

Emailing with ActionMailer

When Sharing Connections decides they cannot accept a donation for any reason, they send out an email to the donor apologizing and letting them know that they cannot pick up. We saw in the Rails Tutorial that we can build email layouts that can be transactionally sent out when an event occurs. That can be if a new user signs up, or even if they want to reset their email.

How we want to implement this is still up to us as a team, however I would like to suggest that in the edit pickups we could put a button, or hypertext link containing a string such as "Decline Donation/Item". This would then trigger an email to be sent to the donor's associated email.

If you recall when we got to the production build of the email it asked us to put in a credit card number on our Heroku account. However, this was just needed in case you wanted to get an add on that required payment for. SendGrid the email service has a free option letting you send up to 12,000 emails a month. I don't know exactly how active Sharing Connections emailing is, but I would imagine that 12,000 emails a month is more than enough. I have found a pdf of SendGrid's plans in case anyone wants to see what their free option has to offer.

https://sendgrid.com/mkt/assets/pdfs/4-15_SendGrid_Comparison_Chart_R2.pdf

There are plenty of other free email services out there, and figuring out one that works best for us is another thing we will have to decide as a team. For now I am just gmail's smtp server to deliver emails in production.

Currently developing with gmail's smtp server has presented me with a few obstacles. The major one being that I have to access my account through a Rails application. The accessing is relatively easy actually, but then you run into authentication errors. Google throws an error back to your application because it has no idea what this app is trying to do accessing your Google account. So to bypass that you have to go into your settings and basically allow unsecure apps to access your account.

(This isn't recommended by Google, but after a lot of searching it's pretty much a mandatory step.) Even after that you may still be getting an authentication error, so then you have to disable captcha's on your Google account (another thing Google does not recommend).

So after all this nonsense it should be working, well for a hour or two and then something else goes wrong and you have to figure out a way to allow your app to access your account in a stable manner. I'm continuing to try to find a way to allow this and even in a more secure way. I have read there's a way to actually enable 2 step verification and let the app access your account still, but there's not a lot of (closer to none) documentation on how to allow a Rails application to do so.

I have gone ahead and made a production level version of emailing on the tutorial app using gmail's smtp server to test the reliability of the service, and I am really not impressed. I have recently made a few changes and it seems that it may be granted proper authorization now. I would like to ask that we try to sign up on the site and let me know if any issues arise so I can address them sooner than later.

<https://secure-oasis-56517.herokuapp.com/>
