

Groupware Architecture

Title	Use of Computer-based Fax Services by State Government Agencies
Category	Groupware Architecture
Applicability	State Government Agencies (See the "Applicability" section below.)
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Standard - A degree or level of requirement that all jurisdictions should use, which would be enforceable by duly authorized entities. With any standard, there may be circumstances that merit exceptions. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Guideline - A statement of general policy or procedure by which to determine a course of action. Adherence is voluntary.
Date Adopted	DRAFT (October 18, 2002)
Date of Last Revision	
Date of Next Review	

A. Authority

Section 86-516 (6). "[The Nebraska Information Technology Commission shall] adopt minimum technical standards, guidelines, and architectures upon recommendation by the technical panel."

B. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this guideline is to provide state government agencies a suggested technical solution for sending and receiving electronic faxes directly from personal computers.

Background

Sending Faxes - The traditional method for sending faxes is to scan printed copy into a facsimile machine and manually entering a phone number to transmit a copy to an external fax machine. This method consumes staff time when copies must be sent to multiple destinations. Sequential transmissions to a large number of recipients can take too much time in an emergency situation.

Some agencies have contracted for mass distribution services from external companies. These services can be costly and require advance arrangements for entering recipient fax connection information.

An alternative method for faxing documents is the use of a high-capacity, state-run fax server activated directly from personal computers. The sender never leaves the workstation and can fax announcements directly from existing agency e-mail systems. The body of the e-mail can include a wide array of attachment formats.

Destination fax numbers can be stored in email address books. Group lists can be used for mass distribution. Multiple destination fax machines can be contacted at the same to reduce the total time to deliver information in an emergency situation.

For agencies with non-standard e-mail, it is possible to utilize a web site to send faxes.

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Receiving Faxes - The traditional method for receiving faxes is to have incoming faxes printed at a local facsimile machine. An attendant watches for incoming faxes and manually routes the document to the intended user. Photocopies must be produced manually when the information needs to be routed to several people.

An eFax Server routes incoming faxes to an e-mail inbox where the information can be reviewed for distribution. This electronic image can be forwarded to multiple e-mail addresses without need from printing or photocopy services.

An added benefit of receiving electronic fax images is that the image can be copied into a document management system for processing without the need for scanning the printed faxes.

eFax - Three agencies, IMServices, HHS and Workers' Compensation Court, identified a need for the use of a fax server. In a collaborative effort, these agencies are sharing the use of a fax server maintained and hosted by IMServices. A fax server is a computer connected to a network that uses a pooled collection of phone lines for users to send and receive faxes.

The state run electronic fax server system, called "eFax", is available for use by other agencies within state government.

C. Guideline

State agencies needing fax services based on electronic mail systems should consider utilizing the "eFax" system maintained and hosted by IMServices. Agencies are encouraged to contact IMServices for more information.

D. Key Definitions

Fax server. A computer in a network that uses a pooled collection of phone lines for users to send and receive faxes.

eFax. A fax server maintained and hosted by IMServices for use by state government agencies that uses electronic mail for sending and receiving faxes.

E. Applicability

State Government Agencies - Adherence to this guideline is voluntary.

F. Responsibility**G. Related Policies, Standards and Guidelines**

(<http://www.nitc.state.ne.us/standards/>)

Secure E-mail for State Government Agencies