NEBRASKA INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY COMMISSION

TECHNICAL STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

03-01-03 Use of Computer-based Fax Services by State Government Agencies

Category	**Groupware Architecture**
Title	**Use of Computer-based Fax Services by State Government Agencies**
Number	**03-01-03**

Applicability	☐ **State Government Agencies,** excluding _____ ....**Not Applicable** ☑ **State Government Agencies,** all ....**Guideline** ☐ **State Funded Entities -** All entities receiving state funding for matters covered by this document................**Not Applicable** ☐ **Other:** _____ ....**Not Applicable** **Definitions:** **Standard** - Adherence is required. Certain exceptions and conditions may appear in this document, all other deviations from the standard require prior approval of _____. **Guideline** - Adherence is voluntary.

Status	☐ Adopted ☑ Draft ☐ Other:_____
Dates	Date: June 24, 2003 Date Adopted by NITC: Other:

1.0 Technical 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 and a cost-benefit analysis.

State agencies needing facsimile services that do not choose to use the eFax system maintained and hosted by IMServices must contact the Division of Communications. (See 5.2 below.)

2.0 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.

2.1 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.

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.

A fax 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, Information Management Services ("IMServices"), Health and Human Services ("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.

3.0 Definitions
3.1 Facsimile
A document sent over telephone lines, originally by means of a special facsimile machine which scans a document and transmits electrical signals to print a copy of the document on the other end. Facsimile services are a telecommunications service and are covered by the statutory authority of the Division of Communications.
3.2 Fax server
A computer in a network that uses a pooled collection of telephone lines for users to send and receive faxes.
3.3 eFax
A fax server maintained and hosted by IMServices for use by state government agencies that uses electronic mail for sending and receiving faxes.

4.0 Applicability
4.1 State Government Agencies
Adherence to this guideline is voluntary with regard to utilizing the eFax server. State agencies choosing to use facsimile services outside of the eFax server are advised that state statutes require the service to be purchased through the Division of Communications.

5.0 Responsibility
5.1 IMServices
The eFax server is hosted and maintained by IMServices.

Contact Information:

5.2 Division of Communications
State statutes § 81-1120.01 through § 81-1120.28 define the authority of the Division of Communications as it relates to the purchase of telecommunications services for state government agencies in Nebraska.

Contact Information:

To purchase a traditional facsimile machine, see the website indicated in 6.0. For other types of services, or to contact an individual regarding facsimile options, contact:

Bob Howard, Telecommunications Manager
Division of Communications 402-471-3720
bhoward@doc.state.ne.us

6.0   Related Documents
6.1   Division of Communications' List of Pre-Approved Facsimile Machines
(http://www.doc.state.ne.us/telecomm/Facsimiles.html)