

Major retailer reduces time to patch 27,000 endpoints from weeks to hours

IBM BigFix solution enables leading retailer to streamline provisioning, management and inventory

Overview

The need

Streamline processes for centrally controlling, managing and reporting on 27,000 servers across the enterprise.

The solution

The company deployed the IBM® BigFix® solution because it enabled near-real-time visibility into the state of systems.

The benefit

The retailer can now complete a 2,400-hour deployment project in 32 hours and perform two days of inventory reporting in 10 minutes; it can proactively test and roll back changes, significantly reducing labor costs.

One of the largest retailers in the United States, with 2013 revenue of more than USD100 billion, and over 3,000 stores staffed by 343,000 full-time associates.

A need to streamline and automate

This leading national retail chain has more than 3,000 stores, and each depends on Virtual Store Architecture (VSA) as its computing platform. The VSA at each store consists of two IBM blade servers hosting at least five virtual machines (VMs) and sometimes more, for an enterprise total of 27,000 endpoints. In the company's data center, a two-person IT team centrally manages all automation functions for VSA, using a legacy IBM solution.

The retailer was interested in IBM's latest offering for managing servers and hoped that the new solution would help streamline and automate the daily tasks required to control its servers, including provisioning, configuration management, and inventory of hardware and software.

Pleased with the success of the IBM BigFix solution, the retailer plans to extend its use to other challenges. A level 3 technology engineer at the company notes, "Because the BigFix agent on each client does most of the reporting work, the solution is very lightweight. We can have a quarter million endpoints in our primary system, and that's very powerful."



Deploying software agents to report back

IBM assisted with solution migration planning. The client then deployed the BigFix agent into its VSA infrastructure to achieve near-real-time visibility into the state of its servers. The IBM BigFix solution uses a bottom-up model so that when a client comes online, the agent automatically reports on its status. In contrast, the legacy solution used a top-down model, where clients had to be registered manually before they could be controlled.

Saving 59 weeks of staff time and more

The new solution has simplified many tasks but especially software distribution and configuration management. In the prior environment, it took 2,400 staff hours to deploy software on 1,500 endpoints. Now, it takes just 32 hours. More than 59 weeks of staff time have been reclaimed so that the team can work on more valuable tasks.

It's also much easier to collect inventory on 27,000 endpoints for compliance purposes. For example, four days of staff work have been reduced to 10 minutes.

Near-real-time insights enable the team to identify software and hardware versions on endpoints before rolling out changes. The team can now test and mitigate issues ahead of time instead of discovering issues as they occur. As a result, severity 1 incidents have been significantly reduced.

Solution components

Software

- IBM® BigFix®

Services

- IBM Cloud & Smarter Infrastructure services

Take the next step

To learn more about the IBM BigFix solution or IBM Professional Services, please contact your IBM representative or IBM Business Partner, or visit the following website: ibm.com/security/bigfix

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