

*“PolicyPak enables us, as admins, to say yes to software responsibly, instead of being the IT guys that always say no to everything.”*

- Jon Bain,  
IT Services Team Leader, Crutchfield



## Consumer Electronics Supplier chooses PolicyPak to manage their toughest applications and desktop settings

### Situation

Crutchfield, with just under 500 employees, is headquartered in Charlottesville, Virginia and focuses on providing its internet, mail order, and retail customers with outstanding service and support across a spectrum of electronic products.

The company's IT Services Team has the same sense of dedication to supporting Crutchfield's internal users as the rest of the company has to creating happy customers. This can-do attitude of the IT Services Team created a lot of extra work and tough decisions, though, whenever Crutchfield workers requested deployment of applications that would require extensive effort to properly set up and keep updated to protect security.

“About two years ago we started to see more internal requests for deploying Firefox,” says Jon Bain, IT Services Team Leader at Crutchfield. “We looked at it and wondered: How do we control the

updates on it? How do we enforce our proxy policy? We could do these things—and for users who needed Firefox we did—but it involved manually editing the config file and other work—which wasn't scalable.”

### Solution

As soon as Crutchfield heard about PolicyPak, the team knew they had found exactly what they needed to accommodate the needs of its internal users.

Bain was attending a Microsoft TechEd conference when he heard Jeremy Moskowitz, Group Policy MVP and Founder of PolicyPak, describing what his product was designed to do.

“Jeremy did some demonstrations of how PolicyPak could be used for a couple of different products, and I immediately recognized the tremendous value in the ability it gave you to tweak settings,” Bain

says. “I knew I could use PolicyPak to control Firefox for however many of our people wanted to use it.”

At the time, Bain wasn’t looking for a solution, because he hadn’t heard of anything that could do what PolicyPak was providing. “I spoke with Jeremy at the conference and told him I could see immediate value in using PolicyPak for Firefox and other apps, but then asked what could be done for some of the oddball apps we have,” Bain says. “When he told me he had an included tool that would let us write our own Paks, I said: ‘That’s a game changer.’”

Crutchfield has been using the on-premises version of PolicyPak since 2013, mostly to administer settings for Firefox and Java. It is currently evaluating deployment of Google Chrome and some Adobe products, for which the company would also use PolicyPak.

The company also values the admin time it saves through use of PolicyPak Group Policy Compliance Reporter, and the precision with which it can assign policy using PolicyPak Item-Level Targeting.

## Benefits

Crutchfield uses PolicyPak to gain a number of benefits, including the ability to say ‘Yes’, easier systems administration, faster compliance checking, granular management with Item-Level Targeting, ease of deployment and management, and great customer service.

### Gaining the Ability to Say “Yes”

IT is often asked to maintain the difficult balance between protecting the integrity and security of corporate infrastructure, while also supporting whatever tools or applications are required internally to drive success. The IT Services Team at Crutchfield was under similar pressure—enhanced by the company’s devotion to providing great service.

“When somebody asks for a piece of software and we have to say, ‘No, we can’t do that, because of X, Y, and Z reasons’ is a whole lot less fun than being able to say: ‘Sure, let’s take a look at how that works and see how we can use it,’” Bain says. “We want to be able to come back to them and say: ‘We can give it to you. We just need to do this and that.’ PolicyPak helps us achieve this goal.”

Bain knows it isn’t enough to just say yes. You need to be able manage what you say yes to.

“PolicyPak enables us, as admins, to confidently say yes to software we support, instead of being the IT guys that always say *no* to everything,” Bain says. “PolicyPak allows us to say yes to something like Firefox and tons of other applications, because we can now deploy them safely, with all of the settings configured dynamically within policy.”

### Easier Systems Administration

Crutchfield appreciates the ease with which it can manage Firefox, Java and other applications using PolicyPak. Ease of systems administration is especially important because the company’s IT Services Team is lean and very busy. The team especially values the reduction in trouble calls it achieved after deploying PolicyPak for Firefox and for Java.

“We use the PolicyPak Firefox Pak to control the network configuration so it adheres to the same setting we use for Internet Explorer,” Bain says. “We no longer have to configure settings by hand.”

He says one of the biggest time savers—especially in regards to reducing help desk calls—came through simply using PolicyPak to turn off auto-updating for Firefox.

“Before we had PolicyPak, we would get calls from users saying they were being prompted to update Firefox, but didn’t have the permission to do so, or they wanted to upgrade to a version we hadn’t yet tested,” Bain says. “A related problem was that we

had to troubleshoot across a range of different Firefox versions. It gives us a greater sense of security knowing what version all of our users are on, and greatly reduces calls for help.”

Similar benefits were seen after deploying PolicyPak to control Java. Again, a major purpose was to turn off auto updates. At the time the company was using a Java-based line-of-business application that was susceptible to changes in Java versions.

“We’re moving away from the application, but for a while we would get phone calls when individual users downloaded new versions of Java that broke the application,” Bain says. “We used PolicyPak to prevent new version notifications and updates. This gave us the chance to test before deployment.”

Prior to PolicyPak, Crutchfield tried different methods of preventing update requests through switches and scripts. “But despite our best efforts, we would still get machines that would just go out and request updates, regardless of what we asked it to do,” Bain says. “PolicyPak was really the first thing that effectively managed Java for us.”

## Faster Compliance Checking

The Crutchfield IT Services Team has found a big timesaver through use of PolicyPak Group Policy Compliance Reporter, which provides powerful reporting on precisely which Group Policy objects were assigned to specific individuals or computers.

“We use the Compliance Reporter to evaluate and verify compliance,” Bain says. “This is especially helpful for our retail stores. Just last week I was at a conference and received a call from work wanting to know if a particular policy was applied to a group of computers out in our stores. Using Compliance Reporter it was easy to respond. This saved us from having to individually examine dozens of machines.”

## Granular Management with Item-Level Targeting

After Bain’s manager asked him to create special policies for the company’s conference room computers, Bain took a closer look at the PolicyPak Admin Templates and its Item-Level Targeting feature, and liked what he found.

“Rather than creating a completely new group for the conference room computers and treat them separately, I’m able to use Item-Level Targeting to make a quick customization.” Bain says. “This allows me to be very specific according to the type of PC in the room, the OS running on it, the type of other equipment in the room it interfaces with, who normally uses the room, and other factors. It can be something as simple as the screen saver time-out. Without PolicyPak’s Item-Level Targeting, this can be a real hassle trying to do these manipulations and ensure they work without tons of trial and error and testing.”

## Easy to Deploy and Manage

Crutchfield deployed PolicyPak to all of its computers. Bain explains, “We wanted to have it on all of our computers, so we could just flip the switch whenever we determined a new business unit required the management that PolicyPak could deliver.”

Of the 750 machines that were deployed to, just a single computer had an issue. “We had one computer—which was running a very specialized piece of accounting software that nobody else in the company had. We were able to review the logs that PolicyPak wrote which were easy to read and we were able to identify the problem on the first day of troubleshooting.”

In addition to being easy to deploy, Bain reports that once deployed, PolicyPak works seamlessly in the background.

“PolicyPak was very easy to deploy, it’s just a simple MSI.” Bain says. “After it’s out there, nobody even knows it’s there. It just politely hums along. It’s so transparent and so easy to use, it’s become one of my favorite tools. PolicyPak is a wonderful piece of software.”

## Great Customer Service

Crutchfield built its business upon a foundational focus on customer service. So they know what to look for and appreciate finding it in their partners.

“PolicyPak customer service is phenomenal,” Bain says. “The services they’ve provided have always been absolutely top-notch. They respond quickly. They respond with answers that are actually meaningful. If they don’t know the answer, they just straight up say, ‘I don’t know. I can find out for you.’ And then they actually find the answer and get back to me swiftly.”

Bain notes that not every company he works with is like that.

“We like partnering with PolicyPak because they operate the way that we do,” Bain says. “They understand the importance of providing a high level of service. This is something that we value.”

Bain has also been impressed by the ongoing interest PolicyPak shows in its customers, as it continually tries to enhance its solutions.

“I’ve worked with Jeremy and the PolicyPak team for a while now, and I’m still impressed when I hear from him,” Bain says. “When the guy that runs the company calls you and says, ‘Hey, how’s it going? What do you think of such-and-such?’ Not everybody does that. PolicyPak provides an exceptional level of service. They have an extremely high-quality product, and they’re offering it at a reasonable price. All of this makes it a great business to partner with.”

## 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 ensure 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](http://www.policypak.com) or give us a call at 1 (800) 883-8002.