

WESTERN FEDERAL CREDIT UNION ACHIEVES COST REDUCTION WITH BIGFIX



Customer

Western Federal Credit Union, <https://www.western.org/>

Vertical Industry

Financial Services

Challenges

- Operational inefficiency and inaccuracies in distributing patches and software updates
- Costly, slow and ineffective manual software distribution and update processes
- Minimal visibility into asset inventory and software usage—particularly for roaming endpoints

Solution

BigFix's Software Distribution and Patch Management solution has reduced costs and improved IT operations for Western Federal Credit Union. Specifically, by automating IT operations through a single, unified management console, the credit union was able to significantly improve patching and efficiency as well as reduce the man-hours associated with these tasks.

Results

- Significantly increased patch compliance across a distributed network—including remote desktops and laptops
- 50% reduction in labor costs through automation and unified management
- Real-time visibility into asset inventory and software usage to improve licensing true-ups—including remote and roaming devices

“With BigFix, we push the patch and we literally watch the policy get applied, go to 100%, and attain current status. With the laptop users and people coming in and out of the environment, we liked that machines get their updates the next time they come online.”

—Nate Howe
Security Officer
Risk Management

Customer

Western Federal Credit Union is one of the nation’s leading credit unions with over \$1.4 billion in assets and over 120,000 members across the country. As a multi-state, multi-sponsor credit union, Western Federal Credit Union has a diverse group of sponsor companies in their field of membership in industries such as information technology, automotive, airline, retail, service, manufacturing, and aerospace. The Risk Management and Information Security organization supports 430 employees in 32 branches located in 10 states across four time zones.

Challenges

With a lean team of three, the credit union’s Information Security team looked for a solution that could enable them to do more with less. Optimizing resources is critical, since there are no local IT staff at the remote branches.

Specifically, the group struggled with a labor-intensive, manual patch management process that lacked real-time visibility—particularly for roaming and remote assets. Without a timely, accurate, and automated asset inventory, it was virtually impossible to get a grasp on the security configuration and compliance status of their servers, desktops and laptops.

Solution Overview

Using the power of the BigFix Unified Management Platform, the team is now able to do more with less. Automated, real-time asset inventory provides certainty in terms of policy compliance and effective risk mitigation across the 600-workstation and 100-server environment. Rather than scheduling staff to perform after hours and weekend operational tasks manually, these are executed automatically through the BigFix console. Most notably, the team uses the BigFix baselining capability to target the specific machines that require a particular patch or update—without any manual intervention. Unlike alternatives that require a server-based scan to validate patch installation, the BigFix agent reports immediately on patch compliance status allowing the team to achieve unparalleled accuracy.

Results

Thanks to these improvements, the team has maximized resources. They’re accomplishing greater levels of visibility and control with a single administrator focused on server and workstation management, rather than the two that were struggling with these tasks before BigFix. Using the BigFix single, unified management console to service both the server and workstation communities streamlines IT operations, improves accuracy, and speeds the time to remediation.

BigFix Deployment Details

Segmenting the assets based on location, priority or configuration baseline is a key aspect of the BigFix deployment. The Risk Management and Information Security team has classified computer groups based on specific characteristics captured through BigFix's retrieved-properties utility. One aspect is asset location. For example, if they need to execute a change on the computers for the Virginia branches, targeting is easy since BigFix automatically segments these assets into a computer grouping. Other groupings can also be configured based on a wide variety of computer properties (e.g. OS version, hostname, IP address range, CPU type, processor speed, etc.). BigFix's awareness of Active Directory data is also leveraged when automating this process.

This level of precise automation optimizes the workflow and improves branch office productivity. Nate, Security Officer, Risk Management, explains the benefits of this approach. "Now that we have this level of visibility and control, we don't need to bother the branch manager with giving us the names of the machines in that office. We have that instant visibility right in the BigFix console."

Why BigFix?

After evaluating offerings from vendors such as PatchLink, LANDesk, Shavlik, Altiris, and McAfee, the team selected BigFix for the accuracy and speed delivered by its unique distributed intelligent agent architecture. BigFix's high performance, unified management approach enables Western Federal Credit Union to obtain real-time certainty into the configuration status and policy compliance of all their assets throughout the network.

Unlike alternative solutions that require a rescan after each patch installation, BigFix delivers instant validation that a patch has been successfully installed because it doesn't rely on a server to do the verification and analysis. As Nate Howe explains, "With BigFix, there's no need to scan your endpoints because changes constantly trickle in to the console. Essentially, the machines report on themselves. When we make a change to a machine, the console is accurate within a matter of minutes. We didn't find any other system that matched that level of accuracy with a real-time view of our assets."

These levels of accuracy have extended beyond those servers and desktops located within the credit union network to roaming users that are intermittently connected. According to Nate Howe, "With BigFix, we push the patch and we literally watch the policy get applied, go to 100% and attain current status. With the laptop users and people coming in and out of the environment, we liked that machines get their updates the next time they come online."

"With BigFix, there's no need to scan your endpoints because changes constantly trickle in to the console. Essentially, the machines report on themselves. When we make a change to a machine, the console is accurate within a matter of minutes. We didn't find any other system that matched that level of accuracy with a real-time view of our assets."

–Nate Howe
Security Officer
Risk Management



Looking Ahead

The Risk Management and Information Security team has plans to migrate their anti-virus and anti-spyware software to a new vendor and wants to avoid the time, hassle, and risks associated with this type of project. They are planning to use the BigFix Client Manager for Endpoint Protection to facilitate the migration, by automatically targeting the machines that need the uninstall, performing an automated, remote uninstall, quarantining the machines during the removal process, installing the new software, and validating successful installation and configuration of the new signature updates. Additionally, BigFix's real-time reporting will give the team a detailed inventory of the state of the migration across the network.

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.