

GLYMPSE HELPS COMPANIES SATISFY CUSTOMERS IN REAL-TIME

The next time you have to leave work to meet the cable guy at home, you may have Glympse to thank for saving you a lot of time. As a built-for-mobility SaaS leader, Glympse uses real-time temporary location sharing as part of a fully-branded web experience to help companies keep their customers informed as to the whereabouts and arrival of time-sensitive services like package and food delivery, roadside assistance, courtesy shuttles, and the ETA of your cable technician. With its powerful platform, Glympse helps companies improve their customer satisfaction by eliminating the friction and anxiety of product and service delivery experiences.



Glympse uses custom dashboards in SignalFx to monitor the heartbeat of its core applications.

Challenge

By nature, the services Glympse provides are extremely time-sensitive, so business continuity is an operational imperative. In order to achieve the high reliability for which its brand is known, Glympse needed real-time application monitoring for complete visibility across its entire platform in order to predict, identify, and resolve issues rapidly.

As Glympse accelerated its growth, their engineering and development teams began to struggle to maintain operational insight. They needed to keep pace with the soaring number of customer interactions, or 'Glympses,' while also allowing for agile development through continuous code releases. Cloud-native from its inception and with a very mature microservices and container-based architecture, Glympse developers release code directly into production up to 10 times per day. Without a cloud-native monitoring and observability tool, the team lacked real-time visibility into their cloud infrastructure, applications, and underlying microservices. The overhead of managing many point solutions from different vendors, along with an increasing reliance on engineering to handle the integrations between tools and platforms was becoming unmanageable. With the expectation that its already high volume of 10 million Glympses a month could grow 10x within a year, the team sought an enterprise monitoring and analytics solution that would help them scale confidently while continuing to deliver the excellent customer experience that built their brand.

“The real-time analytics, customizable dashboards, and native integrations—especially for AWS—were the key features that first got us really excited about SignalFx. As we got deeper into the platform and could see our performance and business metrics updating in real-time as well as the robustness of all the operational variables that could be monitored, visualized, and historically mapped in a single pane of glass, the insight and value we could unlock with SignalFx was clear.”

John Gruender, VP of Engineering at Glympse

Solution

SignalFx provides the visibility, monitoring, alerting, and analytics needed to reliably run Glympse's real-time services, while also supporting the development and engineering teams' continuous release cycles. With SignalFx, Glympse has improved operational intelligence for engineering and development by providing a single pane of glass view across key performance and business metrics. SignalFx brings together Glympse's tech ecosystem through out-of-the-box integrations for all of Glympse's open source and AWS tools. Finally, SignalFx ensures Glympse has the flexibility to scale as quickly as the company grows with a pay-as-you-grow pricing model.

Glympse Predicts and Solves Application Issues with SignalFx

Real-Time Monitoring and Analytics Help Busy DevOps Team Release Code Continuously with Confidence

Seattle-based Glympse, which helps companies improve their customers' service experiences through real-time mobile updates on delivery or service technician arrival times, is clearly an innovator in the exploding location marketing space. With the volume of its monthly location 'Glympses' already at 10 million and set to grow tenfold in just the next few months, the engineering and development teams knew they were going to be in trouble if they didn't find a modern cloud monitoring solution — **and fast.**

Finding the Right Cloud Monitoring Solution

Glympse briefly tried Infospace and a trial run of Datadog, but soon realized using the solution in production would be prohibitively expensive. The team considered having their own engineers support and maintain a home-built monitoring toolset, but found that the operational and opportunity costs were too high.

“We were doing self-managed monitoring and it just no longer made sense,” said John Gruender, VP of Engineering at Glympse. “Every new metric required in-depth configuration work, draining valuable engineering resources. It was painful. Being able to see how your infrastructure is performing for your applications is fundamental to engineering, and we needed a solution from a vendor who lives and breathes this stuff.”

Gruender and his team recognized that it would become operationally infeasible to continue maintaining and customizing their various point monitoring solutions—a medley that included Telegraph, InfluxDB, and Amazon CloudWatch.

With new monitoring requirements starting to crystalize, Gruender was immediately impressed when he came across SignalFx. And once his team saw the solution, they were too—in fact, they made the decision to go with SignalFx within a week and had a contract signed in two.

“We were impressed with the pedigree of the SignalFx team and their experience building the cloud-scale monitoring solution at Facebook. We could immediately see the power of the system and enjoyed every conversation we had with SignalFx while evaluating the solution. This partnership has continued even after we’ve become customers,” said Gruender. “Furthermore, SignalFx’s flexible pricing model fits our organization better than what most other monitoring vendors provide. SignalFx offers everything we need now and is robust and scalable enough for our future. We’re also able to be cost-sensitive without sacrificing quality.”

“No other vendor offers the in-depth mathematical regressions available with SignalFx; this ability to track and visually represent cycles, patterns, and historical anomalies provides a predictive capability that’s helped us catch issues before they become a customer-facing problem.”

John Gruender, VP of Engineering at Glympse

“The pre-built integrations from SignalFx addressed all of our immediate needs, making adoption quick, easy, and seamless, even with multiple open-source technologies as part of our tech stack. And with SignalFx’s constantly growing library of integrations, we’re confident we’ve found a future-proof solution from a partner who will grow with us.”

John Gruender, VP of Engineering at Glympse

“We live in SignalFx Every Day”

Today, Glympse’s development and engineering teams live in SignalFx. They are constantly monitoring the real-time dashboards and frequently spin up custom views to analyze metrics they’d never been able to see before SignalFx. They chose to have data coming in every 15 seconds for the production environment and every 300 seconds for testing, knowing they can increase resolution to 1-second if and when they need it.

The real-time application visibility SignalFx delivers is helping Glympse’s development and engineering teams work smarter and become more proactive. This ability is critical to maintaining the company’s competitive advantage and the development team’s agility as they deploy continuously to production, up to 10x per day.

Lowering MTTR with Analytics

SignalFx has lowered average mean time to resolution (MTTR) by helping the Glympse team visualize and track healthy performance for different services. They now know what “normal” looks like for each dashboard and performance metric, and if something looks off or exhibits anomalous behavior, the team can pinpoint the offending application and take action. With SignalFx, Glympse has been able to identify the root cause 10x more quickly, allowing the team to remediate issues before they impact customers and their business. This ability to understand historical baselines and rapidly identify performance anomalies has been transformative, noted Gruender:

“We can see over time how our Nomad integrations scale up and down and combine that with the Historical Anomaly algorithm to see if we are processing the right amount of traffic. We have built a lot of custom dashboards, and it’s so valuable to be able to see today’s volume right alongside the metrics from yesterday and last week.”

Getting Ahead of Performance Issues

One particular SignalFx condition, Sudden Change, was new for the Glympse team and quickly became a key metric. If the team is alerted that the number of re-tries in an application spikes relative to a previous period, they know they likely have an outage and can jump in to remediate. This alert is particularly useful for monitoring their Nomad performance. The team has also been able to move to more proactive remediation by watching the rate of change between the Sudden Change and Historical Anomaly conditions. By watching these algorithms, they can predict and prevent an outage before it even occurs.

For example, SignalFx played a key role in helping Glympse identify when an AWS autoscaling feature didn't perform as the team expected. When the team observed a significant uptick in re-tries, they quickly instrumented metrics to track "requests per second" and were able to visualize where outages were more likely to occur and work to prevent them.

"SignalFx has enabled us to become more proactive. We can completely prevent outages with SignalFx because we get alerted in seconds."

John Gruender, VP of Engineering at Glympse

Insight into KPIs

Glympse uses SignalFx to monitor the heartbeat of their services through custom dashboards, alerts and integration with StatsD. The team continuously monitors their entire environment across key metrics, including volume, traffic and load, and is able to quickly segment out analysis by variables like region.

"SignalFx allows us to more easily monitor our APIs, see CPU, disk, and memory utilization, and track those metrics against both recent and long-term performance," said Gruender.

Future-Proof Integrations

SignalFx has a comprehensive list of native integrations for cloud and open source services that make it very easy for Glympse to visualize its entire container-based microservices environment. The team can see all their metrics in one place, including API call latency for all of their services through their StatsD integration with Nomad. Other out-of-the-box SignalFx integrations that add instant value for Glympse are Nomad (used for reverse proxy), Kafka, hashborg, and RabbitMQ. And with SignalFx's constantly growing library of integrations, the team can rely on SignalFx to be the future-proof solution that can grow and evolve with them.

Enabling Cross-Company Visibility and Understanding

One unforeseen benefit of SignalFx is it has made it easier for the development and engineering team to socialize data on operational health in a way that engages the whole company. At a glance, anyone at Glympse can see the health of the entire application and its supporting infrastructure environment. Dashboards are up on TVs, which help even nontechnical teams get a feel for what the development and engineering teams do and how their work translates to better customer experiences.

"SignalFx gives the whole company a window into what my team does every day," said Gruender. "It helps them know more about the operational health of the company as well as my team's value to the organization as a whole."

Summary

Challenges:

- Glympse needed its monitoring solution to move as fast as the real-time services it provides to its own customers
- The cost and overhead of having internal engineering teams manage and integrate multiple niche monitoring solutions was too high
- Developers needed visibility into their multiple daily code releases, including canary deployments using Docker containers
- Rapid growth required a future-proof, highly scalable solution that would deeply integrate into AWS services
- Glympse's complex open source microservices environment required a whole suite of integrations with fast and easy instrumentation

Results:

- SignalFx's real-time monitoring that can run as fast as Glympse's own service enables the team to predict and prevent potential service disruptions
- A single, comprehensive monitoring solution allowed Glympse to eliminate the wasteful overhead of managing and maintaining numerous point solutions
- SignalFx gave Glympse's developer and engineering teams a reliable platform for DevOps to more easily enable code releases to production, including canary deployments
- With SignalFx, Glympse has a scalable and reliable solution for future growth

SignalFx

SignalFx is the only real-time cloud monitoring platform for infrastructure, microservices, and applications. The platform collects metrics and traces across every component in your cloud environment, replacing traditional point tools with a single integrated solution that works across the stack. SignalFx is built on a massively scalable streaming architecture that applies advanced predictive analytics for real-time problem detection. With its NoSample™ distributed tracing capabilities, SignalFx reliably monitors all transactions across microservices, accurately identifying all anomalies. Through data-science-powered directed troubleshooting, SignalFx guides the operator to find the root cause of issues in seconds. SignalFx is used by leading enterprises across high tech, financial services, consumer products, retail, communications, media, entertainment, and web-scale players such as Yelp, HubSpot, Acquia, and Kayak. SignalFx is venture-funded by Andreessen Horowitz, Charles River Ventures, and General Catalyst.

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