What is DataDog and why is it useful?

Katreena Mullican
HudsonAlpha Institute for Biotechnology

DataDog (https://www.datadoghq.com) is a cloud-hosted server and application monitoring tool. DataDog is used to create custom dashboards based on "metrics" that are gathered at scheduled intervals, as well as real-time "events". The easiest way to use DataDog is to install the agent on the Synergy node operating system. Once the agent is installed, a default set of metrics are gathered, such as RAM/CPU/disk usage and network I/O. In addition, DataDog supports a rich API and a long list of application integrations. It is possible to send metrics to DataDog without installing an agent, but that process requires custom scripting and is not as "out of the box" intuitive. There are several reasons why DataDog is a great tool for Synergy. Here are a few:

Reason #1
Create a Plan Script that will install DataDog agent onto the node and as soon as the node is up and on the network, metrics will automatically begin to appear in DataDog. Login to DataDog and click on the node name to see the default dashboard, or begin configuring custom dashboards. DataDog configuration files can be created/edited on the Synergy node to send additional host or application metrics. Scripts can be written to parse logs and/or send events.

Reason #2
Take advantage of DataDog's monitoring options (emails, texts, web hooks) to send a notification once a Synergy node or application on a node is online and if any changes in availability occur.

Reason #3:
DataDog has one of the best chat support experiences that I've seen. For paying customers, technical help is readily available via chat, Slack, or event stream (between 10:00 and 19:00 ET). In addition, the documentation is outstanding, with lots of examples and explanations.

Notes:
DataDog hosts must have access to the internet, or to a proxy server that has access to the internet.

DataDog is free up to 5 hosts, with 1-day metric retention. For more than 5 hosts, it is billed (annually or monthly) based on the number of hosts that submit metrics/events (https://www.datadoghq.com/pricing).