

# IBM AIX Support Line Basics



By Georgia A. Gibson

This article provides information about IBM AIX service offerings available online or by phone or fax. It also gives a thumbnail sketch of other IBM Support Family services.

**W**hen a company signs up for AIX Support Line, IBM sends documentation about how to use the service, the hours that support is available, and other necessary information. However, as people move to new jobs, the Support Line documentation often becomes lost, and the new staff

member does not have the most current information. Then when a problem arises, it is unclear about what to do or expect from IBM.

AIX Support Line receives many calls each day. Some calls are from those who are new to Support Line; others have just recently become the authorized contact for Support Line. Still others have problems and are unfamiliar with Support Line.

This article provides information about IBM AIX service offerings available online or by phone or fax. It also gives a thumbnail sketch of other IBM Support Family services.

The AIX service offerings discussed in this article are available in the United States. If you are outside the U.S., refer to your local IBM Availability Services representative for your country-specific contact. If you have access to the Internet, you can obtain specific information that pertains to your country by doing the following:

- ◆ With your favorite browser, type [www.ibm.com](http://www.ibm.com)
- ◆ Select What We Offer
- ◆ Select Services
- ◆ Select Availability Services
- ◆ Select your country from Choose a Country
- ◆ Read the details

## Telephone Resources for Information

Several resources are available to obtain information about AIX and the RISC System/6000 (RS/6000). IBM provides several toll-free 800 numbers for you to learn about service offerings, obtain service, or order product information via fax.

## AIX Support Line Contract

AIX Support Line is a fee service. With your customer number and a brief description of your problem ready when you call, the response coordinator can quickly connect you to a technical specialist who can help. Use the phone numbers in Figure 1 for more information about the AIX Support Family of services.

## Other U.S. Services

To learn about more services in the U.S. (listed in section below), call AIX Availability Services at 1-800-IBM-4YOU. You can also call the AIX Support Family Project Office at 1-800-CALL-AIX (option 8), or send E-mail to [callaix@vnet.ibm.com](mailto:callaix@vnet.ibm.com).



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Phone Number	When to Call
1-800-CALL-AIX (1-800-225-5249) (U.S. only)	Questions about AIX on the RISC System/6000
1-800-237-5511 (U.S. only)	Questions about other IBM platforms
1-817-491-0053	AIX Support Family information if you are not in the U. S.
1-800-438-2468	Order supplies related to your RISC System/6000
1-800-879-2755	Order additional publications for your RISC System/6000 or AIX

**Figure 1. AIX Support Family access numbers**

### IBM Fax Information Service

The IBM Fax Information Service is available 24 hours per day, seven days a week. You can call at any time of the day or night and request information to be sent to the fax machine of your choice. First time users should be sure to request the new user instructions by responding to the instructions on the phone.

The IBM Fax Information Service number is 1-800-IBM-4FAX (1-800-426-4329). If you know the specific document number, you can request that document by phone; for example, request document #1228 for FixDist or document #2441 for PitStop. Subscription and speed-dial services are also available via this number.

Other useful fax numbers include the following:

1-800-522-3422	RISC System/6000 supplies
1-800-879-2755	RISC System/6000 or AIX publications
1-415-855-4329	To call the fax from outside the U.S. using a fax machine phone

### Hardcopy Information

The AIX Support Family Welcome Package notebook is sent to you automatically when you sign up for AIX Support Line. It contains information

about a variety of AIX Support Family Services available for purchase. If this book is not available at your location, call 1-800-CALL-AIX to request this package. It provides specific access and usage information about the following fee-based services:

**AIX Support Line Standard:** Service that provides telephone access to technical specialists who can help with general installation, usage, and code-related questions about RISC System/6000 hardware, AIX software, and Scalable POWERparallel™ systems

**AIX Support Line Premium:** An extended package of AIX Support Family services with discounts for other services and education courses

**AIX Associate:** Service that provides a remote support analyst who will act as your advocate on software installation, usage and defect issues, and hardware service

**AIX Technical Library:** Comprehensive AIX library of service and support information on CD-ROM; uses the user-friendly InfoExplorer hypertext search and retrieval facility

**AIX Alert:** Service that automatically notifies you by fax or Internet E-mail of code-related fixes that may help prevent problems

**AIX Consult Line:** Access to AIX consultants via scheduled conference calls for help in resolving questions that are beyond the scope of AIX Support Line, such as performance analysis, capacity planning, and high availability

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**AIX/6000 Performance Management:** Service that assists you in understanding and managing system resource utilization through ongoing analysis of key performance indicators of your RISC System/6000

**AIX System Backup and Recovery/6000 (Sysback):** Sysback enables you to install, back up, list, verify, and restore various types of data on an RISC System/6000 to both local and remote devices

**RISC System/6000 Recovery Express:** Disaster recovery service that provides a backup system to you within 24 hours of a disaster

**IBM House Call:** On-site assistance with tasks such as software installation, problem assistance, and Program Temporary Fix (PTF) updates  
The Welcome Packet also contains an IBM Support Family brochure and the latest issue of *AIXtra*, IBM's magazine for AIX professionals.

## Service Tools

Two service tools are important for providing information or code to keep your system current.

### AIX/PitStop

AIX/PitStop is a prototype AIX desktop service and support facility that all AIX customers receive (You do not have to subscribe to the AIX Support Line). AIX/PitStop was designed to make existing tools and information easy to access using one common user interface.

AIX/PitStop can help you with the following functions:

- ◆ Accessing information with or without the Internet
- ◆ Reading all of your README files by logically grouping them together
- ◆ Subscribing to the latest fix information
- ◆ Accessing faxes

AIX/PitStop provides access to information that is maintained by RISC System/6000 hardware engineers and AIX software engineers, which keeps you up-to-date on the latest information. More AIX/PitStop information is available on the Internet (See URL in Internet References at the end of this article).

### FixDist

FixDist, another AIX service tool, makes it easy to download AIX fixes and their prerequisites

from an anonymous ftp server via the Internet. Since FixDist is updated nightly, it provides a quick, easy way to keep your system current. If you do not want to download the fixes immediately, specify a later time for the download. Check all the specifics on the Internet. (See URL in Internet References at the end of this article.)

## FTP-based Services

Three ftp-based services are available:

**Fix Distribution:** FixDist, a free AIX service tool, makes getting fixes much easier. Use FixDist to download AIX files and their prerequisites from an anonymous ftp server via the Internet. For more information about FixDist, get the file <ftp://service.software.ibm.com/aix/tools/fixdist/README>.

**Emergency Fix Service:** Another ftp site houses emergency fixes, which are provided as short-term fixes before the formal PTF is available. Since these fixes are provided "as is", you will typically not use this service unless you are working directly with IBM on a problem. If you are directed by IBM, go to <ftp://software.watson.ibm.com/pub>.

**Data Exchange Service:** If you live in the U.S., use this service to upload your test case or related materials (instead of mailing them to us): <ftp://testcase.boulder.ibm.com>.

## E-mail-based Services

There are two E-mail-based services: Program Services which provides free defect reporting, and Mail List Server.

**Program Services:** If you do not have an AIX Support Family contract, report suspected software defects by sending E-mail to [aixsupt@service.software.ibm.com](mailto:aixsupt@service.software.ibm.com). If you are outside the U.S., check with your country representative. Each country has its own software defect reporting path.

Since Program Services provides limited support, read your IBM product license agreement and service announcements for more details.

**Mail List Server:** Worldwide customers can subscribe to our AIX Mail List Server to receive E-mail on subjects such as security notifications and other support-related notices. Send mail with a subject of "help" to [aixserv@austin.ibm.com](mailto:aixserv@austin.ibm.com) for more information.

Home Page	URL
AIX Support Network	<a href="http://service.software.ibm.com/www/support/aix">http://service.software.ibm.com/www/support/aix</a>
FixDist	<a href="http://service.software.ibm.com/pbin-usa/fixdist.pl">http://service.software.ibm.com/pbin-usa/fixdist.pl</a>
IBM	<a href="http://www.ibm.com">http://www.ibm.com</a>
IBM Global Network	<a href="http://www.ibm.com/globalnetwork">http://www.ibm.com/globalnetwork</a>
IBM RISC System/6000	<a href="http://www.austin.ibm.com">http://www.austin.ibm.com</a>
AIX/PitStop	<a href="http://service.software.ibm.com/www/support/aix/pitstop/index.html">http://service.software.ibm.com/www/support/aix/pitstop/index.html</a>

**Figure 2. Internet addresses for support**

### Internet References

Figure 2 provides a list of useful Internet addresses for information and support.

Using these resources will help you understand what services are available and how AIX Support Line works.



### Summary

The service tools, ftp-based and E-mail-based services, and the fee-based AIX Family of services can help you handle nearly any problem or emergency. The AIX Welcome Packet, AIX/PitStop, FixDist, and access to the Internet provide a wealth of knowledge at your fingertips.

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## Barriers to Online Commerce Diminish

MasterCard International and Visa International, with support from IBM and other technology partners, have agreed on a standard for doing business securely over the Internet and other public networks. This agreement means that people who would like to buy or sell goods and services on the Internet, but have been concerned about the security of their credit card numbers and other private information, will soon be able to conduct their business without worry.

The new standard, called Secure Electronic Transactions (SET), is the result of a collaborative effort in which IBM contributed technological expertise and a technology called iKP, developed at IBM Research. The iKP technology uses a mathematical technique called cryptography to enable secure electronic payments on the Internet.

SET was developed in accordance with principles that create equal opportunity for thousands of companies and individuals who have innovative ideas for doing business online. For example, in addition to ensuring a high level of security for electronic commerce, the SET protocol is open and available to software developers free of charge, will be fully published, is free of royalty payments, and incorporates technologies that are already standard to the industry.

The next step is for companies to develop and market offers that incorporate the SET protocol.