

## Deploying a Fax Server Successfully for Your Business

The fax machine is rapidly disappearing and being replaced by the fax server. A fax server is a LAN connected appliance that provides a shared resource for all users to receive and send fax documents. Users can receive incoming fax documents directly into their email inbox and can send outbound fax documents directly from their workstation. Fax servers can be configured as a network connected appliance or can be an imbedded application running on a PBX that supports integrated applications. The latest development is that current fax servers use the T.38 standard to transmit and receive faxes over an IP network. This allows fax traffic over IP Trunking and VoIP telephone systems<sup>1</sup>.

Through a fax server, you are eliminating a bottleneck known as a traditional fax machine. This means:

- No fax machine which equals no maintenance, no paper, toner expenditure, possible repairs, etc.
- No extra telephone line required for the fax
- Paperless communication, integrated with email
- A business can send and receive multiple faxes simultaneously
- A company can reduce phone costs, and eliminate long distance fax charges
- Faxes can be received and sent from any location that has Internet access

Through a fax server, confidential documents are no longer misplaced or viewed by the wrong person. Employees can receive faxes on their own personal devices, including desktops, laptops and even cell phones. Storage challenges are eliminated, with electronic documents that can be kept indefinitely.

When this functionality is combined with Unified Communications, you have a platform that can dramatically improve the productivity of mobile employees. Employees on the road can receive a fax on their laptop, and use a hotel printer or other local device to output the document. Employees can even set up their preferences so that they can read a fax right on their cell phone (assuming their phone has the capability of accessing the employee's desktop).

### How it works

A fax server works this way: A PC user prints a document to be faxed using the "fax" print driver installed on their PC. The document is routed to the LAN connected fax server, is converted to a fax, and is sent out over any available telephone line to the destination fax machine. If a fax is received from an outside fax machine, the reverse process occurs to deliver the fax into the recipient's inbox, with hardcopy converted to TIFF or PDF data and attached to an e-mail.



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## How to deploy a fax server

A fax server is similar to centralized voicemail in that it can exist anywhere on your network. You only need the fax server appliance connected to your LAN and PBX.

When you take this approach to fax communications, you reduce the maintenance required and can free up IT staff to focus on other tasks.

## Using a fax server to enhance workflow

You need to also consider the workflow benefits of this technology. Imagine an employee on the road who receives a message over the phone that a facsimile has been received. The employee pulls off the road and uses a cell phone to access the desktop back at the office. From there, the employee can bring up the fax and read it. If a signature is required, the employee can call the individual who sent the fax and leave a voicemail that the document will be signed and returned shortly. When the employee arrives at the hotel, he or she uses the hotel's scanner to scan a signed copy of the document and uploading it back to the desktop. The document is then faxed back to the original sender.

With this kind of mobility potential, a fax server combined with Unified Communication can really become a productivity engine for your enterprise.

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<sup>1</sup> Basic definition of fax server obtained from Wikipedia, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fax\\_server](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fax_server)



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