

BIGFIX ON THE MENU

AT O'CHARLEY'S RESTAURANTS



Customer

O'Charley's Restaurants, headquartered in Nashville, TN, <http://www.ocharleys.com>

Vertical Industry

Retail

Challenges

- Comply with PCI Data Security Standards (PCI DSS) requirements
- Manage computers distributed across 350+ restaurants and corporate offices over slow 56 kbps links
- Satisfy corporate mandate to consolidate infrastructure and reduce complexity

Solution

BigFix helps O'Charley's Restaurants manage risk and save money by bringing distributed computers up to PCI security standards without sending any field technicians out on the road.

Results

- Demonstrably satisfies PCI requirement for 30-day patch and update currency
- Replaced at least three "point solution" security and system management products by implementing BigFix's unified management
- Reduced licensing costs and removed non-approved applications using BigFix's software license management solution

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—Michael Schaefer

Senior Wide Area Network Analyst,

Customer

O’Charley’s, Inc. operates 364 restaurants in the US Midwest, Southern and New England regions. The company manages three restaurant brands—over 200 company namesake O’Charley’s restaurants in the Midwest and South, 114 New England and Mid-Atlantic “Restaurant 99” locations, and five Stoney River Legendary Steaks properties in upscale locations in selected cities.

Challenges

Cost-effective security and systems management have always been high on the O’Charley’s priority list, especially since maintaining an efficient supply chain is critical to pleasing customers and maintaining profitability. In the last few years, however, the restaurant chain has steadily upgraded its IT infrastructure management programs to stay ahead of new legal and industry best practices compliance programs, most notably the credit card industry’s PCI Data Security Standard.

O’Charley’s IT infrastructure consists of a centralized data center of applications, servers and desktops at the company’s headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, and approximately 2,100 PCs and PC-based point-of-sale (POS) terminals installed in the company’s restaurants. The POS terminals are particularly important to O’Charley’s, as they generate financial, inventory and business operations data vital to the smooth operation of the company’s supply chain. As is common in retail environments, relatively slow 56k data lines connect the restaurants to the O’Charley’s data center, complicating remote administration and application processing. Furthermore, restaurant staff and managers are chiefly concerned with keeping customers happy, rather than distracting themselves with computer system administration tasks.

Solution Overview

Managing distributed assets over slow data links while keeping costs down was a recipe for success at O’Charley’s. Thanks to BigFix’s unified management solution, O’Charley’s realized reduced IT costs and complexity, speedier remediation, and validated compliance with PCI DSS requirements for systems configuration.

Specifically, within just a matter of days, O’Charley’s deployed BigFix’s Security Configuration and Vulnerability Management, Endpoint Protection and Asset Discovery solutions on their 2,100 distributed servers, PCs and PC-based POS terminals.

Results

O'Charley's quickly reaped the significant cost savings using BigFix to manage their dispersed computers. Specifically, these benefits were attributed to:

- Slashing licensing costs of unapproved and unnecessary applications
- Obviating the need to upgrade their “skinny” data links
- Keeping field technicians from driving from restaurant to restaurant to manually bring PCs into PCI DSS compliance

According to Michael Schaeffer, Senior Wide Area Network Analyst at O'Charley's, “The alternative to BigFix was putting technicians in trucks and sending them around the country to install software and fix bugs in person. With BigFix, we dodged this expense and managed to do almost everything without leaving our offices. The cost savings from this alone more than paid for our three-year BigFix license for all solution packs and modules.”

BigFix Deployment Details

While PCI DSS compliance may have been the primary driver for the project at O'Charley's, simplified management, reduced IT costs, and improved quality of service came out of the BigFix deployment.

In choosing a new software update and patch solution to help the company meet PCI DSS standards, the company had two major criteria: a solution which would work within a bandwidth-constrained environment and provide more than just a single-purpose update and patch functionality. As Schaefer points out, “This would not only simplify a number of IT management processes, but would also reduce the number of vendors competing for the IT department's attention and budget.”

With the help of a BigFix solution engineer, O'Charley's deployed the BigFix Agent and requisite policy modules on the company's infrastructure in four days compared to other vendor implementations that can take months to complete. “The BigFix sales engineer also gave us informal hands-on training on how to use the solution,” says Schaefer. “The BigFix user interface would be familiar to anyone who has managed Windows solutions, but learning by doing in our own environment was a very effective way to come up to speed on BigFix.”

With respect to managing bandwidth usage, O'Charley's leverages BigFix Relays to make it possible to service remote PCs and POS terminals over a typical retail-grade 56k network. A BigFix Relay can be any Microsoft Windows-based computer running the BigFix Agent tasked with additional responsibilities to collect and distribute content (policies, patches, updates, etc.) to a local group of BigFix Agent-managed computers. Because the BigFix Relay functionality is unobtrusive to the end-user, O'Charley's has designated a BigFix Relay computer in every one of its restaurants, with each Relay supporting anywhere between one to nine PCs and Point of Sale terminals.

“Restaurant managers need to manage restaurants, not PCs.”

–Michael Schaeffer
Senior Wide Area Network Analyst



“The Relays proved their worth when we updated Microsoft Office and installed Windows Service Packs across the infrastructure,” says Schaefer. “The Service Packs and Office update files run about 500 Megabytes, and can swamp even a fast network. BigFix Relays helped us distribute these packages without overloading our network.”

Why BigFix?

After evaluating alternatives in a competitive proof-of-concept exercise, O’Charley’s selected the BigFix Security Configuration and Vulnerability Management and BigFix Endpoint Protection Solution Packs to combine a variety of functions—with a single agent, single console, and unified management infrastructure.

A key point is that BigFix works unobtrusively, which enables O’Charley’s IT group to service its PC infrastructure without need for action by end-users. “Restaurant managers need to manage restaurants, not PCs,” says Schaefer.

As a result, BigFix has helped O’Charley’s reduce the number of software tools and vendors it needs to manage. “Anything that simplifies processes and gives us fewer vendors to manage saves money, reduces stress and improves the quality of service we can deliver to the organization,” says Schaefer.

Looking Ahead

With most regulatory mandates, additional requirements emerge, and thanks to BigFix’s extensible management infrastructure, O’Charley’s will be ready for them—without additional hardware, system reconfiguration or deployment downtime. In the meantime, O’Charley’s IT staff can continue to focus on delivering superior customer service to their end-user community.

ABOUT BIGFIX, AN IBM COMPANY

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.

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