## Building Kafka-based Microservices with Akka Streams and Kafka Streams

Boris Lublinsky and Dean Wampler, Lightbend

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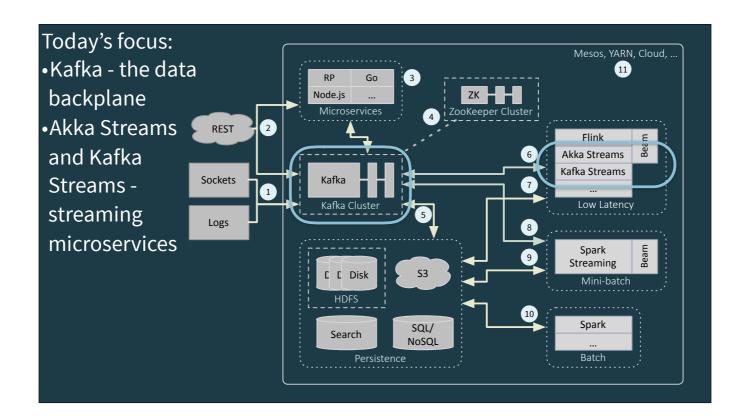


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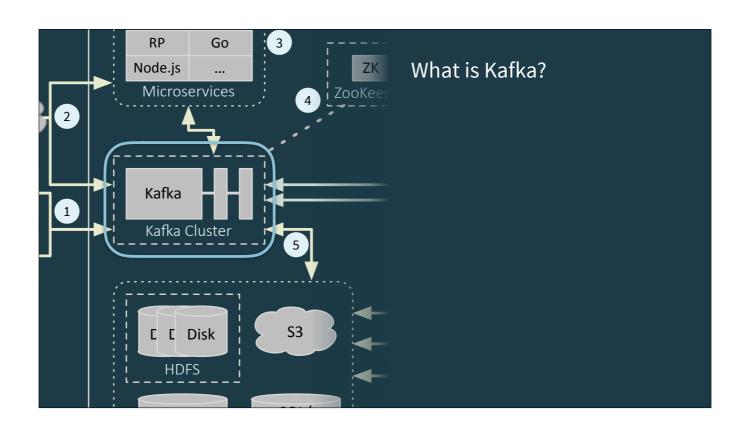
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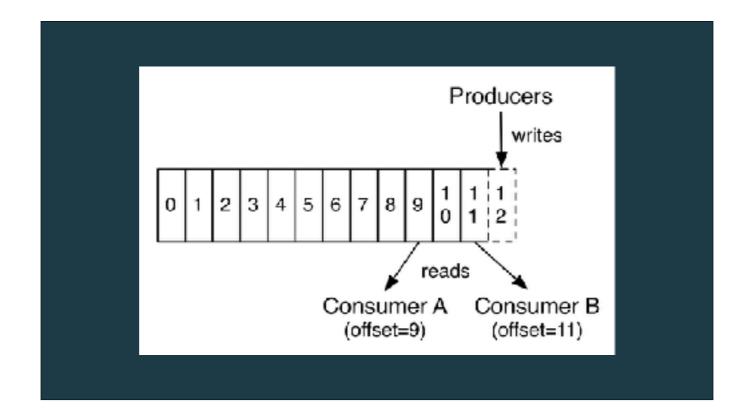


- Dean wrote this report describing the whole fast data landscape.
- bit.ly/lightbend-fast-data
- Previous talks ("Stream All the Things!") and webinars (such as this one, <a href="https://info.lightbend.com/webinar-moving-from-big-data-to-fast-data-heres-how-to-pick-the-right-streaming-engine-recording.html">https://info.lightbend.com/webinar-moving-from-big-data-to-fast-data-heres-how-to-pick-the-right-streaming-engine-recording.html</a>) have covered the whole architecture. This session dives into the next level of detail, using Akka Streams and Kafka Streams to build Kafka-based microservices



Kafka is the data backplane for high-volume data streams, which are organized by topics. Kafka has high scalability and resiliency, so it's an excellent integration tool between data producers and consumers.





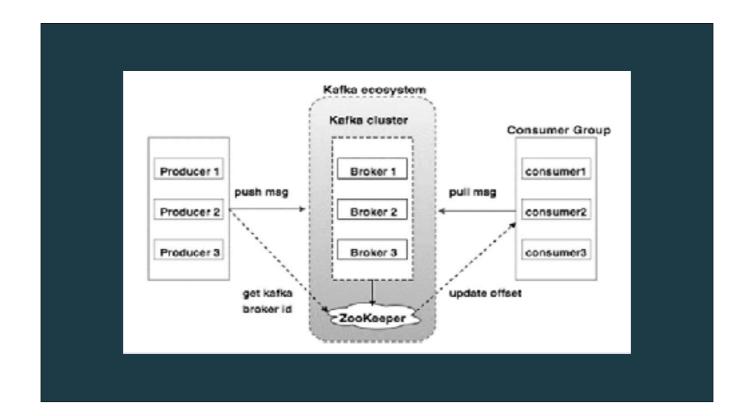
Kafka is a distributed log, storing messages sequentially. Producers always write to the end of the log, consumers can read on the log offset that they want to read from (earliest, latest, ...)

Kafka can be used as either a queue or pub sub

The main differences are:

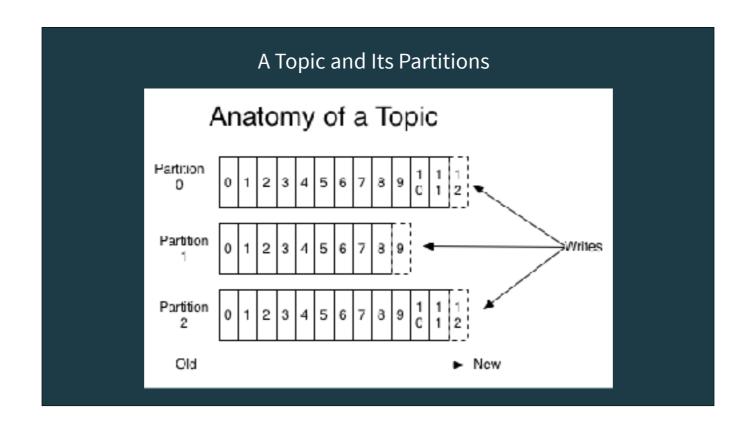
- 1. Log is persistent where queue is ephemeral (reads pop elements)
- 2. Traditional message brokers manage consumer offsets, while log systems allow users to manage offsets themselves

Alternatives to Kafka include Pravega (EMC) and Distributed Log/Pulsar (Apache)



Kafka cluster typically consists of multiple brokers to maintain load balance.

One Kafka broker instance can handle hundreds of thousands of reads and writes per second and each broker can handle TB (based on the disk size and network performance) of messages without performance impact. Kafka broker leader election can be done by ZooKeeper.

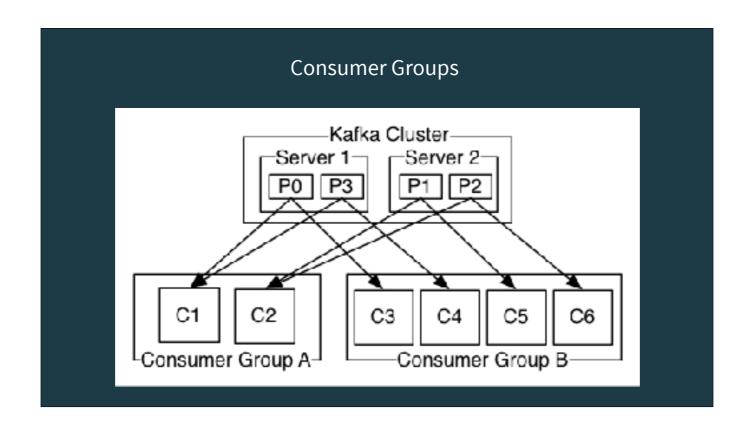


Kafka data is organized by topic

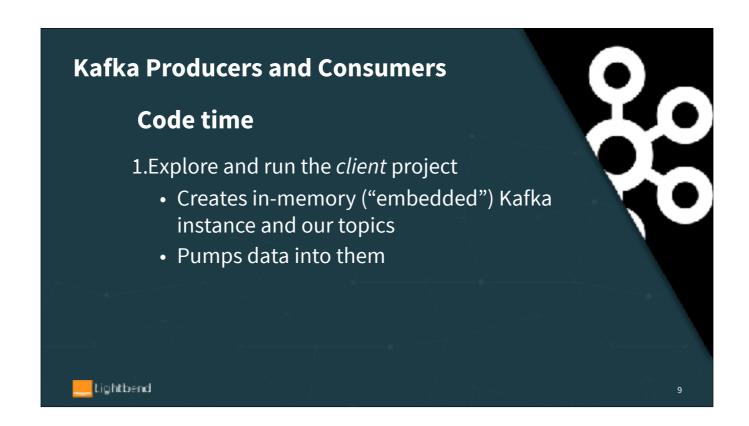
A topic can be comprised of multiple partitions.

A partition is a physical data storage artifact. Data in a partition can be replicated across multiple brokers. Data in a partition is guaranteed to be sequential. So, a topic is a logical aggregation of partitions. A topic doesn't provide any sequential guarantee (except a one-partition topic, where it's "accidental"). Partitioning is an important scalability mechanism - individual consumers can read dedicated partitions.

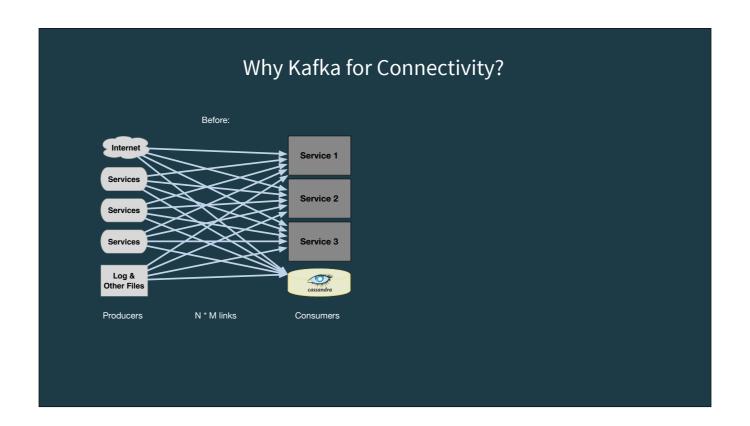
Partitioning mechanisms - round-robin, key (hash) based, custom. Consider the sequential property when designing partitioning.



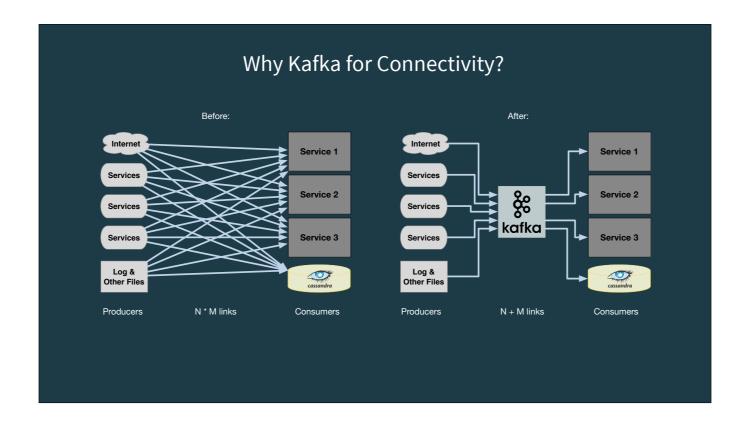
Consumers label themselves with a consumer group name, and each record published to a topic is delivered to one consumer instance within each subscribing consumer group (compare to queue semantics in traditional messaging). Consumer instances can be in separate processes or on separate machines.



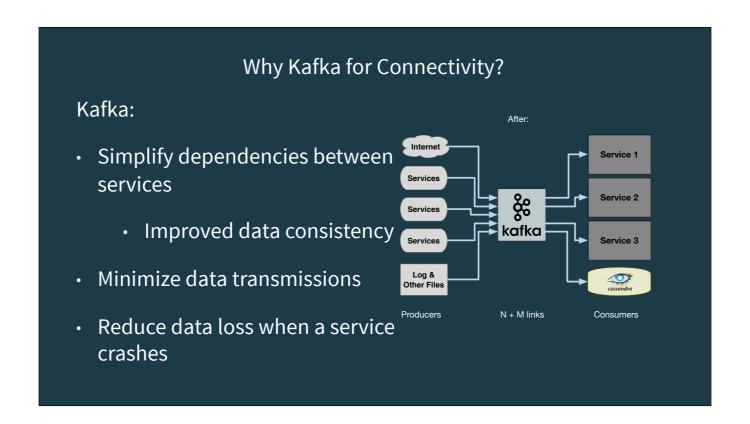
The embedded Kafka approach is suitable for non-production scenarios only, like learning;)



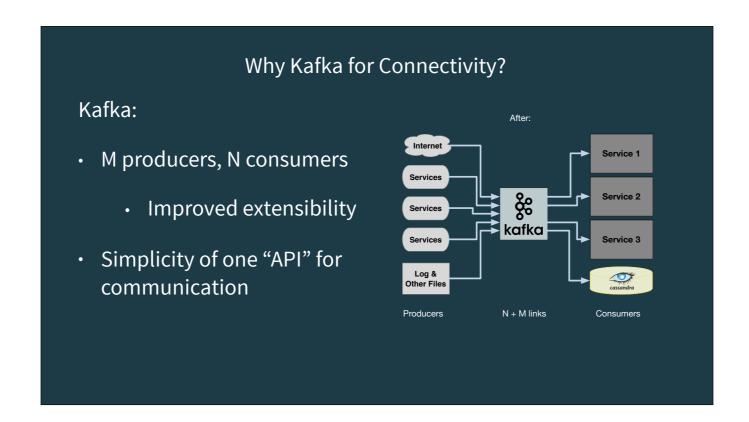
We're arguing that you should use Kafka as the data backplane in your architectures. Why? First, point to point spaghetti integration quickly becomes unmanageable as the amount of services grows



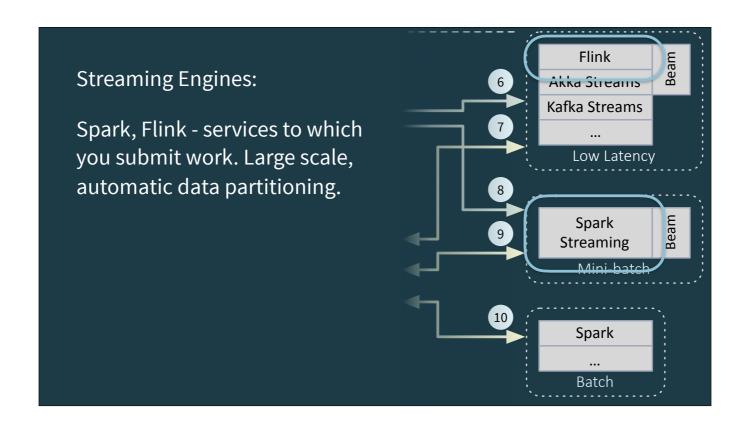
Kafka can simplify the situation by providing a single backbone which is used by all services (there are of coarse topics, but they are more logical then physical connections). Additionally Kafka persistence provides robustness when a service crashes (data is captured safely, waiting for the service to be restarted) - see also temporal decoupling, and provide the simplicity of one "API" for communicating between services.



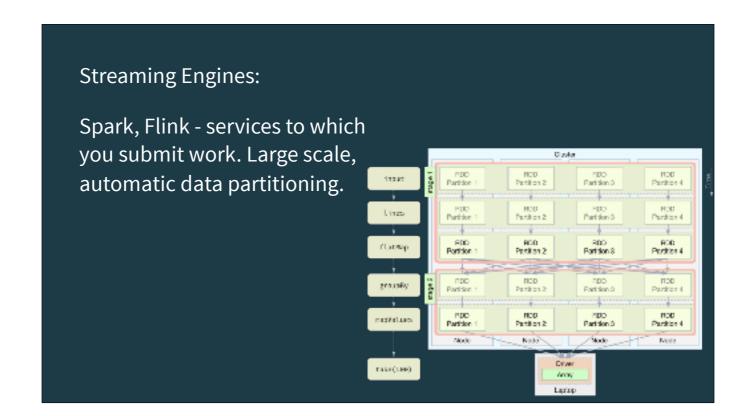
Kafka can significantly improve decoupling (no service specific endpoints, temporal decoupling), It minimize the amount of data send over network, each producer writes data to Kafka, instead of writing it to multiple consumers. This also improves data consistency - the same data is consumed by all consumers. Extensibility is greatly simplified - adding new consumers does not require any changes to producers, and provide the simplicity of one "API" for communicating between services.



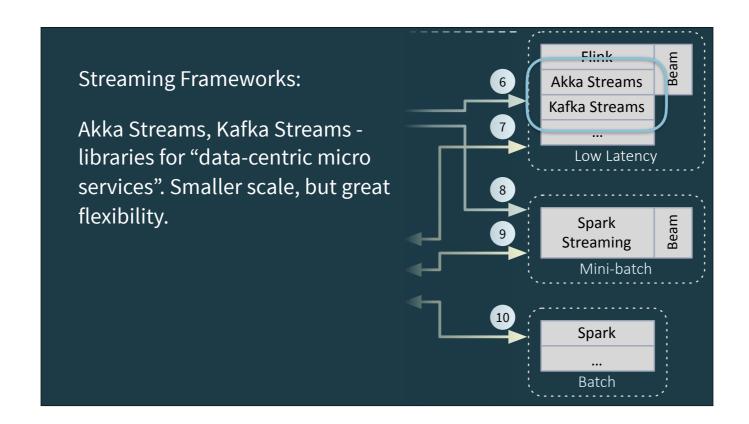
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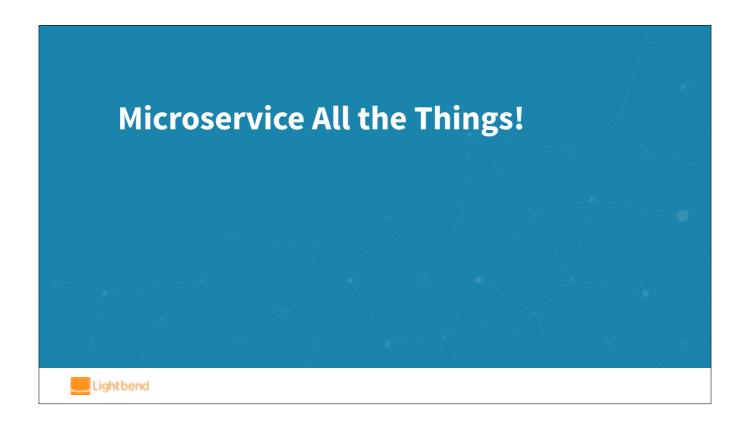
They support highly scalable jobs, where they manage all the issues of scheduling processes, etc. You submit jobs to run to these running daemons. They handle scalability, failover, load balancing, etc. for you.



You have to write jobs, using their APIs, that conform to their programming model. But if you do, Spark and Flink do a great deal of work under the hood for you!

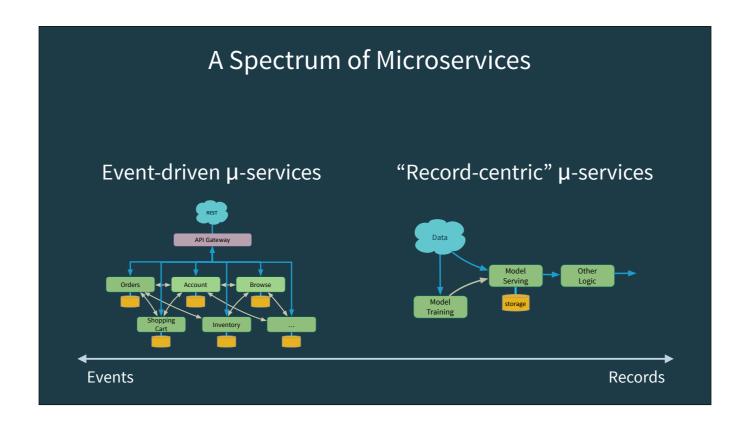


Much more flexible deployment and configuration options, compared to Spark and Flink, but more effort is required by you to run them. They are "just libraries", so there is a lot of flexibility and interoperation capabilities.





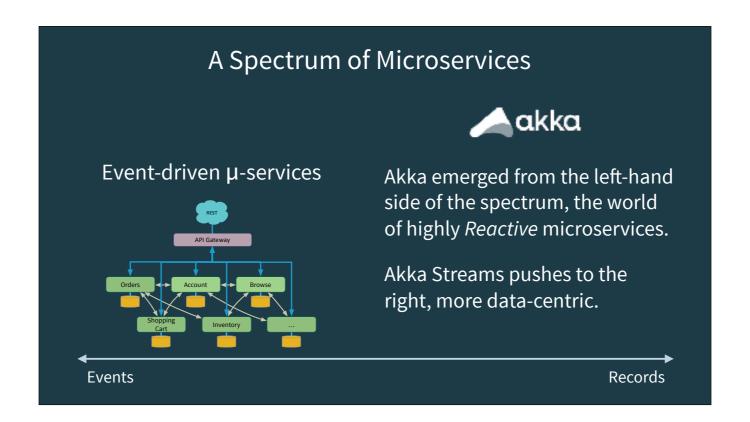
https://twitter.com/shanselman/status/967703711492423682



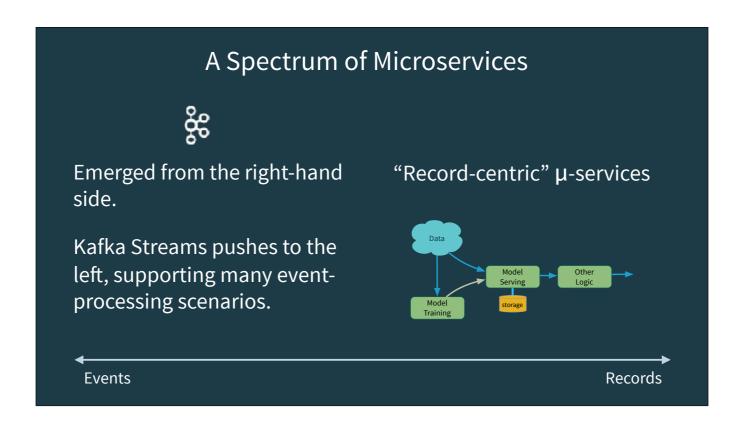
By event-driven microservices, I mean that each individual datum is treated as a specific event that triggers some activity, like steps in a shopping session. Each event requires individual handling, routing, responses, etc. REST, CQRS, and Event Sourcing are ideal for this.

Records are uniform (for a given stream), they typically represent instantiations of the same information type, for example time series; we can process them individually or as a group, for efficiency.

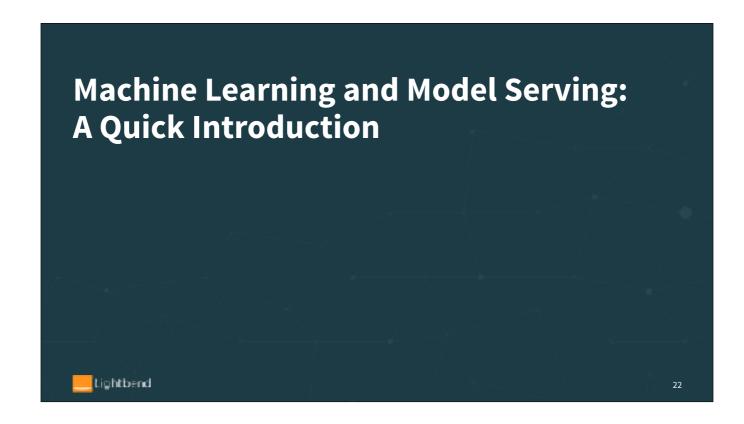
It's a spectrum because we might take those events and also route them through a data pipeline, like computing statistics or scoring against a machine learning model (as here), perhaps for fraud detection, recommendations, etc.



I think it's useful to reflect on the history of these toolkits, because their capabilities reflect their histories. Akka Actors emerged in the world of building *Reactive* microservices, those requiring high resiliency, scalability, responsiveness, CEP, and must be event driven. Akka is extremely lightweight and supports extreme parallelism, including across a cluster. However, the Akka Streams API is effectively a dataflow API, so it nicely supports many streaming data scenarios, allowing Akka to cover more of the spectrum than before.



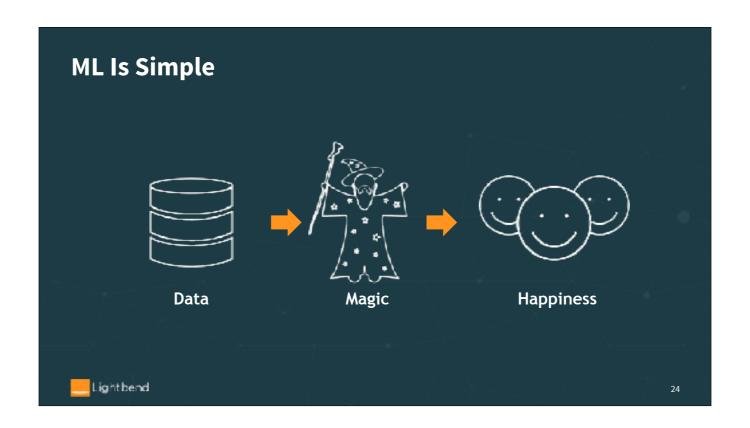
Kafka reflects the heritage of moving and managing streams of data, first at LinkedIn. But from the beginning it has been used for event-driven microservices, where the "stream" contained events, rather than records. Kafka Streams fits squarely in the record-processing world, where you define dataflows for processing and even SQL. It can also be used for event processing scenarios.



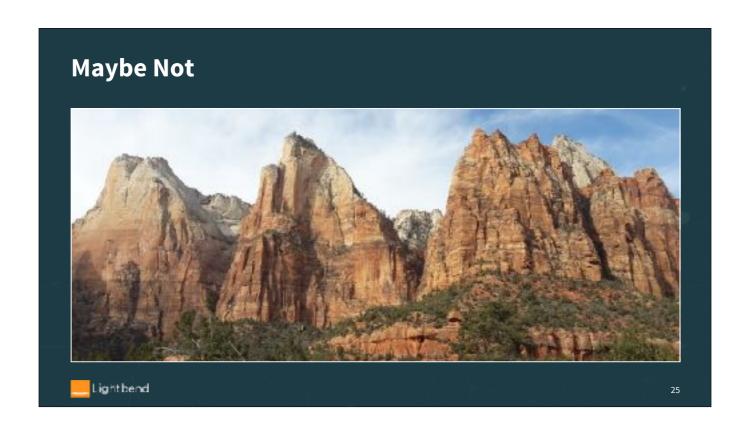
We'll return to more details about AS and KS as we get into implementation details.



Our concrete examples are based on the content of this report by Boris, on different techniques for serving ML models in a streaming context.



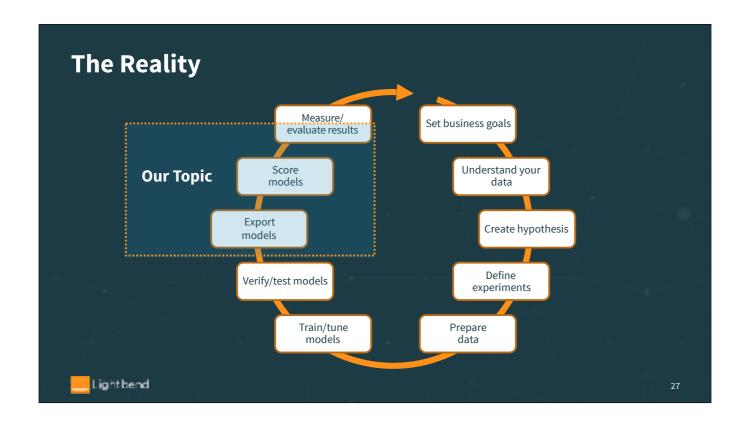
Get a lot of data Sprinkle some magic And be happy with results



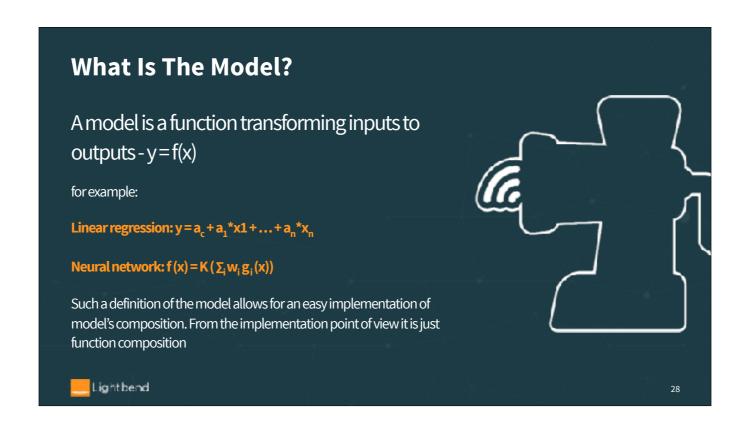
Not only the climb is steep, but you are not sure which peak to climb Court of the Patriarchs at Zion National park



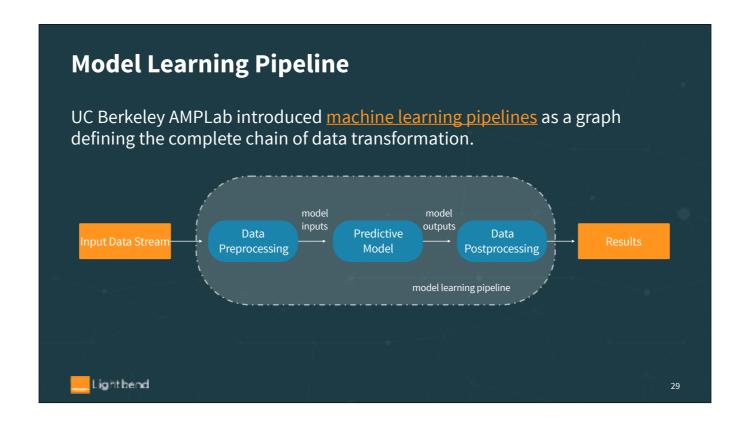
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- But what does a company in the, say, Aware stage look like, vs a company in the Expand stage?
- Some real-world examples can help drive that understanding.



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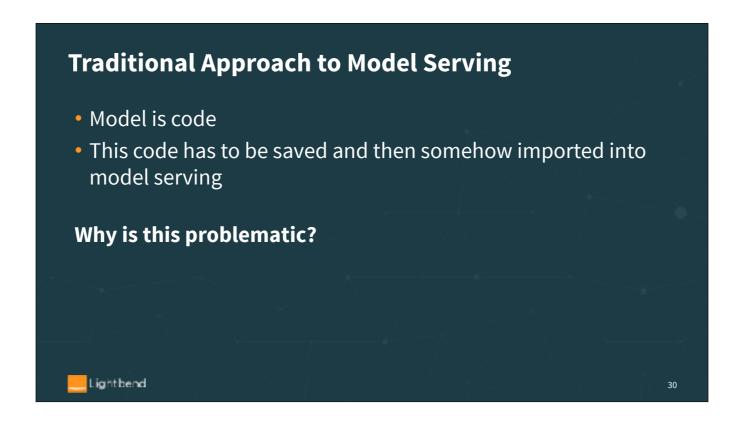
UC Berkeley AMPLab introduced machine learning pipelines as a graph defining the complete chain of data transformation. The advantage of such approach

It captures the whole processing pipeline including data preparation transformations, machine learning itself and any required post processing of the ML results. Although a single predictive model is shown on this picture, in reality several models can be chained to gather or composed in any other way. See PMML documentation for description of different model composition approaches.

Definition of the complete model allows for optimization of the data processing.

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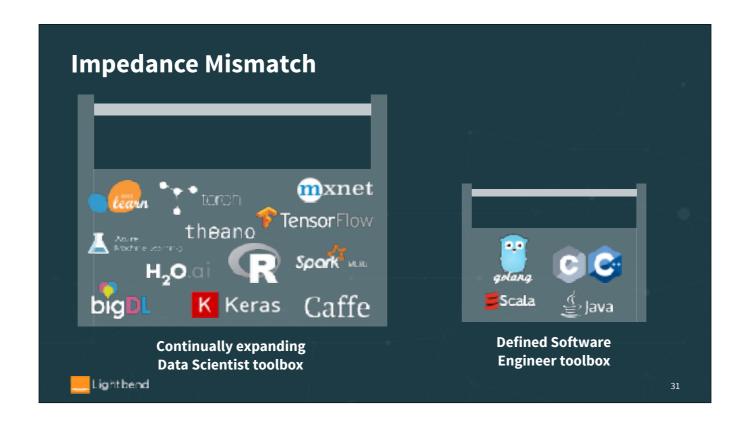
This notion of machine learning pipelines has been adopted by many applications including SparkML, Tensorflow, PMML, etc.



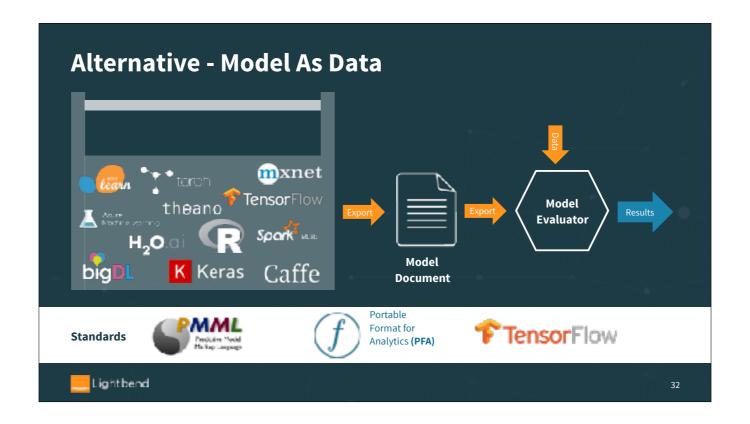
This provides guidance only and should be used as a suggestion. Choose the best fit for each answer. Return to this deck once the questionnaire is complete and scored.

Link: <a href="https://goo.gl/forms/cay1pMtxlQh83cSD3">https://goo.gl/forms/cay1pMtxlQh83cSD3</a>

NOTE: Score answers on a 1 to 4 point scale for each answer from top to bottom -



In his talk at the last Flink Forward, Ted Dunning discussed the fact that with multiple tools available to Data scientists, they tend to use different tools for solving different problems and as a result they are not very keen on tools standardization. This creates a problem for software engineers trying to use "proprietary" model serving tools supporting specific machine learning technologies. As data scientists evaluate and introduce new technologies for machine learning, software engineers are forced to introduce new software packages supporting model scoring for these additional technologies.



In order to overcome these differences, Data Mining Group have introduced 2 standards - Predictive Model Markup Language (PMML) and Portable Format for Analytics (PFA), both suited for description of the models that need to be served. Introduction of these models led to creation of several software products dedicated to "generic" model serving, for example Openscoring, Open data group, etc.

Another de facto standard for machine learning is Tensorflow, which is widely used for both machine learning and model serving. Although it is a proprietary format, it is used so widely that it becomes a standard

The result of this standardization is creation of the open source projects, supporting these formats - JPMML and Hadrian which are gaining more and more adoption for building model serving implementations, for example ING, R implementation, SparkML support, Flink support, etc. Tensorflow also released Tensorflow java APIs, which are used in a Flink TensorFlow

## **Exporting Model As Data With PMML**

There are already a lot of export options



https://github.com/jpmml/jpmml-sparkml



https://github.com/jpmml/jpmml-sklearn



https://github.com/jpmml/jpmml-r



**Tensor**Flow <a href="https://github.com/jpmml/jpmml-tensorflow">https://github.com/jpmml/jpmml-tensorflow</a>



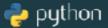


## **Evaluating PMML Model**

There are also a few PMML evaluators



https://github.com/jpmml/jpmml-evaluator



https://github.com/opendatagroup/augustus



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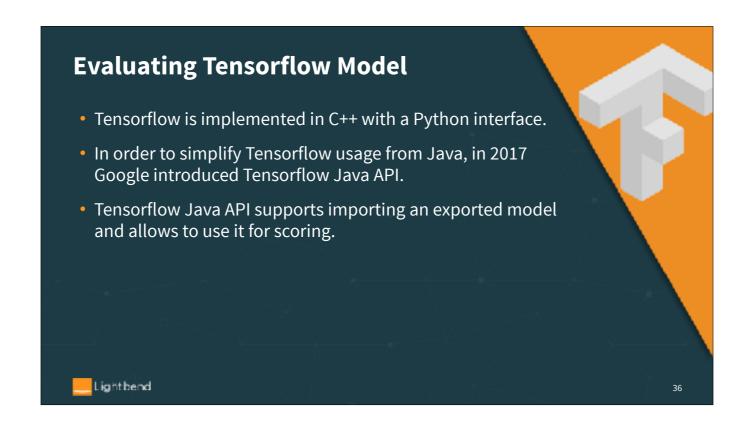


## **Exporting Model As Data With Tensorflow**

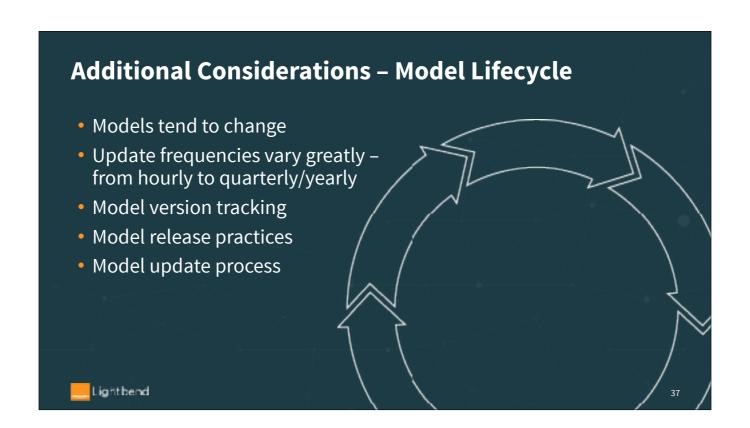
- Tensorflow execution is based on Tensors and Graphs
- Tensors are defined as multilinear functions which consist of various vector variables
- A computational graph is a series of Tensorflow operations arranged into graph of nodes
- Tensorflow supports exporting graphs in the form of binary protocol buffers
- There are two different export format optimized graph and a new format saved model

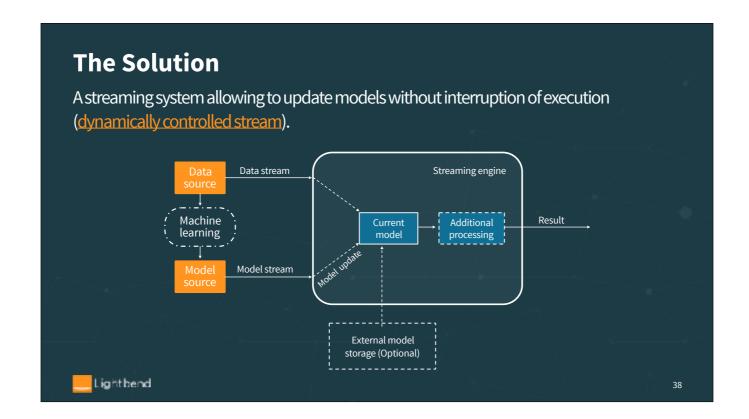
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We have a previously-trained TF model on the included "Wine Records" data. We'll import that model to do scoring.





The majority of machine learning implementations are based on running model serving as a REST service, which might not be appropriate for high-volume data processing or streaming systems, since they require recoding/restarting systems for model updates. For example, Flink TensorFlow or Flink JPPML.

```
Model Representation (Protobufs)
// On the wire
syntax = "proto3";
// Description of the trained model.
message ModelDescriptor {
 string name = 1; // Model name
 string description = 2; // Human readable
 string dataType = 3; // Data type for which this model is applied.
 enum ModelType { // Model type
                                                   ModelType modeltype = 4;
  TENSORFLOW = 0;
                                                   oneof MessageContent {
  TENSORFLOWSAVED = 2;
                                                     // Byte array containing the model
  PMML = 2;
                                                     bytes data = 5;
                                                     string location = 6;
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```

You need a neutral representation format that can be shared between different tools and over the wire. Protobufs (from Google) is one of the popular options. Recall that this is the format used for model export by TensorFlow. Here is an example.

```
trait Model {
    def score(input: AnyVal): AnyVal
    def cleanup(): Unit
    def toBytes(): Array[Byte]
    def getType: Long
    }

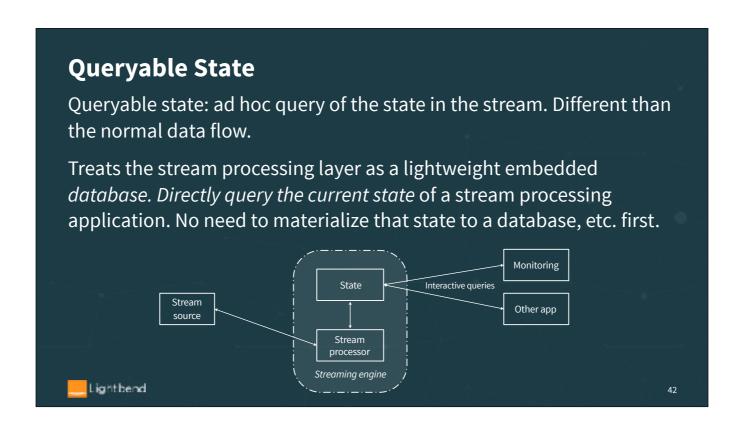
def ModelFactoryl {
    def create(input: ModelDescriptor): Model
    def restore(bytes: Array[Byte]): Model
}

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```

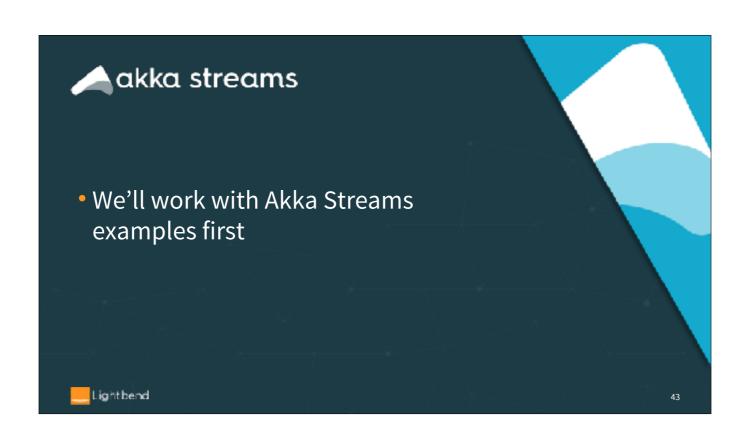
Corresponding Scala code that can be generated from the description.

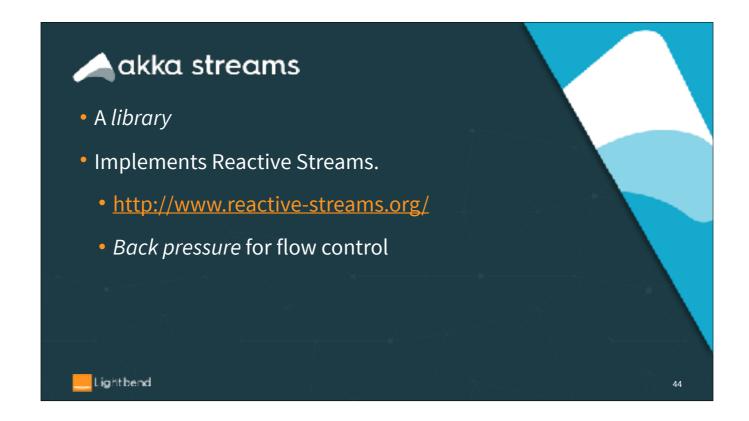
### **Side Note: Monitoring**

Model monitoring should provide information about usage, behavior, performance and lifecycle of the deployed models

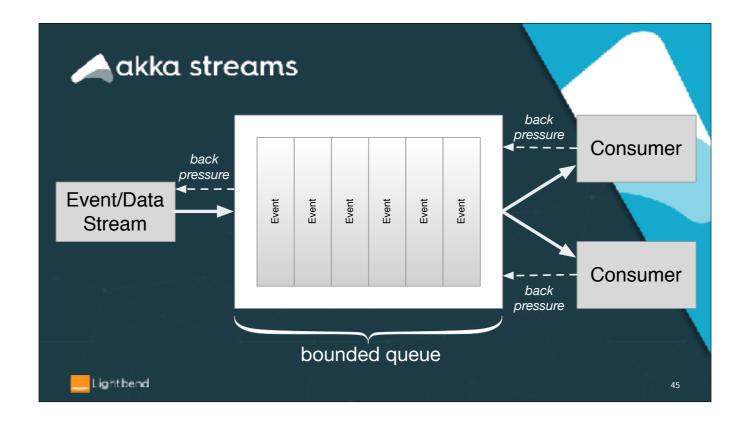


Kafka Streams and Flink have built-in support for this and its being added to Spark Streaming. We'll show how to use other Akka features to provide the same ability in a straightforward way for Akka Streams.

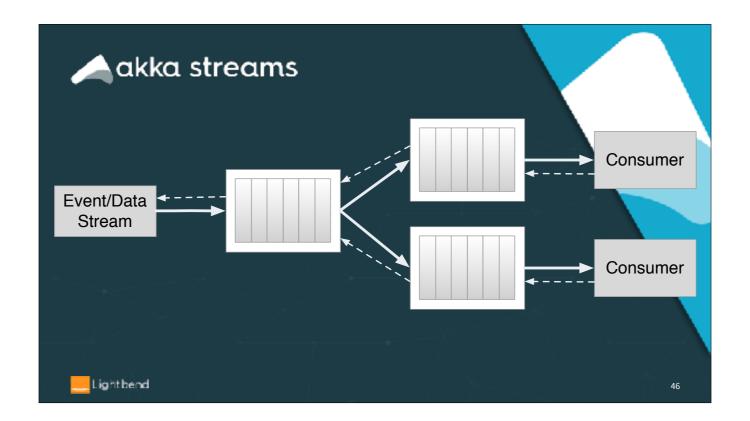




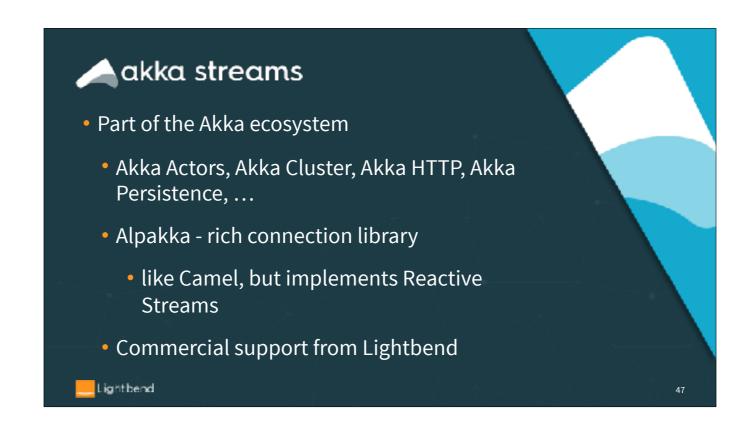
See this website for details on why back pressure is an important concept for reliable flow control, especially if you don't use something like Kafka as your "near-infinite" buffer between services.



Bounded queues are the only sensible option (even Kafka topic partitions are bounded by disk sizes), but to prevent having to drop input when it's full, consumers signal to producers to limit flow. Most implementations use a push model when flow is fine and switch to a pull model when flow control is needed.



And they compose so you get end-to-end back pressure.



Rich, mature tools for the full spectrum of microservice development.



```
import akka.stream._
import akka.stream.scaladsl._
import akka.{ NotUsed, Done }
import akka.actor.ActorSystem
import scala.concurrent._
import scala.concurrent.duration._

implicit val system = ActorSystem("QuickStart")
implicit val materializer = ActorMaterializer()

val source: Source[Int, NotUsed] = Source(1 to 10)
val factorials = source.scan(BigInt(1)) ( (acc, next) => acc * next )
factorials.runWith(Sink.foreach(println))
```

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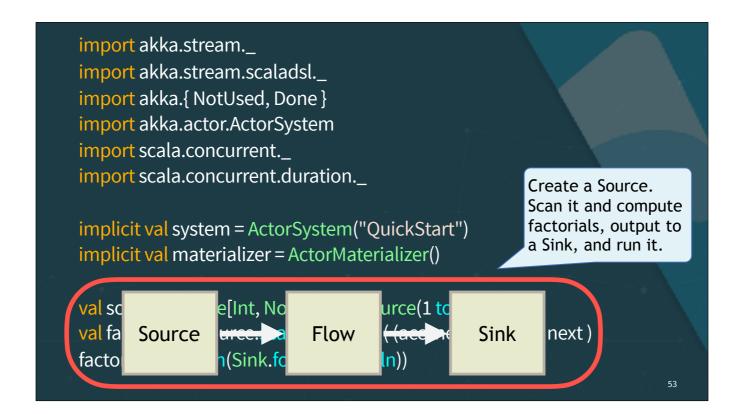
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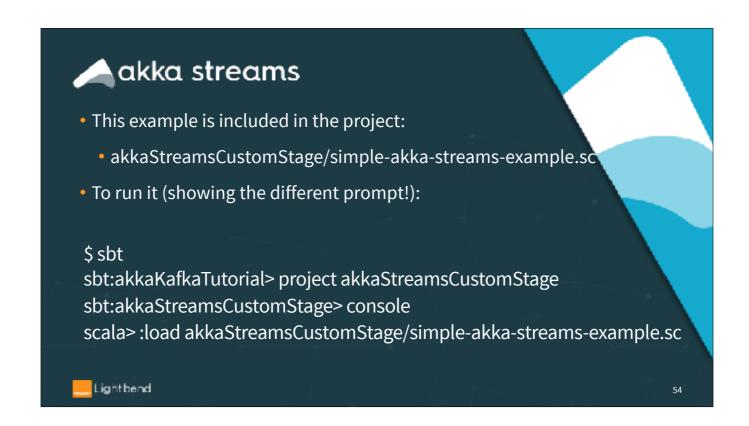
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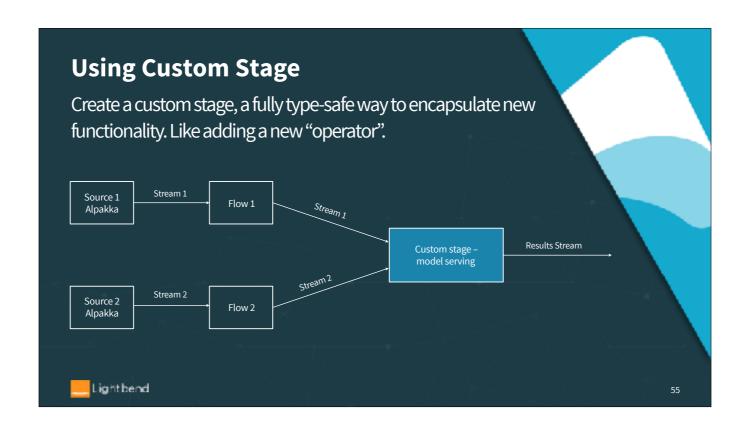
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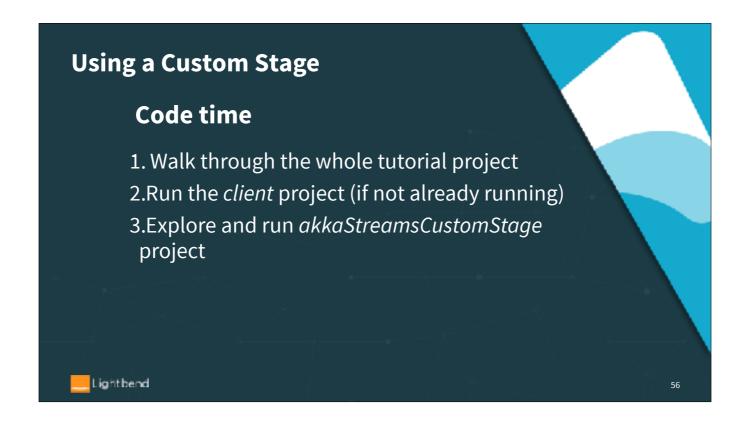
The core concepts are sources and sinks, connected by flows. There is the notion of a Graph for more complex dataflows, but we won't discuss them further



The ".sc" extension is used so that the compiler doesn't attempt to compile this Scala "script". Using ".sc" is an informal convention for such files.



Custom stage is an elegant implementation but doesn't scale well to a large number of models. Although a stage can contain a hash map of models, all of the execution will be happening at the same place



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#### **Exercises!**

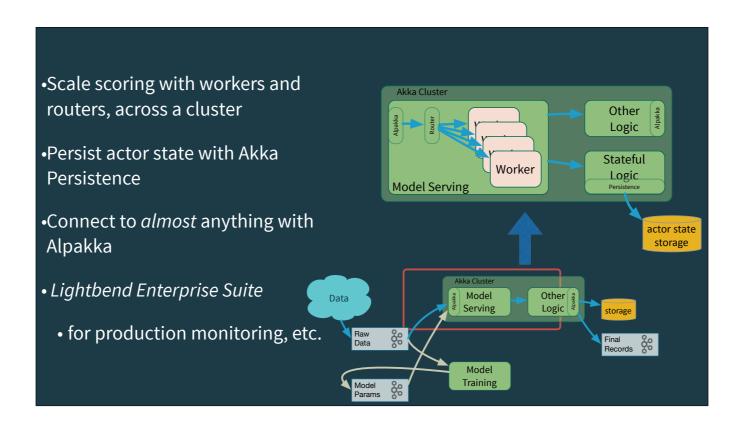
We've prepared some exercises. We may not have time during the course to work on them, but take a look at the *exercise* branch in the Git project (or the separate X.Y.Z\_exercise download).

To find them, search for "// Exercise". The *master* branch implements the solutions.

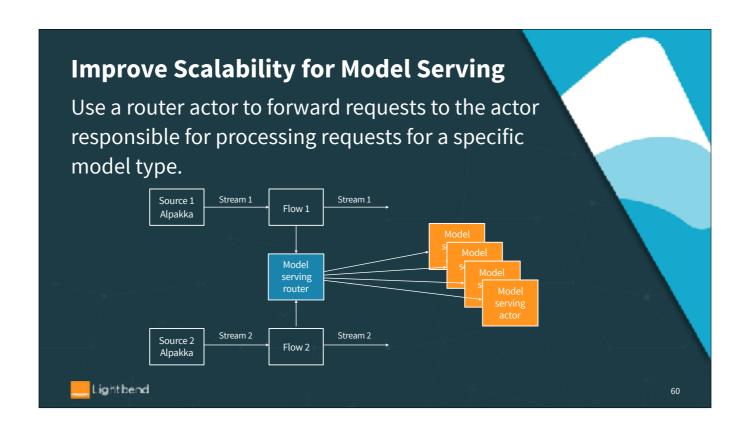
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Here's our streaming microservice example adapted for Akka Streams. We'll still use Kafka topics in some places and assume we're using the same implementation for the "Model Training" microservice. Alpakka provides the interface to Kafka, DBs, file systems, etc. We're showing two microservices as before, but this time running in Akka Cluster, with direct messaging between them. We'll explore this a bit more after looking at the example code.

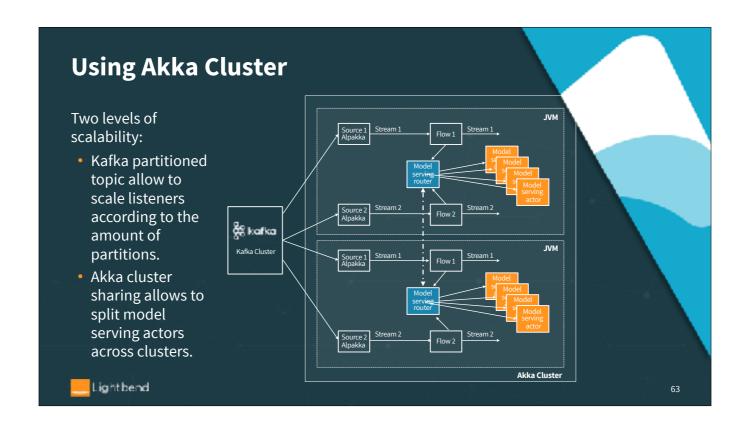


We here create a routing layer: an actor that will implement model serving for specific model (based on key) and route messages appropriately. This way our system will serve models in parallel.

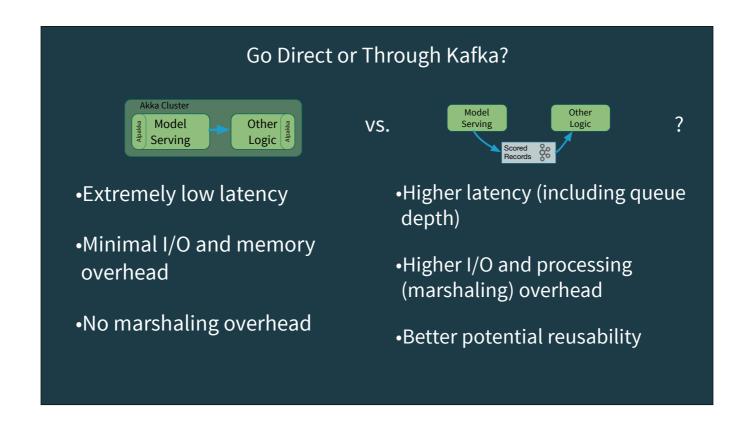


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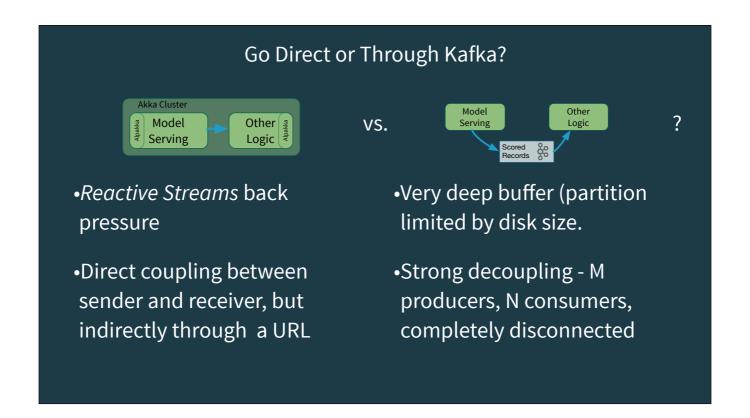




A great article <a href="http://michalplachta.com/2016/01/23/scalability-using-sharding-from-akka-cluster/">http://michalplachta.com/2016/01/23/scalability-using-sharding-from-akka-cluster/</a> goes into a lot of details on both implementation and testing



Design choice: When is it better to use direct actor-to-actor (or service-to-service) messaging vs. going through a Kafka topic?



Design choice: When is it better to use direct actor-to-actor (or service-to-service) messaging vs. going through a Kafka topic?





There's a maturing body of thought about what streaming semantics should be, too much to discuss here. Dean's book provides the next level of details. See Tyler's work (from the Google Apache Beam team) for deep dives.



There is a duality between streams and tables. Tables are the latest state snapshot, while streams record the history of state evolution. A common way to implement databases is to use an event (or change) log, then update the state from the log.



## **Kafka Streams**

- Low overhead
- Read from and write to Kafka topics, memory
  - Could use Kafka Connect for other sources and sinks
- Load balance and scale based on partitioning of topics
- Built-in support for Queryable State

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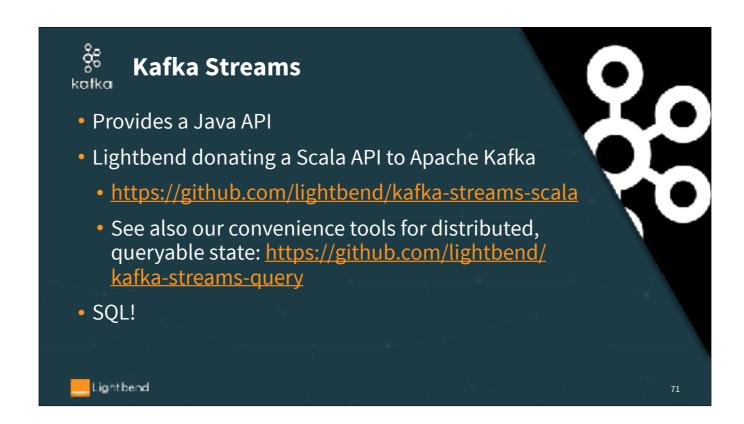
# Kafka Streams

- Two types of APIs:
  - Process Topology
  - Compare to <u>Apache Storm</u>
  - DSL based on collection transformations
  - Compare to Spark, Flink, Scala collections.



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The kafka-streams-query uses a KS API to find all the partitions across a cluster for a given topic, query their state, and aggregate the results, behind a web service. Otherwise, you have to query the partitions individually yourself.



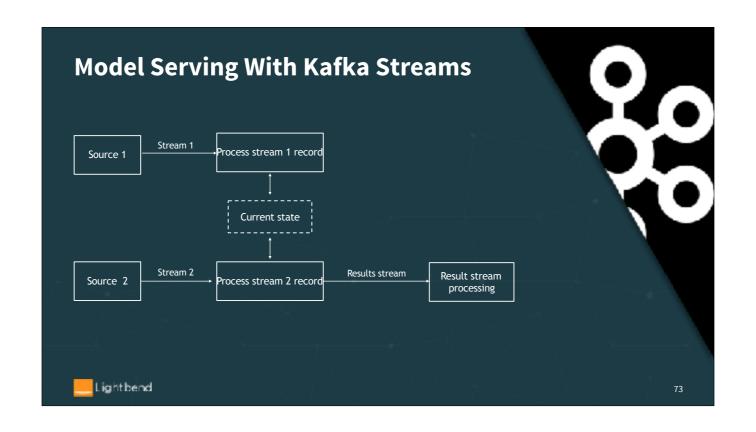
## **Kafka Streams**

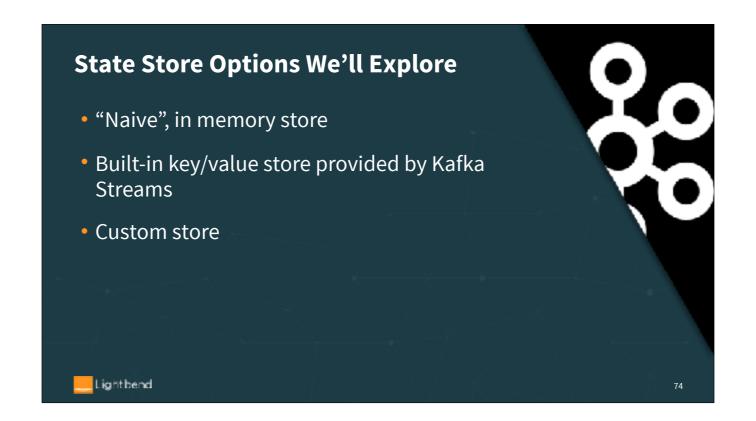
- Ideally suited for:
  - ETL -> KStreams
  - State -> KTable ???
  - Joins, including Stream and Table joins
  - "Effectively once" semantics
- Commercial support from Confluent, Lightbend, and others



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We provide three example implementations, using three different ways of storing state. "Naive" - because in-memory state is lost if the process crashes; a restart can't pick up where the previous instance left off.

## **Model Serving With Kafka Streams**

### **Code time**

- 1.Still running the *client* project...
- 2.Explore and run: kafkaStreamsModelServerInMemoryStore





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We probably won't get to this implementation and the next, but you can look at them on your own.

## Model Serving With Kafka Streams, KV Store

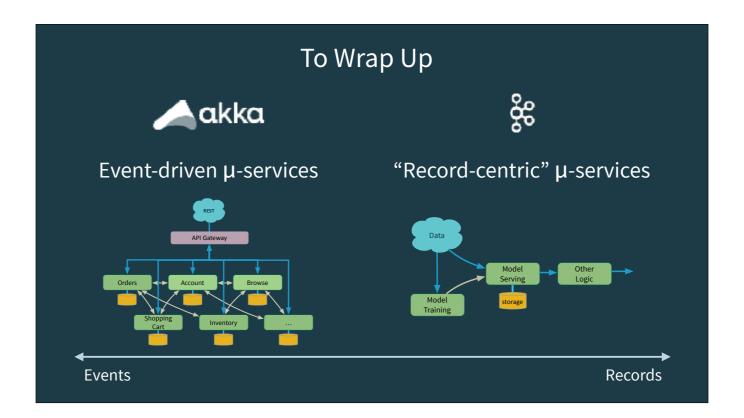
#### **Code time (as time permits)**

- 1.Still running the *client* project...
- 2.Explore and run: kafkaStreamsModelServerCustomStore



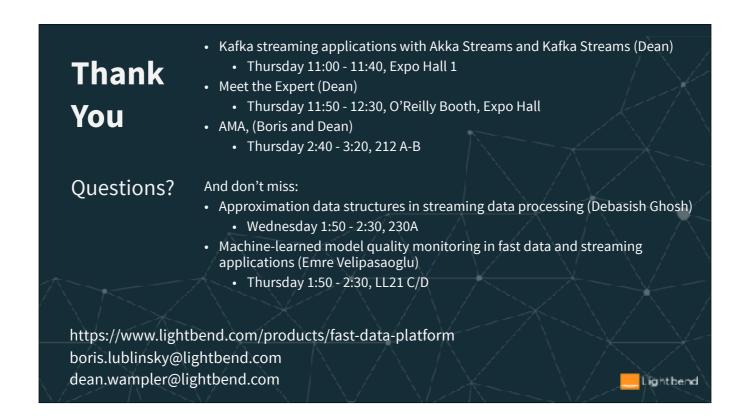
\_\_Lightbend

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Akka Streams is a great choice if you are building full-spectrum microservices and you need lots of flexibility in your app architectures, connecting to different kinds of data sources and sinks, etc.

Kafka Streams is a great choice if your use cases fit nicely in it's "sweet spot", you want SQL access, and you don't need to full flexibility of something like Akka. Of course, you can use both! They are "just libraries".



Thank you! Please check out the other Strata San Jose sessions by Boris, Dean, and our colleagues Debasish and Emre. Check out our Fast Data Platform for commercial options for building and running microservices with Kafka, Akka Streams, and Kafka Streams.