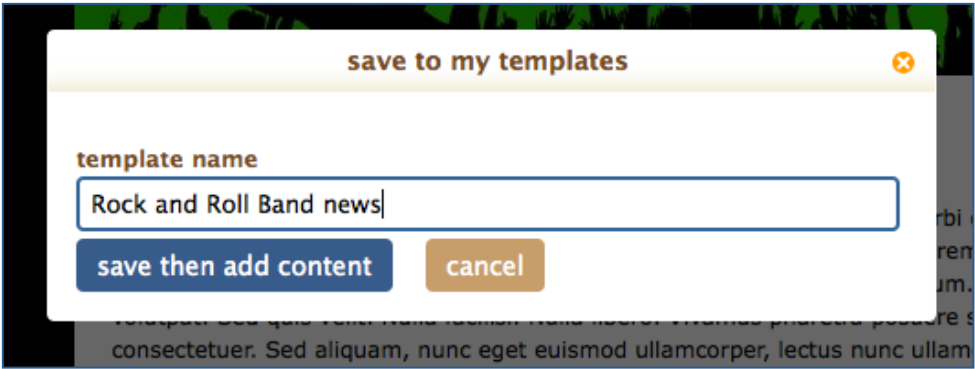
The next time you want to send an email with the same template, you'll find this template in the *My Templates* section of the campaign builder.
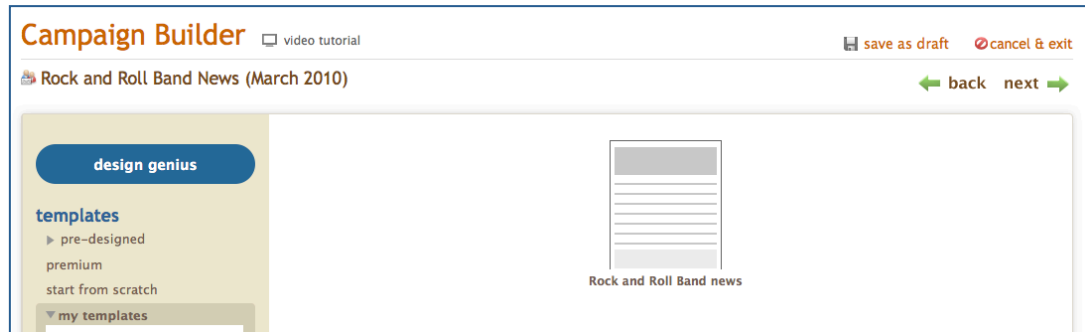

When you finish using Design Genius, the next step is to add content to your newsletter. You can also change all the visual elements of your newsletter in this step.

1. *Style Editor* allows you to change all the visual elements of your campaign, including colors, borders and links.
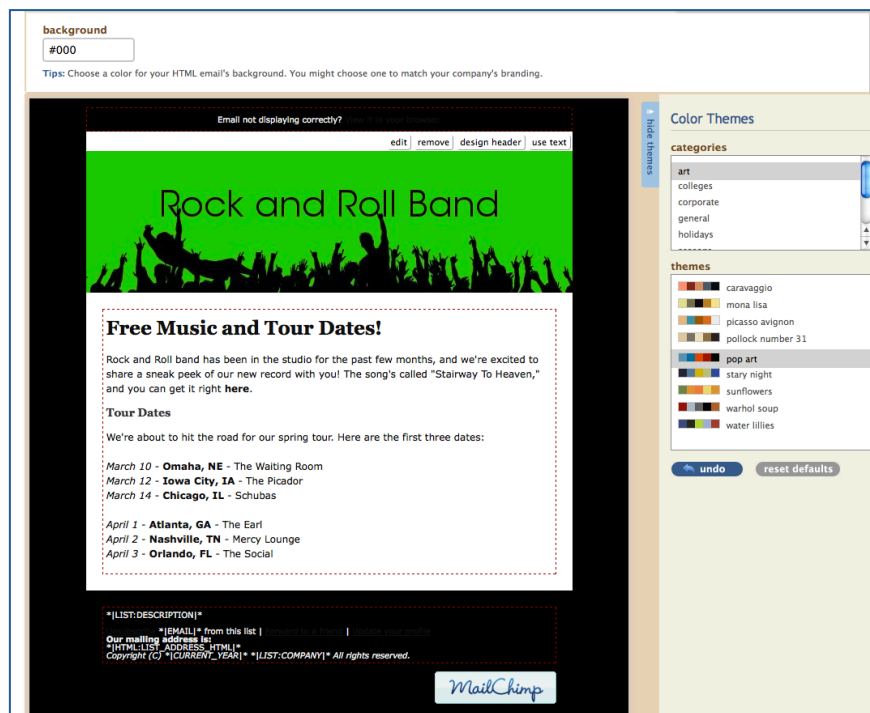
2. If you want a quick look at what your newsletter will look like when your subscribers receive it, click *Popup Preview*.
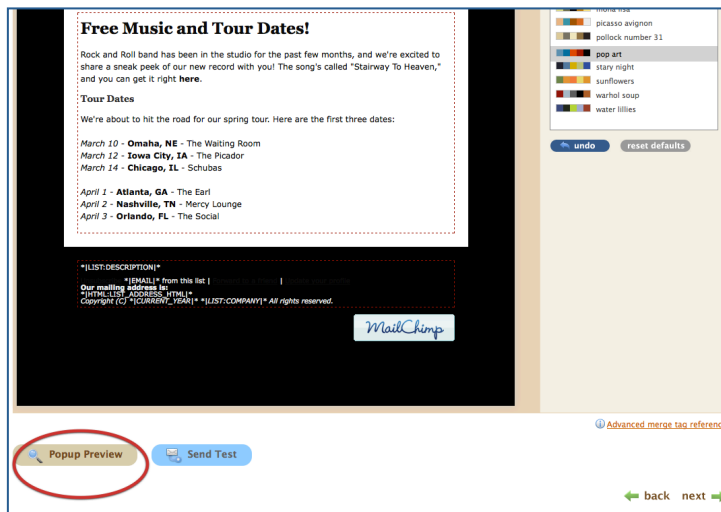

3. Each text section of the newsletter is editable. Just click on the section you want to edit, and add your content.

The next step is to create a text-only version of your campaign. This is required for all campaigns because some people don't have HTML-enabled email clients, and others read email on phones that don't support HTML email. Click *Copy Text from HTML Email*, and MailChimp will grab all the content from your HTML newsletter and reformat it as text.

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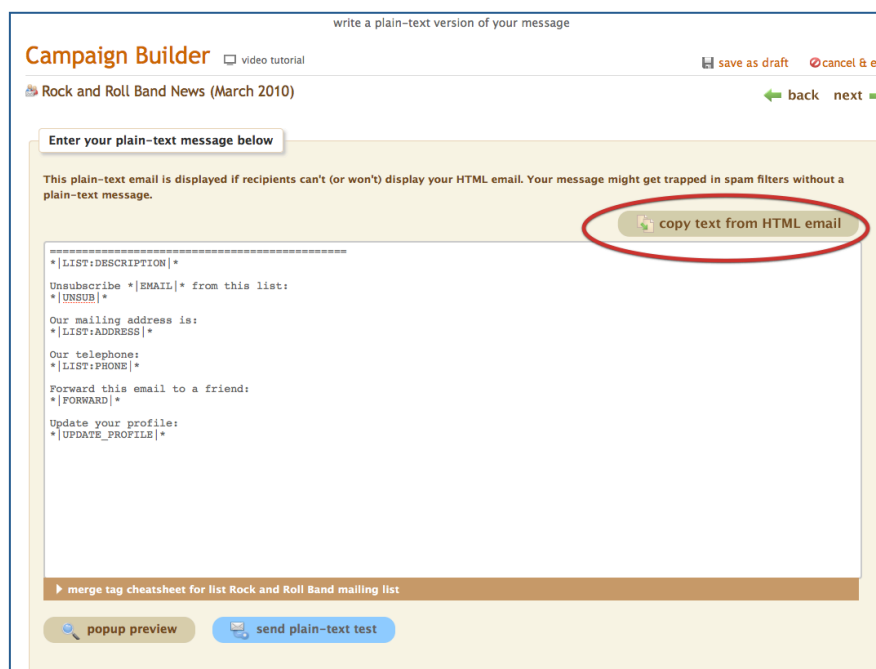
The final step in the process is to confirm everything you've done. If there are any issues with the newsletter, we'll let you know on this page. If you want to edit any part of the newsletter, just click on the relevant *Edit* button. There are more tools here to help you finalize the email on this page, too.
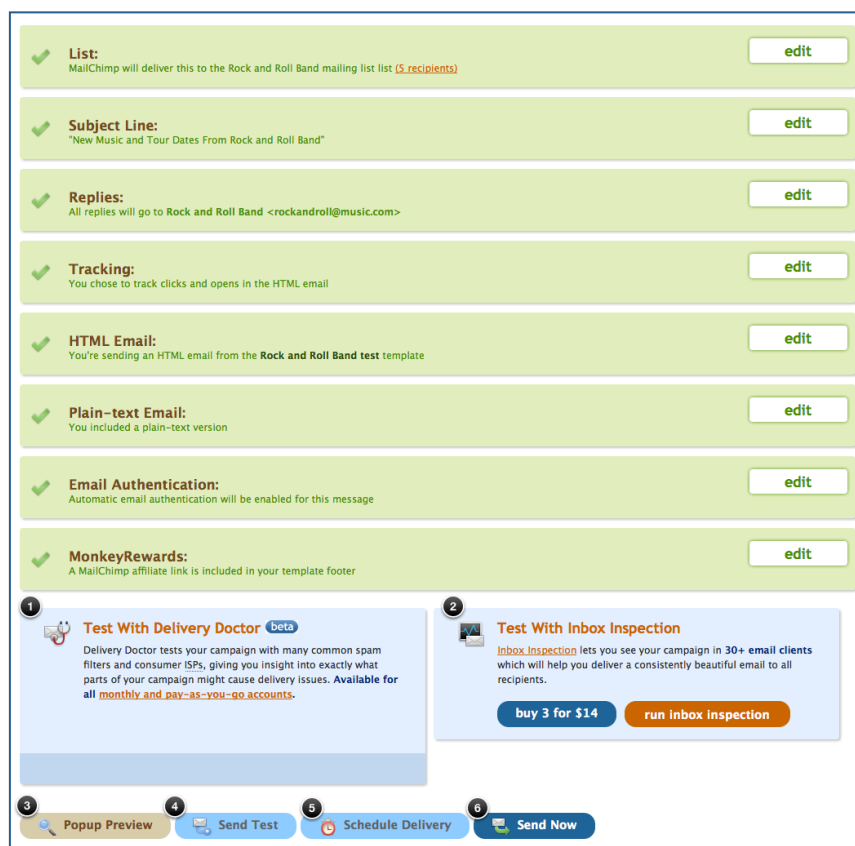

1. Delivery Doctor sends your newsletter through common spam filters and will let you know if there are any specific problems. If so, you'll want to fix them to make sure the newsletter is delivered successfully to all your subscribers. (Delivery Doctor is only available for paid accounts.)
2. Inbox Inspector shows you what your newsletter will look like in more than 30 different email clients. Since different services will render your newsletter in different ways, it's helpful to see ahead of time.
3. Preview the final version of your newsletter.
4. Send a test to yourself or a friend to see how the newsletter will look when it shows up in your inbox.
5. Schedule delivery if you don't want the newsletter to go out right away.
6. If everything looks good, send your newsletter!

CREATE AN RSS–TO–EMAIL CAMPAIGN

If you have a tour diary or another blog connected to your website, then you might want to set up an RSS–to–Email campaign to automate the process. RSS stands for "really simple syndication," and it's an easy way for people to follow your blog updates without having to check in routinely to see if you've posted anything new. It's 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–to–Email campaigns provide an easy solution for automatically sending your new content via email. Here's how to create one:

1. From the MailChimp dashboard, click the big orange **Create Campaign** button and choose **RSS–driven campaign**.
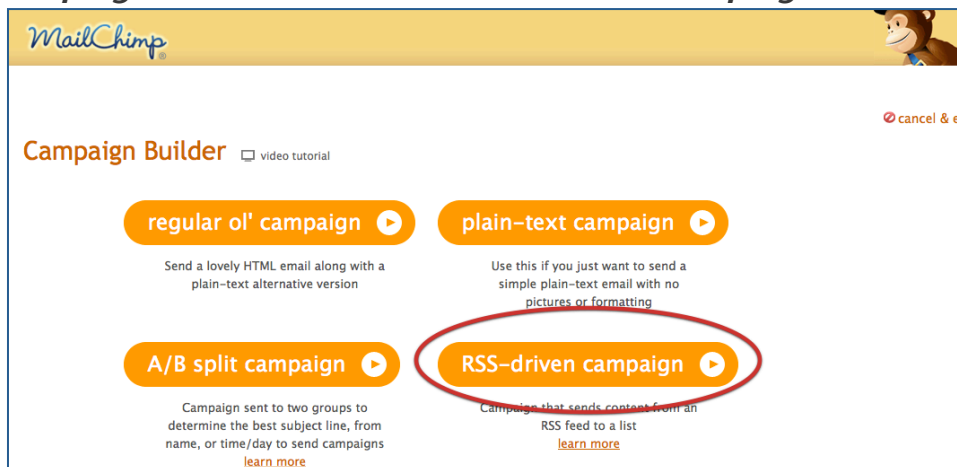
2. Enter the URL of your blog. You can give us the URL of your RSS feed, but it's not necessary. We can usually find it for you.
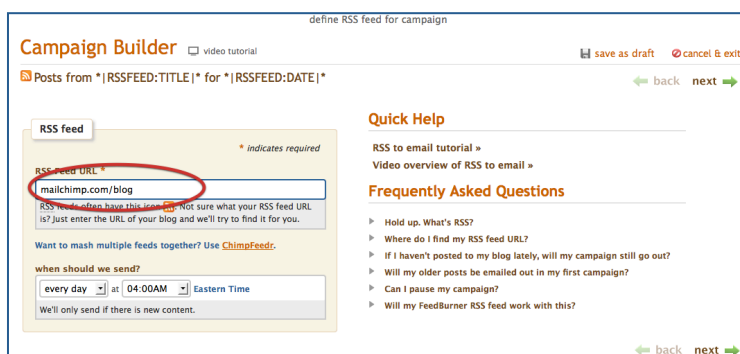
3. Decide how often you want the campaign to be delivered. You can choose when you want to send campaigns by **hour** for daily campaigns, and by **day and hour** for weekly and monthly campaigns. Click *Next*.

4. Choose the list and/or segment that will receive the campaign. Click *Next*.

5. Name your campaign, give it a subject, and review additional options on the preferences screen. There's also an option to auto-tweet your campaign from this screen (more on auto-tweets in the Social Sharing section). Click *Next*.

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6. Choose a template for your campaign. You can design the template yourself, or let MailChimp help you. If you have custom HTML, you can upload that as well.

Use our handy merge tag cheatsheet if you want to customize how your RSS feed is displayed in your campaign. You can use the *Pop-up Preview* tool to pull in live content and see exactly how your campaign will look when it's delivered. After you've completed the template, click *Next*.
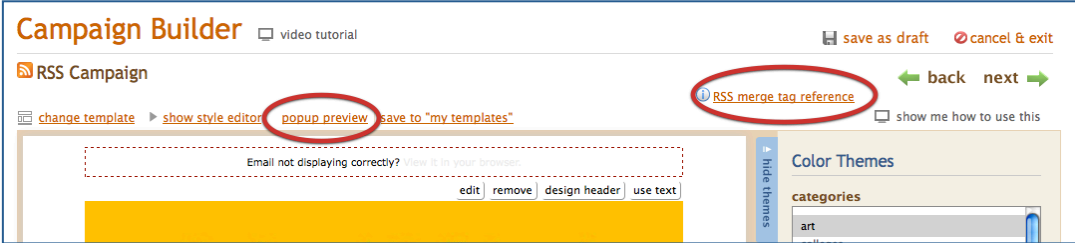
7. Automatically create a text version of your campaign for readers who use mobile devices or have HTML disabled. Click *Next*.
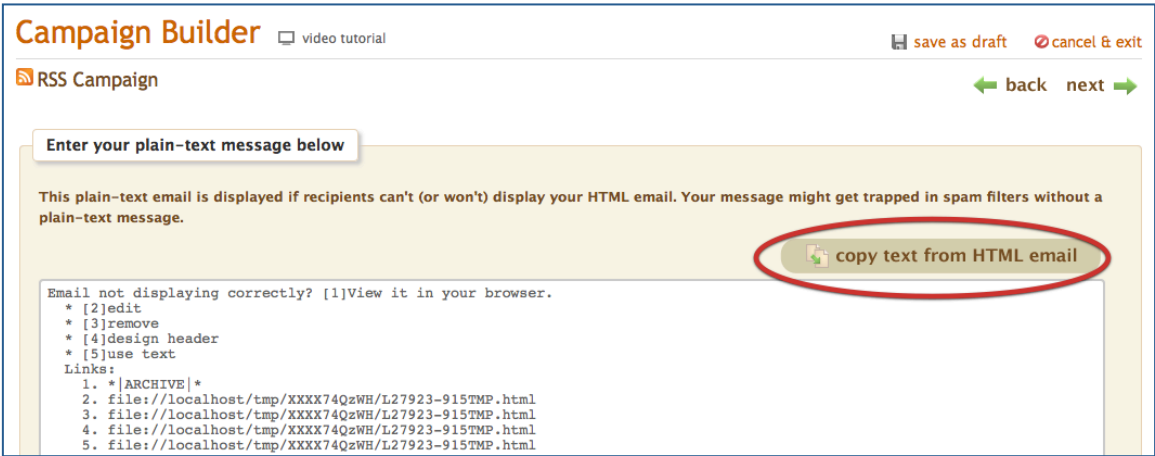
8. Confirm the details of your campaign, send a test, and if everything looks good, click **_Start RSS Campaign_**. Your first campaign will be delivered after your next blog post and at the frequency you determined in step 3.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why should I use MailChimp instead of FeedBurner for RSS-to-Email newsletters?

Feedburner is a great product, but we can do some things that it can't. We provide powerful tools like fully customizable templates, open and click tracking, bounce management, list cleaning and spam-filter check. You can auto-tweet your campaigns from MailChimp; you can tie your Google Analytics account to MailChimp and see how your site traffic is affected by your email campaigns; you can even send email in 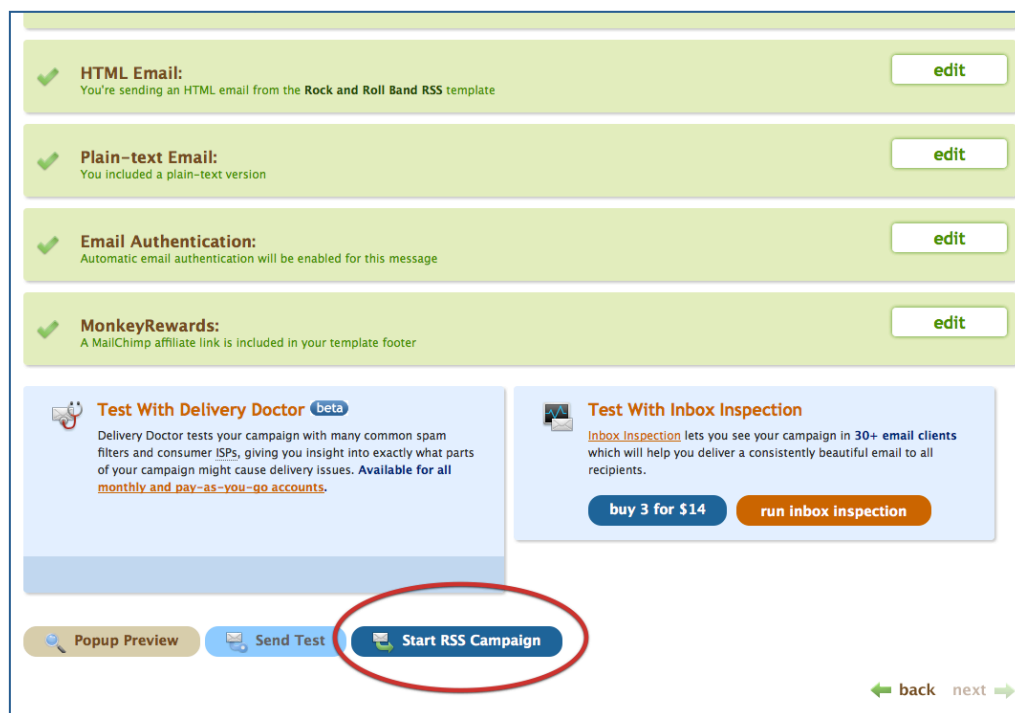a mobile-friendly format for people who read on their phones. Need more convincing? Feedburner doesn't allow you to choose when you send your RSS updates, but you can choose when to send by hour with MailChimp. You can personalize your newsletters with MailChimp's merge tags; you can segment your campaigns by frequency and interests—and it's completely free for lists under 500 subscribers. Plus, if you just love the look of Feedburner emails, you can use MailChimp's Feedburner template or customize it to your liking.

You may even want to use Feedburner *with* MailChimp—not just as an alternative. For example, you can use the two services together to add advertisements to your newsletter. We've got a step-by-step tutorial about how to do that on our blog. You can also use Feedburner to fix a feed that doesn't play nice with MailChimp (see the next question). We'll even add your MailChimp subscribers to your Feedburner count so you can monitor your overall subscriber count.

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

Our application generally cooperates well with RSS feeds, but every once in a while, customers have issues with feeds not working correctly. Make sure you've added the correct URL for your feed (especially if you're having problems when you just add your blog's URL). If it still doesn't work, we recommend running your feed through Feedburner and giving us the Feedburner feed instead. To do that, just go to feedburner.google.com and create a feed for your blog. Once you've completed the simple steps there, copy and paste your new Feedburner feed into the Feed URL field in the MailChimp campaign builder.

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

No. We'll start sending email when new content is added to your feed.

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

Nope. We only send campaigns when there's new content in your feed. So if you've set your campaign to go daily but didn't post anything today, a campaign won't go out tomorrow.

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

To update your campaign, go to *Campaigns* from the dashboard. In the left column beneath *Create Campaign*, you'll see folders containing all your campaigns. Navigate to the RSS-to-Email folder, and you'll see a list of all your campaigns. Click on the one you want to update, and the "parent"—the template for your all your emails—will be the top item in the folder. Click *Edit Email* to make changes.

SOCIALIZE YOUR CAMPAIGN

Social networking sites are excellent ways to promote your music and connect with your audience, but we don't think they'll replace email marketing any time soon. In fact, our data suggests that social media and email complement each other nicely. MailChimp recently analyzed more than a billion emails sent since January 2009 to track the inclusion of links to Twitter and Facebook. The data shows an 84% increase in email campaigns that include links to Twitter, and a 66% increase in campaigns that feature Facebook. In 2008, neither site was linked often in email–marketing campaigns—a mere 0.49% of users included any social media links in their emails.

Social media and email work so well together because they have different strengths. Social media is great for networking, quick updates and linking to articles; while email campaigns are better for delivering content and providing more in–depth updates. As a blogger, you want your audience to be engaged, and a blend of social media and email marketing will give your fans several ways of following your music. MailChimp offers several ways to integrate social media with email marketing.
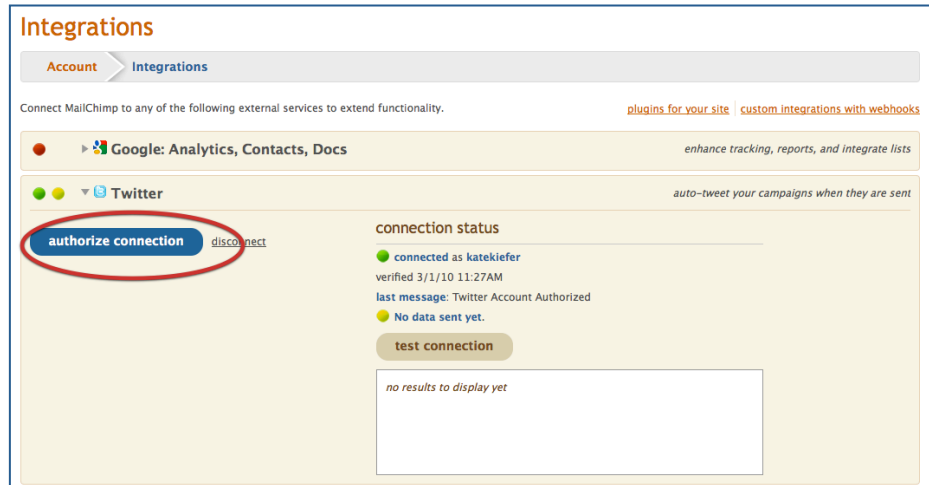
Auto–Tweet

If you know you want to tweet an email campaign before you send it, MailChimp will do it for you as soon as you send the campaign. Just check the ***Automatically post to Twitter*** box on the campaign preferences tab when you're setting up the campaign. If you haven't set up a Twitter account in MailChimp, you'll have the option to do that instead. Once the account is set up, you won't have to re-authorize it every time.
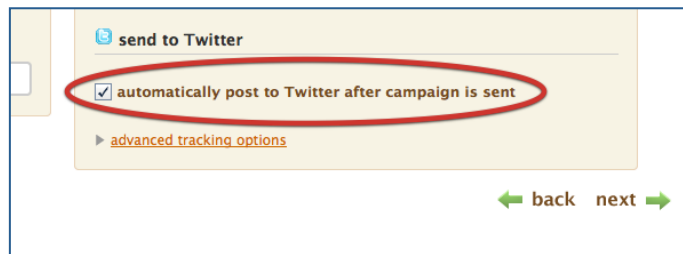

MailChimp will automatically send a tweet with your subject line and a link to the online version of your email. We also shorten the URL using our EepURL tool, so you don't have to worry about having your tweet cut short.

If you want to change the Twitter account you use to tweet your campaign, click on *Account* in the top-left corner of your screen, then click on *Integrations*. Choose *Twitter* and then *Authorize Connection* to authorize a different account. (You can only authorize one Twitter account at a time.)


Social Share Button

If you decide to tweet your campaign after it's been sent or want to promote your campaign on a social network other than Twitter, use the social share button that appears beside your sent campaign in the Campaigns dashboard. When you click *Social Share*, you'll be directed to a screen where you can share your campaign on Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, StumbleUpon, Digg and Delicious.

learn more at mailchimp.com
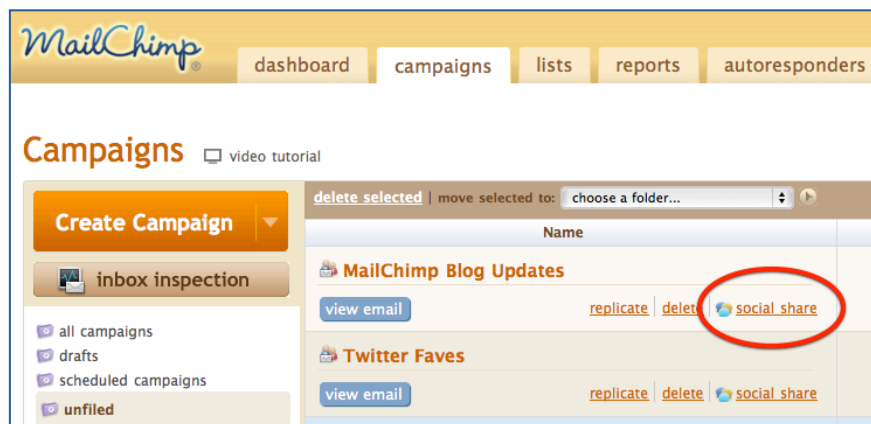
Social Share Merge Tag

In addition to sharing your own campaign, MailChimp lets you offer your readers a way to share your campaigns. When you place the *|MC:SHARE|* merge tag in your template, MailChimp will add links to more than 20 social networks. If you want to limit the networks in the social share merge tag, you can use *|SHARE:SITE_NAME1,SITE_NAME2|* to specify which sites are included. For example, *|SHARE:Facebook,Twitter,Digg|*.
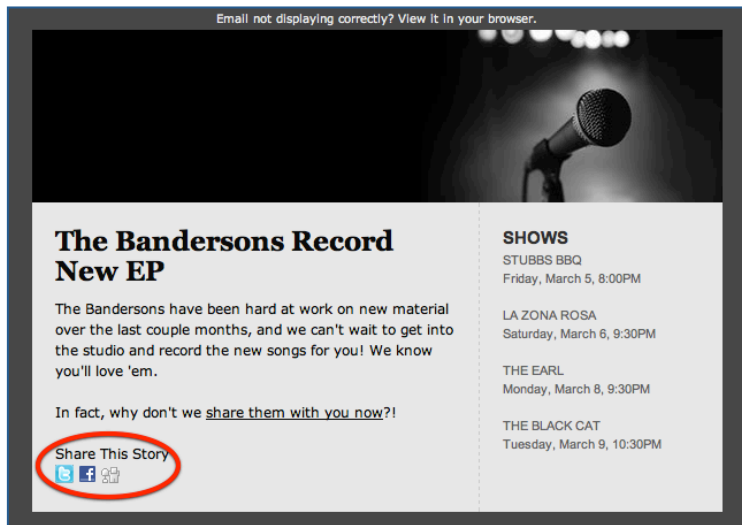
Share Your Twitter Profile

We even have a merge tag that lets you share your own Twitter information in your newsletter. The Twitter merge tag *|TWITTER:FULLPROFILE|* will bring in the background from your Twitter page, as well as your avatar, follower count, a follow button and recent tweets.

The tag *|TWITTER:PROFILE|* will bring in your background, avatar, follower count and a follow button—but it won't pull in recent tweets.

Wanna limit the number of recent tweets that show up in your email? Just remove (NUM) from this tag and replace it with the number of tweets you want to see in your campaign: *|TWITTER:TWEETS(NUM)|*. So if you want to show five recent tweets, use *|TWITTER:TWEETS5|*.

SHARE YOUR MUSIC

With MailChimp, you can easily share your music with your fans. While we can't let you attach huge files to your emails and send them to thousands of subscribers (that would be annoying for your subscribers, not to mention incredibly expensive), we have a fast and simple way to achieve the same effect—we'll host the files for you and link back to them in your emails, all from inside MailChimp.

Want to send a new song to your newsletter subscribers? Here are three easy steps to including a file in your MailChimp campaign.

1. Highlight the relevant text in your email. For example, you might highlight a sentence like "Download the new song" or "Check out the video." We suggest indicating the size and file type as a courtesy to your subscribers.
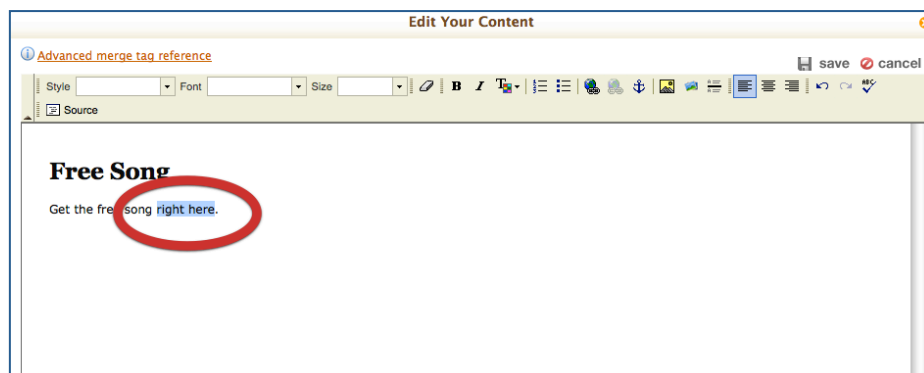
2. With the text highlighted, click **insert**/**edit link**.
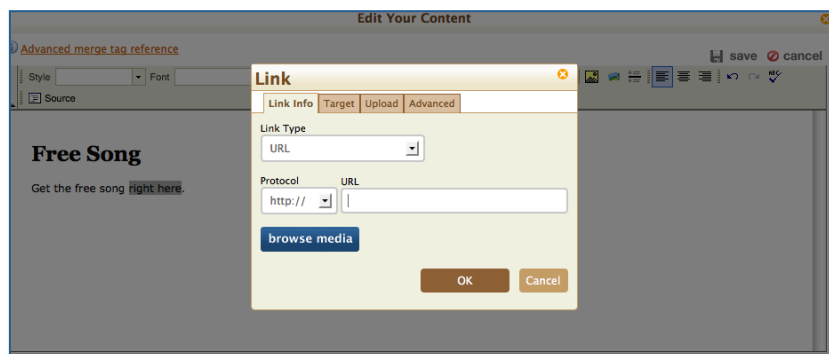
3. Then select the **Upload** tab and click **Browse** to grab the file from your computer (it must be less than 10 megs).
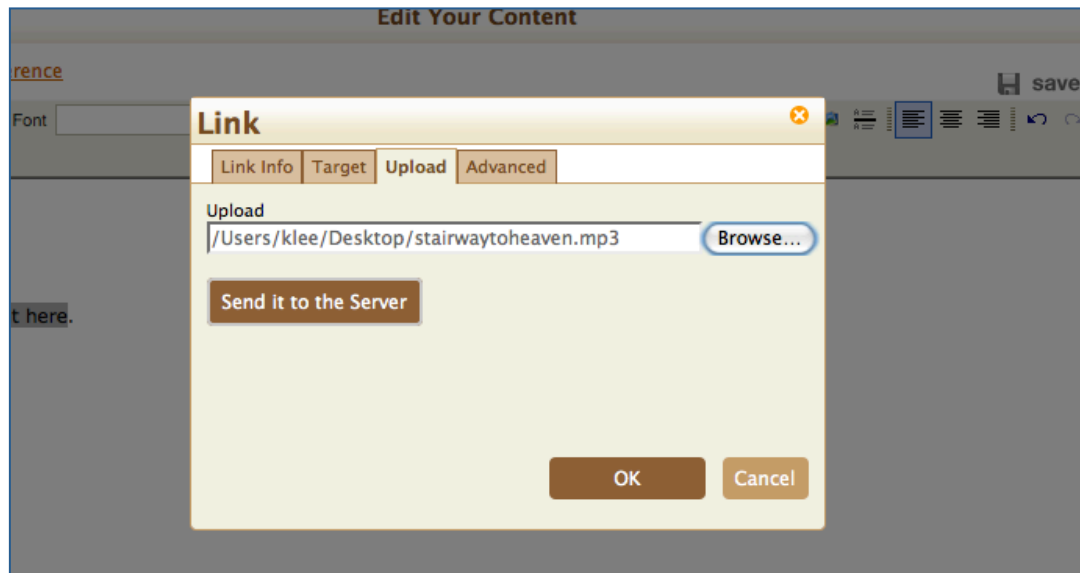
It's that simple. We'll host the file for free on our CDN servers and track how many times it was clicked. And if you've installed AIM reports, we'll even let you know *who* clicked to download.

All your uploaded attachments are accessible by clicking **Insert Link** and then **Browse Media** from within the text editor. You'll see your uploaded files in a folder called—you guessed it—**Files**.

SHARE YOUR VIDEOS

As a musician, you might want to embed videos into your email campaigns. The truth is, embedding videos into HTML email is unreliable and often dangerous, so MailChimp has a better way.

The safest option is to generate a screenshot of the video player, insert that image into your email, and link it to the actual video landing page. Sounds complicated, but we automated the process with our YouTube, Blip.tv and Vimeo merge tags so you can do it in two quick steps:

1. If it's not already there, put the video you want to use on YouTube, Blip.tv or Vimeo.

2. Get the video ID from YouTube, Blip.tv or Vimeo.

TIP: FINDING THE VIDEO ID

Can't find it? A video ID consists of letters and/or numbers, depending on the service provider. You'll find it at the end of the video's URL. Occasionally, the video ID will be presented within a long URL. If this is the case, the video ID ends before a question mark.
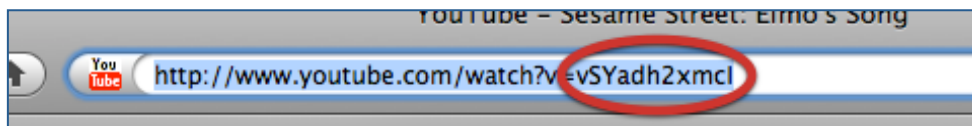
3. Copy the video ID into our handy video merge tag.

Here's the YouTube merge tag before we included the video ID:

|YOUTUBE:VIDEO_ID|

And after:

|YOUTUBE:vSYadh2xmcI|

And you're all set. MailChimp will find the video, grab a still image and overlay some video–control elements to make it look playable. When subscribers click on the image, it'll take them to the hosted version of the video.

Here's what it looks like in the Popup Preview:

TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE

MailChimp makes it easy for you to get the word out about shows to the fans who want to know. Say you're playing a show in Atlanta—you can send a targeted campaign exclusively to people near Atlanta, rather than sending to your entire list.

Segment By City and State

If you have city and state as fields in your signup form (you probably do), then you can easily segment your list based on those interest groups. It's perfect for concert announcements. Here's how:
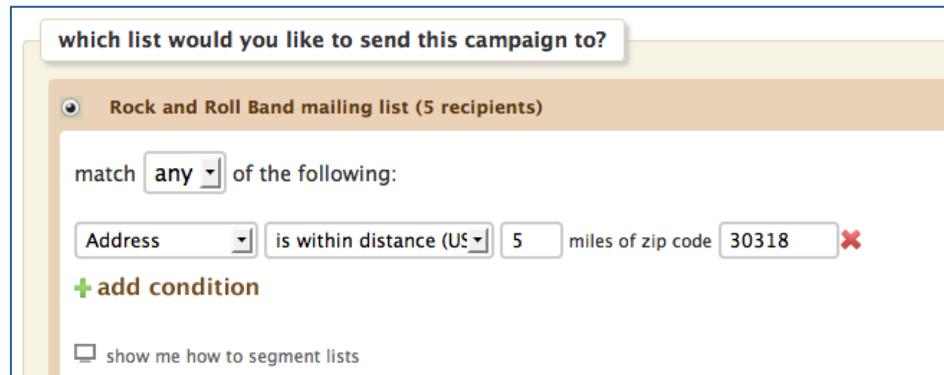
1. From the MailChimp dashboard, click **Create Campaign**.
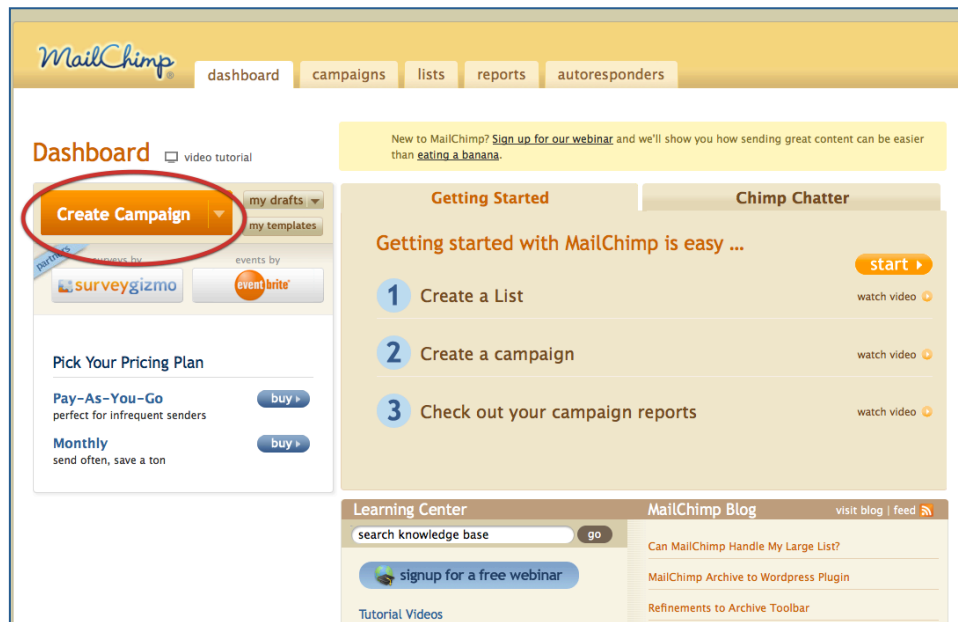
2. Select which list you'd like to send to and select **send to segment of list**.
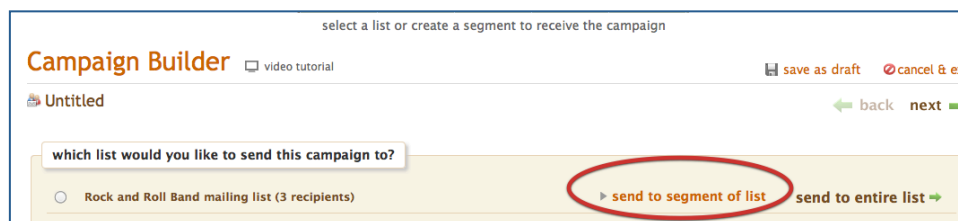
3. If you have City and State set up as fields in your signup form, you can segment by those independently. From the drop-down menu, select **City | is** and type the name of the city you're playing. You may also have address as one field in your signup form, in which case you can select **Address | is within distance** and enter a zip code.
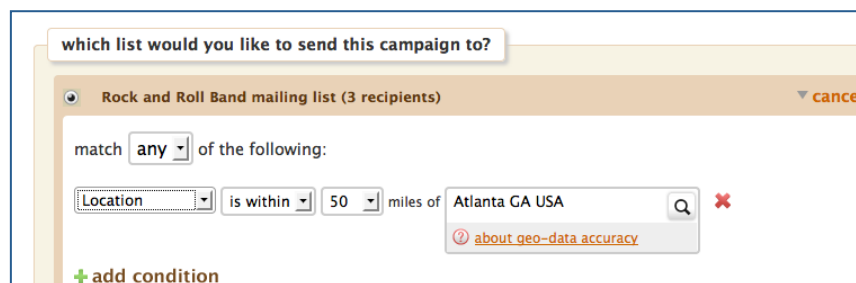

4. The list count will update to reflect the number of people in the segment you're sending to. Now you're ready to let your fans know when you're playing near their town.

Geolocation

Looking for another great way to segment by location? With our Geo-location tool, you can set up a campaign to send to anyone on your list within a 150-mile radius of any point on the globe. Here's how:

1. Segment your list by specifying a location.

2. Select a radius of 50, 100, or 150 miles around that location.

3. Click on the magnifying glass to verify the location on the map. Click **use this location**, and you're all set.
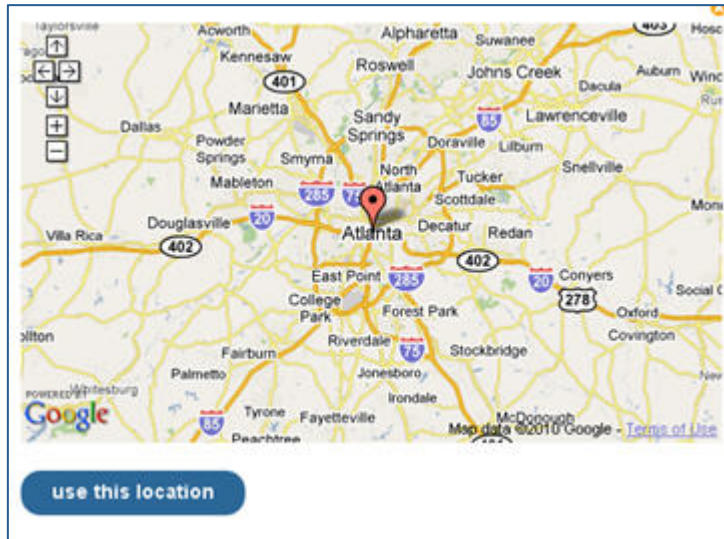

You can segment by lots of other criteria, too—anything that you have set up in your signup form can be used to segment your list. For example, if you're playing an all-ages show, you can segment by age to let your younger fans know that they'll *finally* be able to see you live. You can also segment by ***Date Added*** to send a thank-you note to everyone who signed up at your last show. There are tons of ways to reach out to your list using list segments.

FIND YOUR FANS

As a musician, your mailing list is a super valuable resource. The folks on your list care enough about what you're doing that they want to be regularly updated, so it's important to track your interaction with them. MailChimp has several features that give you better idea of where your fans are coming from and how your campaigns are reaching them.

AIM Reports

Our regular reporting features give you lots of great information about campaign performance, but if you *really* want to get to know your list, consider our AIM Reports as an add-on. You'll have all the standard features of a campaign report, but with more detail about specific recipients. With AIM Reports installed, you can track real-time activity of a specific recipient to find out when they opened your email, which links they clicked on and how many times they looked at your campaign.
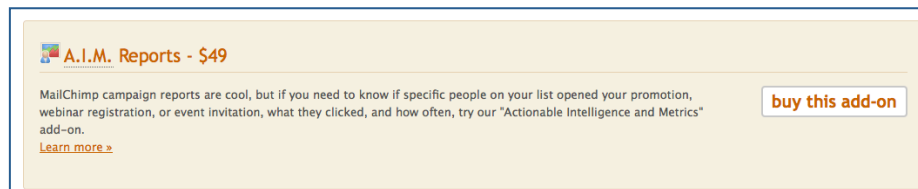
This add-on has a one-time fee of $49. After that, you can use AIM Reports for any campaign, with any list, for the life of your account. To install AIM Reports, just follow these quick steps:

> 1. From your dashboard, click **Account**.
>
> 2. Click **Add-ons** and then **AIM Reports**.
>
> 3. Once you click **Install**, MailChimp will take you through the secure ordering process.
>
> 4. From now on, forever and ever, when you send a campaign with tracking enabled, we'll generate AIM Reports for that campaign.

learn more at mailchimp.com

Click Mapping

A great way to find out if your subscribers are engaged is to track which links they're clicking within your email. Our Click Mapping feature allows you to see which links are clicked the most in an individual campaign. Check it out:

1. Go to the *Reports* section of a recently sent campaign.
2. Select *Click Map* to view the stats for each link in your campaign.

With click mapping, you can experiment with different types of links to see which are more successful for your list. Do people respond better to links near the top? Do they like to click on images of products? Try different layouts to find out what works best for you.

Tracking Tweets

MailChimp not only automatically tweets your email campaigns; we also make it easy to track how many other people are tweeting them. If you click on the *Reports* tab in your MailChimp dashboard, you'll see a screen that lists all your email campaigns. Click on the name of one of your campaigns to view its overview report. From there, click *EepURL Stats* to see how many times your campaign has been tweeted and retweeted, who did the tweeting and a timeline of all tweets. (Note that only tweets that include the automatically generated EepURL for your campaign are included in this report.)

PayPal Integration

If you accept payments via PayPal, you can automatically add new fans to your MailChimp list when they purchase music or merch from you. To use this feature, you'll need to have either a Premier or Business PayPal account. Once that's in place, here's how to link it with your MailChimp account:

1. Log in, go to the *Account* tab, click *Add-ons*, *Integrations*, and then activate the *PayPal 360* plugin:
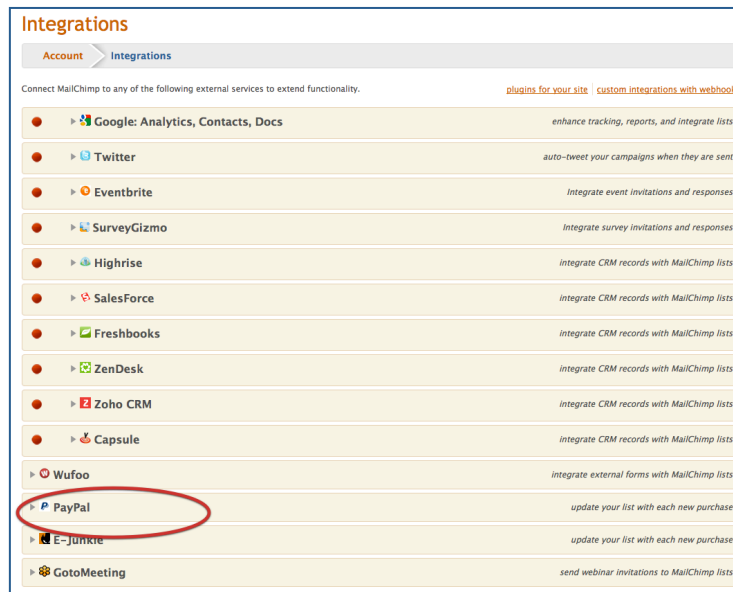
2. Select the list you want to add PayPal purchasers to. MailChimp will give you a custom URL. Copy & Paste that to your clipboard.
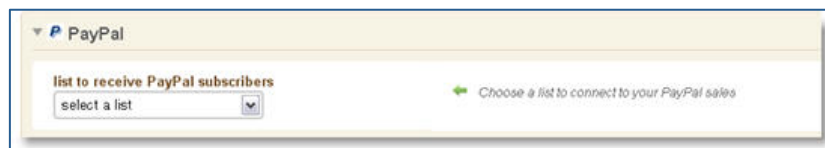
3. Log in to your Premier or Business PayPal account.

4. Click *Profile*, then *Instant Payment Notification Preferences*.

    5. Enter the custom URL MailChimp generated for you, and click *Save*.

EXAMPLES

Lots of great musicians use MailChimp. Here are a few examples of nicely designed MailChimp campaigns from musicians we love.

This one's from a Portland indie-pop band called Blind Pilot. We like the cool header, short-and-sweet note to fans, and the large photo:

Here's a simple one from a bluegrass band called The Punch Brothers. They used this campaign to announce tour dates and locations:

And one more from another Portland band, The Decemberists.

The Decemberists | News 2.17.10

Points of Order
• Sydney show at the Metro Theater streams online!
• Dharma Bums to reunite in Portland
• Black Prairie on tour soon!

Adored Mailing List Recipients,

The Decemberists' very first headline show in Australia, at Sydney's Metro Theatre on January 19, was filmed and is now available to view online via Oz webcaster Moshcam's site. Click here to watch the set, which includes a pretty broad setlist, including a cover of "Bye Bye Pride," originally recorded by Australia's own The Go Betweens. Photos from the band's first Australia/New Zealand tour last month are available here.

The Dharma Bums, featuring Decemberist drummer John Moen, will reunite at the Crystal Ballroom in Portland, OR for a show on February 20. The Young Fresh Fellows and Derby will support. Tickets are $15 in advance and can be purchased here.

We recently introduced you to Black Prairie, a side project featuring Decemberists Chris Funk, Jenny Conlee, and Nate Query plus local Portland musicians Annalisa Tornfelt and Jon Neufeld. The band has announced some new tour dates. A full list of shows can be found below. If you'd like to volunteer to help spread the word about Black Prairie shows, please sign-up here. You can follow the band on Twitter and Facebook.

February 27, Noise Pop Festival at Rickshaw Stop, San Francisco, CA
March 18, SXSW - Paste Magazine Party, Austin, TX
March 19, SXSW - St David's Historic Sanctuary, Austin, TX
April 1, The Woods, Portland, OR
April 2, Sam Bonds Garage, Eugene, OR (with Mimicking Birds)
April 3, Tractor Tavern, Seattle, WA (with Mimicking Birds)
April 8, Live Wire Radio @ Mission Theater, Portland, OR
August 6-8, Pickathon Festival, Pendarvis Farm near Portland, OR

Yours truly,

The Decemberists
www.decemberists.com
twitter.com/thedecemberists

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learn more at mailchimp.com

RESOURCES

Here are some more tools MailChimp offers that are helpful for musicians:

MailChimp Jungle group: Musicians Who MailChimp:
jungle.mailchimp.com/group/musicianswhomailchimp

Personalize Your Welcome Emails With Custom Freebies:
mailchimp.com/blog/personalize-your-welcome-emails-with-custom-freebies/

Staying In Touch With Your True Fans:
http://www.mailchimp.com/blog/staying-in-touch-with-your-true-fans/

Analytics360 for Wordpress:
http://www.mailchimp.com/blog/google-analytics-plugin-for-wordpress/

MailChimp Academy Support Videos:
http://www.mailchimp.com/support/videos/

Webinars:
http://www.mailchimp.com/support/webinars/

Free Email Marketing Guides and Articles:
http://www.mailchimp.com/articles/

Benchmark Reports:
http://www.mailchimp.com/charts/

MonkeyWrench Newsletter:
http://www.mailchimp.com/page/monkeywrench/