Canal Insurance Unifies Browser Management

Situation

Canal Insurance, based in Greenville, South Carolina, is a well-established, privately owned company with legendary tenure in the transportation insurance marketplace. The company traces its history back more than 75 years.

With some 240 employees dedicated to providing exceptional customer service, the company needs to support use of the major browsers, including Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, and Mozilla Firefox. Enforcing policy settings across browsers was becoming an ever more difficult challenge, especially after Microsoft changed the way in which group policy for browsers was managed with its release of Internet Explorer 11.

"Internet Explorer had been our most used browser, but after IE 11 came out, browser management using Group Policy was so convoluted that it became a real challenge," says Faye Jasman, Applications Analyst at Canal Insurance. "It was tough enough to create and ensure browser

settings with the new version of IE, but maintaining the settings over time became untenable."

Meanwhile, Canal Insurance employees were finding that some of the applications and sites they required for work simply performed better using alternate browsers including Chrome and Firefox. "There was no easy way to manage policy across those browsers, either," Jasman recalls. "Anything browser-related seems to be in constant flux. We needed a good solid way to manage all of our browsers."

Solution

Canal Insurance quickly focused on PolicyPak. "One of our senior network administrators, who is always on the lookout for ways to tighten security, suggested PolicyPak," Jasman says. "We looked at PolicyPak and said, 'This is it! This is exactly what we need!'"

To be on the safe side, the company wanted to ensure its initial enthusiasm was well placed. So

PolicyPak was more formally evaluated and then trialed with a limited number of users.

"We brought PolicyPak to a small working group we had, and the evaluation showed that PolicyPak would do exactly what we needed to accomplish in enforcing policy across multiple browsers," Jasman says. "Our next step was a trial deployment and that went so well we soon rolled it out across our company."

Benefits

Canal Insurance has enjoyed a number of benefits since deploying PolicyPak, including ease of managing policy across multiple browsers, support for related applications, simplicity in staying current, rapid ROI, tighter security, and great product support.

Ease of Managing Policy Across Multiple Browsers

PolicyPak, with its powerful, yet easy to use, policy administration capabilities has given Canal Insurance the ability to continue to use Internet Explorer—while also eagerly supporting Chrome and Firefox.

The ability to manage policy across multiple browsers has greatly enhanced efficiency for systems administration.

"We still have a lot of users on IE 11 and Google Chrome," Jasman says. "And after Google did a Chrome upgrade that caused problems for NPAPI [Netscape Plugin API] plugins, we've tended to encourage our people toward Firefox," Jasman says. "PolicyPak is awesome because we can use it for setting policy across all three browsers."

Jasman has found that it is far easier to use PolicyPak browser templates than it is to use the templates provided by the browser publishers.

"You can find some management for the different browsers, but in our experience these templates are often difficult to work with, and often are left un-updated," Jasman says. "We find it much easier to use PolicyPak because if something ever needs to be updated or changed, we simply go directly to PolicyPak for assistance."

Support for Related Applications

In addition to giving Canal Insurance the ability to manage policy across browsers, PolicyPak also gives the company the ability to manage many non-browser third-party applications.

"A company can have non-browser applications—such as Adobe Flash, Adobe Reader, Java, Filezilla, or Teamviewer—installed that they may never consider enforcing policy across," Jasman says. "With PolicyPak you can control browser-related applications with system-wide settings, which helps secure and simplify the overall environment."

Was this something that was tried before?

"Without PolicyPak I don't think we would have even considered this possible," says Jasman.

Simplicity Brought to Staying Current

From long experience Canal Insurance has found that setting policy for browsers is just the first step. The ongoing challenge is keeping current with settings within the dynamic environment of browsers that seem to be constantly updating.

For Canal Insurance, that challenge is met nicely with PolicyPak.

"We've found PolicyPak to be exceptionally dependable and proactive in the manner they update their Paks for the different browsers," Jasman says. "We're set up to receive automatic notifications whenever a new pak or any pack changes are released."

From receipt of notification to implementation the process is simple and fast.

"Just this morning we received an email from PolicyPak that the Chrome pak had been updated," Jasman says. "I downloaded the pak, opened up our management console, and pushed the update out for all of our users. The whole process took less than three minutes. Before PolicyPak it could take hours—or sometimes days—to implement browser setting changes."

Time Savings = Rapid ROI

Without PolicyPak, the process of manually updating browser settings generally required 12 or more hours a month, Jasman estimates. Slashing that time leads to a rapid return on investment.

"PolicyPak, especially if your IT group is a smaller shop, can have a significantly positive impact on operations," Jasman says. "For Canal Insurance, we estimate an ROI of less than six months, just based on the time we are saving administering policy settings for our browsers."

Additional time is saved from a reduction in trouble calls from users. When calls do come in, they are easier to handle. "With PolicyPak it is much easier to field trouble calls because we already know exactly what settings we are dealing with. This helps you identify and resolve a problem much more quickly."

Tighter Security

As with businesses everywhere today, Canal Insurance constantly looks for ways to tighten the security of its resources. The company is using PolicyPak to lock down settings that aren't required for work activities and might otherwise be exploited.

"It is very important to protect the browser," Jasman says. "For example, Chrome by default provides access to your webcam. We've turned that

off using PolicyPak, so if a user travels to a malicious site, a webcam can't be used to harvest company information."

Canal Insurance also uses PolicyPak to help ensure employees are up to date on internal notifications by setting the company's intranet as the default browser home page.

"Previous to PolicyPak we didn't have a way to lock in our intranet site as the default homepage for Firefox or Chrome," Jasman says. "Now it's universal!"

The company values the freely included PolicyPak Design Studio. "We like the fact that if in the future we need to control an application not covered by PolicyPak, we can use Design Studio to design and build our own pak," Jasman says. "All of these features—the automatic updates and ease of deploying fresh paks, along with the ability to lock down settings, and the ability to create our own paks if needed— help us create a safer environment for our company."

Great Community & Product Support

The PolicyPak user community—and the company's product support—have enhanced the total experience of using PolicyPak. Jasman is impressed with the wealth of information on PolicyPak user forums and sometimes posts questions to peers, which are swiftly answered.

She was surprised once when she posted a question to a user's forum and received an e-mail from company founder and CEO Jeremy Moskowitz. "He asked for more information on our issue and then gave us solutions via e-mail," Jasman says. "You don't expect someone in Jeremy's position to be diving right in to help a customer. And whenever we've contacted customer support we've been extremely impressed with the depth of their knowledge and commitment to helping."

About PolicyPak

PolicyPak is an enterprise software company with a focus on managing and securing end-points. Our software solves complex and challenging IT security and settings management problems, while providing affordable solutions for businesses of all sizes. PolicyPak reduces desktop management and helps ensures standardization, while increasing end-user productivity.

PolicyPak Software has been included in the Top 20 most promising Citrix Solution Providers for 2015, according to Enterprise Technology Magazine CIOReview.

For more information or a trial, visit us at www.policypak.com or give us a call at 1 (800) 883-8002.