Splunk Search Pro Tips

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Agenda

- My background
- Comments
- Search by index
- In the year 2000
- Red Card
- Watch Lists
- Search Job Inspector
- More fun with subsearches
- Carrier signal
- Imaginary events
- Summary

2

My Splunk background

- 4 years Splunk experience
- SOC is primary user base
- 6 indexers
- ■350 GB data/day
- ■90 indexes
- ■170 sourcetypes



comments

// No comment



Comment your Splunk search

```
sourcetype=access_combined_wcookie
   eval COMMENT="This is my comment"
```

or

```
sourcetype=access_combined_wcookie
   rename COMMENT -> "This is my comment"
```

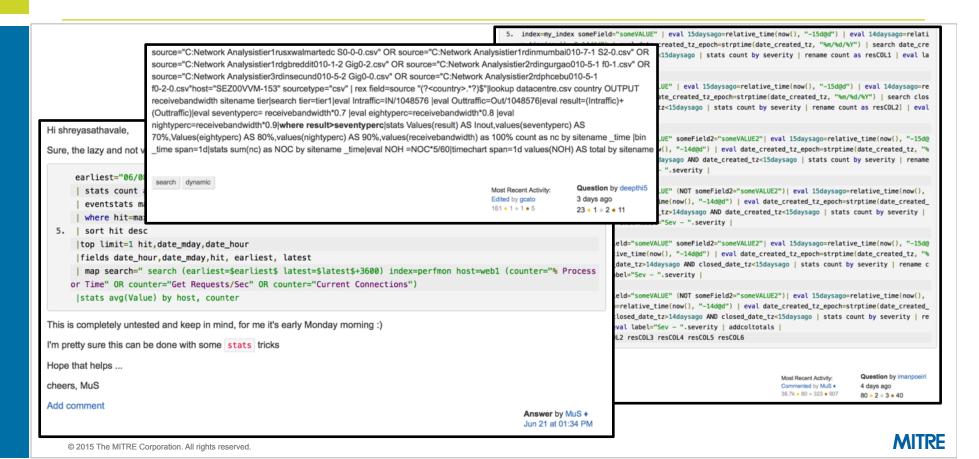
* There's nothing special about the word "COMMENT", use whatever you like

rename vs. eval for comments?

- In practice, it does not seem to matter
- In a few odd circumstances, I have seen rename be faster than eval



Why would you need comments?



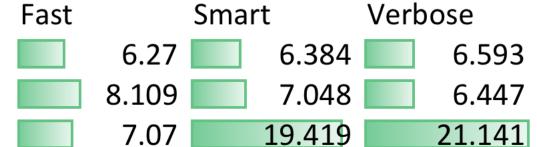
Search by index



Searching by index and sourcetype

Specifying an index in your search speeds it up

index=
index= AND sourcetype=
sourcetype=



This difference is less pronounced in Fast Mode

In the year 2000

In the year 3000



Get with the times

- Timestamps are extremely important for Splunk data
- Detected at index time, set forever
- Cannot be fixed if they're wrong

Common errors:

- -Incorrect time zone interpretation
- -Host clock incorrect



Past, present, future

If this search ever returns events, you have timestamp problems¹:

index=* earliest=+30m latest=+9y

This requires some tweaking, depending on your expected delay:

index=* | eval delta=_indextime-_time | where
delta>300

¹ Or a flux capacitor²

² Or a TARDIS

red card

your approximate wait time is...



Calculate average delay proxy logs

```
index=main
| eval delta = _indextime - _time
| timechart span=1h avg(delta)
```

Problem: that's a *lot* of events







Calculate average delay proxy logs

Solution:

```
*/5 * * * wget http://testdomain.zzz
```

```
index=main testdomain.zzz
| eval delta = _indextime - _time
| timechart span=1h avg(delta)
```

Search terms	Duration
index=main	453 s
index=main testdomain.zzz	6 s

watchlists

better than grep -f

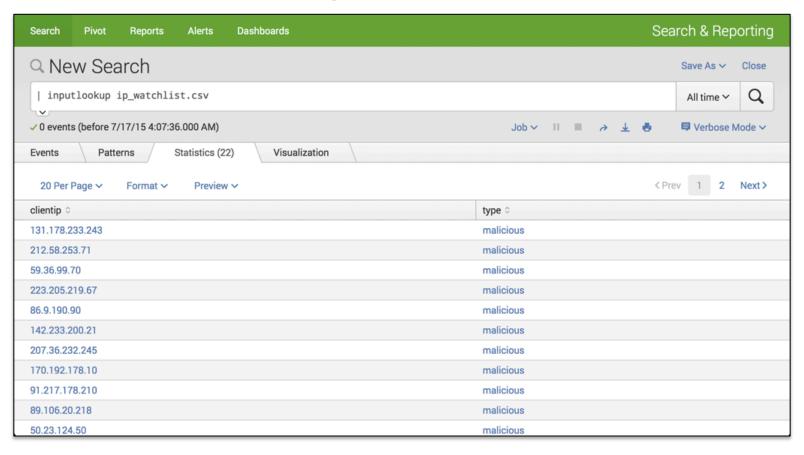


Watchlist examples

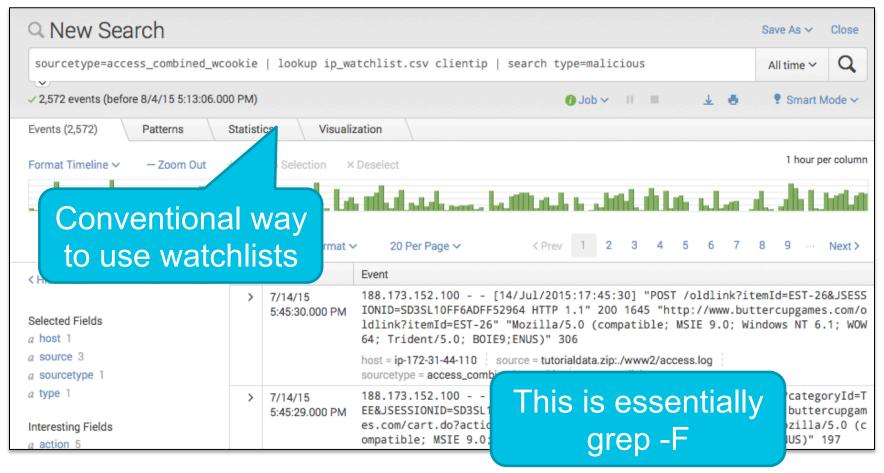
- Known "evil" IP addresses
- Known "evil" domain names
- List of your DMZ web servers
- Known allowed IP/port combinations in your DMZ



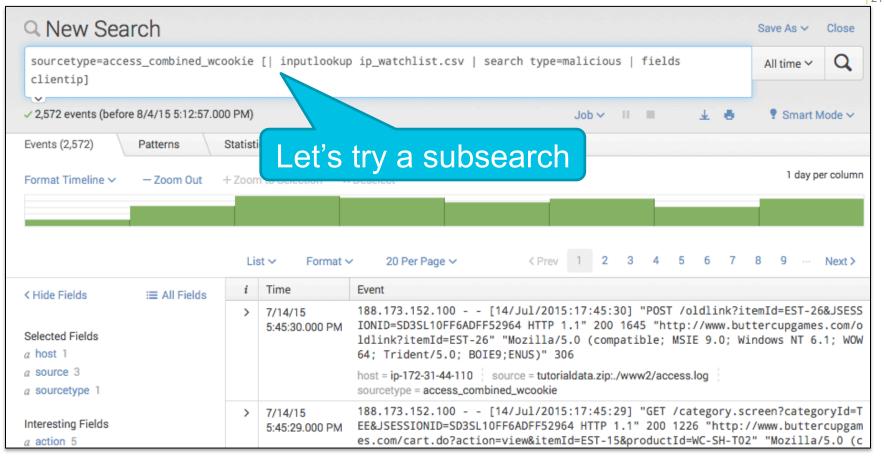
Example IP watchlist

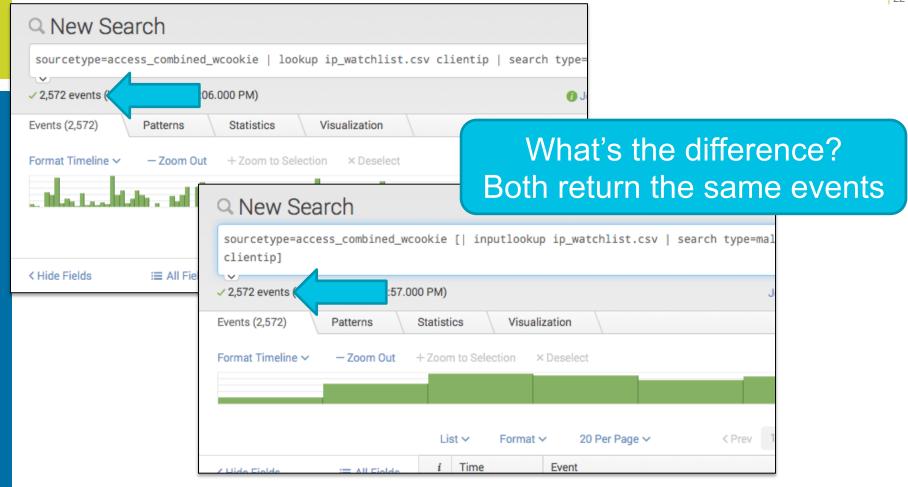












This search has completed and has returned **2,572** results by scanning **39,532** events in **1.821** seconds.

Search job inspector

What's the difference? 71% less time

This search has completed and has returned **2,572** results by scanning **2,692** events in **0.52** seconds.

Saving time on a search can be important for large or frequent searches

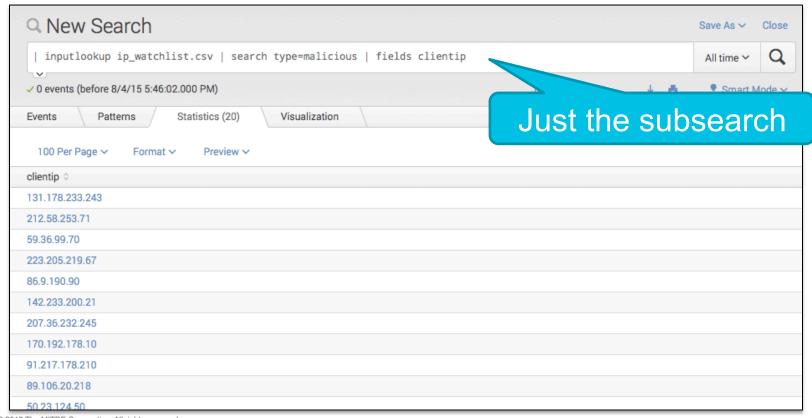
This search has completed and has returned 24 results by scanning 6,134,801 events 124.509 seconds.

This search has completed and has returned 24 results by scanning 266 events in 6.203 seconds.

Small watchlists and large datasets make this difference greater

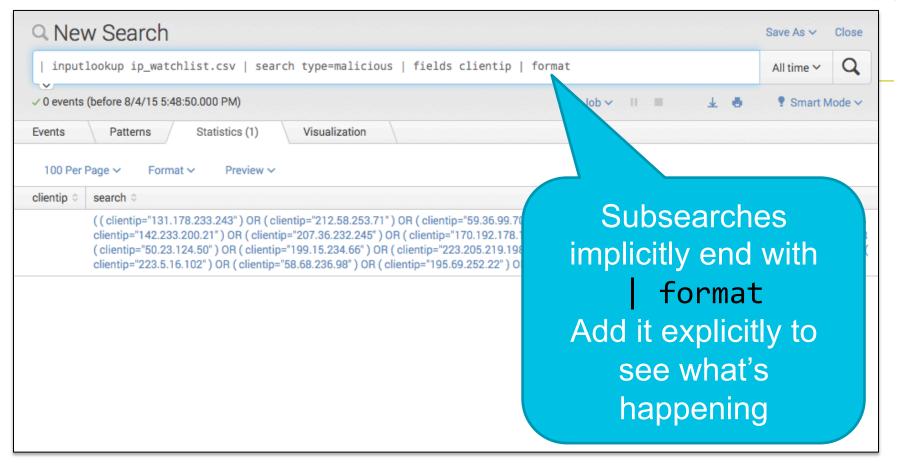


How does it work?



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```
sourcetype=access_combined_wcookie
[ | inputlookup ip_watchlist.csv | search
type=malicious | fields clientip ]
```

...after the subsearch is evaluated becomes this:

```
sourcetype=access_combined_wcookie
( clientip="131.178.233.243" ) OR
( clientip="212.58.253.71" ) OR ... )
```

i.e., the results of the subsearch are appended

normalizedSearch

```
litsearch sourcetype=access_combined_wcookie ( clientip="131.178.233.243" )
OR ( clientip="212.58.253.71" ) OR ( clientip="59.36.99.70" ) OR (
clientip="223.205.219.67" ) OR ( clientip="86.9.190.90" ) OR (
clientip="142.233.200.21" ) OR ( clientip="207.36.232.245" ) OR (
clientip="170.192.178.10" ) OR ( clientip="91.217.178.210" ) OR (
clientip="89.106.20.218" ) OR ( clientip="50.23.124.50" ) OR (
clientip="199.15.234.66" ) OR ( clientip="223.205.219.198" ) OR (
clientip="203.45.206.135" ) OR ( clientip="212.27.63.151" ) OR (
clientip="223.5.16.102" ) OR ( clientip="58.68.236.98" ) OR (
clientip="195.69.252.22" ) OR ( clientip="69.80.0.18" ) OR (
clientip="188.173.152.100" ) | fields keepcolorder=t "*" "_bkt" "_cd" "_si"
"host" "index" "linecount" "source" "sourcetype" "splunk_server"
```

The Search Job Inspector shows us this.



Why is

```
sourcetype=access_combined_wcookie
( clientip="131.178.233.243" ) OR
( clientip="212.58.253.71" ) OR ... )
```

Better than

```
sourcetype=access_combined_wcookie
| lookup ip_watchlist.csv clientip | search
type=malicious
```

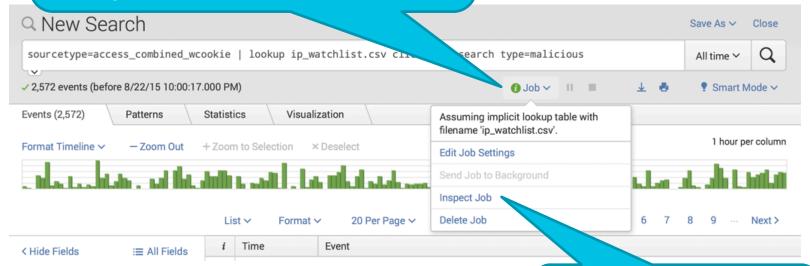


Search Job Inspector

...explains it all



This icon means there's some debugging message you should examine



Inspect Job is always here

This search has completed and has returned 2,572 results by scanning 39,532 events in 1.974 seconds.

The following messages were returned by the search subsystem:

INFO: Assuming implicit lookup table with filename 'ip_watchlist.csv'.

(SID: 1440247286.13) search.log

Execution costs

Duration (seconds)		Component	Invocations	Input count	Output coun
	0.02	command.fields	21	2,572	2,577
	0.06	command.lookup	21	39,532	39,53
	1.57	command.search	42	39,532	42,10
	0.21	command.search.filter	39	•	
I	0.03	command.search.index	21	-	
	0.02	command.search.calcfields	18	39,532	39,53
	0.02	command.search.fieldalias	18	39,532	39,53
	0.00	command.search.index.usec_1_8	246	-	
	0.00	command.search.index.usec_8_64	20	-	
	0.47	command.search.rawdata	18	-	
	0.46	command.search.kv	18	-	
	0.40	command.search.typer	18	39,532	39,53
	0.02	command.search.lookups	18	39,532	39,53
	0.02	command.search.tags	18	39,532	39,53
	0.01	command.search.summary	21	-	
	0.00	dispatch.check_disk_usage	1	•	
	0.02	dispatch.createdSearchResultInfrastructure	1	-	
	0.04	dispatch.evaluate	1	-	
I	0.04	dispatch.evaluate.search	2	-	
	0.00	dispatch.evaluate.lookup	1	-	
	1.28	dispatch.fetch	22	•	
	1.66	dispatch.localSearch	1	-	
	0.00	dispatch preview	1		



This search has completed and has returned 2,572 results by scanning 39,532 events in 1.974 seconds.

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(SID: 1440247286.13) search.log

Profiling information

Execution costs

Debugging message Duration (seconds) Component 0.02 command.fields 2,572 0.06 command.lookup 39,532 39,532 21 command.search 1.57 42 39,532 42,104 command.search.filter 0.21 39 0.03 command.search.index 21 0.02 command.search.calcfields 18 39,532 39,532 command.search.fieldalias 0.02 39,532 39,532 18 command.search.index.usec_1_8 0.00 246 0.00 command.search.index.usec_8_64 20 0.47 command coarch roudate



This search has completed and has returned 2,572 results by 39,58 1.821 seconds.

Search job inspector

This search has completed and has returned **2,572** results **0.52** seconds.

2,692 events in

The slowest parts of a Splunk search are usually field extraction and reading events from disk.

Approximate order of operations for searches

- 1. Search index for keywords
- 2. Read matching events from disk
- 3. Extract fields (as necessary)
- 4. Match keywords to fields (as necessary)
- 5. Filter (e.g. additional "where" or "search" pipes)
- 6. Send data to search head



What are keywords?

```
keywords sourcetype::access_combined_wcookie type::malicious
```

```
keywords

clientip::131.178.233.243 clientip::142.233.200.21 clientip::170.192.178.10 clientip::188.173.152.100 clientip::195.69.252.22 clientip::199.15.234.66 clientip::203.45.206.135 clientip::207.36.232.245 clientip::212.27.63.151 clientip::212.58.253.71 clientip::223.205.219.198 clientip::223.205.219.67 clientip::223.5.16.102 clientip::50.23.124.50 clientip::58.68.236.98 clientip::59.36.99.70 clientip::69.80.0.18 clientip::86.9.190.90 clientip::89.106.20.218 clientip::91.217.178.210 sourcetype::access_combined_wcookie
```



A stitch in time saves nine

lookup	subsearch	
2	21	Check index for keywords
39,000	2,700	Read matching events from disk
39,000	2,700	Extract fields (i.e. regex)
39,000	2,700	Match keywords to fields
39,000	2,700	Filter

^{*} This is illustrative and approximate, not precise

Pare your data early to save time late



lookup method reads and regexes all this data ((clientip="131.178.2 33.243") OR sourcetype=access_ combined_wcookie (clientip="212.58.253. 71") OR ...) subsearch method reads only this data

Compare "lookup" and "subsearch" methods

	lookup			subsearch	
Component	Duration	Input count		Duration	Input count
command.search	1.57	39,532		0.17	-
command.search.filter	0.21	-		0.00	-
command.search.index	0.03	-		0.02	-
command.search.rawdata	0.47	-		0.08	-
command.search.kv	0.46	-		0.04	-
command.search.typer	0.40	39,532		0.03	2,572



More fun with subsearches



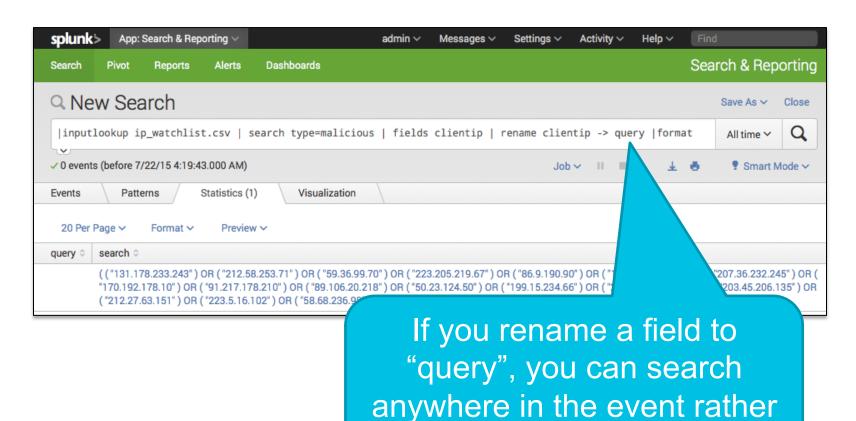
Field name mismatch with subsearch

For lookup and subsearch, sometimes fields need to be renamed

lookup method

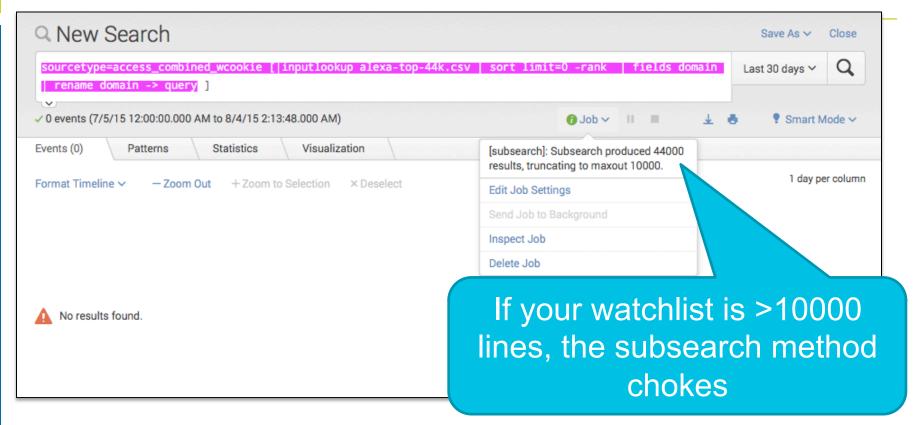
lookup watchlist.csv foo AS bar

subsearch method

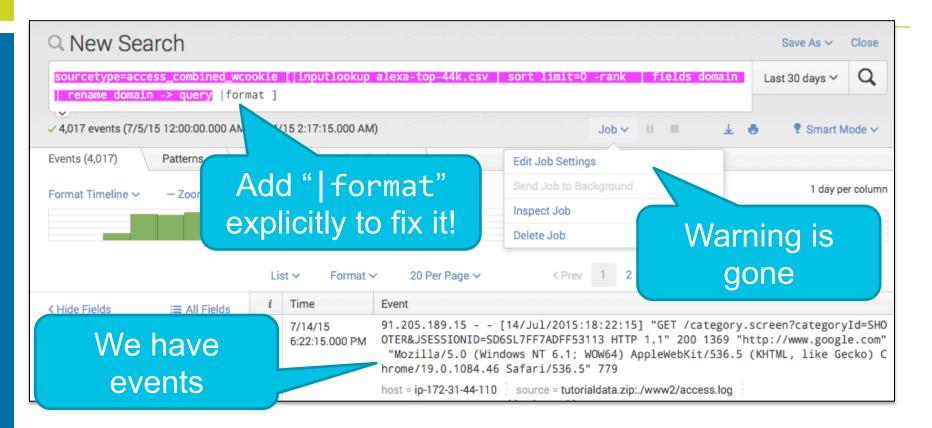


than a single field

Large subsearches



Large subsearches





carrier signal



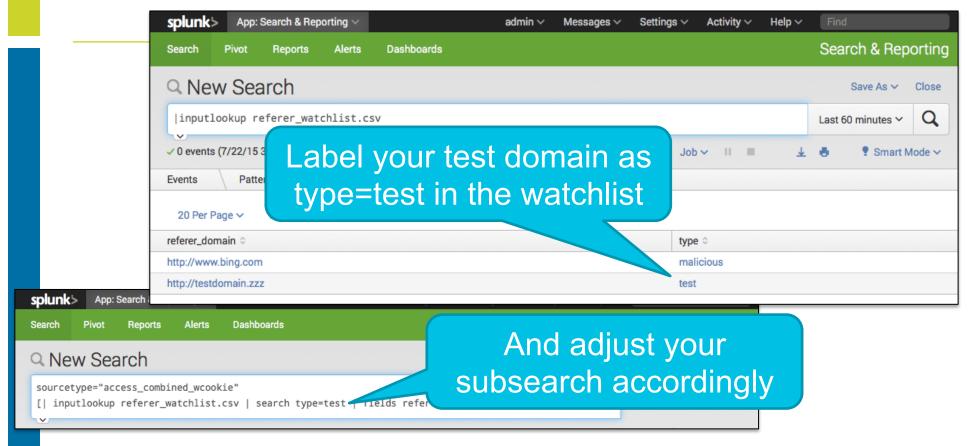
What's the problem with watchlists?

When they don't alert, is it because:

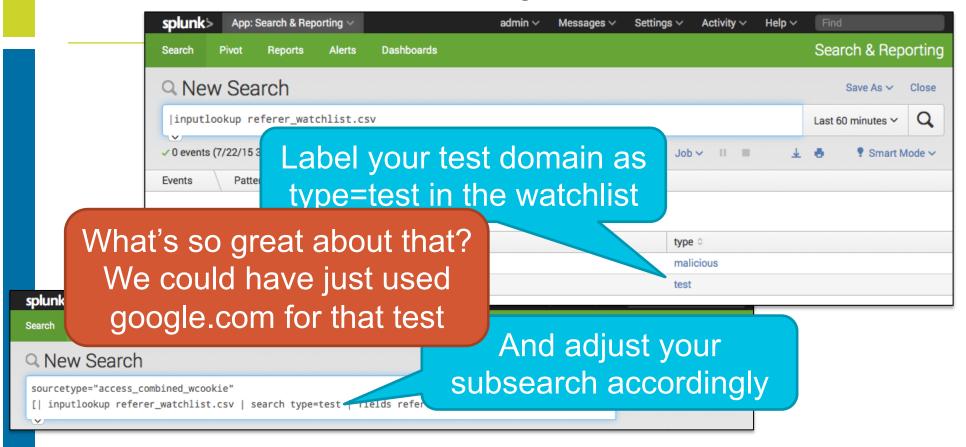
- the watchlist is broken?
- there's nothing to alert on?

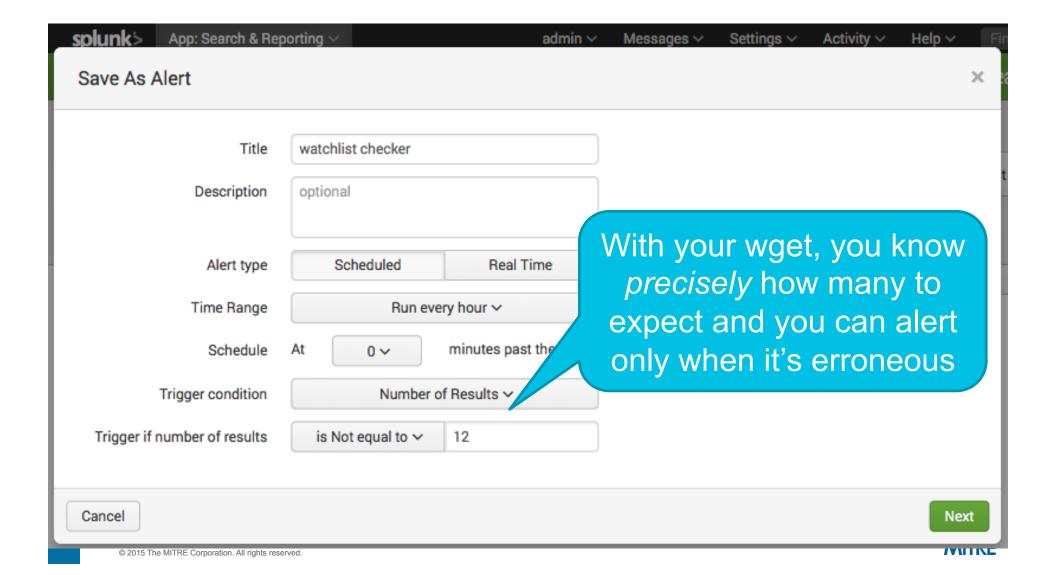


Add test cases to your watchlist



Add test cases to your watchlist



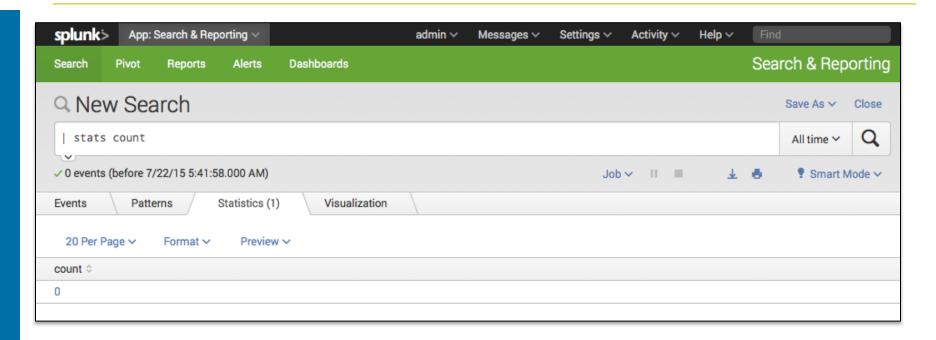


imaginary events

we landed on the moon

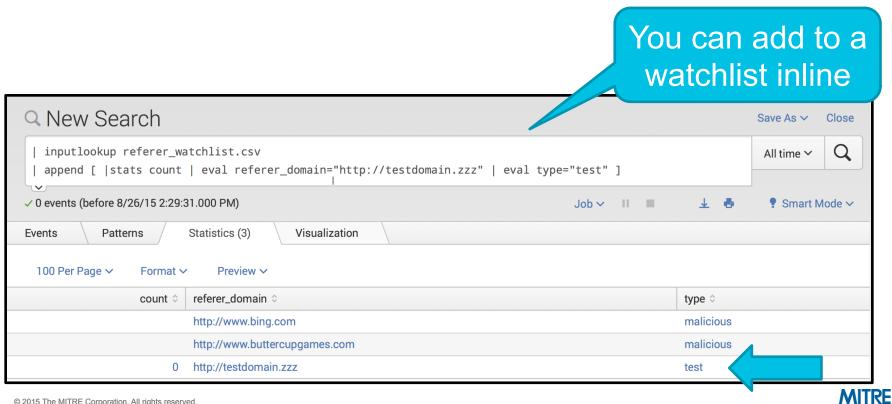


Creating data on the fly



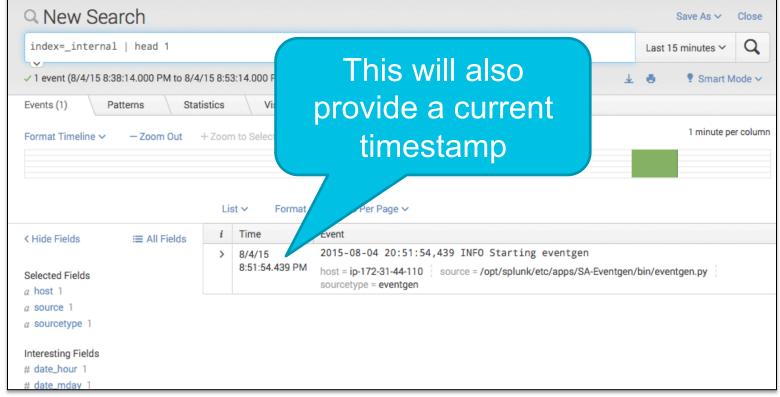


How is this helpful?



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Creating data on the fly with timestamps



Are we there yet?



Overall lessons

- Read Splunk Search Manual
- Try multiple methods
- Use the Job Inspector
- •Understand what Splunk is doing "under the hood"



Thank you!

