

Collecting Fax Numbers, Web Sites, and e-Mail Addresses

[WARNING: The following is somewhat disheartening. Read at your own discretion]

Every category has its particular pluses and minuses, more so when you take into consideration the different perspectives from various collectors, but Fax Numbers, Web Sites, and e-Mail Addresses, it seems to me, have a particularly tragic side.

These *could* have been great categories—after all, everybody, but *everybody*, was getting one or the other, and often all three—so they were *bound* to be abundant on covers. Granted, they didn't have that special allure seen in the Fancy categories, the magic of Die-Cuts, or the nostalgia of Military or Political covers—but they were new, and they were promising, and they were beginning to pop up with increasing regularity as the new technologies rapidly began to be incorporated in both homes and businesses across the country. The potential was certainly there; the anticipation building...but...[Here comes the tragic part. Ready your hankies.] Through the fault of no one in particular, and certainly not the collector...the timing was wrong. In fact, the timing was fatal!

Just as fax numbers were making their appearance (with e-mail addresses and web sites coming along a few years later), the quadruple whammy hit!—anti-smoking campaigns, disposable lighters, foreign competition, and the collapse of the domestic match industry. [Yep, that'll do it!] So, as we all busily filled our lives with 9-digit numbers, .coms, .orgs, .nets, and the like, legislation and a change of habits were simultaneously slashing the opportunities for such to appear on new covers.

You can certainly still build collections of Fax Numbers, Web Sites, and e-Mail Addresses; it's just that they don't exist in the numbers one would have expected back in 1990. I don't collect any, myself, but I do save them for my traders, and I seem to see a greater frequency of fax numbers over web sites and e-mail addresses, with the latter coming in last. In any event, the smaller numbers certainly shouldn't stop you from collecting in these categories. Often, it's the smaller categories that give the collector the greatest pleasure. And, since the categories, here, represent 'new' technology, it's probably only a matter of not-so-many years before fax numbers, web site addresses, and e-mail addresses disappear in favor of even newer technology...which may make what you've already collected even *more* collectable! And...on day...you may just be bouncing your beautiful grandchild on your knee, explaining what all those 'things' were, back in the 'old days'!

