

# Using Fax Servers and Hosted Fax Services Together for Guaranteed Business Continuity

Premises-based fax servers have a number of advantages - increased customer control over fax traffic, higher security, and tight integration with existing business systems. Hosted fax services have their advantages - lower initial investment, unlimited capacity, and global user access. Combining both systems, therefore, results in an electronic faxing solution that is the best of both worlds: guaranteed business continuity. By implementing Biscom's FAXCOM Server, and also setting up a FAXCOM *Anywhere* hosted fax service as an automatic failover backup, Biscom customers ensure their users have non-stop business faxing. When the FAXCOM Server's award-winning reliability is supplemented by FAXCOM *Anywhere*, users can always send and receive faxes, even when the fax server is down for maintenance or peak fax traffic exceeds the available bandwidth.

## What is a Fax Server?

A fax server is a premises-based computer server that is the interface between an organization's network and the Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN). A fax server can fax-enable virtually any business application, and can take almost any type of electronic input and transmit it as a fax, automatically handling such details as dialing, retries, scheduling, queuing, and document conversion.

The most commonly used feature of a fax server is integration with email systems, so that any user with an email address can send or receive faxes directly from his/her email client.

A fax server solution thus supports a range of business automation options - desktop fax, production fax, automated fax processing - with such features as:

- Automatic inbound routing
- Integration with any LDAP-compatible directory service such as Active Directory
- Rules-based Advanced Fax Routing via OCR or barcode recognition
- Automated fax workflow creation tools.

By implementing a FAXCOM fax server solution, any organization can reduce costs, extend fax functionality to all employees, and improve efficiency with automated business processes.

The benefits of a premises-based fax server are readily apparent, with fax traffic management and security, as well as hardware management and expansion, all able to be done in-house. Return on investment usually occurs quickly and owners realize a low total cost of ownership. One risk, however, is unavoidable: when the fax server fails, fax capability is unavailable unless a totally redundant system has been purchased and is in place. The Biscom solution to overcome this risk - without the major expense of a redundant system - is to implement a hosted fax service as a failover backup.

## Benefits of a Hybrid Solution

- **Seamless failover capabilities for planned and unplanned events**
- **Scales easily to meet the demands of evolving business requirements**
- **Advanced fax functionality**
- **Tight integration with existing business systems that utilize fax**

## What is a Fax Service?

A hosted fax service is functionally identical to a premises-based fax server. The fundamental difference is that the actual fax servers are maintained by another organization and the fax functionality is provided via the Internet. In the case of FAXCOM *Anywhere*,

Biscom's hosted fax service, the faxing capabilities are completely identical to the FAXCOM fax server solution.

There are, however, a number of benefits that can be realized by utilizing a hosted fax solution:

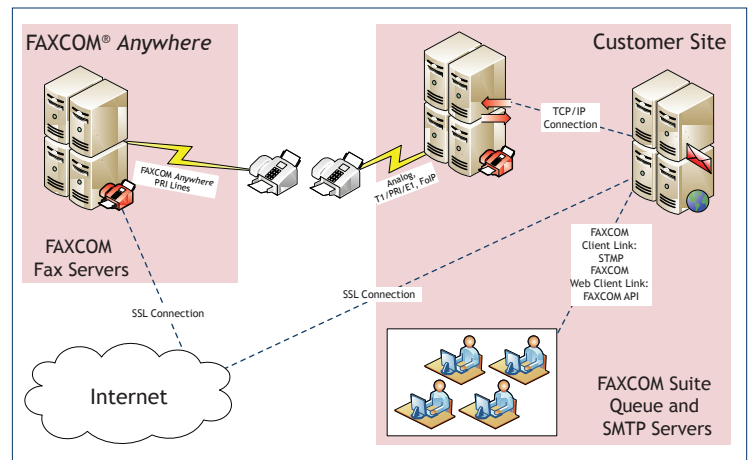
- Lower initial cost (as organizations do not have to purchase hardware or fixed telephone lines)
- Capability to pay only for actual fax traffic (along with a nominal monthly fee), which is particularly cost effective for organizations with regularly fluctuating fax needs
- Capability to extend fax functionality to remote users or locations that lack faxing requirements or technical expertise

There is, however, one risk inherent in any hosted fax solution: Internet connectivity, whereby any interruption in Internet service results in interruption of faxing capability.

## Servers & Services: The Best of Both Worlds

The ideal solution is a combination of both a hosted fax service and a premises-based fax server. This solution quite literally provides the best of both worlds as it ensures un-interruptible fax connectivity and guarantees business continuity. During normal operation, all fax activity uses the local fax server for transmission. Should that fax server go down, however, all fax traffic automatically fails over to the hosted service, with failover being instantaneous and completely transparent to both end-users and automated business applications. The advantage of such an implementation is obvious: neither hardware failure, telecom failure, nor Internet failure alone, can interrupt fax traffic.

Note that a combined fax server and fax service solution has other benefits as well. By combining both solutions, organizations can also enjoy the advantages of hosted and premises-based systems. System administrators can focus on building, managing, and supporting fax servers at the organization's largest and busiest geographical locations, while system administrators can support via the hosted fax service smaller remote sites that do not justify a dedicated fax server. A combined service enables organizations to be more flexible when developing fax solutions for projected fax traffic. For example, a business whose regular fax traffic spikes dramatically (as during tax season) can implement a fax server throughout most of the year and engage a hosted fax service to handle the seasonal increase. Such a solution is significantly less costly and makes more business sense than building a fax server of the specifications necessary for meeting the seasonal-only maximum fax demands.



### Hybrid Faxing Solution: Premises-Based & Service Model

## Choosing a Combined Solution

Any organization planning to implement a combined fax server and hosted fax service solution should address certain key issues, the most important of which is interoperability. In order to implement and maintain an effective failover system, both the fax server and the hosted fax service must be compatible and able to present an effectively identical interface to the end-user. Another key issue is that both fax solutions must not only provide the same features, but those features must meet the faxing needs of the organization. Finally, an organization must be assured that both vendors will continue to provide products and support services well into the future. A hosted fax service that is not likely to exist in five years is not a valid business continuity option, nor is a fax server that is unlikely to enjoy long-term support from its supplier.

## Biscom's FAXCOM Fax Server & FAXCOM Anywhere

The industry-leading joint fax server and hosted fax solution available today is Biscom's. With over 20 years experience in developing enterprise-class fax solutions, Biscom is well established as a fax vendor with legendary reliability. Biscom's FAXCOM Server product line is scalable and powerful, with a wide range of features, and integration with almost every business application. As a hosted fax service, FAXCOM Anywhere is based upon tried-and-true FAXCOM technology developed over the last 20 years. The combination of these two products results in a joint solution that is simply unparalleled in the fax industry. Since both products provide a fully-featured fax solution that is functionally identical to end users, only Biscom FAXCOM solutions can offer the seamless failover capabilities required for business continuity. Moreover, since both the FAXCOM Server and FAXCOM Anywhere are directly supported by Biscom, integration and customized development is simple.

One organization that has saved money and realized business continuity through the joint Biscom fax solution is Acclaris. Acclaris is the leading software-enabled service provider for employee benefits reimbursement. Their business model is based upon receiving over 5,000 expense reports each day via fax from all over North America. Any interruption in faxing capability would result in significant financial losses and decreased customer satisfaction. When Acclaris began the project of upgrading their fax solution, they looked into solutions from both Biscom and another fax server provider. Overall, it was determined that their best option was Biscom's award-winning FAXCOM Server supplemented by FAXCOM Anywhere, Biscom's hosted fax service.

By installing a FAXCOM Server on-site and setting up the FAXCOM Anywhere hosted fax service as an automatic failover backup system, Acclaris was able to ensure that fax traffic is never interrupted. Acclaris chose Biscom because Biscom provided a completely integrated solution that included the fax server, the fax cards, the software, and the service - all from one source. Only Biscom was able to provide direct support for both premises-based and hosted faxing from the same vendor - a unique offering in the fax marketplace. Acclaris now has a system to send and receive faxes with guaranteed business continuity, regardless of whether the fax server is down for maintenance or peak fax traffic exceeds the available bandwidth.

### About Biscom

Biscom has over twenty years experience as full-service provider of high-availability enterprise production fax systems for organizations with intensive, mission critical fax requirements. Biscom's information delivery solutions integrate, process, and automate the flow of documents, helping its customers not only streamline document handling and management, but also comply with government regulations. Biscom's full-service approach is built on consulting with the customer to design the system that best meets their needs. To that end, the FAXCOM Server solution exclusively uses Cantata's Brooktrout series intelligent fax boards.



321 Billerica Road, Chelmsford, MA 01824  
 p: 800-477-2472 | sales@biscom.com  
 www.biscom.com