

Re: Is Fax Dead Yet?

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- *From:* Nomen Nescio <nobody@xxxxxxxx>
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Paul wrote:

Email and the modern scanner has made the FAX a dinosaur.

You must not spend much time in the business world. I recently had to manage a major project for a world wide banking conglomerate that everyone knows by name, and everything "important" was done using FAX. Absolutely nothing sensitive could be transmitted via email, encrypted or otherwise.

I also recently went through a credit card dispute after being swindled on a Christmas present purchase (bastards!). Every scrap of paper and every statement I made had to be faxed. They wouldn't even give me an email address, or even surf to the web site I built that had everything nicely organized, documented, and explained in detail. A web site hosted tight in my own living room no less.

I also do quite a bit of work for a largish law firm dealing primarily with international property and copyright law. They've gone largely paperless internally, but I'd estimate over 90% of their external (non-hardcopy) correspondence is still FAX. They actually decrypt archived documents before transmission and use a networked Xerox "all in one" to FAX documents when it would actually be *easier* to email them if their clients would only put in place a free server and exchange keys properly. The whole thing could be done transparently, and documents would be delivered directly to the "addressee" rather than routed through whoever happens to "check the FAX machine" that hour. ;-)

FAX dead? Not from where I sit it isn't. I can only guess at why it's so, but if I had to my best would be that crypto is a "black box" and FAX feels more "natural". FAX is (allegedly) a direct transmission too, while everyone seems to have at least some small, if sometimes alarmist, grasp of how "evil" email can be because it's routed through every Tom, Dick, and Jane server on the planet. FAX transmissions are simply trusted more than email and crypto, and

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oddly enough, for some valid reasons.

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