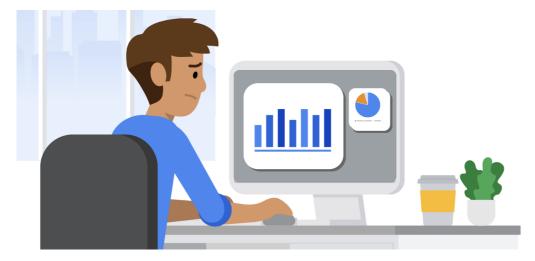# Potential pain points when long-term monitoring

Business intelligence monitoring involves building and using hardware and software tools to easily and rapidly analyze data and enable stakeholders to make impactful business decisions. As you design dashboards for long-term monitoring, there are a few common obstacles users might encounter that can make dashboards harder for them to use. In this reading, you'll get a short checklist of potential obstacles, known as "pain points." These are things to keep in mind when you build out the case study dashboard—and as you build dashboards in the future! This will help you build more user-friendly dashboards that your team and stakeholders can use long-term.

Three possible obstacles for long-term monitoring

Pain points can change depending on the scale of the dashboard—the larger the scale, the more additional context is required to make the data understandable for users. However, there are three general obstacles you might encounter:

- **Poorly defined use cases:** The ways a business intelligence tool is actually used and implemented by the team are referred to as "use cases." When designing a dashboard that includes live-monitoring, it's important to establish how the different views will be used. For example, if you only include one "executive view" with no way to drill down into specific information different users might need, it leaves a lot of the interpreting work to users who may not understand or even need to understand all of the data.

- **Isolated snapshots**: Snapshots of the latest information can be useful for reports, but if there's no way to track the data's evolution, then these snapshots have a pretty limited utility. Building in tracking for users to explore will help them understand the snapshots better. Basically, tracking means including insights about how the data is changing over time.

- **Lack of comparisons**: When creating a dashboard, implementing comparisons can help users understand whether the visualizations being presented indicate good or bad performance. Comparisons place KPIs side-by-side in order to easily examine how similar or different they are. Similar to adding more context to snapshots, adding comparisons is a fast way to ensure users understand why the data in the dashboard is useful.

Key takeaways

In upcoming activities, you are going to work with stakeholders to create a dashboard designed to monitor incoming data and provide as close to real-time updates as possible. When designing dashboards, it's important to keep the user in mind. Identifying potential pain points they might encounter and addressing those problems in your design phase is a great way to guide your process and generate more useful, accessible, and long-lasting solutions for your team.

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