Business Options for Deployment of Fax2Mail Service

Fax technology was invented and patented in 1964 by the Xerox Corporation. Since that time, analog based fax machines have been used in business to transmit documents and information. In the 21st century, most communications now are centered on digital technologies such as email, voice over IP, texting, smartphones, online portal and social media. Business processes are being changed to use digital technologies as they are more robust and economical, and support today's business processes better.

Until fax communications are fully migrated to newer technologies and business processes, the need to support fax based communications will remain. Business users are encouraged to redefine business processes to phase out fax communications. To support this need, the Fax2Mail service was added to the state's hosted VoIP contract to facilitate removal of expensive analog phone lines, as well as to reduce the costs, supply needs and support needs surrounding support of fax machines.

There are some scenarios that have emerged that may be helpful to consider when contemplating movement to the Fax2Mail service.   It is important to note that in comparing costs, business processes need to be considered too. For example, when a fax arrives, is it scanned in? When a fax arrives via Fax2Mail it arrives as a PDF, possible eliminating the need to scan it, allowing for further efficiencies to the business over just comparing raw page costs. A scanner may not be needed if this is the case, and time will be recovered by the person that used to have to perform this function. Some potential scenarios are outlined below for your consideration.

Is Fax Needed?

First and foremost this is a business process question. Eliminating the need for faxing overall by updating business processes is something that should be considered first. Many organizations have eliminated the need for faxing by analyzing and improving their business processes. Today organizations in both government and the private sector have transitioned to using web forms, online accounts with upload capabilities, and email to send and receive information as a part of a business process without the use of fax technology. With newer technologies such as secure email, secure web forms and on line portals, the need for fax has been reduced and even eliminated. Fax technology has some serious security considerations that make it less secure than many of these newer technologies available today; anyone with access to the fax machine can walk by and see or take information that maybe was not intended for them.

Shared Fax Account

Using the Fax2Mail service, a shared email box or folder can be created, and received faxes are emailed to this shared folder. By giving users access to this folder, any user with rights to the

email box can check and see if there are any faxes. This is especially useful as a replacement for a physical fax machine that may have been shared by a group of people.

Fax Designee

Another option is to set one person in an area up with a Fax2Mail account, and have all faxes for the group come to this person for forwarding. In most cases, an administrative person or receptionist is designated, as they typically have multiple people that have access to their email folders in case backup coverage is needed.

IP Printing

Many of the states' multifunction devices, including those in the cost per copy program, have the ability to be given an email address that is tied to the device's IP address. By using this email address as the recipient of the inbound faxes through the Fax2Mail service, faxes that come in will simply print on the device as they arrive, eliminating the need for a fax machine.

Summary

Today, many newer technologies are available that may preclude the need for fax technology. Where applicable, business processes should be changed to eliminate the need for fax technology. If fax technology is necessary, options for using it vary based upon need, so all facets of the business need and process should be considered.