What to do if things dont work.

Mail2Fax depends on the proper interaction of PcBoard, Mail2Fax and your fax software, each with its own configuration file and options and each looking for files in specific locations and having specific formats.

In this document we cover the DEBUG option, and we explain what to do if your Mail2Fax set up is not fully working. At the end is a section on troubles with SENDFAX.PPE.

DEBUG option

Mail2Fax now supports a DEBUG keyword in the Config file, and a debug parameter on the command line. The purpose of these is to help in troubleshooting your Mail2Fax configuration, yet be able to surpress those messages once your setup is clean. The latter is important since log files get big soon enough, why add unnecessary entries.

The command line debug parameter turns on debugging for the entire run of the program. The Config file parameter only from the point where it is encountered.

Set the DEBUG parameter (fourth parameter on the command line) to 5, its highest setting. This will make available all diagnostic messages and checks that M2F does.

Below are some suggestions and some hard-earned knowledge that should help you troubleshoot your setup. The key technique is to identify WHERE the problem occurs. The areas we'll look at are:
> PcBoard Event Processing
> Mail2Fax setup
> Mail2Fax processing
> Fax Software

Our approach is to first narrow down in which of these portions the problem appears to be. Then the next step is to do some specific testing in that particular area, and will have it solved.

1.   Make sure your PcBoard system is running before trying to install Mail2Fax
>   Check that you have an event defined to run Mail2Fax
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2.   Check if Mail2Fax runs. At the time of the Event, watch for Mail2Fax messages on the screen. There should be at least our copyright notice. If not, check your Event setup - somehow Mail2Fax was never started.

3. If you get the message
            'Usage : Mail2Fax cfgfile msgbase faxfile [dlevel]'
        something is wrong with the program's commandline parameters:
            not 3 or 4 parameters
            config file (e.g. MAIL2FAX.CFG) not found
            Message base (e.g. E:\MAILFAX\MSGS) not found, or,
            Config file entry not recognised

        In this last case (invalid entry in Config file), there will be a specific message identifying the keyword not recognised. This message is shown immediately above the Usage ... message.

4.   Check for the "Scanning MSGS.. " on the sceen and in the log. If it is on the screen but not in the log, your MAIL2FAX.CFG entry LOGFILE is missing or is not pointing to the log file you are looking at. Make sure you use a log file, it is an indispensible troubleshooting tool.

        MSGS.. should be the name you specified as the Message Base to scan

        When the message Scanning MSGS.. does not appear, there was a problem with the Config file, or not enough memory to run the program. (This might happen if you have reply messages that are very many pages long.

5.   If Mail2Fax refuses a fax number that it should not refuse, check the file you specified via the OKNNX keyword entry (LOCALNNX.TXT in our examples). IT MUST have a space character ahead of every entry in the file, INCLUDING THE FIRST. If there are multiple lines, each line must start with a blank.
        This is because we scan for the NNX that way. If the Fax number on a message is "5551234", what we scan for is " 555" (note the leading blank.

        Leading blanks are required in BLOCKTN and FAXALIAS as well.

6.   Check if Mail2Fax found something it could fax. The easiest check is
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inspect the file FaxFile (or whatever you specified as third parameter on the Mail2Fax commandline - see item 3).

That file should exist, and should contain the text of your cover page - if any, and the text of the last fax that Mail2Fax [tried to] send. If this file (FaxFile in our examples) does not exist, verify that the TO: field in for at least one message contains "FAX MAIL @ xxxxxxx". FAX MAIL (or whatever you specified as FAXID) @ xxxxxxx must be a valid fax number or Alias (see item 5 above:

Make sure the entry "FAX MAIL @ xxxxxxx" is 25 characters or less. This
version of Mail2Fax does not completely handle extended headers.

7.   See if your Fax software gets invoked.
This is specific to your fax software. For instance, ZFAX (Zyxel) displays a blue popup window in the centre of the screen. Try FAXCMD TESTER.BAT and write a small Batch file (TESTER.BAT) containing only the statement:
        PAUSE TEST OF FAX

You should then see the message "TEST OF FAX - Press any key when ready"
That way at least you'll verify that M2F invokes the Fax software.

8.   SentFax.PPE
When you type in the FAX command from the PcBoard command prompt (main board), you should see the message:

        "This command allows you to enter a message that is to be sent by fax"

If that does not happen, check in PcbSetup that the FAX command is defined in CMD.LST for the main board (all CMD.LST files if you use different ones in different conferences.

When you follow the prompts of the FAX command, the last prompt is "Is the above information correct". If you answer Y for this prompt, you should then be in the PcBoard editor (full screen or line editor).

In the Full screen editor you'll see @ATTENTN:
on the first line. If you see "N@ATTENTN" (notice the leading N, it is because the FaxMail conference as non-echo, but the parameter in CMD.LST for SENDFAX.PPE is 99 . Y, which tells SendFax that it IS an Echo conference.
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9.   If the above do not help, call our BBS (416 588-9690) and leave a
message
       with the details.
       Include the portion of your log file that shows the error. If the log does
       not show anything, see item 4 above. We will not be able to help
       without those log entries or a screen capture or print.

       You can reach us by the following means:
              Network mail addressed to FRANS VAN DUINEN in the following
              confenferences:
                     PcBoard Tips and PcBoard Support on Rime
                     Sysops and Shareware on NANET

              Software Support BBS at 416 588-9690
              Fax   416 588-9690
              Voice 416 588-1111

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