

Technical report

Email Efficiency Calculators

James Hogg, Kerrie Mengersen

April 4, 2024



Basic Calculator

The following notation is used:

- N_i : Number of emails of type i , where $i \in \{1, 2, 3\}$ corresponds to the three email types.
- R_i : Time to read each email of type i in minutes.
- A_i : Time to take action on each email of type i in minutes.
- W_i : Time to write or respond to each email of type i in minutes.
- P_i : Probability that an email of type i is essential.
- T_{total} : Total email time.
- $T_{essential}$: Total email time that is essential.
- $T_{nonessential}$: Total email time that is nonessential.

The total email time per type is calculated by summing the product of the number of emails and the respective email activity times (e.g., read, action, responding). The formula for the total email time for email type i is

$$T_i = N_i \times (R_i + A_i + W_i)$$

.

Note that the values in the right pie chart are T_1, T_2, T_3 . The total email time in minutes is derived by summing.

$$T_{total} = \sum_{i=1}^3 T_i$$

To differentiate between essential and nonessential email time, we use the probability P_i .

$$T_{essential,i} = P_i \times T_i$$

$$T_{nonessential,i} = (1 - P_i) \times T_i$$

Then, to find the email time spent on essential and nonessential emails across all email types, we sum across the respective times for each email type:

$$T_{essential} = \sum_{i=1}^3 T_{essential,i}$$

$$T_{nonessential} = \sum_{i=1}^3 T_{nonessential,i}$$

The values in the left pie chart are $T_{essential}$ and $T_{nonessential}$.

The cost associated with the managing emails is determined by multiplying the email time, in hours, by the pay rate per hour. The cost of time spent on all emails and the cost of time spent on essential and nonessential emails is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Cost}_{total} = (T_{total} \times \text{Pay})/60$$

$$\text{Cost}_{essential} = (T_{essential} \times \text{Pay})/60$$

$$\text{Cost}_{nonessential} = (T_{nonessential} \times \text{Pay})/60$$

Intermediate Calculator

The intermediate calculator introduces variability into the derivations, both in the number of received emails and the time taken for the email activities (e.g., read, action, respond). The time for the email activities are modeled using the Gamma distribution with its parameters derived from the user inputs. We use similar notation as above, with the introduction of the following new terms.

- $N_{lower,i}, N_{upper,i}$: User-specified lower and upper bounds for the number of emails recieved of email type i
- $R_{lower,i}, R_{upper,i}, A_{lower,i}, A_{upper,i}, W_{lower,i}, W_{upper,i}$: User-specified lower and upper bounds for reading, action, and writing times for email type i , respectively.

1. Sample the number of emails:

$$N_i \sim \text{Uniform}(N_{lower,i}, N_{upper,i})$$

2. Parameterisation of distribution of time to complete email activities:

- The parameters for the Gamma distribution are derived from the user-specified lower and upper bounds.
- Consider reading times as an example.

$$\mu_{reading,i} = \frac{R_{upper,i} + R_{lower,i}}{2}$$

$$\sigma_{reading,i}^2 = \left(\frac{R_{upper,i} - R_{lower,i}}{3.92} \right)^2$$

- Similar calculations are made for action and writing times.

3. Simulate email activity times:

- Consider reading times for email type i . Simulate a vector of length N_i from the following:

$$\text{Gamma}(k = \frac{\mu_{reading,i}^2}{\sigma_{reading,i}^2}, \theta = \frac{\sigma_{reading,i}^2}{\mu_{reading,i}})$$

- Complete the above simulation for each email type and email activity

4. Calculate total email time per email type:

- The total email time, T_i , is the sum of the sampled vectors for each email activity.

5. Stratify by essential and nonessential emails:

- The distinction between essential and nonessential time is made by randomly assigning each of the simulated emails in the previous step a 1 (denoting essential) or a zero (denoting nonessential).

- Simulate N_i -dimensional vectors, G_i , of assignments using a Bernoulli trial with probability P_i
- Derive the essential and nonessential email time using the dot product of G_i and the vector of total email time for each email.

6. Calculate total time:

- The total email time is $T_1 + T_2 + T_3$.

7. Calculate yearly hours and cost

- The formula used to derive the yearly hours and cost values follow those given in the basic calculator.

By running the above steps 1000 times, the intermediate calculator estimates the distribution of the output values, including total, essential, and nonessential times, and yearly hours and cost. To summarise the simulations a point estimate (e.g., median) and interval (2.5% and 97.5% quantiles) are reported in the dashboard. The pie charts in the intermediate calculator are the point estimates only.