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Crutchfield eases XP SP2 migration with AppSight

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US electronics retailer Crutchfield has deployed Identity Software's AppSight Black Box Application Flight Recorder monitoring software.

Crutchfield, based in Charlottesville, Virginia, and one of the country's largest retailers in the sector, has implemented the software resolve application problems for business-critical applications and to provide testing and monitoring support during a large-scale migration to Microsoft Windows XP Service Pack 2 (SP2).

The deployment has increased availability of critical customer-facing applications while reducing IT support costs.

Crutchfield's acting CIO, Steve Weiskircher, said: "AppSight gives us insight into our applications that isn't readily available with any other tool. Because we can find and fix such a wide range of application problems more quickly, we can maintain a reliable technology infrastructure as our business continues to expand. AppSight's innovative Black Box technology has helped us shrink the time between problem discovery to problem diagnosis significantly."

AppSight Black Box software technology monitors application execution and captures a synchronised, real-time log of user actions, system events, performance metrics, configuration data, and code execution, similar to how the black box flight recorder on an aircraft captures a real-time record of a flight. The AppSight Black Box log can be replayed and analysed to quickly pinpoint the root cause application problems, whether related to performance, configuration issues, user mistakes, or code errors. AppSight eliminates up to 70 per cent of the cycle time traditionally consumed by root cause analysis.

The company also used AppSight to prepare its applications for a migration to Windows XP SP2. SP2's new security features may block certain components from talking to others, causing an application to fail or run poorly. Crutchfield relied upon AppSight to analyse application behaviour and relevant infrastructure relationships and quickly pinpoint the root cause of problems that occurred with SP2.

"Since 85 per cent of Crutchfield's applications were custom-created and integrate with third-party products that have not yet been tested on SP2, our SP2 migration process would have taken several months, perhaps more than a year, to complete without AppSight. However, by using AppSight, we were able to validate all applications for our largest business unit, the contact centre, in just one month," said Weiskircher.

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