

# Get a fax machine and number

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*Being fax capable is the norm*

As a doctor, junior or otherwise, you are a professional and need to present yourself as such. Even if you do not have a permanent practice, you should still have professional contact details. In another article, I highly recommended the use of a [post office box](#). You should strongly consider purchasing a facsimile machine (or service) as well.

Being able to both receive and send faxes is considered part of the clinical and professional norm. All doctors in private practice would have a fax machine. All public organisations have as well. Faxes are great in that they have the relative security of postal mail (i.e., you can send clinical information) but also the speed of e-mail. Furthermore, a fax is much less likely to linger in someone's (unchecked) inbox like e-mail.

There are a number of options that you should consider when buying a fax machine.

Fax machines need to connect to a telephone line. Now, you can get "all in one" machines that act as a fax, phone and copier, but often, the result is unsatisfactory. You will at times miss faxes. Some of your incoming voice calls will be interrupted by the squeals and pings of the fax machine. In my humble opinion, a fax machine that **receives** faxes needs its own dedicated phone line.

There are two problems with this.

Firstly, buying a second phone line for your unit or house is expensive, not to mention impractical if you are renting. Secondly, as per [this article](#), I would dissuade you to give out a landline number to any one but family and close friends.

**An internet based facsimile service like [Fax Online Australia](#) is an excellent option to consider.**

The best solution that I have seen (and that I personally use) is to subscribe to an internet based facsimile service like [Fax Online Australia](#). Once you subscribe to the service, you are allocated a facsimile number (in any major Australian capital city). When someone sends you a fax, it is digitised and then sent to a nominated e-mail address as either images or as a PDF file (preferred). With the service, you can also send facsimiles (again, through e-mail). The monthly cost of the service is much less than getting a second phone line.

Personally, I own a fax machine that I use for sending. For receiving, I use the internet based fax service. The advantage is that I do not have to release my home telephone number and the number does not change even when I move.

Remember, the cost for a service like this is tax deductible.