

BGC PARTNERS USES BIGFIX'S REAL-TIME VISIBILITY AND CONTROL TO OPTIMIZE IT OPERATIONS



Customer

BGC Partners, Inc. <http://www.bgcpartners.com/>

Vertical Industry

Financial Services

Challenges

- Improve visibility of application usage or licensing needs on workstations and servers
- Gaining a real-time and accurate view into asset inventory
- Perform cost-efficient routine maintenance at remote sites

Solution

The BigFix Unified Management Platform has radically changed the way that BGC's IT staff approaches their daily operational tasks. Thanks to the real-time visibility and control of the BigFix solution, IT has saved money and time, and gets answers to the questions they have about their globally distributed environment—within minutes.

Results

- Complete, detailed application usage data now drives a reliable and speedy licensing true-up process
- Comprehensive asset inventory across the enterprise—within minutes—allowing IT to reallocate systems rather than purchase new ones
- Systems maintenance tasks are performed reliably across the WAN—saving travel costs and optimizing IT operations

“With BigFix, we’ve instantly obtained real-time reporting and insight from the operating system up the stack. There is nothing more valuable than having that type of evolving visibility with one click.”

—Chris Marino

Senior VP of Global IT Procurement

Customer

BGC Partners is a leading global intermediary to the wholesale financial markets, specializing in the brokering of a broad range of financial products, including fixed income securities, interest rate swaps, foreign exchange, equities, equity derivatives, credit derivatives, commodities, futures, structured products, and other instruments. BGC Partners also provides a full range of services including trade execution, broker-dealer services, clearing, processing, information, and other back-office services to a broad range of financial and non-financial institutions. Through its eSpeed, BGC Trader, and BGCantor Market Data brands, the Company operates multiple buyer, multiple seller real-time electronic marketplaces for the world’s most liquid capital markets and globally distributed and innovative market data and analysis products for numerous financial instruments and markets. BGC Partners’ customers include many of the world’s largest banks, broker-dealers, investment banks, trading firms, hedge funds, governments, and investment firms.

BGC Partners has approximately 1400 brokers and over 2400 employees in 19 offices in New York and London, as well as in Beijing (representative office), Chicago, Copenhagen, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Johannesburg, Moscow Mexico City, Nyon, Paris, Rio de Janeiro, São Paulo, Seoul, Singapore, Sydney, Tokyo, and Toronto.

Challenges

Before BigFix, BGC Partners’ IT staff struggled to gain certainty about all of the workstations and servers in their environment. With offices spanning multiple countries and branches across the US, the IT team was looking for a solution that could give them a single, unified view into all aspects of their computing infrastructure. Licensing true-ups across the global network were simply not possible—leaving the IT department in the position of taking the vendor’s word for it, rather than having a reliable and updated database of installed, used, and authorized software.

Additionally, many simple administrative changes required onsite travel to these locations, particularly since these offices aren’t staffed with technical personnel. Existing tools couldn’t give the staff the real-time visibility and control over their remote systems—resulting in costly travel and expenses.

Solution Overview

By providing a “single pane of glass” perspective into the BGC global network of servers and workstations, BigFix has given the IT staff reliable, up-to-the-minute information—information that can be used to reduce costs, simplify management, and improve security.

During a recent licensing true-up exercise with Microsoft, BGC was able to use BigFix’s Software Asset Management solution to confirm that application usage patterns remained flat. Without automated and accurate validation from BigFix, BGC would have likely signed up for more licenses, incurring unnecessary expense. According to Chris Marino, Senior VP of Global IT Procurement,

“Thanks to Big Fix we have absolute certainty where we stand from a EULA perspective optimizing our expenditure and minimizing risk.”

When a software vendor notified BGC Partners of their decision to eliminate support for one of their products, the IT staff turned to the BigFix unified management console to determine where the software was installed. Within 20 minutes, the team was able to tell management exactly where the software was installed—giving instant insight into the potential impact of the support termination.

Inventory management via BigFix has provided a powerful way to reduce capital expenditures. The IT department uses BigFix to report when someone on the trading floor logs into a system, documenting via asset tags which systems are in use. This information populates an updated inventory database, allowing the team to re-deploy from the in-house inventory, rather than purchasing a new system. Before BigFix, inventory tracking was difficult

BigFix Deployment Details

Initially, BGC planned to deploy BigFix Patch Management for their 5,000 Windows workstations and 1,500 servers but soon extended functionality scope based on the power and flexibility of the BigFix Unified Management Platform. As Scott Heasman, Global Wintel Manager, explains, “At first, we just signed up for patch management with BigFix. But when we saw all the things that we could do with the BigFix management platform, we immediately subscribed to more functionality: asset discovery; software distribution; endpoint protection; and power management.”

The deployment was straightforward and BigFix Agents were quickly installed throughout the enterprise. Once the single, multi-purpose agent was installed on each system, the BGC team realized that they could literally do anything on the systems they needed to do via the BigFix unified management console.

In order to optimize service delivery to each of the remote sites, the team has installed a BigFix Relay at each location. Additionally, a DMZ-based Relay was installed at the main site in order to support and protect all roaming laptops. Network uptime is critical so IT staff members are appreciative of BigFix's ability to throttle bandwidth usage dynamically in order to avoid performance impacts during maintenance windows.

Why BigFix?

While BGC had already had an existing patch management system in place, it wasn't meeting their requirements for tracking and controlling systems over their highly distributed environment. When comparing BigFix to the incumbent tool and another they evaluated, Chris Marino indicates, “It's not a fair fight. The ability to solve multiple challenges by leveraging a multi-purpose agent, residing in a single console was ultimately the compelling reason for BGC to choose BigFix. Additionally, the speed with which BigFix could enforce change was another big consideration for the decision.”

“We initially signed up for patch management with BigFix. But when we saw all the things that we could do with the BigFix management platform, we immediately signed up for more: asset discovery; software distribution; endpoint protection; and power management.”

—Scott Heasman
Global Wintel Manager



Looking Ahead

Currently, BigFix is installed on all of the Windows desktops, laptops, and servers throughout the network with the potential to deploy BigFix on all Unix systems as well.

BigFix: Breakthrough Technology, Revolutionary Economics

Founded in 1997, BigFix, an IBM Company, is a leading provider of high-performance enterprise systems and security management solutions that revolutionizes the way IT organizations manage and secure their computing infrastructures. Based on a unique architecture that distributes management intelligence directly to the computing devices themselves, BigFix is radically faster, scalable, more accurate and adaptive than legacy management software. From Systems Lifecycle Management, Security & Vulnerability Management to Endpoint Protection, BigFix solutions automate the most labor-intensive IT tasks across the most complex global networks saving organizations significant amounts of time, labor, and expense. BigFix provides real-time visibility and control for millions of globally distributed computing devices. The BigFix customer list counts many of the world's largest and most prestigious organizations in every industry including financial services, retail, education, manufacturing, and public sector agencies. More information can be found at www.bigfix.com.