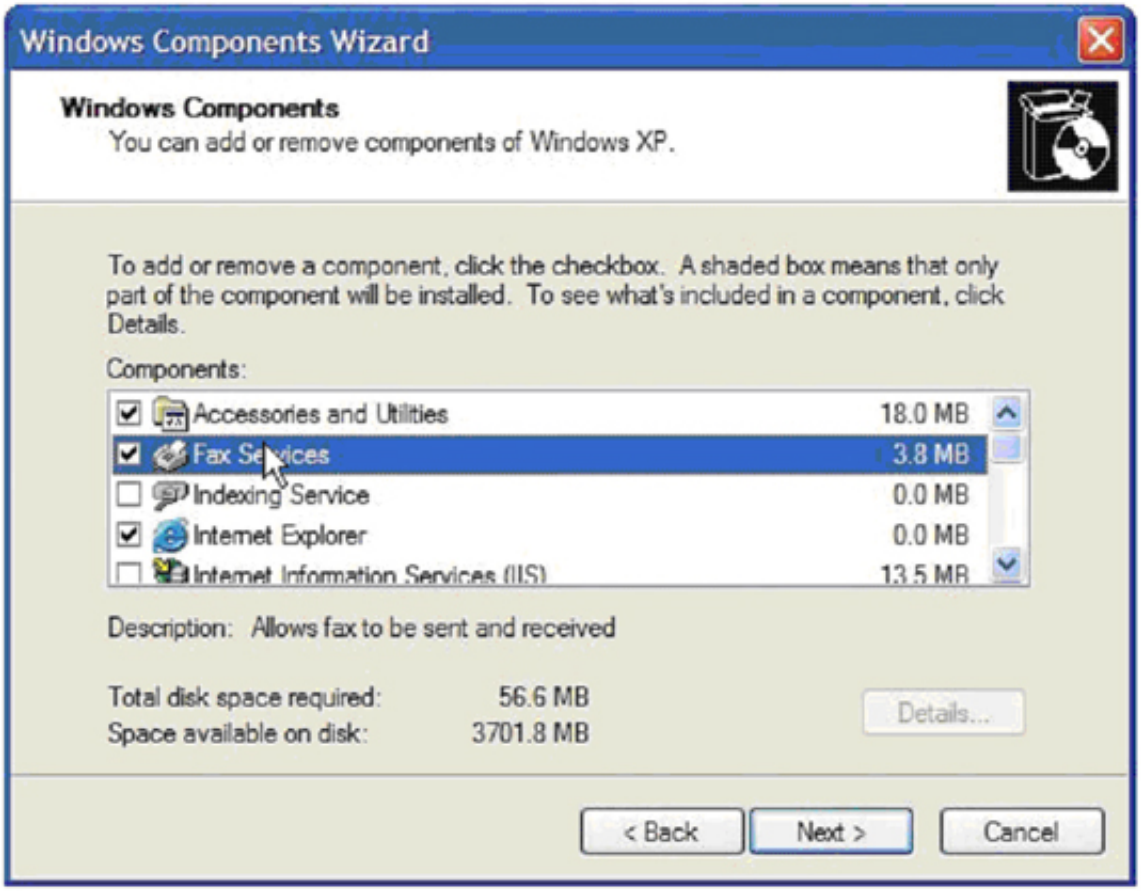
HOW TO FAX FROM YOUR PC

You call your attorney to ask her to review a contract, and she says, "Sure. Fax it over." "But it's a Microsoft Word document," you say. "Can't I just e-mail it to you? I don't have a fax machine." No, she prefers fax. Or, she says, if you'd rather, you can drop it in the mailbox or drive it over. Grrr!

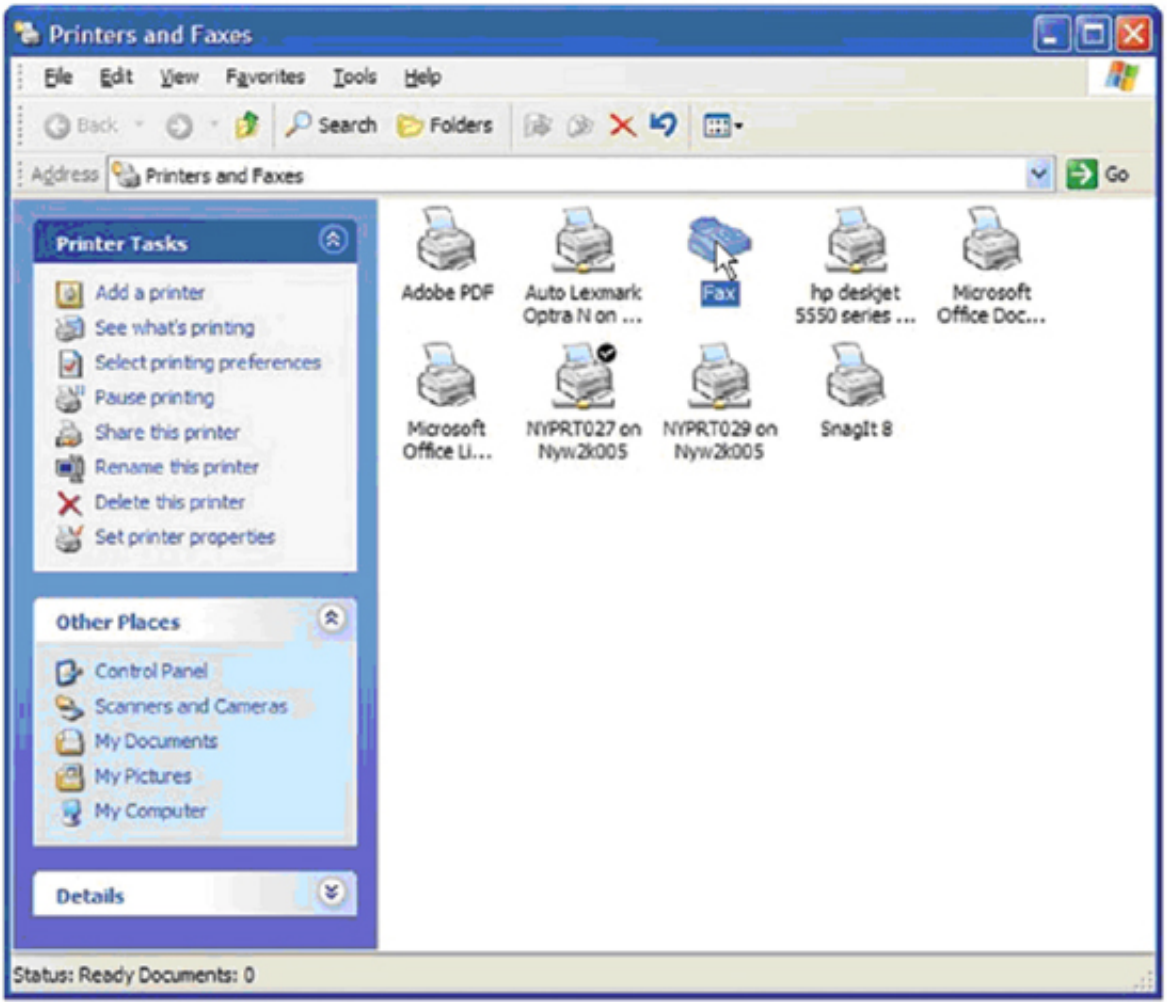
But wait! You probably do have a fax machine and don't even realize it. It's right in your PC. You may have forgotten this if you've moved to broadband, but most computers still ship with fax modems. And Microsoft Windows XP includes fax software, although you may not have realized that either, since it's not part of the default installation. Fortunately, installing it is pretty painless.

Here's how to enable fax services.

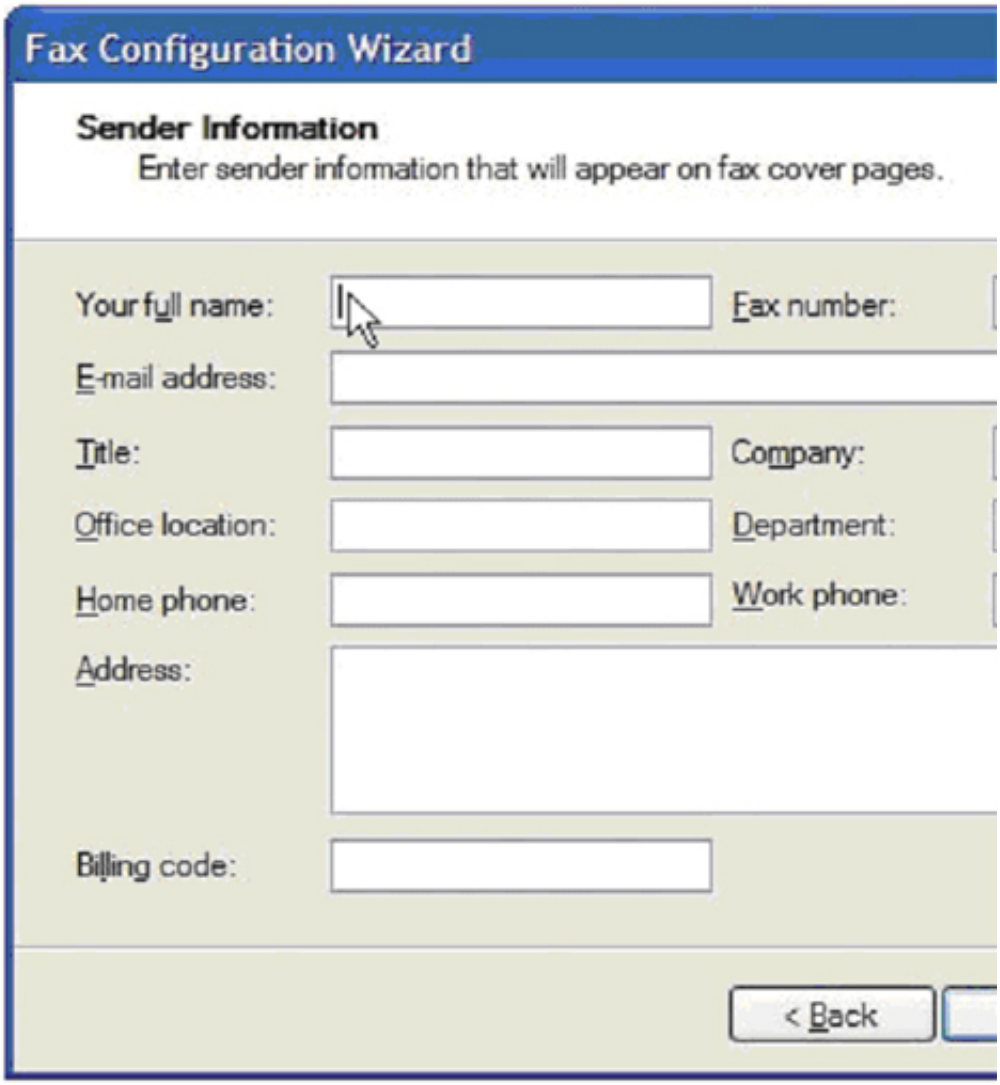
Navigate to Control Panel | Add or Remove Programs, then click Add/Remove Window Components. Windows XP Setup starts. Place a check next to Fax Services, click Next, and follows the prompts.



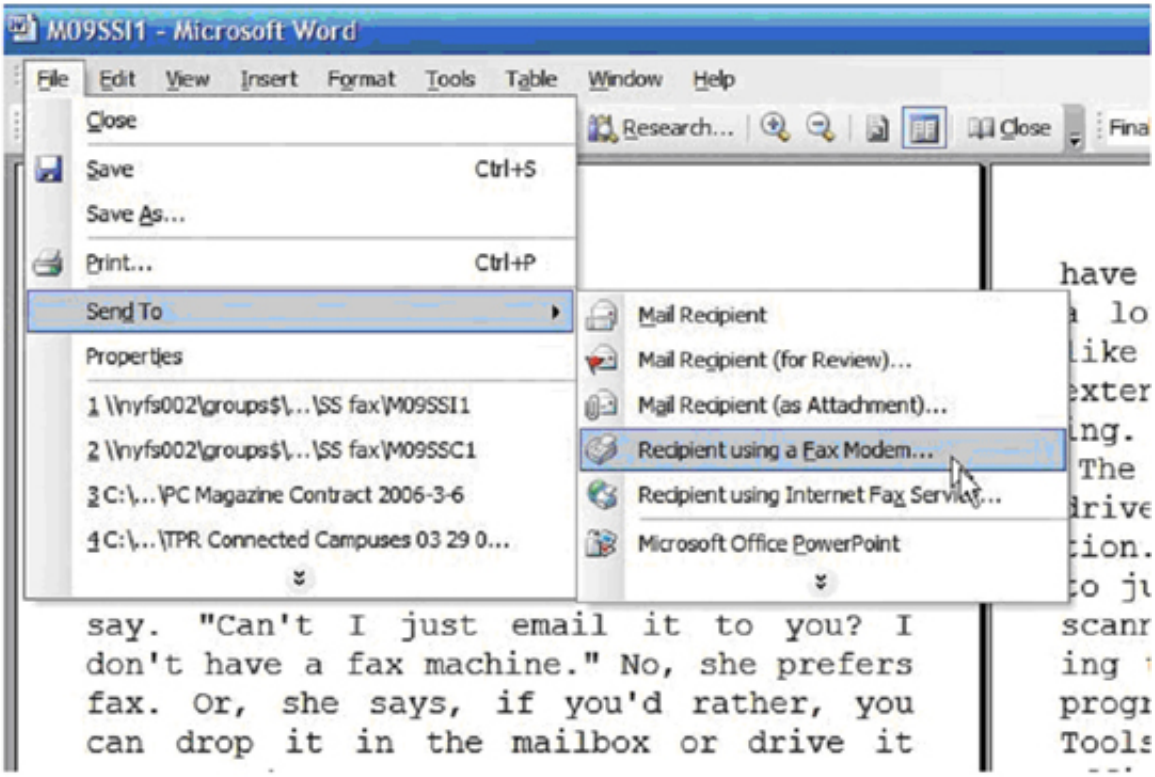
When the wizard finishes, a Fax item is added to the Printers and Faxes control panel. If you just want to send a note on a cover sheet, double-click the Fax icon.



The first time you use the Fax, you'll be prompted to enter the information that you'll want to appear on your fax cover sheets.



As with any Windows application that supports printing, you can fax from Microsoft Word by just selecting File | Print and choosing Fax as your printer. But you may find it easier to use Word's Fax Wizard, which you can access through the File menu's Send To option.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File Edit View Insert Format Tools Table Window Help
Close
Save Ctrl+S
Save As...
Print... Ctrl+P
Send To
Properties
1 \\nyfs002\groups$\...\SS fax\M09SSI1
2 \\nyfs002\groups$\...\SS fax\M09SSC1
3 C:\...\PC Magazine Contract 2006-3-6
4 C:\...\TPR Connected Campuses 03 29 0...
Mail Recipient
Mail Recipient (for Review)...
Mail Recipient (as Attachment)...
Recipient using a Fax Modem...
Recipient using Internet Fax Service...
Microsoft Office PowerPoint
Research...
Close
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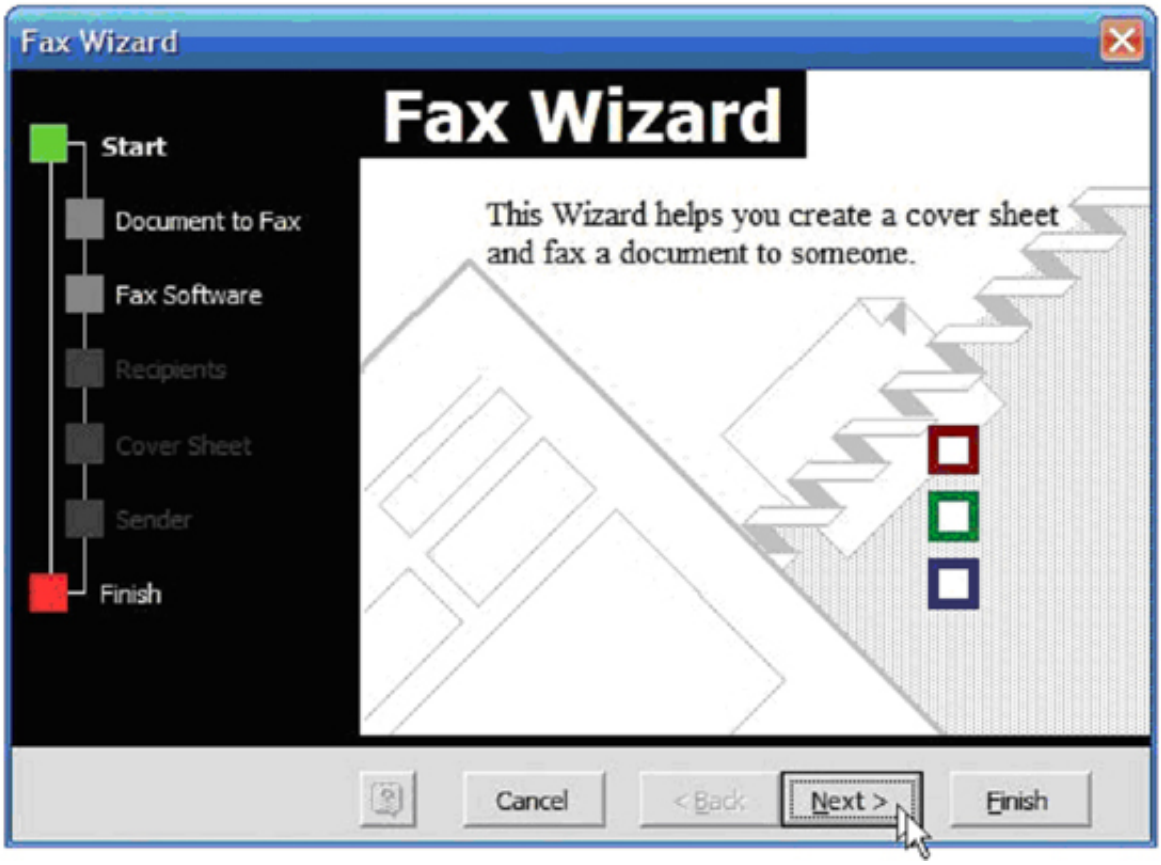
Fax Wizard
Start
Document to Fax
Fax Software
Recipients
Cover Sheet
Sender
Finish
Fax Wizard
This Wizard helps you create a cover sheet and fax a document to someone.
Cancel
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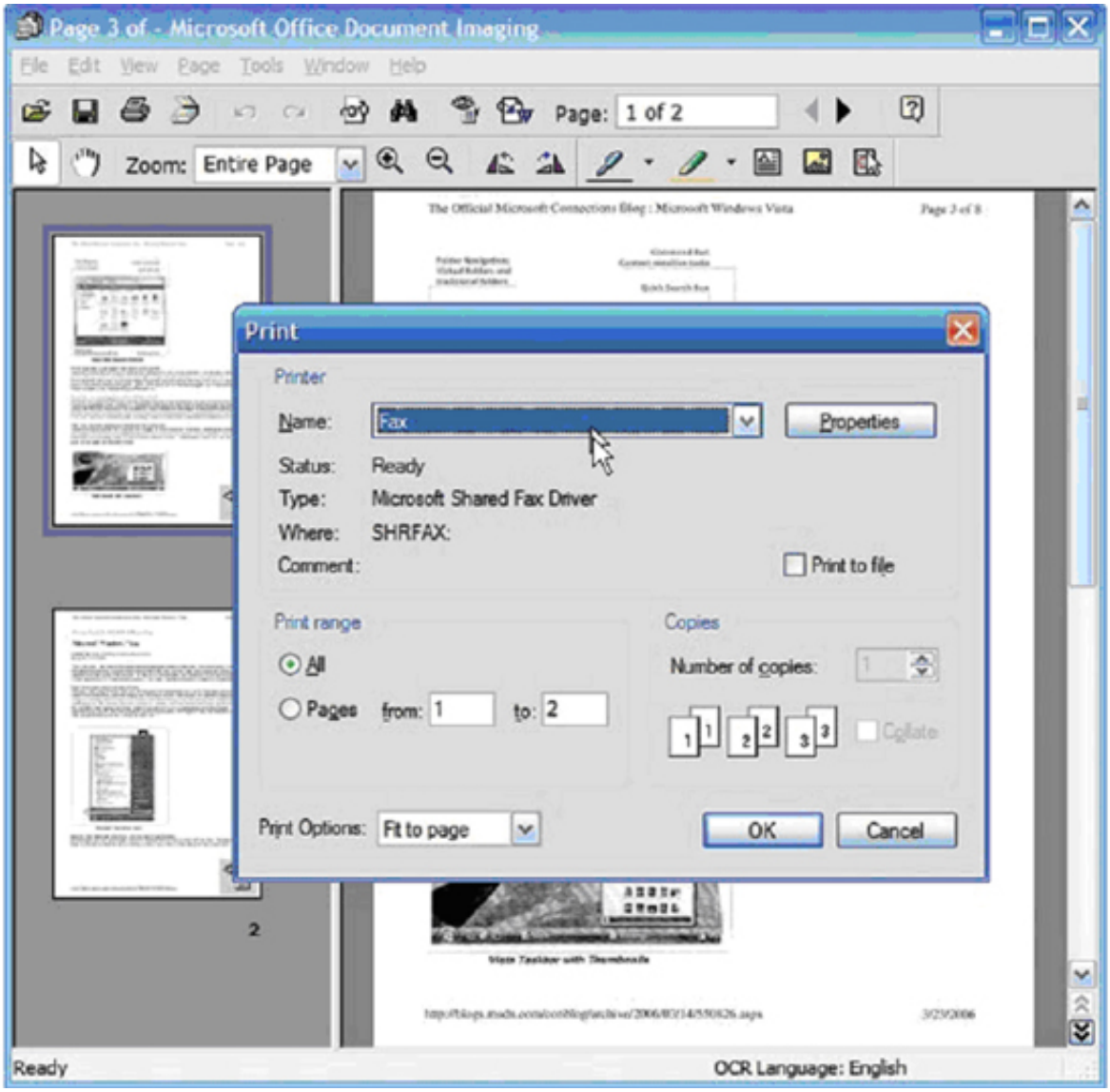

You'll also need a phone line near your system. If there isn't one there already, you can run a long extension cable, have the phone company install a jack, or use a device like the GE InstaJack, which lets you easily extend your phone lines over your AC wiring.

Why not use an Internet fax service? Well, services such as Efax.com start at about $13 per month for sending, and a desktop fax is almost free (you'll be charged for long-distance faxes).

Desktop faxing also saves time: You can resume important tasks while your modem processes the transmission. It's faxing at your fingertips, and you've been able to do it all along.

Dennis Turner