

WORLD-CLASS DELIVERY POWERED BY BIGFIX

FOR PUROLATOR COURIER LTD.



Customer

Purolator Courier Ltd., Mississauga, Ontario, Canada, <http://www.purolator.com>

Vertical Industry

Air Delivery and Freight Services

Challenges

- Accelerate the patch management process—without the need for local field technician site visits
- Reduce systems management complexity
- Avoid costly bandwidth upgrades required to support new shipping technology

Solution

BigFix provides reliable security configuration and patch management to the 3,000 automated shipping systems distributed across Canada. BigFix's unified management, managed by services provider Cyberklix, delivers lowered IT costs and improved security to Purolator.

Results

- Reliable execution of software updates and configuration changes within 24-hour SLA—delivering 100% systems uptime
- Simplified, consolidated systems management
- Expanded shipping infrastructure without the need for bandwidth upgrades

“With BigFix, we could offer Purolator the ability to consolidate security and system management services delivery through a lightweight, single agent, single console, single communications infrastructure solution.”

—John Menezes
President, Cyberklix

Customer

Purolator is Canada’s largest courier company, picking up and delivering 1.1 million packages each day. From timely, reliable package delivery to integrated distribution solutions, Purolator is committed to providing its customers with solutions that help their businesses succeed.

Challenges

One of Purolator’s top initiatives for 2008 is to install a newly automated shipping process at 3,000 customer locations across Canada. These systems automate the process of preparing shipping documents for packages being picked up and delivered by Purolator. The systems weigh packages, calculate delivery charges, generate shipping labels, send billing information to the customer’s account records, and signal Purolator that the customer is ready for a package pick-up.

This shipping infrastructure is critical to Purolator’s business, so maintaining uptime is a high priority; however, systems management must be conducted over bandwidth-constrained links. Any administrative work to maintain the health and security systems must avoid impacting business operations. Yet, a reliance on wireless connectivity for the shipping infrastructure makes remote administration challenging, particularly when other services are competing for limited bandwidth. Additionally, since these systems house customer data, security is essential.

The shipping systems are built around embedded PC hardware based on the Microsoft Windows operating system. The user interface runs as a Web service generated by a Windows Web server installed on each system. This enables Purolator to frequently update and upgrade services delivered via the automated shipping systems, including changes to the look and feel of the user interface, shipment pricing information, and so on.

Solution Overview

Speed is a critical success factor for leading delivery services firms like Purolator, and the same was true for their systems management solution. Due to BigFix’s simplified management platform and Cyberklix’s technical expertise, Purolator was able to roll out automated security and systems management two months ahead of schedule. Changes are executed remotely well within the 24-hour SLA, ensuring 100% uptime, and cost-effective and reliable customer service.

Results

Time to value for the BigFix solution has exceeded the customer’s expectations. “Implementing the basic BigFix infrastructure took place in two months, half the time we projected,” says John Menezes, President of Cyberklix. “From there, it’s a matter of physically installing the new shipping systems at customer sites. As soon as we turn them on, they show up on Purolator’s BigFix dashboard, ready to manage.”

Purolator Automation Specialist Sam Hutcheon concurs with Menezes' assessment, and adds his observations from his experience as an end-user. "We are routinely executing changes on the systems—patches, updates, configuration fixes, etc.—within 24 hrs. We can perform much more routine administration and problem solving remotely and are reducing the need for in-person service calls. This is a terrific advantage in reducing travel costs and reducing time-to-resolution," Hutcheon says.

Although the BigFix solution is new to Purolator, Hutcheon finds it easy to use and expects it to benefit Purolator, as well as its customers. "At the administrator level, it's very intuitive. I feel comfortable with BigFix right now and am confident the technology will enable us to be even more responsive to our customers."

BigFix Deployment Details

As part of the new generation Shipping System project, Purolator engaged Cyberklix, a Mississauga, Ontario-based technology solution integrator and service provider to develop a security and system management solution for the shipping infrastructure. Cyberklix recommended a BigFix solution to manage endpoint security, software patch and update and asset inventory, but with an innovative twist. Under this arrangement, Cyberklix owns and maintains the BigFix infrastructure, with Purolator staff performing day-to-day security and system management operations on the systems through the BigFix infrastructure.

"Purolator is in the package delivery business, not in the IT business," says Jim McDade, Purolator's Chief Information Officer. "In developing the project, we decided that we wanted to stay hands-on in delivering mission critical services to the shipping systems, but delegate support and maintenance work required to keep the infrastructure up and running to a third party. We have executed a number of successful projects with Cyberklix and heeded their counsel when they proposed the BigFix-delivered-as-a-managed-service solution to us."

Under the arrangement, Purolator Automation Specialist Sam Hutcheon manages the shipping systems through BigFix Console software installed on his desktop computer, interacting with the Purolator shipping systems in the same way other BigFix operators do at owner-operated installations. The only difference is that a third party, in this case Cyberklix, maintains the BigFix infrastructure. BigFix products installed in the Purolator solution include the BigFix Unified Management Platform, BigFix Systems Lifecycle Management (includes patch management, software distribution and license management), and BigFix Endpoint Protection (provides Anti-Virus, Anti-Spyware, endpoint firewall, plus client management for third-party anti-virus products).

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President, Cyberklix



Why BigFix?

Cyberklix recommended BigFix to Purolator for many reasons besides its suitability for managed services-based delivery. John Menezes, President of Cyberklix comments, "With BigFix, we could offer Purolator the ability to consolidate security and system management services delivery through a lightweight, single agent, single console, single communications infrastructure solution. BigFix is also easy to deploy and an excellent fit with the managed services operating model we proposed to them."

Menezes also cites BigFix's minimal requirements for communications bandwidth as an important advantage. "BigFix's trunk-and-branch Relay features conserve bandwidth and build in fault tolerance to the solution. Conserving communications bandwidth is important in the long run as this can be a significant operating expense, particularly when you are managing devices spread out over the world's second largest country."

Looking Ahead

Purolator remains on track towards its goal of installing new systems at all appropriate sites by early 2009. As the population of BigFix-managed shipping systems rises, the BigFix management infrastructure will be ready to accommodate the growth in managed shipping system endpoints. "The managed services model lets me concentrate on what's going on with the shipping systems without the distractions of looking after the infrastructure put in place to control them," says Hutcheon. "So far, everything is working out as planned and we look forward to a good long run for the shipping system management solution."

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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