



Client Story

**Adafruit:
Addressing the Challenge of Rapid
Growth with an Integrated
Solution**

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“Implementation was so fast...it took just a few days.”

Limor Fried, Founder & Engineer, Adafruit

THE CHALLENGE OF RAPID GROWTH

One of the fastest-growing companies in America, New York City-based Adafruit has taken the technology industry by storm with educational electronics designed for everyone from teenage robotics enthusiasts to military personnel. With thousands of orders coming in every day, this fast-paced organization required a restricted party screening solution that could be up-and-running quickly. They found that solution with Visual Compliance, and within just a few days everything changed about the way Adafruit screened their customers.

Founder Limor Fried (the first female engineer ever featured on the cover of WIRED magazine) and Managing Director Philip Torrone are committed not only to providing the best eCommerce experience for their customers, but also to fulfilling their export compliance responsibilities. With at least 20,000 online orders every month from all over the world, and 2,000 international resellers, it became clear to the ten-year-old company that performing restricted party screening manually was not a good option.

“Every single order is screened,” explains Torrone, noting the sensitive nature of their exports. “We ship robotics, hobbyist drones, even gyroscopes and parts.” To keep such items out of the wrong hands, Adafruit diligently scoured government watch lists, including those posted on the Bureau of Industry and Security’s (BIS) website, to ensure they weren’t entering into transactions with any denied or sanctioned entities. The laborious process of manual screening —coupled with daily updates to the Denied Party Lists—led Adafruit to think that there had to be a better way. “We wanted to *not* have to maintain the collection of lists on our own,” says Torrone, adding that the sheer amount of work involved left them vulnerable to human error. “We had to ask ourselves, how can we continue to have best practices and make sure we’re not shipping the wrong way?”

AN INTEGRATED SOLUTION

Adafruit chose to simplify their restricted party screening process through automation, and wanted to get started right away. They chose Visual Compliance to take on the task of providing a fast integration implementation.

The Visual Compliance Restricted Party Screening tool integrated seamlessly into Adafruit’s custom in-house ERP system. Every time an order is processed, the entity is screened. Adafruit can be certain that they are not shipping to debarred parties, and by automating the process they no longer have to allocate resources to manual screening or to maintaining the vast collection of ever-changing government watch lists. They also have peace of mind knowing that



the Visual Compliance API service automatically records each transaction into an audit record, so that should Adafruit ever need to prove its compliance, they will be able to easily access detailed records of their screening activities.

“It’s easier for us now,” says Torrone. “If there’s a hit it gives us more information directly on the order page, so we can look at it and make a decision based on what we’re seeing. The customer never knows what’s going on, and the order never stops.” While Adafruit’s searches typically reveal eligible customers, they no longer worry about undesirable parties slipping through the cracks. “It’s like an insurance policy.”

WHY VISUAL COMPLIANCE?

Adafruit’s quest for a time-saving, reliable screening solution didn’t take long. They looked at other vendors, but Fried and Torrone were impressed with the speed and accuracy demonstrated by Visual Compliance, plus the reassurance they received that implementation would be fast and uncomplicated. They were also aware of other prominent eCommerce businesses using their software solutions to meet their screening needs, and had noticed Visual Compliance referenced on U.S. Government websites. Knowing that Visual Compliance had the credentials to deliver what they needed is what kept it “top of the list” in their search.

Due to their professional backgrounds and the nature of their business, Fried and Torrone had the expertise to know exactly what they wanted in an API. “As a modern company,” Torrone explains, “using an API is our natural way of doing things.” They were impressed that Visual Compliance’s API was so straightforward. They were also pleased that it could so quickly and easily be integrated with their custom built export system. They were able to get up and running right away.

“Implementation was so fast,” Fried recalls. “It took just a few days.”

Visual Compliance helped Adafruit turn a tedious and uncertain screening process into a virtually effortless one, an investment that—as Adafruit continues to grow—will reap benefits for years to come.



ABOUT eCUSTOMS

Founded in 1981, eCustoms is a privately-owned company with a wealth of experience providing export compliance software solutions to companies and institutions. Our clients include everyone from emerging start-ups to international corporations spanning virtually all industries. Our global export compliance solutions are scalable, intuitive, and user-friendly, and can be tailored to meet the needs of any organization.

Our Visual Compliance software suite—designed to help you comply with a number of different regulatory regimes, including BIS (EAR), DDTC (ITAR), and OFAC, to name but a few—is ECR ready. Clients are already using Visual Compliance Export Control Reform, improving the quality of their reclassification decisions and enjoying the savings.



Information on Compliance Solutions

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General Information about Visual Compliance

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