

White Paper

The Benefits of Migrating Fax Communications to Converged IP Networks

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Executive Summary

This white paper discusses the potential of fax servers in an IP architecture to save costs and enhance productivity. It also reviews how the centralized and fault-tolerant nature of IP fax servers can assist companies in their efforts toward automating business processes, managing documents, and meeting regulatory and compliance standards.

Special focus is on the long distance savings potential of using IP fax over PSTN, the cost reductions of using routers over PBX station ports, the lower operating costs realized when converging voice and data infrastructures, the easier deployment and lower maintenance due to centralized resources, and the enhanced disaster preparedness due to separation of server and user that allows an IP fax server to be remote and secure. Also discussed are the productivity benefits of an IP fax server in the areas of compliance, business process automation, and document management, as well the enhanced customer satisfaction derived from quick and timely faxes, the increased security from using desktop fax, and the option to use Multi-Function Peripherals to further leverage the IP fax sever to capture, store, and archive documents.

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Introduction

Enterprise networks are evolving to support voice, video, and data applications on a single network infrastructure at an increasing pace. Based on projections from Synergy Research Group, 72.7% of new ports/lines shipped worldwide in 2008 are IP [Synergy].

One technology that is often overlooked when transitioning to VoIP networks is fax. By migrating fax communications to converged IP architectures, companies can enjoy many advantages over legacy analog or Time Division Multiplex (TDM) fax. The centralized and fault-tolerant nature of IP fax servers can help companies:

- Reduce their phone bills by driving long distance fax traffic over IP
- Eliminate the cost of maintaining analog Private Branch eXchange (PBX) ports
- Dramatically reduce network administrative costs
- More easily provide fax services to all employees regardless of location
- Lower the cost of disaster preparedness associated with fax technology
- Consolidate remote fax servers in a central location
- Eliminate analog fax machines

This white paper describes the specific cost and productivity benefits offered by implementing an IP fax server. It also reviews how fax servers can assist companies in their efforts toward business process automation, document management, and regulatory and compliance standardization.

Long Distance Savings with IP Fax

One of the major advantages of IP communications is that it enables companies to make many telephone and facsimile calls free of Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) charges. For example, the cost of sending a long distance six-page fax at 5 cents per minute is approximately 30 cents. Routing that same fax over an IP network can eliminate a large portion of long distance fees. Multiply that by the thousands of faxes sent monthly and the savings add up quickly. This savings can also increase when using FoIP products that support the V.34 standard. This standard can decrease the time required to send a fax by as much as 50% over the earlier V.17 standard.

As the market adoption of IP fax grows, savings will increase even more as a greater percentage of faxes will travel from start to finish via IP, bypassing the PSTN.

Lower PBX Maintenance Fees

By switching to an IP-based fax solution, companies can reduce the maintenance costs of PBX station ports, which are much higher than the maintenance costs of routers [Davidson]. As shown by comparing the traditional fax server with the IP fax server implementations, shown in Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively, the fax server no longer requires connectivity to the PBX and is instead connected to a gateway. This saves a good deal of money as PBX connection costs are about \$200-\$300 per port whereas router costs are typically under \$100 per port [Davidson].

Less Complexity — Lower Operating Costs

One of the main reasons that companies converged their voice and data infrastructure was to reduce the complexity of their total infrastructure, which in turn reduces the cost of maintaining the network. By ensuring that facsimile traffic is also run on this same infrastructure, companies can further leverage the investment made in their converged voice and data network. By removing traditional telephone lines (and perhaps fax machines altogether through the use of Multi-Function Peripherals [MFPs]) companies can further reduce their operation and maintenance costs.

Centralized Fax Resources Provide Easier Deployment and Maintenance

As shown in Figure 2, the location of the IP fax server is independent of the PSTN network access point. In a VoIP environment, gateways provide the connection to the PSTN. The fax processing resources simply need access to a data network, Local Area Network (LAN), or Wide Area Network (WAN), where the gateway resides. The various application servers on the enterprise WAN can deliver services to all locations from one central data center, using the gateways in remote offices to gain access to the PSTN. This arrangement reduces the number of parts that are remotely managed, consolidating maintenance and lowering costs. This also simplifies deployment to remote locations, enables greater consolidation of fax services, lowers disaster preparedness costs, and enables least cost routing via the WAN.

The Benefits of Migrating Fax Communications to Converged IP Networks

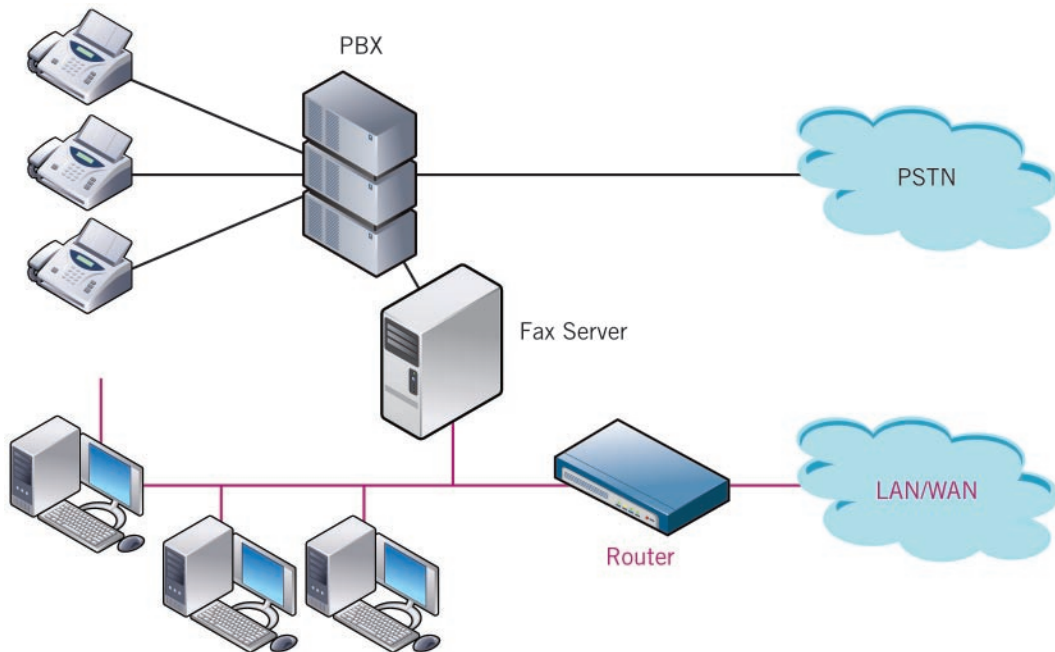


Figure 1. Traditional Fax Server PBX Integration

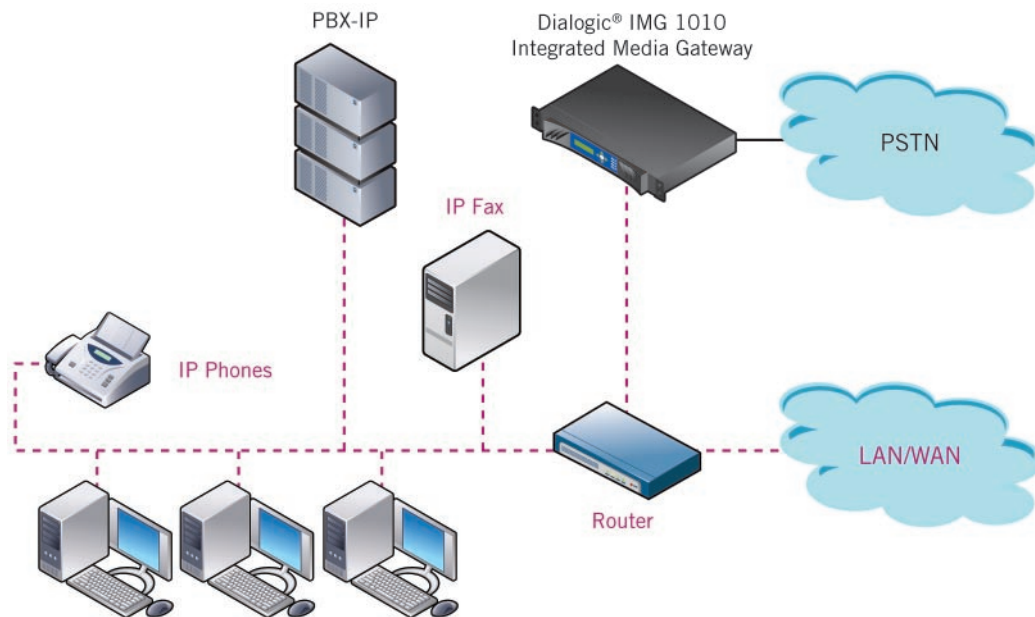


Figure 2. IP Fax Server — IP-PBX Integration

This is particularly important for services that utilize fax to communicate with law enforcement and other government agencies in the event of a crisis, such as to provide or receive tsunami warnings or severe weather alerts.

Productivity Benefits of Implementing an IP Fax Server

The migration to IP communications is taking place at the same time that companies are focusing their efforts and investment on IT infrastructure to resolve difficult operational and compliance issues. As companies look to make the switch to IP communications, they will also consider how these purchases can assist their efforts in compliance, business process automation, and document management.

Fax server technology sits squarely at the intersection of communications, document management, business process automation, and compliance. The shift to IP communications, combined with the increased focus on business process automation and document management, makes the IP fax server an excellent solution as companies accelerate their IP communications plans.

“Desktop” faxing software enables end users to send or receive faxes directly from their PCs. In addition to just being able to send/receive single documents, these applications often enhance user productivity by allowing them to send fax documents to multiple destinations in a matter of minutes. Unlike traditional walk-up fax machines where users must enter multiple fax numbers to send to multiple faxes, desktop fax allows users to fax to multiple addresses the same way an e-mail message is sent to multiple people. This reduces interruptions to workflow and increases productivity. Although this is often considered as a “soft” savings only, the savings can also be calculated as a “hard” savings, as each time a fax is sent manually, it requires the user to print the document, walk to the fax machine, write out the cover sheet, type in the fax number, and then wait for the fax machine to send and confirm delivery. This process can take five minutes per fax. If the person responsible for sending faxes is paid \$12 to \$18 per hour, then the cost of manually sending faxes can range from \$1 from \$1.50 per fax. Multiply that by the number of faxes that can be sent per day, per month, per year, and the labor cost involved with faxing can climb into thousands of dollars per year.

Table 1 highlights the costs of manually faxing documents.

Number of Faxes Sent Per Day	Cost Per Day Per Fax Sent		Cost Per Week		Cost Per Year	
	\$1 per fax	\$1.5 per fax	\$1 per fax	\$1.5 per fax	\$1 per fax	\$1.5 per fax
10	\$10	\$15	\$50	\$75	\$2,600	\$3,900
50	\$50	\$75	\$250	\$375	\$13,000	\$19,500
100	\$100	\$150	\$500	\$750	\$26,000	\$39,000

Table 1. Costs of Manually Faxing Documents

These costs are conservative in that they do not take into account hidden costs such as the paper required to print out the fax, long distance charges to send the fax, and the fax machine maintenance costs, such as replacing toner cartridges. Most importantly, desktop fax applications integrate easily with existing e-mail infrastructure, making the addition of fax to the end-user’s e-mail applications comparable to sending e-mail attachments.

The electronic delivery of documents saves companies time and money. Mailing a document involves printing out the document, stuffing it into an envelope and mailing it out, which can cost almost a dollar per document with postage, and even more for multiple-page documents or materials being sent out of the country. As discussed previously and shown in Table 1 above, manually faxing documents is costly as well. If the majority of the day-to-day operations of a business involves sending out multiple documents per day, such as invoices, order confirmations, and inventory ordering, then the cost per year can be a significant piece of a company’s operational expenses. With a “production” fax solution, a company can reduce these costs by up to 90% by automating fax delivery and reducing the administration costs to print, mail, or fax a document.

Production fax is an attractive option for a company whose day-to-day operations consist of manually delivering large numbers of paper documents to customers and/or partners. Production fax allows companies to automatically deliver business-critical documents electronically, such as purchase orders, invoices, statements, order confirmations, loan applications, loan approval/denial, bills of lading, financial reports, and mortgage tables, without the need to print, mail, or manually fax a document.

Table 2 below highlights the savings a typical enterprise would experience with a production fax solution versus the cost to mail or manually fax a document.

	50 Documents per Day	250 Documents per Day	500 Documents per Day
Yearly Cost to Manually Fax (Cost Per Document: \$1 – \$1.50)	\$13,000 – \$19,500	\$65,000 – \$97,500	\$130,000 – \$195,000
Yearly Cost to Manually Mail (Cost Per Document: \$0.65 – \$0.80)	\$8,450 – \$10,400	\$42,250 – \$52,000	\$84,500 – \$104,000
Yearly Cost with Production Fax (Cost Per Document: \$0.10)	\$1,300	\$6,500	\$13,000
Production Fax Savings vs. Manual Faxing (Cost Per Document: \$0.90 – \$1.40)	\$11,700 – \$18,200	\$58,500 – \$91,000	\$117,000 – \$182,000
Production Fax Savings vs. Mail (Cost Per Document: \$0.55 – \$0.70)	\$7,150 – \$9,100	\$35,750 – \$45,500	\$71,500 – \$91,000

Table 2. Savings Using Production Fax versus Mail or Manual Fax

Enhanced Customer Satisfaction

Another “soft” benefit of adding a desktop fax solution is that inbound faxes can be directly delivered to the appropriate recipient for quicker resolution. Without this type of solution, received faxes could lie unclaimed at the fax machine for hours (or days if a fax arrives late on a Friday) before it is delivered to the appropriate person.

Other delays could be caused when a fax machine is out of paper or ink and faxes are queued inside the machine before they are printed. There is also the case when a printed document is inadvertently picked up by wrong person along with a stack of other pages, which, besides causing costly delays, can raise privacy issues or concerns about sensitive information (for example, financials, transactions) getting in the wrong hands.

By routing inbound faxes directly to the desktop (or email inbox) of the target recipient, these types of delays can be avoided.

Compliance

Being able to adhere to the growing list of federal, state, and industry compliance frameworks is fast becoming a concern in companies. Recently, Forrester conducted a study wherein it reported the following:

“Governance, risk, and compliance (GRC) continues to be a hot topic of interest for security and risk professionals. Between July 2007 and July 2008, Forrester’s security and risk management team received 1,798 inquiries on a variety of topics — 198 of which were from clients interested in GRC. Of the GRC-related inquiries recorded, 46% covered compliance best practices, 32% concerned GRC vendor selection, and 24% addressed risk management. Forrester doesn’t expect the focus on compliance to diminish drastically, but maturing companies are focusing more on how to manage a federated compliance program that encompasses all standards and regulations rather than managing separate initiatives for each. Inquiries about enterprise risk management and selecting comprehensive GRC management software platforms also echo the same trend toward maturity.” [Forrester]

These compliance needs dovetail with many of the features found in document management solutions that can be implemented as part of a network fax solution. Document management systems bring greater organization and control of documents, and serve as a foundation for numerous compliance-related initiatives. According to Forrester, “The combination of compliance, governance, and process efficiency has placed an increased focus on document imaging, document management, and records management.” [Forrester] With their workflow, access control, version control, and search and retrieval features, document management systems enforce the controls that companies seek to establish in their efforts to comply with legislation, regulations, or corporate-governance initiatives.

Security

With desktop fax, end users can send, receive, view, print, and save faxes from their PC or laptop computer. Desktop fax provides small, medium, and enterprise customers with safe, secure, and confidential fax to and from the desktop through integration with Microsoft® Exchange, Lotus Notes, Novell GroupWise, and other e-mail applications.

Desktop fax also provides end users with security and confidentiality in sending and receiving faxes to and from their desktop with receipt confirmation from Direct Inward Dial (DID) routing, in which end users are assigned a personal secure fax number and faxes are routed directly to the desktop. Because the fax is received on the desktop PC, faxes are not left out in public view on traditional walk-up fax machines where other people can view them, thus reducing privacy and confidentiality concerns.

In addition, signed documents transmitted by fax serve a legal purpose. Despite the signing of the Electronic Signatures in Global and National Commerce Act (E-SIGN bill) in 2000 by U.S. President Bill Clinton that legalized digital signatures, the internet has not replaced fax as a means of business communications as experts had predicted. This is attributable to the fact that many businesses still have concerns regarding privacy, security, fraud, and identity theft with the internet. The bottom line is that fax is still one of the most highly secure mechanisms for transmitting important and confidential information.

Multi-Function Peripherals

Multi-Function Peripherals (MFPs) that integrate copying, printing, faxing, and scanning are quickly gaining popularity. As companies purchase these devices, they have two choices when deciding on how to implement IP fax. The first choice is to purchase an analog fax module for the MFP. MFP devices do not provide IP fax support, offering only analog, BRI, or PRI fax modules. Trying to integrate these devices with an IP network can be a difficult process.

As a second choice, companies can further leverage the IP fax server to enable users to send and receive faxes from the MFP, just as they would from a fax machine but with the fax server performing the actual fax processing once the image has been captured by the MFP. This process ensures that all fax communications are routed through a fax server that centralizes the capture, storage, and archival of the document, as shown in Figure 4.

Dialogic's IP Fax Leadership

For more than 20 years, Dialogic® Brooktrout® intelligent fax technology has enjoyed a leadership position in the market. While the Brooktrout® brand is well known as a leader in intelligent fax, it is less well known that Dialogic's experience with IP fax goes as far back as the early 1990s, before internet and IP became household technologies, with early development work to enable faxing over X.25 networks. Much of what Dialogic learned through developing fax for X.25 networks went into the design of T.38, the protocol for real-time IP fax. Dialogic was a primary contributor to the T.38 ITU-T specification, which has become the industry standard for real-time Fax over IP (FoIP) networks.

While Dialogic leads the market in the development of IP fax technology, its strength and field experience in T.30 fax is what differentiates its Dialogic® Brooktrout® SR140 Fax Software and Dialogic® Brooktrout® TR1034 Fax Board IP products. The T.30 protocol for faxing over TDM or analog telephone networks remains at the heart of fax connections, including connections between two T.38 IP fax devices. Dialogic's T.38 IP fax products use the same T.30 code that has propelled the Brooktrout-brand fax technology to lead the market. To this day, Dialogic continues to develop its core fax technology in-house, which enables it to deliver unsurpassed support to the end customer.

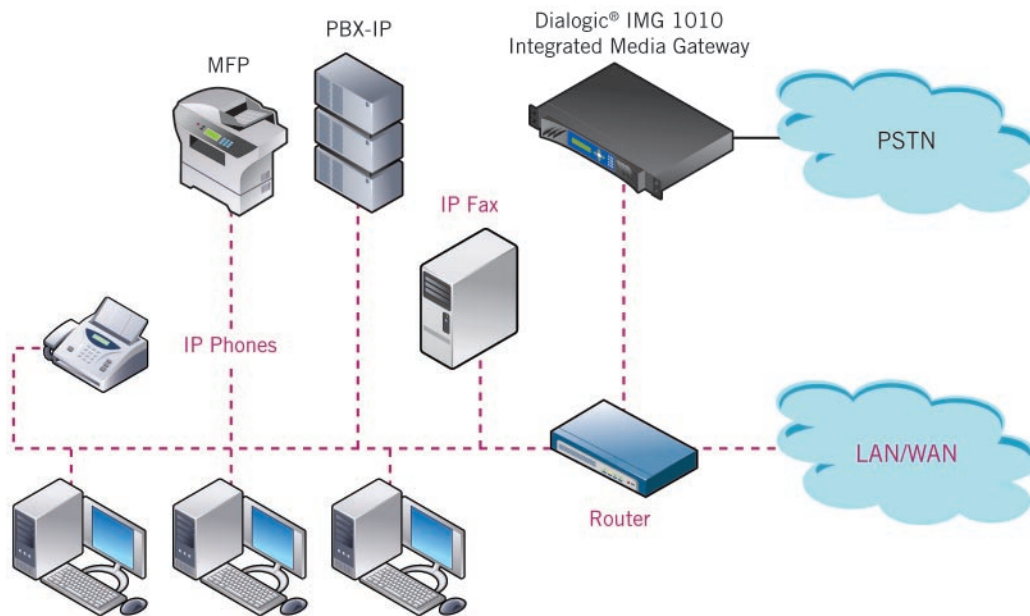


Figure 4. Integrating MFP with IP Fax Server

Dialogic also owns several patents for its fax technology, along with many other innovative features.

Automatic Inbound Routing

Regular data modems cannot support DID/DTMF/DDI detection. Dialogic® Brooktrout® Fax Boards can capture routing information from the inbound fax call and pass it along to the LAN fax application so inbound faxes can be sent to the right people on the network — even automatically routing the inbound faxes to an individual Microsoft® Exchange, Lotus Notes, or Novell GroupWise box.

Advanced Compression

Using advanced compression formats, such as Modified Read (MR) and Modified Modified Read (MMR) with Error Correction Mode (ECM), Brooktrout Fax Boards can send faxes as smaller files, reducing transmission time, and saving on long distance charges.

V.34 Support

V.34 transmits at 33.6 kbps, making it over two times as fast as V.17 at 14.4 kbps and more than three times as fast as V.29 at 9.6 kbps.

V.8 Support

Along with the faster fax transmissions comes the ability to set up the call more quickly. The Dialogic® Brooktrout® TR1034 Fax Boards also support V.8 or fast handshaking, which cuts call setup and session management time by one-third or more, again reducing overall long distance charges required for sending a fax.

Dialogic Enables the Future of IP Fax

The culmination of the many years of development work in IP fax technology are Dialogic's Brooktrout SR140 and the Brooktrout TR1034 IP fax platforms.

Dialogic® Brooktrout® SR140 Fax Software

Brooktrout SR140 offers businesses of all sizes real-time FoIP capability with the same high performance that companies have come to expect from the Brooktrout Fax Boards, available in a software-only platform. The Brooktrout SR140 is a host-based intelligent fax platform that takes advantage of the latest advances in computational processing power.

Host-based processing allows media processing and call control functions — traditionally performed by specialized Digital Signal Processors (DSP) on boards — to be performed on general-purpose host CPUs that run on industry-standard servers. The Brooktrout SR140 is available in a variety of densities from 2 to 60 channels and is suitable for a variety of computer-based fax applications such as fax server, unified messaging, fax document management, and compliance systems. To add more channels as needs grow, simply purchase and install a new software license key to instantly upgrade a system. The Brooktrout SR140 supports both SIP and H.323 call control and has been tested and certified with market leading T.38 gateways.

To learn more about the Brooktrout SR140 software-only IP fax platform, see http://www.dialogic.com/products/ip_enabled/FoIP/SR_140.htm

Dialogic® Brooktrout® TR1034 Fax Board

Brooktrout TR1034 is a high-performance intelligent fax board offering support for PSTN and FoIP connectivity. The Brooktrout TR1034 is suitable for a variety of computer-based fax applications such as fax server, unified messaging, fax document management, and compliance systems.

To learn more about the Brooktrout TR1034 Fax Board, see http://www.dialogic.com/products/tdm_boards/fax_boards/default.htm

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