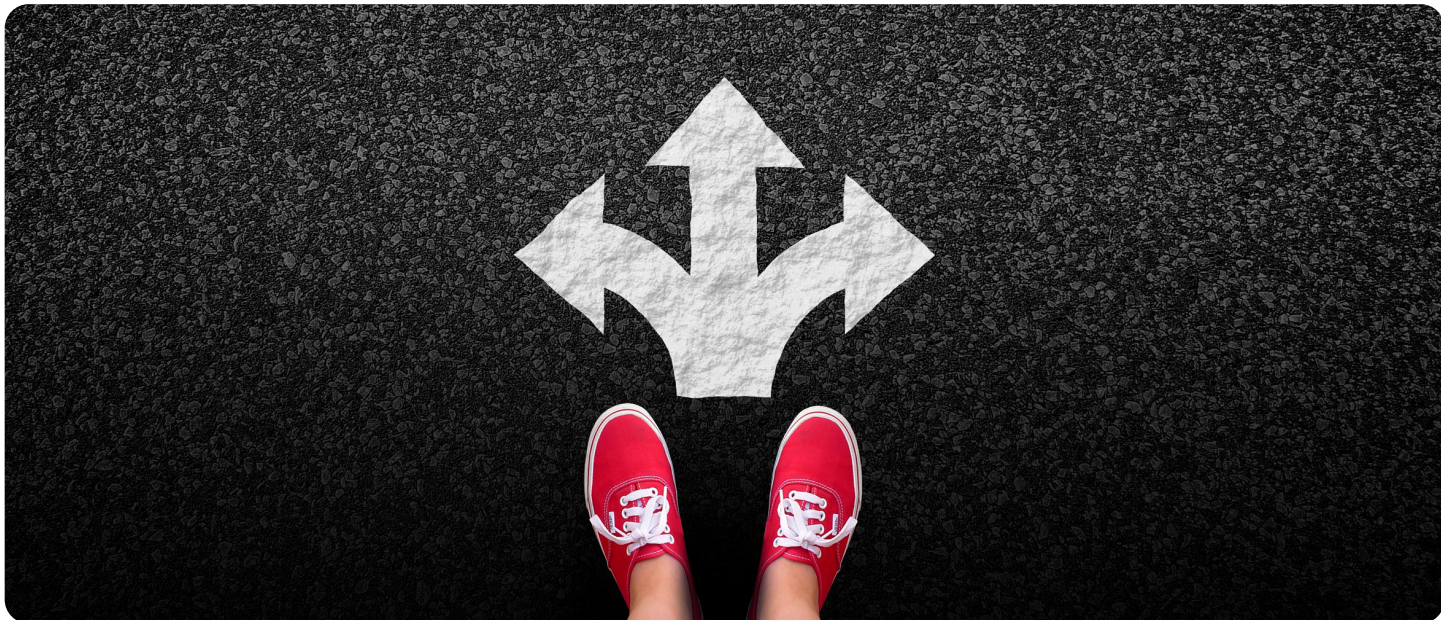# Modernize Your Fax

Eight points to consider for a successful switch from PSTN to FoIP

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Modernize Your Fax

Eight points to consider for a successful switch from PSTN to FoIP

Despite a growing variety of high-tech communications tools, fax remains mission-critical for many industries, allowing organizations to connect to different providers, systems and technologies.

Businesses, organizations, and government offices of various shapes and sizes rely on fax for daily communication. Worldwide, the number of faxes sent and received each day ranges in the tens of millions. What's more, the need for fax isn't going anywhere. According to a study from International Data Corporation, a global market intelligence firm, 82 percent of survey respondents said fax usage was holding steady or even increased over the past year[1].

Why is fax still used so widely?

While it isn't the newest or shiniest option, fax remains a preferred communication choice – first and foremost – because of its interoperability. Not only can faxes be sent quickly, securely, and reliably, senders don't have to verify in advance whether recipients have compatible technology for receiving and viewing what is being sent.

Because of the level of privacy protection required today, knowing your communications are being delivered securely is essential. For this reason and others, large and small organizations and businesses will continue to rely on fax for the foreseeable future.

Faxing's popularity isn't changing, but how people fax is evolving. For example, connecting fax equipment over Internet connections instead of using legacy PSTN phone lines can deliver many of the advantages of traditional faxing – namely, data security and reliability – but at a much lower cost. If you're curious about Fax over Internet protocol (FoIP) and think you are ready to give it a try, read on.

This eBook will show you what qualities to look for as you vet vendors, so you can be certain you are getting the best product and service to meet your needs.

[1] Perez, Jose Luis. "Fax, the missing link in Microsoft Teams". eComFax Blog. Sept. 29, 2020, https://www.ecomfax.com/en/fax-the-missing-link-in-microsoft-teams/

Real-time, encrypted data

In virtually every industry, immediacy and privacy of data transfer are essential. Because not all FoIP solutions are designed with the same capabilities and level of security protections, look for solutions that meet the following eight parameters:
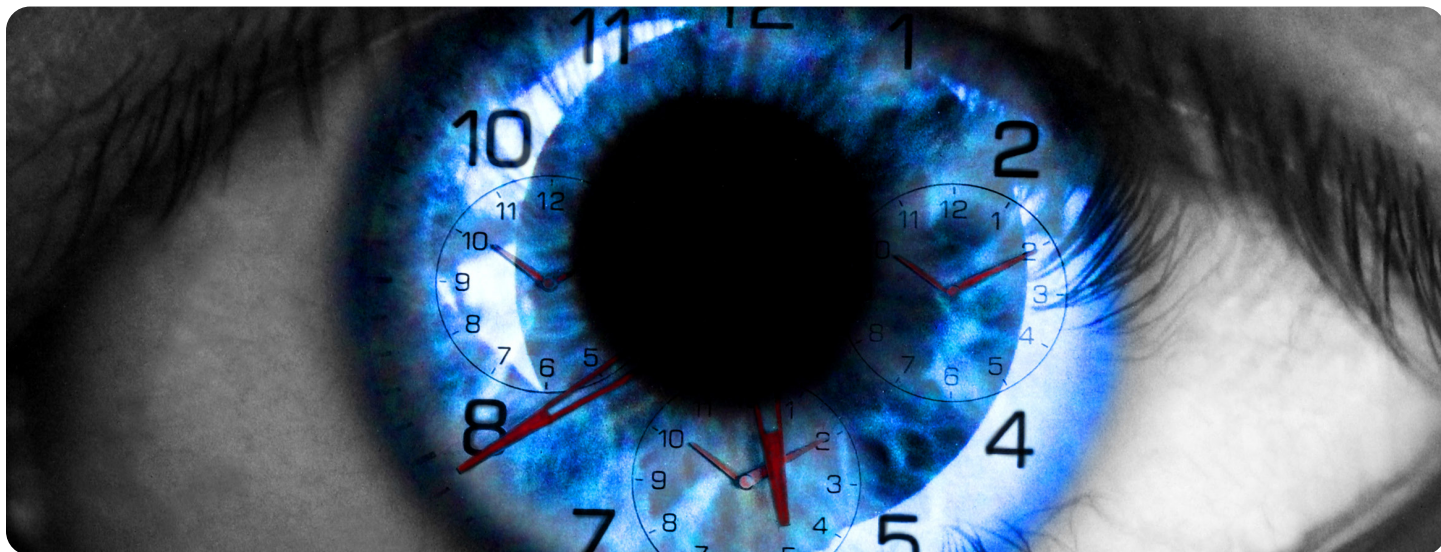
1

Real-time data transfer, rather than "store-and-forward"

Real-time faxing serves as a conduit for data rather than containing an intermediary storage step. It connects the sending and receiving fax devices, which means you know for certain that a received message comes straight from the sending fax machine, not from an intermediary re-faxing the document. That differs from cloud-based "store-and-forward" systems that store fax data in an intermediary station before forwarding it to the recipient.

For obvious reasons, avoiding unnecessary "middlemen" between senders and recipients is best from a privacy standpoint. There is a higher risk for breaches when using a "man-in-the-middle" type of solution.

Whenever hypersensitive information is being transmitted – such as legal, financial, insurance, health, or other confidential data – it makes sense to choose the most direct communication route. Otherwise, organizations and fax service providers could be held liable if private information is not protected. Real-time fax is accepted as a safe and legal form of document transmission, along with courier, and U.S. Postal registered mail.

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2

Encrypted T.38 technology

T.38 is a standard that defines how a real-time fax call is carried over the Internet (FoIP) without having to convert it into a voice call (VoIP). Encrypted T.38 is hands-down the best FoIP protocol suited to transport sensitive information. Here's why:

Unlike PTSN (phone line) faxing, T.38 uses the internet as a conduit for data transfer. This improves speed, reliability, security, and performance at a significant savings to users.

Unlike HTTPS, T.38 does not use a "middleman" fax server to store data before sending. Depending on how an HTTPS fax is deployed, the sender may encounter "false positives" – situations where it appears a fax page was sent when, in fact, it had failed. T.38 offers safer, faster transfer and page-by-page confirmation as the fax is transmitted.

T.38 encrypts not only the signaling (SIP) over the Internet, but the media (image) as well. That ensures high-level security of your data with low susceptibility to hacking.

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3

Fully Virtual

Choose a solution that lets you go totally virtual (VoIP or FoIP). By doing so, you can trade the hardware used for PSTN connectivity for software that uses FoIP. Here's why that's optimal:

Any hardware in the interchange may fail, interrupting your communications while you wait for technical support.

Gateways in the path of transmission hamper encryption. It's best to have the entire transfer in the hands of one provider who can encrypt end-to-end.

Fully virtual lines can be used by all divisions and locations within your organization – and even abroad. The phone numbers can be used to send and receive faxes no matter where you are located.

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4
Compatible

To ensure your fax recipients don't have problems receiving communications from you, your fax provider should be software-agnostic. In other words, your fax recipients should be able to easily retrieve and view the information you've sent in any format, no matter which software program they are using to receive faxes.

Unlike document exchange solutions from different vendors, T.38 is a standards-based protocol adopted at large, rather than a proprietary solution. This means your faxes can be easily exchanged with other organizations without error regardless of which software they use to accept incoming communications.

5
Sustainable

Faxing isn't going away anytime soon, but that doesn't mean certain fax capabilities won't. Here are some considerations for ensuring you have a long-term, sustainable solution:

Reliability:
Large telephone companies are dropping traditional PSTN faxing, converting to technologies like G 711 (voice protocol) that are less reliable than T.38. Even solutions marketed as T.38 sometimes are converted to G 711 within the carrier network.

Maintenance costs:
When you use fully virtual, T.38 technology, you don't need to maintain additional fax line connectivity hardware — you're using virtual fax lines. This means no maintenance fees or equipment costs, and no waiting around for a technician to arrive.

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6

Scalable

Obviously, a small startup business will have different needs than a large multinational company. Regardless of your organization's size, your fax provider should be able to accommodate your needs. One benefit of T.38 protocol is that it can be applied to a single, multifunctional device, or a multi-server company.

T.38 is fully capable of scaling to meet your growing organization with a simple request to your service provider, whereas expanding traditional on-site faxing usually requires additional equipment, phone lines and extensive technical support that may result in downtime.

7

Customer-Focused

If your fax provider fails you, and important communication is disrupted, it reflects poorly on your organization and can potentially cost you lost business. Having a customer-focused fax provider that you can trust to deliver world-class customer service when you need it is a must. However, not all providers offer smaller clients personalized service – rather, they reserve the VIP treatment for their biggest and best customers.

Look for a FoIP service provider that offers:

High-priority service for mission-critical applications

24/7 intervention as needed

Technicians specialized in T.38 faxing

It's also important to find a fax provider that demonstrates a commitment to identifying the source of any problems and works toward solutions – even if the problem relates to another vendor.

Don't be shy about vetting your prospective fax provider by talking with other customers within your industry that have a similar organizational structure. Doing so can help you understand what type of experience to expect from a provider, and help you feel confident that you're getting an experienced partner dedicated to your success.

8
Affordable

Every business or organization can appreciate the cost savings that FoIP offers. FoIP can save you up to 50 percent compared to analog fax costs.

One way to save even more is by choosing a vendor with flexible payment options such as a no-contract plan with 30-day cancellation, instead of a locked-in multi-year contract.

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If you need faxing capabilities that are reliable and secure, advanced T.38 technology offers the best option at the best price. Now is the time to give T.38 faxing a try, but selecting the right vendor is critical to making the transition smooth and positive. This eight-point checklist will help you in that decision.

As you get started on your journey, let Cloudli provide a free presentation of what we offer. Call us at 1-877-808-VOIP (8647) to talk to an agent about Cloudli faxing services, or visit cloudli.com for more information.

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About Cloudli

Since 1991, Cloudli has developed and provided advanced technologies for cutting-edge voice and fax communication services. We customize services using our own development resources without depending on third-party developers. That allows our customer and network support teams to offer more effective and timely support.

Cloudli serves both small business and large enterprise customers in over 12,000 locations in the United States, Canada and many international locations. Our extensive focus on high-availability, service continuity and round-the-clock monitoring ensure you get reliable service every minute of the day.

To talk to one of our agents or reseller partners about Cloudli services, **call 1-877-808-VOIP (8647), or visit cloudli.com for more information.**

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