



## PRODUCTS

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# FAXCOM

## All for One and One for All

**B**iscom Inc. provides both software-only and hardware-software solutions that allow users to send faxes directly from their network-attached workstation. To provide this capability for the NetWare environment, Biscom offers FAXCOM for NDS, which is integrated with NDS eDirectory and provides a GroupWise client, a Windows-based client, and a web-based client.

### FAXCOM FOR NDS

Biscom boasts that FAXCOM for NDS is well-suited for the enterprise, and based on my testing, I have to agree. Because FAXCOM for NDS is integrated with NDS eDirectory, users who can authenticate to NDS eDirectory can send and receive faxes.

In addition, managing your company's faxing capabilities is as easy as managing your company's printing infrastructure. For example, you can use the information already stored in NDS eDirectory to create directory-wide fax queues and to assign users or groups to these fax queues. You can also use Novell's NetWare Administrator (NWADMIN) utility to install, create, activate, and manage a fax queue on the server.

In addition, you can use the NWADMIN utility to perform the following tasks:

- Configure the fax queue
- Specify the users who can manage the fax queue
- Specify the FAXCOM server that services the fax queue
- Configure send and receive options for the fax queue
- Configure the logs that record fax queue activity
- Specify the retry schedule according to the type of error
- Configure fax port routing (which routes faxes received on certain fax server ports to the users you specify)

FAXCOM for NDS adds an option to the NWADMIN Tools menu. By selecting this option, you can list users according to their fax number, or you can list fax numbers according to users.

This option also enables you to assign a range of fax numbers to a range of users. If you plan to use the GroupWise client included with FAXCOM for NDS, this feature simplifies the task of assigning fax numbers to each user: You can simply highlight the users, and click the Assign Fax button—a process that is much like the process of adding a user to a GroupWise post office.

You have two choices for assigning a range of fax numbers:

- You can enter both a Start Number and an End Number. If you choose this option, the utility will stop at the End Number even if all highlighted users do not receive a fax number.
- You can enter only a Start Number. If you choose this option, the utility will assign sequential numbers until all highlighted users have numbers.

Because FAXCOM is integrated with NDS eDirectory, installing, managing, and maintaining FAXCOM is easy. When you install the product, you add snap-in modules to the NWADMIN utility and extend the NDS schema. The installation process also makes the correct trustee assignments for fax queues and creates the FAXCOM Agent directories. After you install FAXCOM for NDS, no additional management steps are required.

FAXCOM for NDS requires the following:

- NDS 6.0 or above
- NetWare 4.11 with Support Pack 8 or NetWare 5.x
- NWADMIN32 5.x
- FAXCOM fax server

If you purchase FAXCOM for NDS as a software-only solution, you must also purchase a major brand server. (For more information on the hardware requirements, visit [www.biscom.com](http://www.biscom.com).)

For this review, I tested the hardware-software solution provided by Biscom, which included the following: a rack-mount chassis running Windows NT 4 Workstation and FAXCOM for NDS with all the client software.

### The GroupWise Client

As mentioned earlier, users can use a GroupWise client to access FAXCOM for NDS. This capability is provided through a product that Biscom previously sold separately—FAXCOM for GroupWise. The two products are now packaged together.

Users click on the fax icon that FAXCOM has added to the GroupWise client and then complete a simple fax template. Users can manually type in the destination or select the destination from the GroupWise address book. Users can also specify that a fax should be sent immediately or should be sent at a later time.

FAXCOM for GroupWise also provides fax capabilities for remote users. If remote users can access their GroupWise e-mail, they can also send and receive faxes.

To connect a GroupWise domain to a FAXCOM fax queue, you set up the FAXCOM agent and a corresponding Application programming interface (API) Gateway. This gateway runs as a NetWare Loadable Module (NLM) on the GroupWise server. (The API Gateway is required for fax transmission. However, API Gateways can support more than one GroupWise domain.)

After you have installed the API Gateway, you must use the NWADMIN utility to create a Fax Gateway object for each GroupWise domain that will be connected to FAXCOM. This Fax Gateway object must be dedicated to FAXCOM for NDS, and the FAXCOM Agent can access only API Gateways in the same domain.

### The Windows Client

The Windows client allows users to send faxes from Windows applications. When you install the Windows client, the installation program adds a print driver in the Windows control panel. To send a fax, you simply print to the FAXCOM printer, and FAXCOM for NDS does the rest.

### The Web Client

The web client allows users to send, receive, and monitor their faxes through their browser, regardless of their computing platform. As a result, mobile workers can access their faxes from different workstations, from home, or from their laptop. All they need is an Internet connection.

You can also use the web client to perform the following management tasks:

- Manage queued fax transmissions in the Pending log
- View a log of sent faxes and resend or recover faxes that failed to be transmitted
- Configure default settings for using the fax service
- Manage folders into which fax transmissions are saved
- Download and view received faxes
- Forward a received fax to another fax service user
- Create phone books of fax recipient individuals and groups

### FAX COVER PAGES

You can create cover pages, forms, and signatures that users can include in their faxes. Cover pages can be simple text-only pages, or they can include merged image files, such as marketing collateral, that are stored on the server. By simply entering the name of the form in the Message area of the Mail To dialog box, users can instantly fax any number of pre-printed materials—such as product specifications, marketing materials, purchase orders, and customer surveys.

When users access the Send Fax dialog box from the FAXCOM Manager menu bar, they can include up to 20 attachments in addition to the cover page fax memo. (Image files must be a TIFF or PCX/DCX file because these types of files are usually smaller.)

### SHARE A PHONE BOOK

With FAXCOM for NDS, you can create a Public phone book, which all users of a particular fax queue can share. You can also create a Private phone book, which can be shared with other users.

Whether you access a Public or Private phone book from the SEND FAX dialog box or directly from the FAXCOM Manager menu bar, the default mode of access is Read-only. If a user wants Read-Write access to a phone book, you as the fax service administrator must configure that access.

### A WEALTH OF INFORMATION

Biscom provides extensive faxing logs that report almost anything you would like to know about your company's faxes. For your convenience, Biscom separates information into the following log files:

- **The Admin Log.** This log contains information about all the faxes sent and received for the current day. Each entry corresponds to an attempted fax transmission whether that transmission was successful or unsuccessful or a received fax message. The entries are listed in the order in which the fax transmission was sent or the fax message was received.

You can have the Admin log forwarded to a specified e-mail location at a specified time. You can also configure the maximum number of entries (up to 500) for the Admin log. When the Admin log reaches this size, FAX-

COM forwards the log to the appropriate place and creates a new log.

- **The Extended Log.** This log is a tab-delimited ASCII file that is a more detailed version of the Admin log. The Extended log includes 55 fields of data for each entry (with 20 additional blank fields at the end reserved for adding more data in the future).

FAXCOM records an entry for each received fax message and for each attempt to transmit an outgoing fax. The Extended log is intended to be imported into a database such as MS-Access, whereby each entry is displayed as a database row, and each of the fields defining an entry is displayed as a database column. You can also have the Extended log e-mailed to a specific address.

- **The Service Log.** This log is a record of FAXCOM's internal processing. You can specify options for this log, thereby determining the size and detail level of the log. If you are experiencing problems with FAXCOM, you should check this log.
- **The Activity Log.** This log is a version of the Admin log that individual users can view.
- **The Pending Log.** This log includes all of the faxes that are queued for transmission. Users can use this log to determine when their job will be faxed. Although users can manage only their own jobs, you or other users you specify can manage this log and any job in the log.

### CONCLUSION

You may think that e-mail has reduced the need for a company-wide fax solution. In some respects, however, e-mail has had an opposite effect. Users are accustomed to clicking a button to send or receive a message and want the same conveniences from a fax solution. Biscom provides users with the luxury of sending and receiving faxes from their desktops—via GroupWise, an NDS client, or a web based client.

In addition, Biscom has made the task of managing a company-wide fax solution easier by integrating its product with NDS eDirectory.

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