



**AWS
re:Invent**

ARC306

Event Handling at Scale

Designing an Auditable Ingestion and Persistence Architecture
for 10K+ Events/Second

Terri Sage, VP Engineering, McGraw-Hill Education

Benjamin Feldon, Solutions Architect, AWS

November 2016

What to Expect from the Session



- Business Background: Reporting and event-driven analytics for hundreds of thousands of concurrent learners in a reliable, secure, and auditable manner that is cost effective
- Learning events
- Reporting & analytics architecture
- Architecture tradeoffs
- Challenges, built confidence, and lessons learned

Background



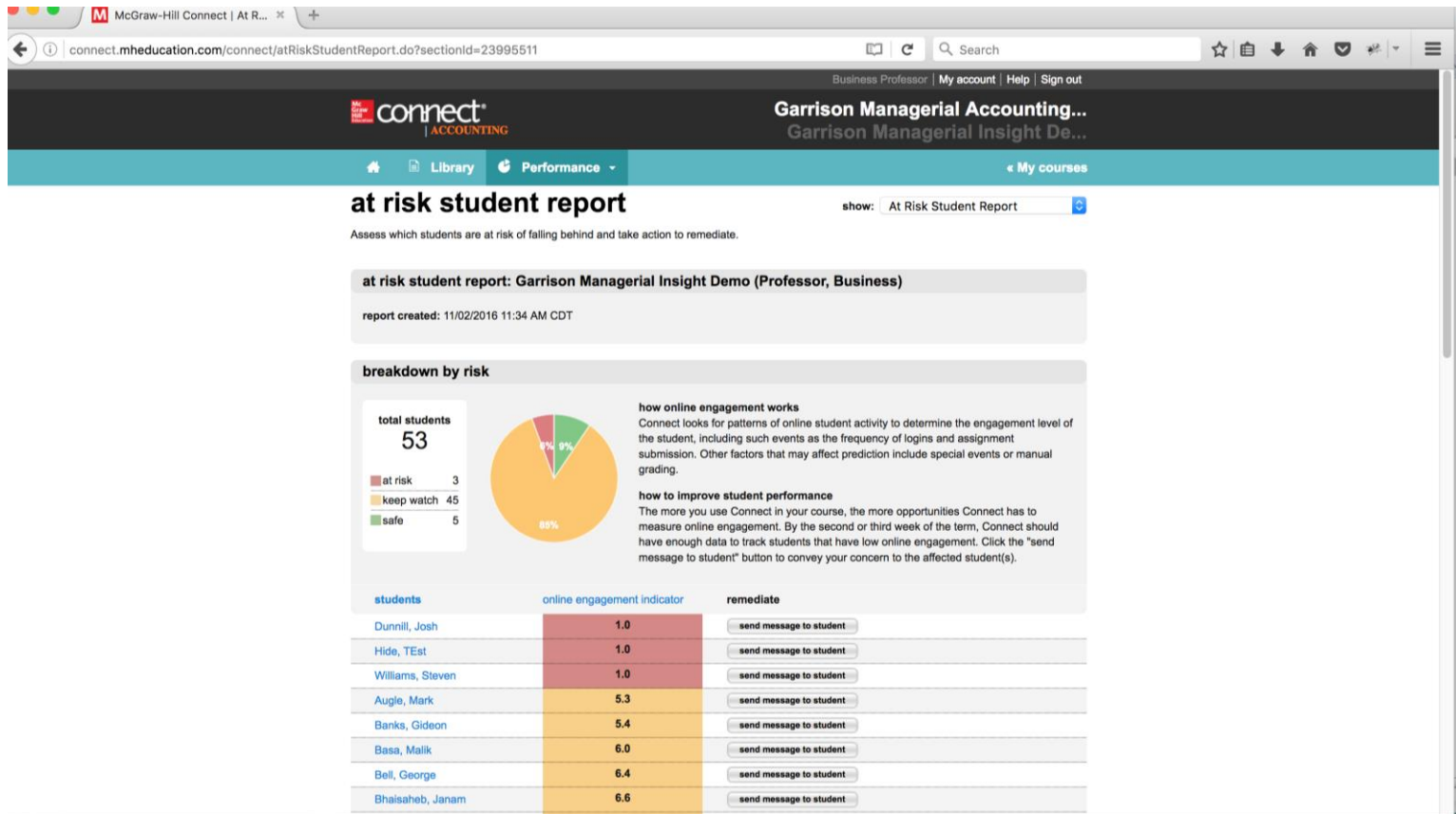
- McGraw-Hill Education is a digital learning company
- Learning Management Systems and Learning Analytics
- 2 million to 14 million students, initial load 10 thousand events per second to scale to 15 million per second
- Cyclical and cost conscious nature of business – low price point per student
- Service Level Agreements
- ‘Just-In-Time’ Insights; Example is Connect Insights

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Connect Insights




Connect Insights

McGraw-Hill Connect | Stu...

connect.mheducation.com/connect/studentPerformance.do?reportType=singleStudentMultipleAssignments&viewMode=result&reports=re

Search

☆ ⌵ ⬇ ⌵ ⌵ ⌵ ⌵ ⌵ ⌵

connect
ACCOUNTING

Garrison Managerial Accounting...
Garrison Managerial Insight De...

Library

Performance

My courses

Student performance

Show: Student Performance

Look up a student to view performance reports:

➡

McCue, Megan

☐ Look in all sections of this course (including those shared with colleagues)

McCue, Megan (Professor:prof 2)

Submitted assignments results

Assignments in progress

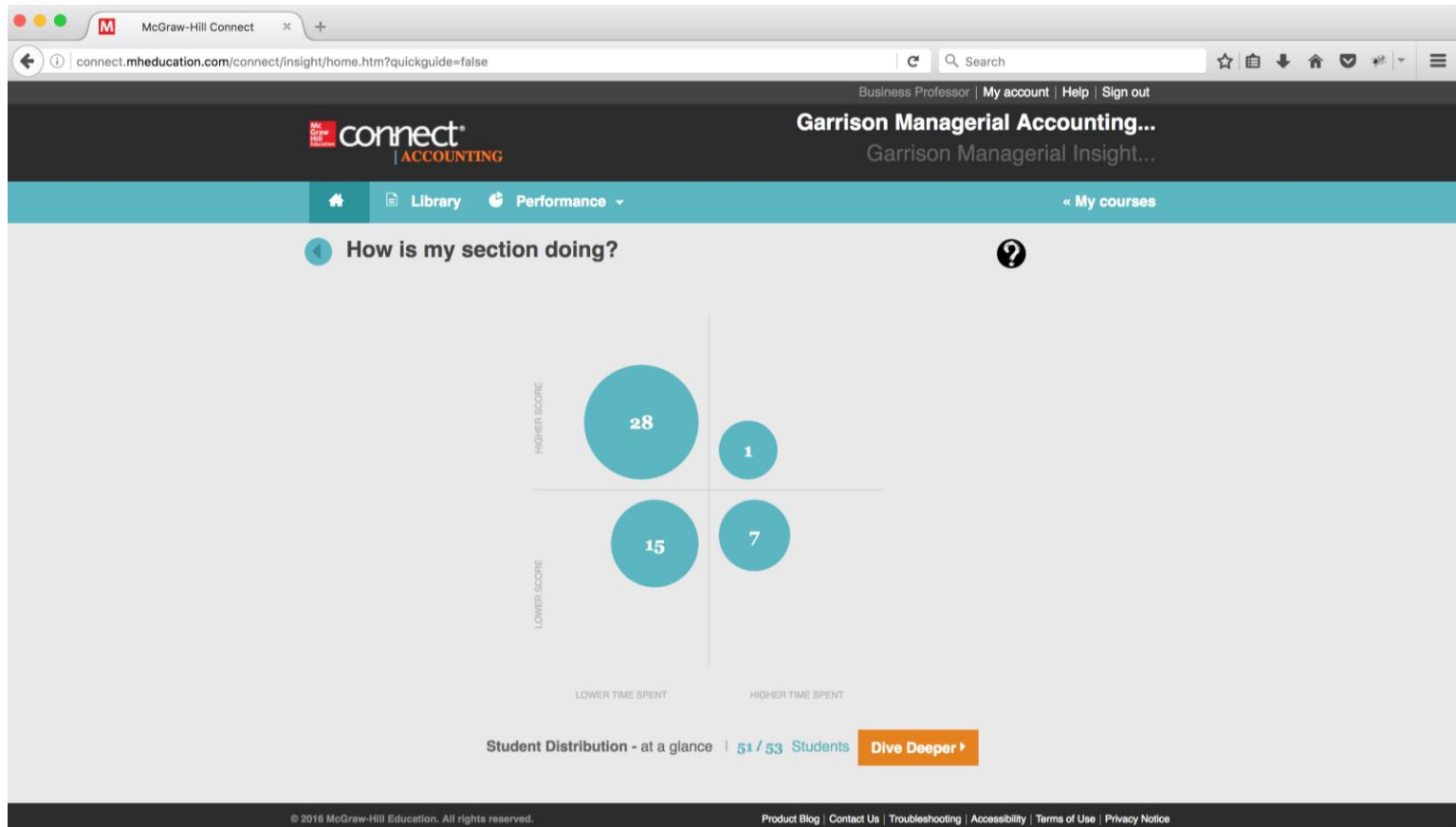
Show: All assignments

Export to Excel

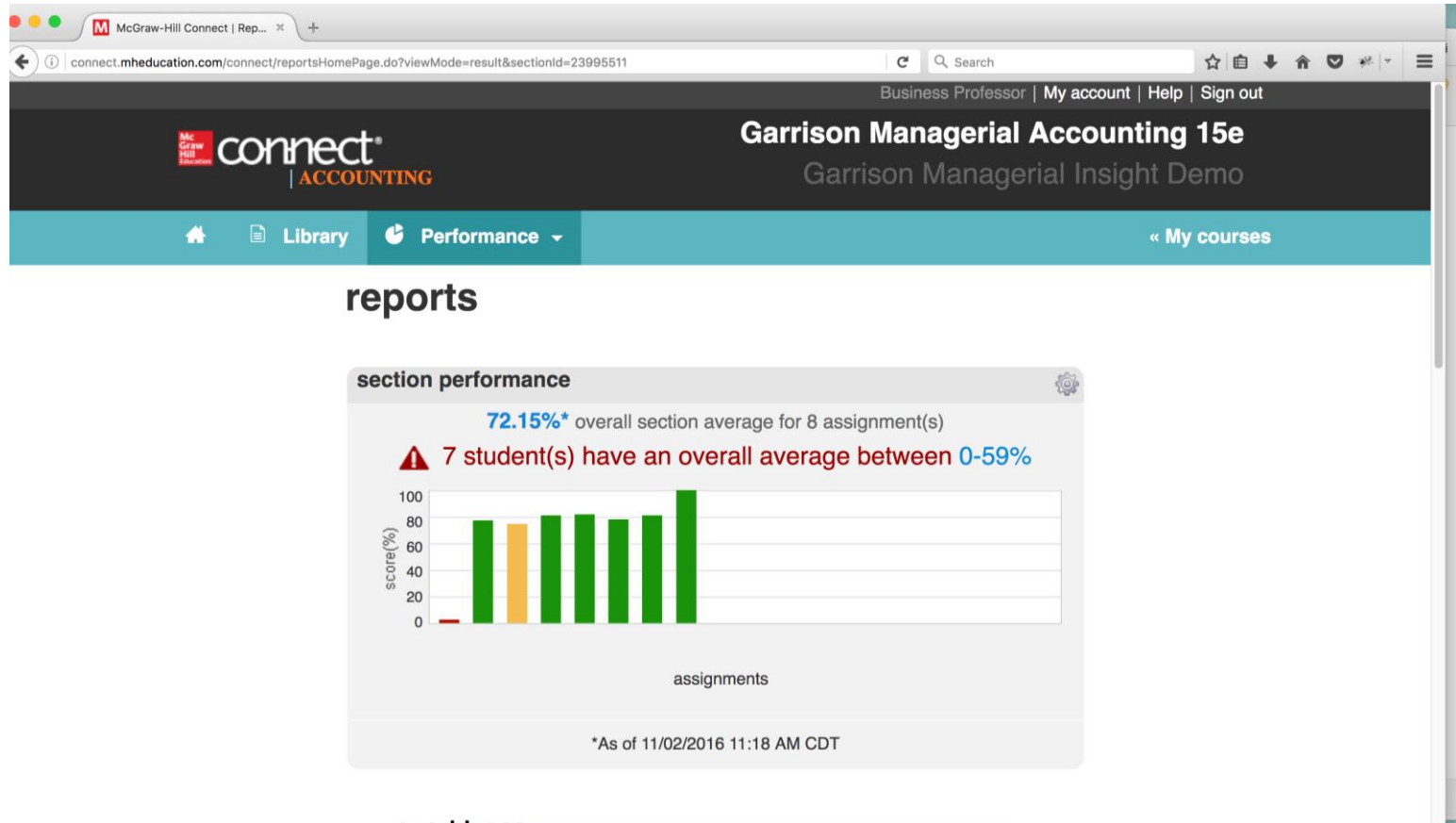
?

Assignments	Score	Started	Submitted	Time spent (HH:MM)	Date scored
Chapter 2 LearnSmart b Total Value (Points): 100.00 , Average Score: 0.00 (0.00 %)					
Attempt 1	0.00(0.00%)	01/13/14 11:06PM CST	03/26/16 12:23AM CDT	0:00	03/26/16 12:23AM CDT
Chapter 2 Practice Total Value (Points): 150.00 , Average Score: 115.00 (76.67 %)					
Attempt 1	115.00(76.67%)	01/07/14 12:05AM CST	01/07/14 12:39AM CST	0:33	02/28/15 08:44AM CST
Chapter 2 Homework Total Value (Points): 50.00 , Average Score: 28.80 (57.60 %)					
Attempt 1	28.80(57.60%)	01/07/14 01:51AM CST	01/07/14 02:03AM CST	0:11	04/14/16 10:48AM CDT
Chapter 2 Quiz Total Value (Points): 100.00 , Average Score: 90.00 (90.00 %)					
Attempt 1	90.00(90.00%)	01/07/14 02:04AM CST	01/07/14 02:17AM CST	0:12	
Chapter 3 Practice Total Value (Points): 150.00 , Average Score: 116.60 (77.73 %)					
Attempt 1	116.60(77.73%)	01/07/14 12:42AM CST	01/07/14 01:04AM CST	0:22	

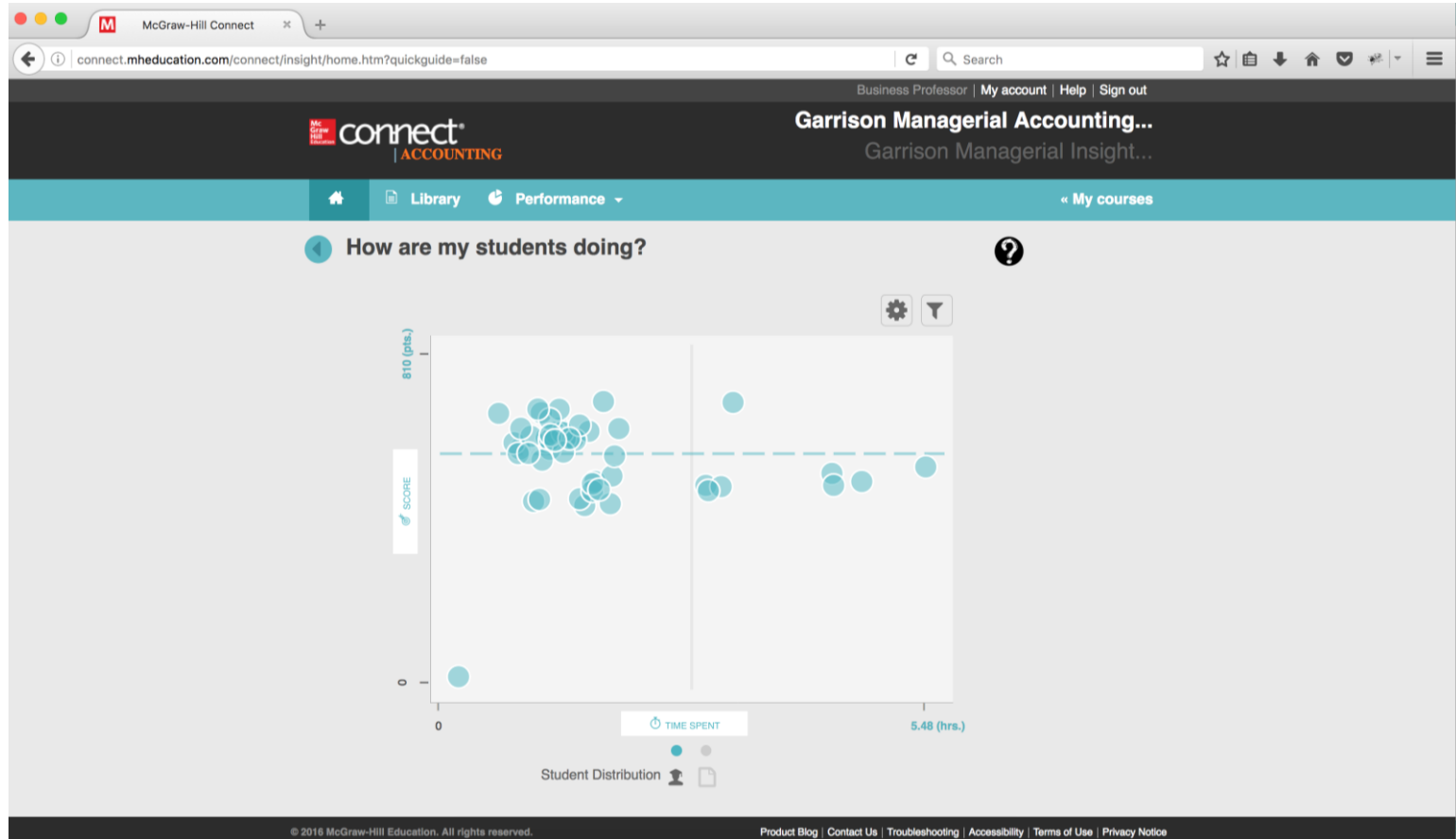
Connect Insights



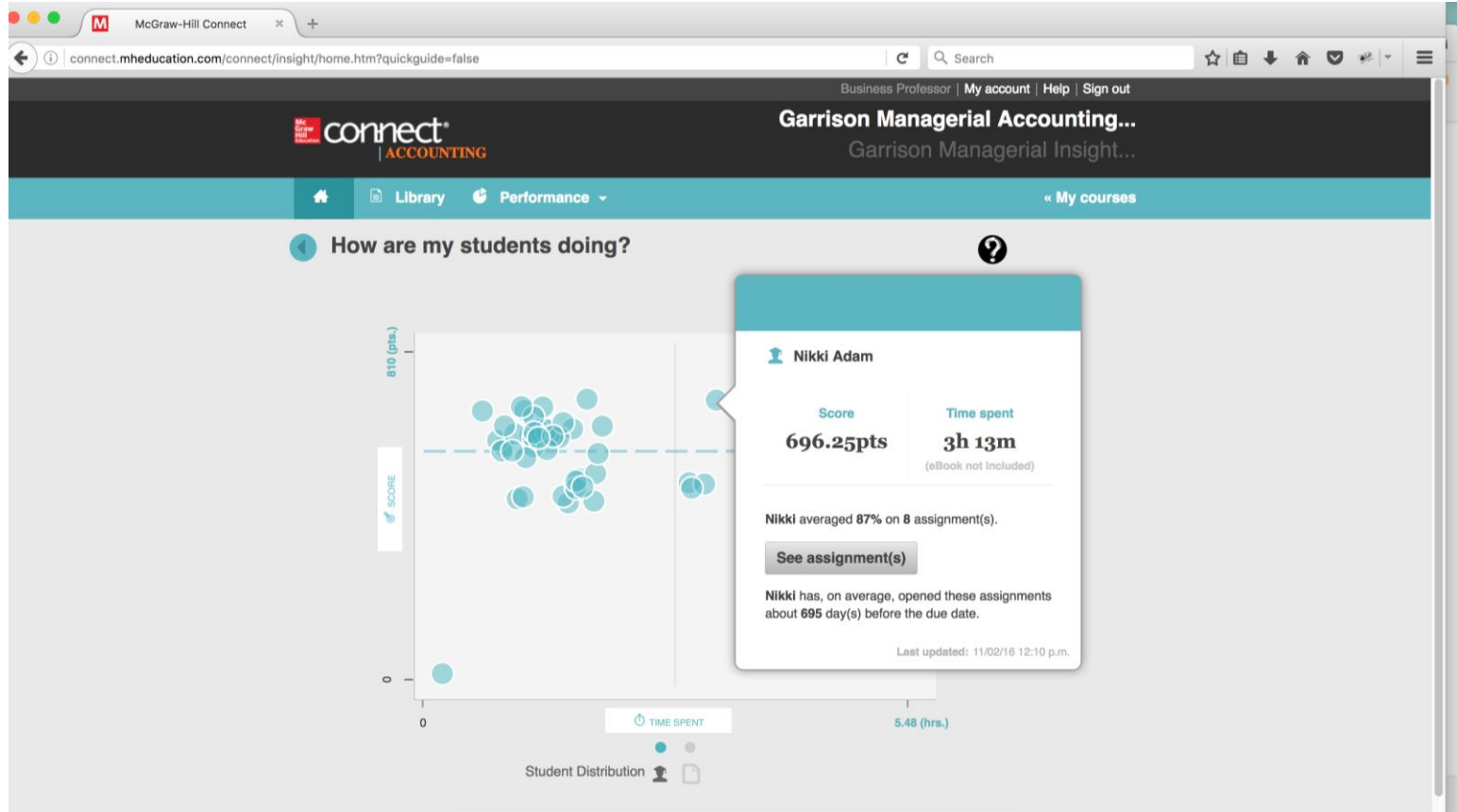
Connect Insights



Connect Insights



Connect Insights



IMS Global Learning Consortium

- Ingest 47 Caliper events
- Domain events
- <https://www.imsglobal.org>

[Membership](#) [Events](#) [Global](#) [Login](#)

**IMS GLOBAL**
Learning Consortium
Better Learning from Better Learning Technology

[INITIATIVES](#) [DEVELOPERS](#) [PRODUCT DIRECTORY](#) [LEARNING IMPACT](#) [LEADERSHIP](#) 

**IMS GLOBAL**
Learning Consortium

IMS Caliper Analytics™ Implementation Guide

Version 1.0 Final
Date Issued: 15 October 2015
Latest version: <http://www.imsglobal.org/caliper>

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Document Name: *IMS Global Caliper Analytics Implementation Guide – Final v1.0*
Revision: 15 October 2015

Example of Caliper Event

```
0000 {
0001   "assessmentItem": {
0002     "xmlns": "http://www.imsglobal.org/xsd/imsqti_v2pl",
0003     "xmlns:xsi": "http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance",
0004     "xsi:schemaLocation": "...",
0005     "identifier": "MACHINE-ITEM04",
0006     "title": "Chopper is a type of?",
0007     "label": "Fill-In Blank Question on a Chopper",
0008     "xml:lang": "en-US",
0009     "timeDependent": "true",
0010     "adaptive": "false",
0011     "responseDeclaration": {
0012       "identifier": "RESPONSE",
0013       "cardinality": "single",
0014       "baseType": "identifier",
0015       "correctResponse": {
0016         "value": "motorcycle"
0017       }
0018     },
0019     "outcomeDeclaration": [
0020       {
0021         "identifier": "SCORE",
0022         "cardinality": "single",
0023         "baseType": "float",
0024         "masteryValue": "0.0",
0025         "defaultValue": {
0026           "value": "0.0"
0027         }
0028       },
0029       {
0030         "identifier": "MAXSCORE",
0031         "cardinality": "single",
0032         "baseType": "float",
0033         "defaultValue": {
0034           "value": "1.0"
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0037     ],
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0039 }
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0003     "xmlns:xsi": "http://www.w3.org/2001/XMLSchema-instance",
0004     "xsi:schemaLocation": "...",
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0006     "title": "Chopper is a type of?",
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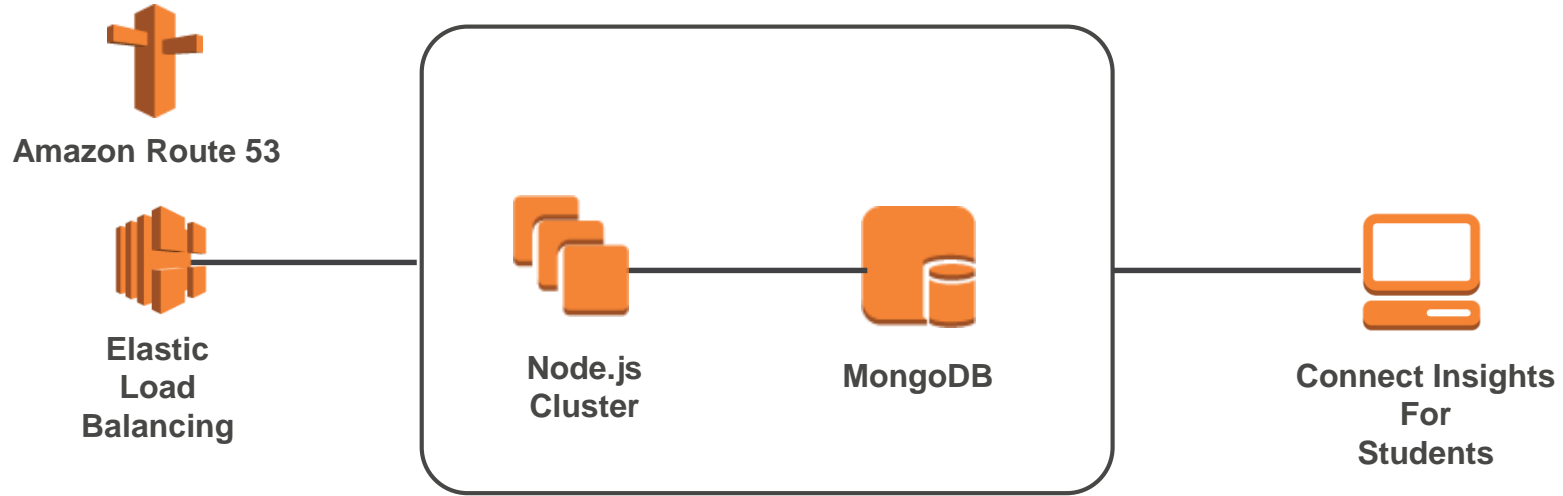
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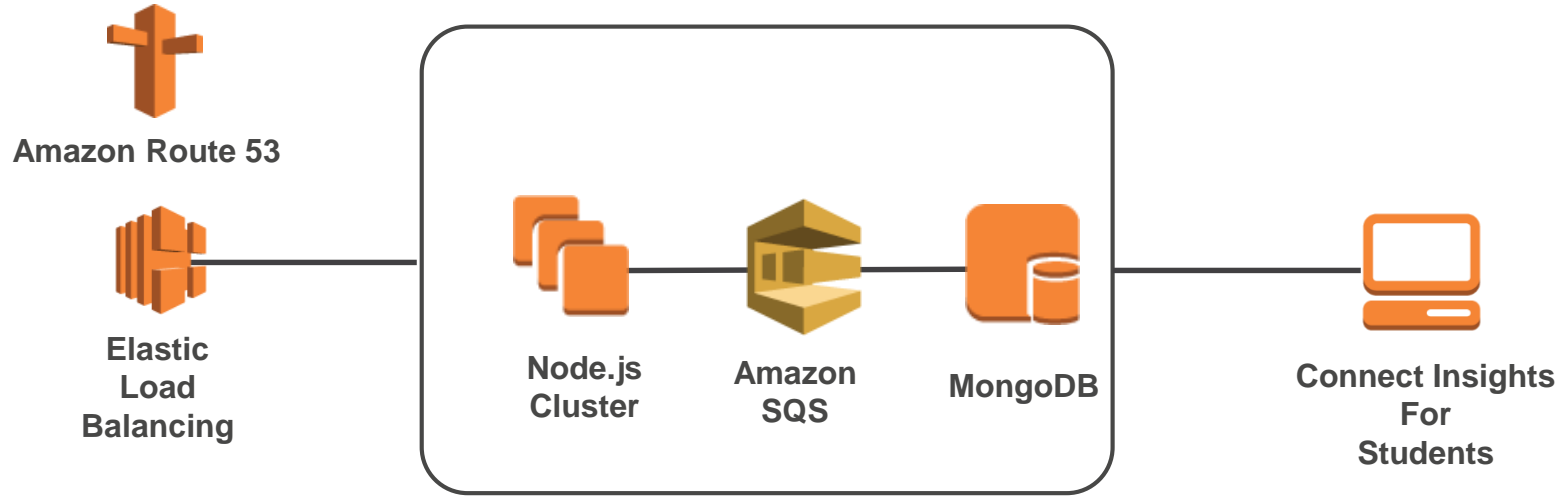
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Evolution of the Learning Analytics Platform



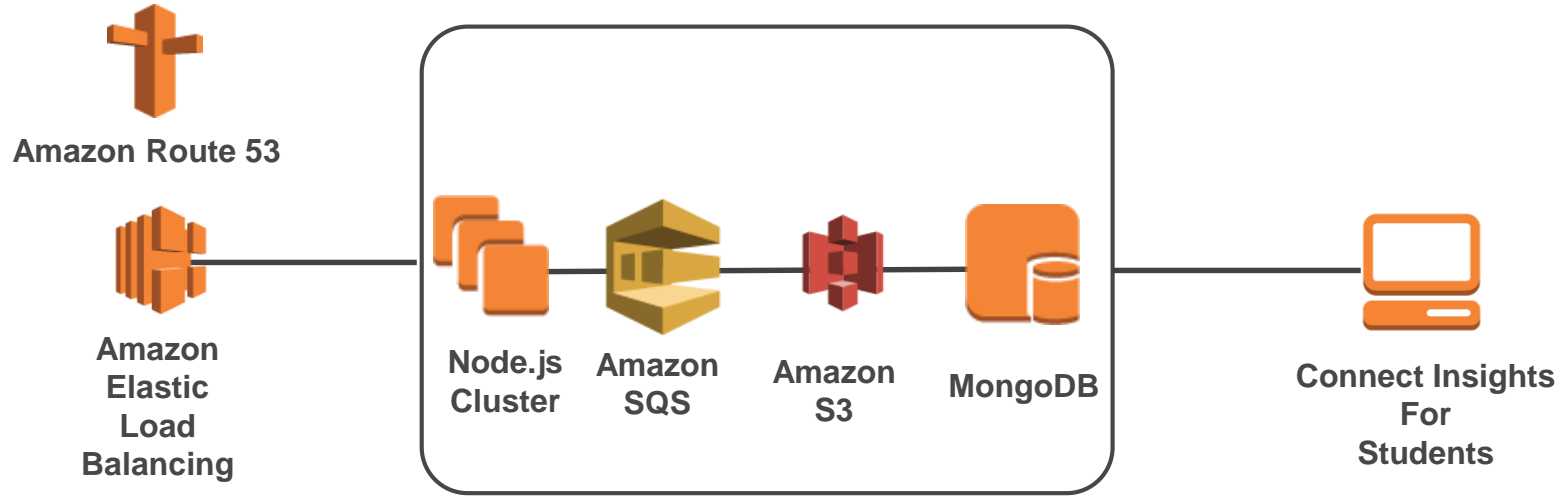
LAP 1.0: Cluster of Node.js servers writing aggregations to MongoDB.

Evolution of the Learning Analytics Platform



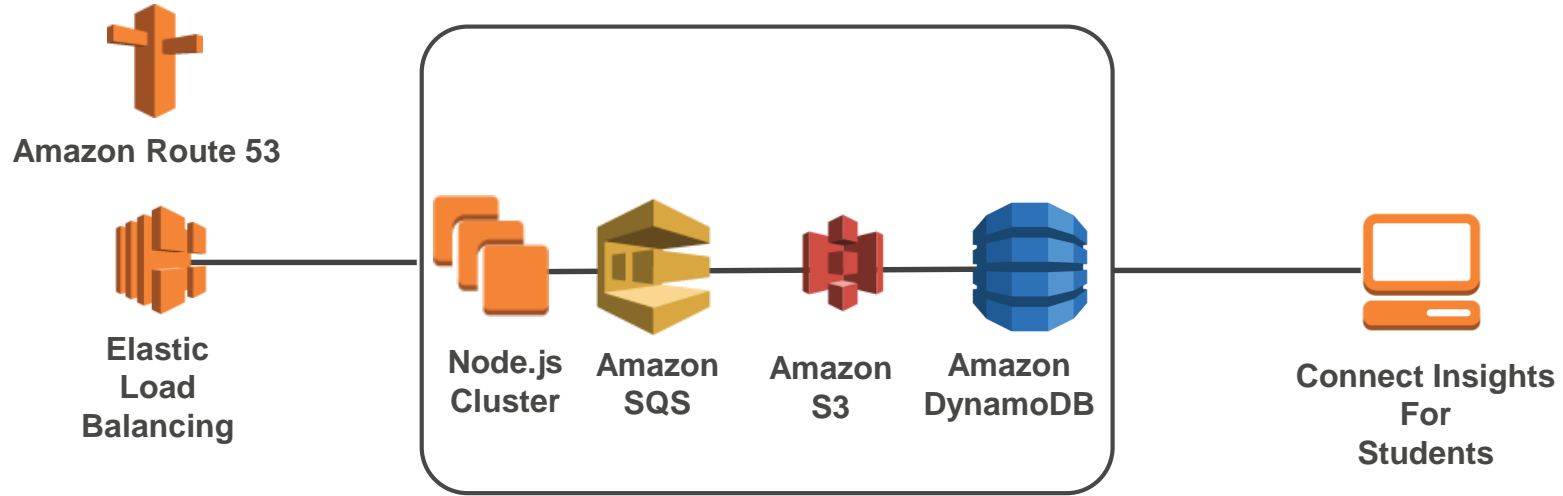
LAP 1.1: Put a queue in the middle.

Evolution of the Learning Analytics Platform



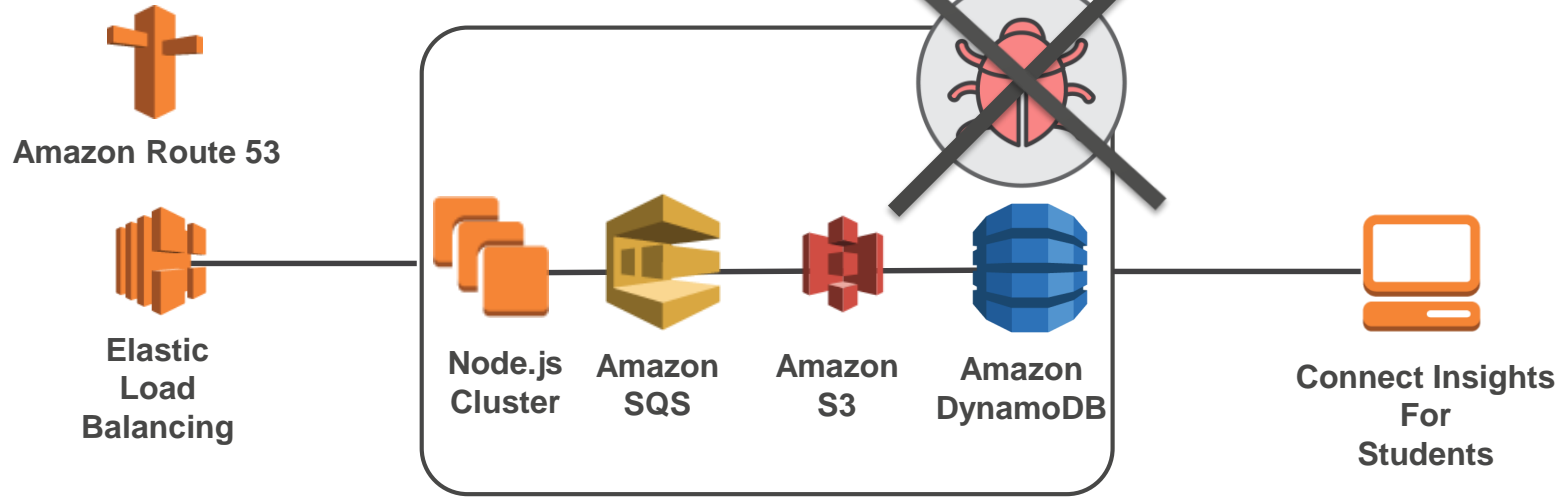
LAP 1.2: Added S3 to pre-aggregate events and then load into MongoDB.

Evolution of the Learning Analytics Platform



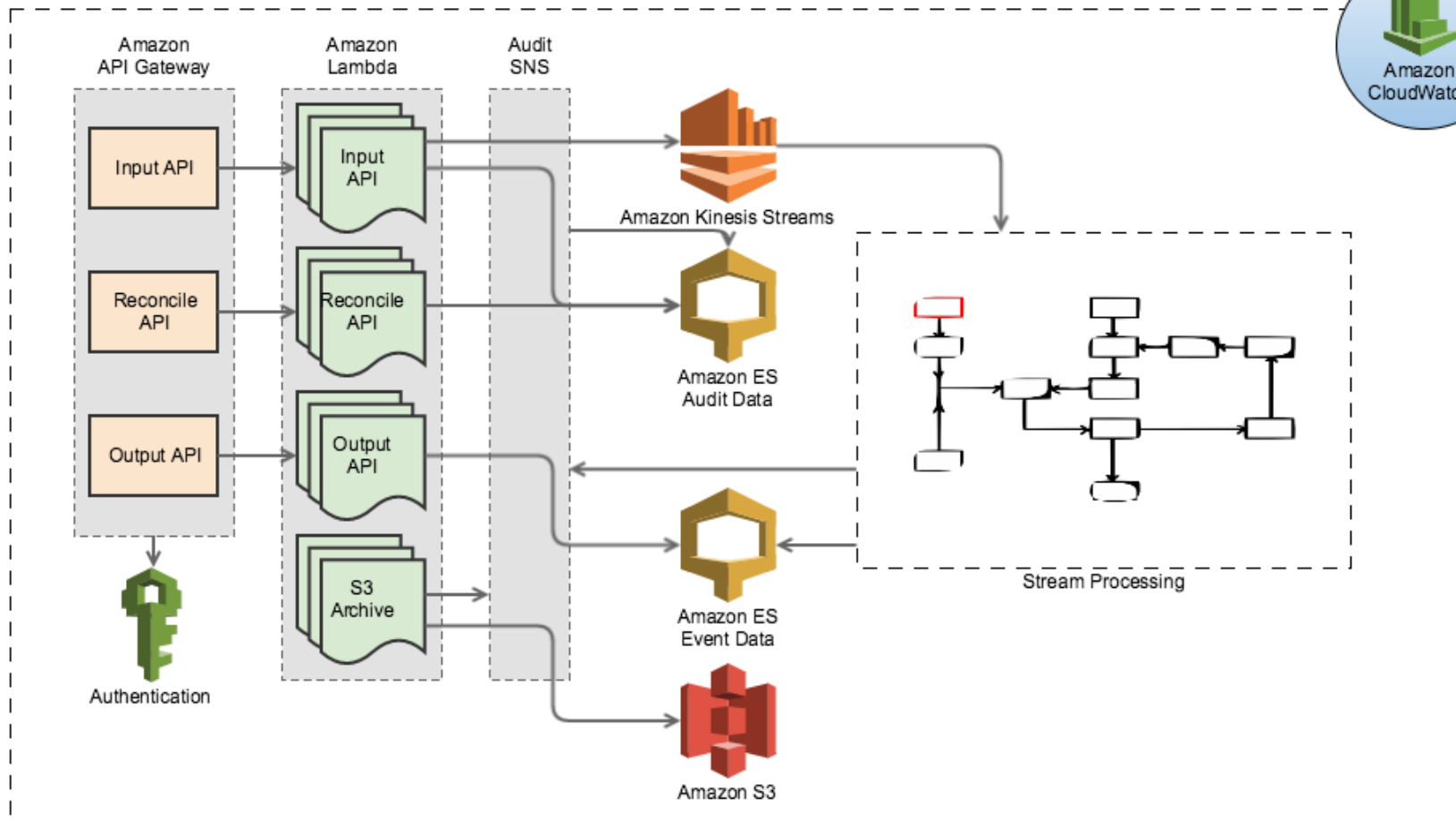
LAP 1.3: Replaced MongoDB with DynamoDB.

Evolution of the Learning Analytics Platform

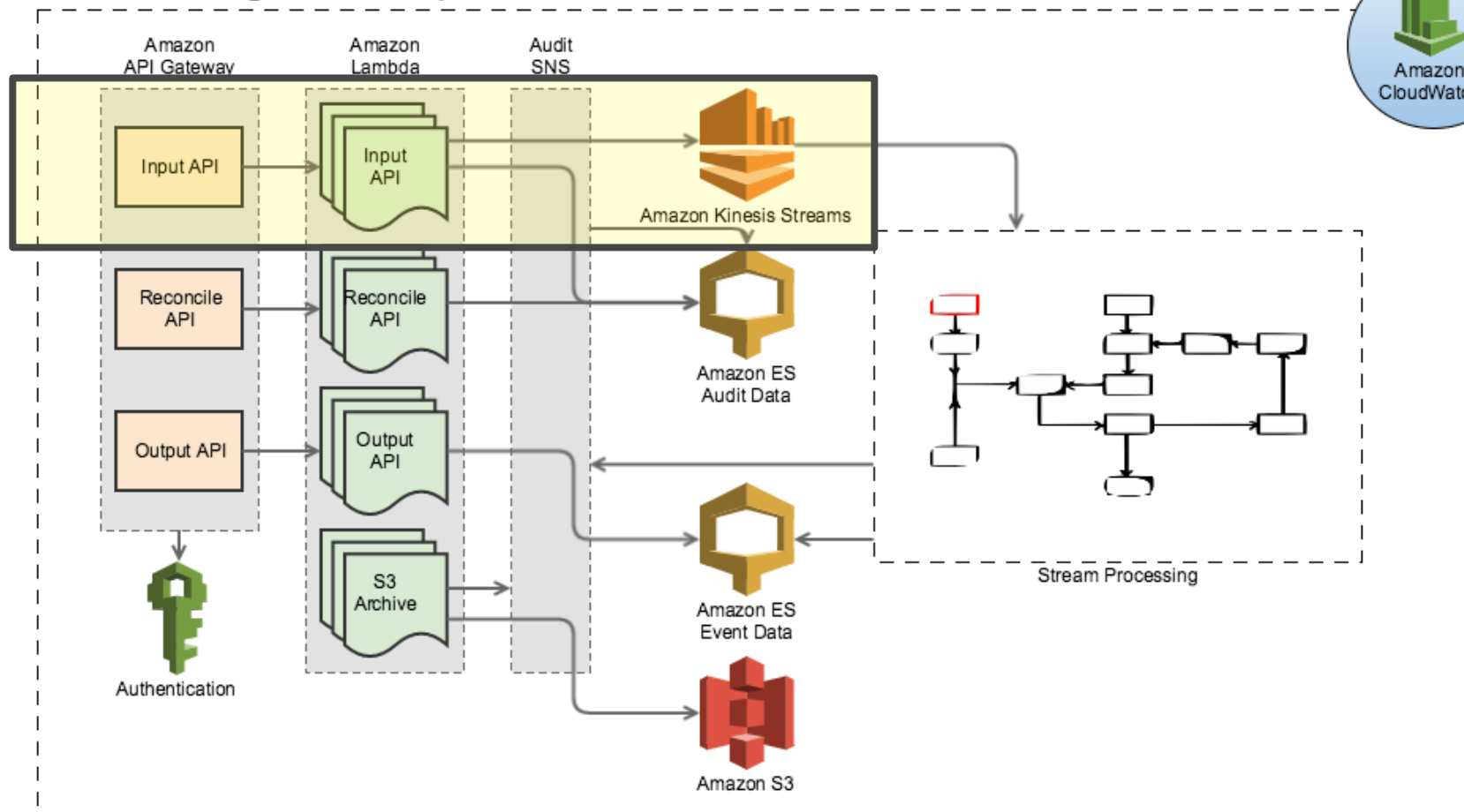


LAP 1.4 & LAP 1.5: Stabilized and fixed bugs.

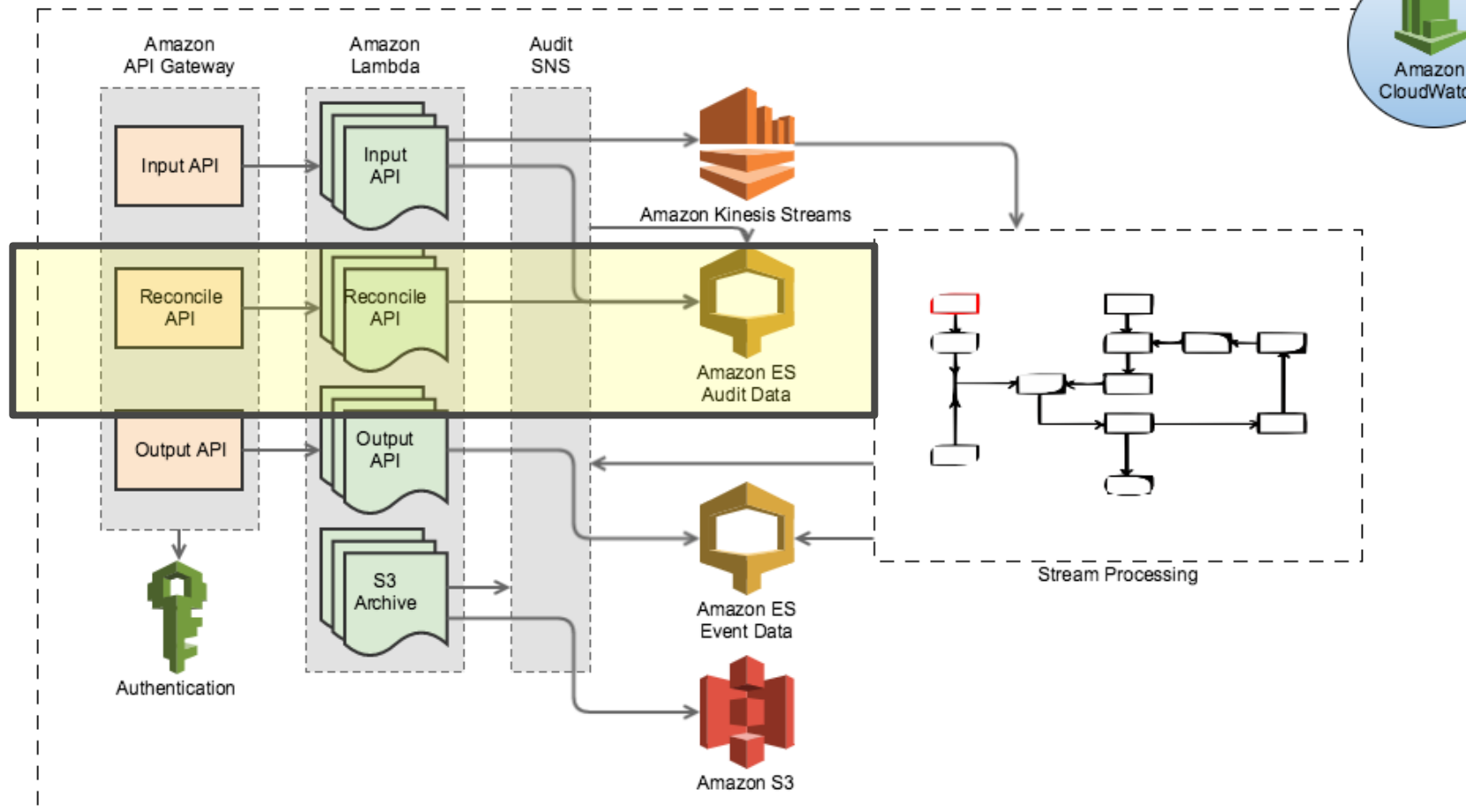
Learning Analytics Platform 2016



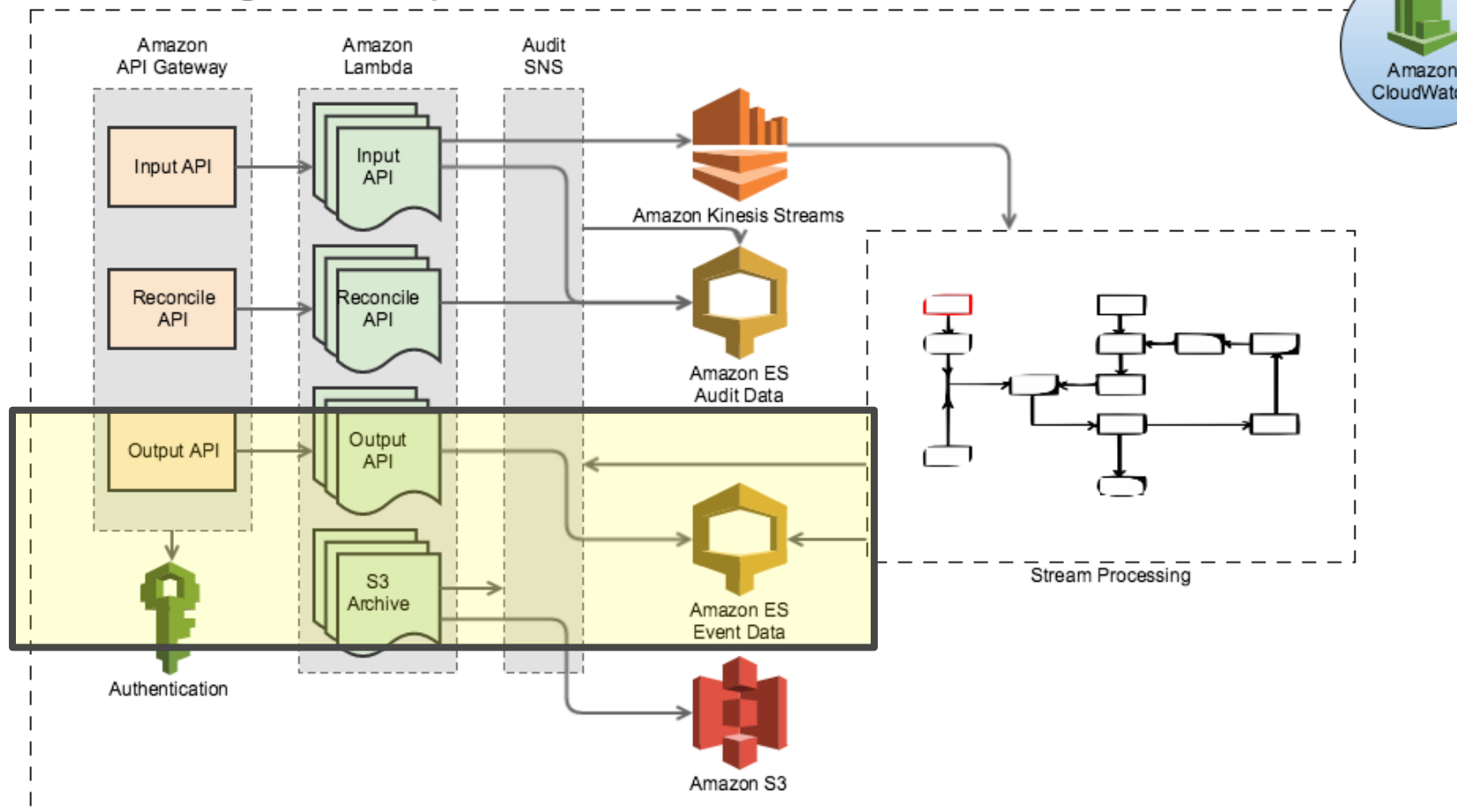
Learning Analytics Platform 2016



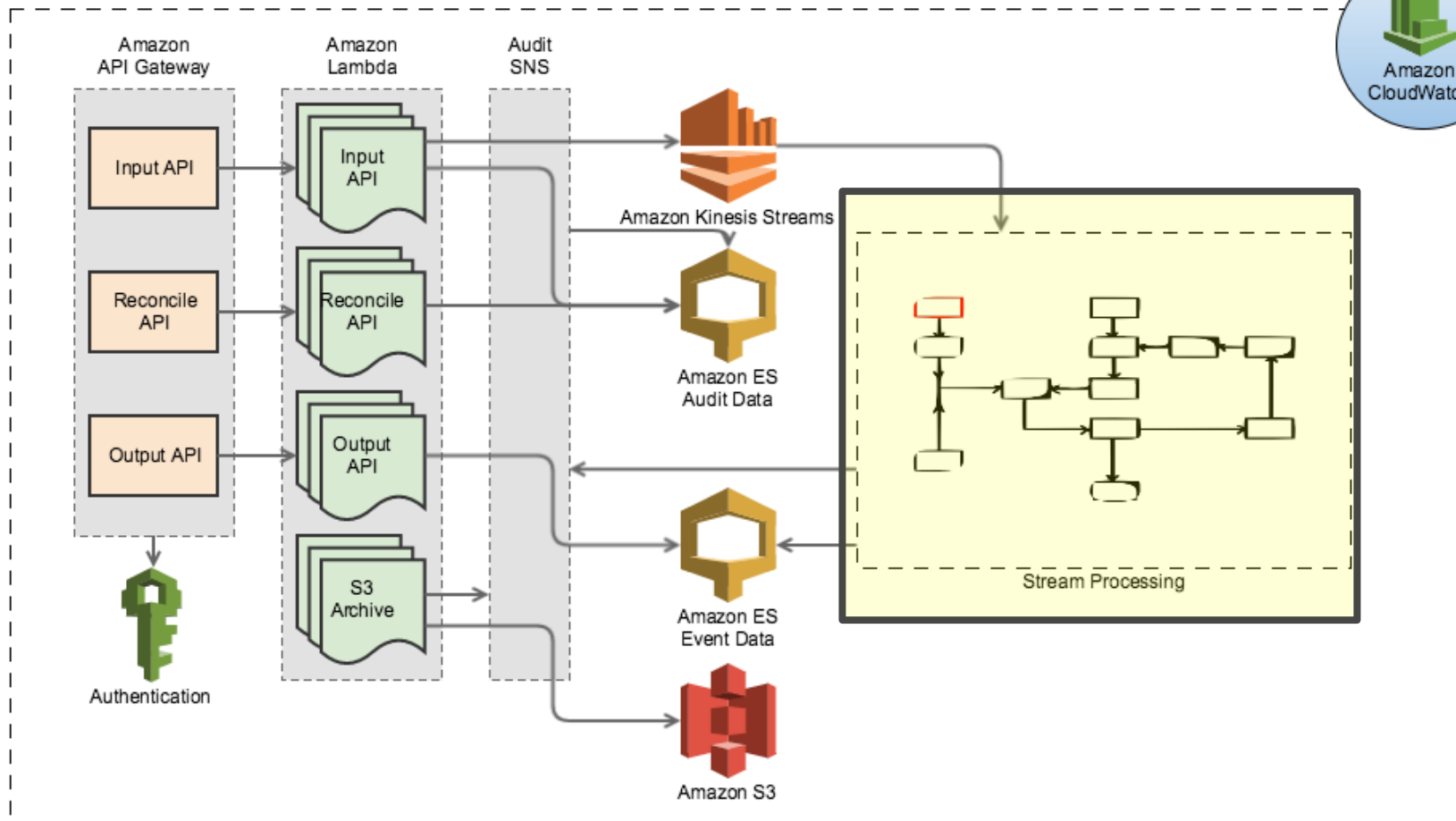
Learning Analytics Platform 2016



Learning Analytics Platform 2016



Learning Analytics Platform 2016



Learning Analytics Platform - Services



Amazon API Gateway



Amazon Simple
Storage Service (S3)



AWS Lambda



Amazon Kinesis
Streams



Amazon Elasticsearch
Service



Amazon Relational
Database Service (RDS)



Amazon DynamoDB

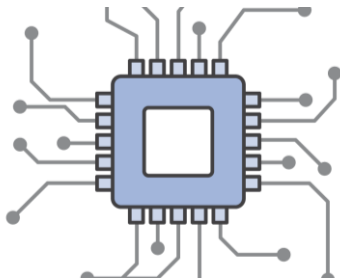
Amazon API Gateway

Fully managed service for hosting HTTPS APIs on top of AWS

- Support for standard HTTP methods
- Authenticate and authorize requests
- Highly scalable parallel processing
- DDoS protection and throttling for back-end systems
- Support for standard HTTP methods
- Swagger Import/Export
- Custom domains



Benefits of Amazon API Gateway



Create a unified
API frontend for
multiple micro-
services



DDoS protection
and throttling for
your backend

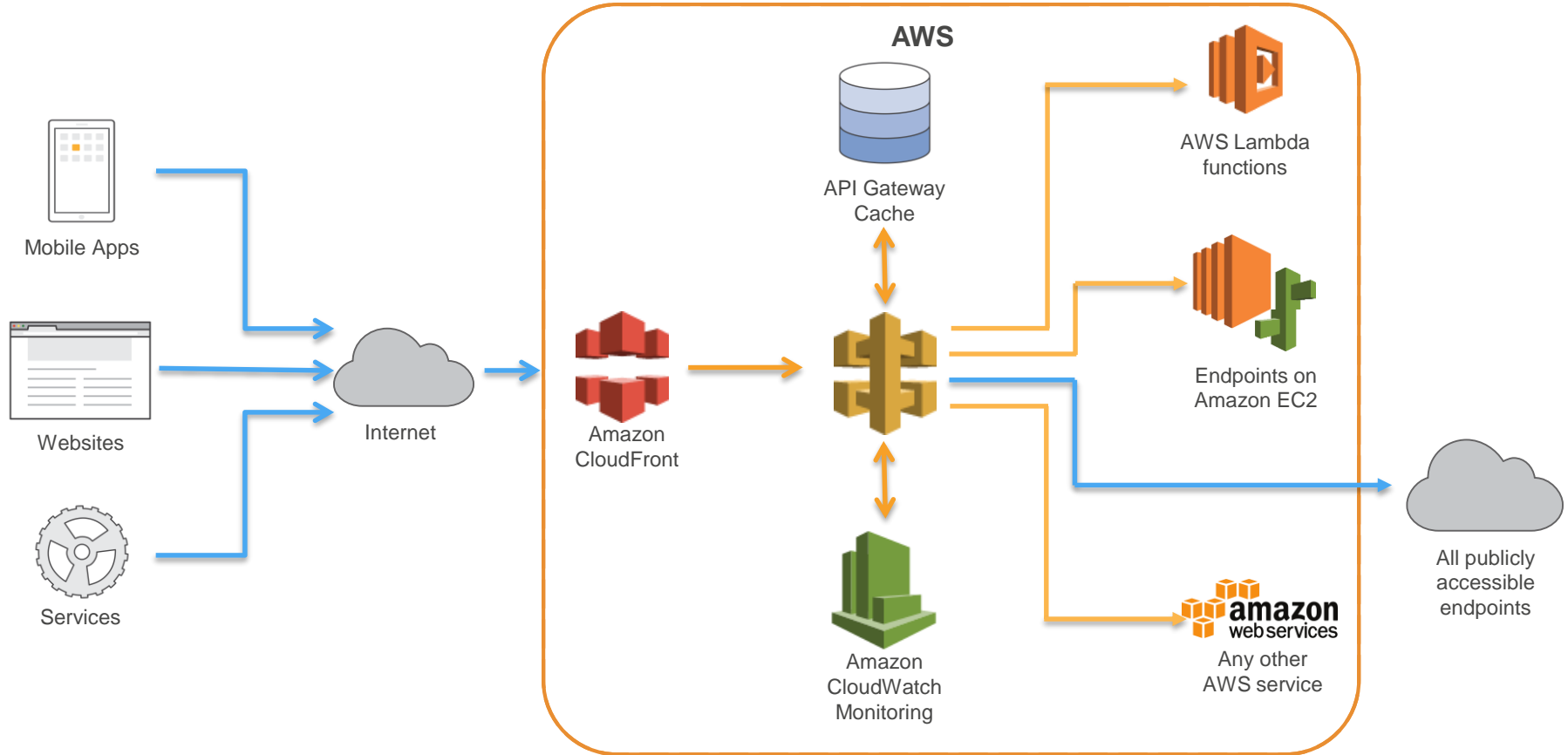


Authenticate and
authorize
requests to a
backend



Throttle, meter,
and monetize API
usage by 3rd
party developers

API Gateway integrations



AWS Lambda

Serverless, event-driven compute service

- Runs your function code without you managing or scaling servers
- Provides an API to trigger the execution of your function
- Ensures function is executed when triggered, in parallel, regardless of scale
- Provides additional capabilities for your function (logging, monitoring).

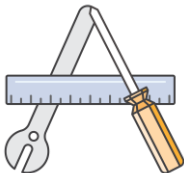


AWS Lambda Overview

Lambda functions: Stateless, trigger-based code execution

1

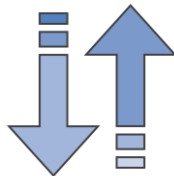
No Infrastructure to manage



Focus on business logic, not infrastructure. You upload code; AWS Lambda handles everything else.

2

**High performance at any scale;
Cost-effective and efficient**



Pay only for what you use: Lambda automatically matches capacity to your request rate. Purchase compute in 100ms increments.

3

Bring Your Own Code



Run code in a choice of standard languages. Use threads, processes, files, and shell scripts normally.



How Lambda works

Invoked in response to events

- Changes in data
- Changes in state



S3 event notifications



DynamoDB Streams



Amazon Kinesis events



SNS events



CloudTrail events

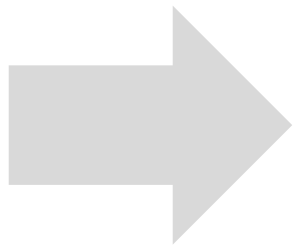


Cognito events

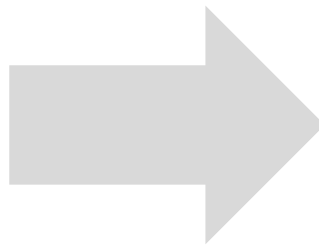


Custom events

Author in familiar language
using any libraries; Execute
only when needed,
automatic scale



“Lambda
functions”



Access any service,
including your own

Any custom



Any AWS



Such as...

SNS DynamoDB Lambda



Amazon Redshift



Amazon Kinesis



S3



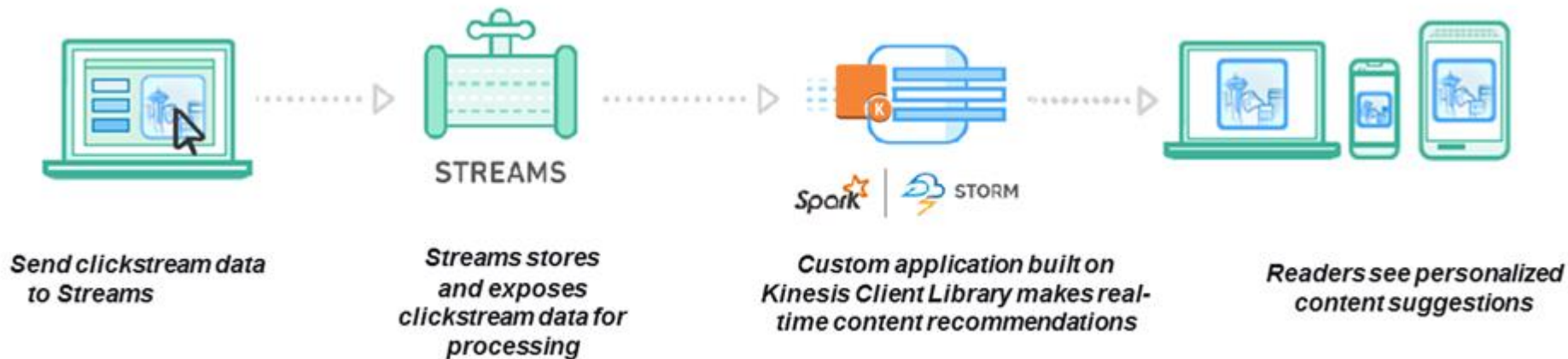
Amazon Kinesis Streams

Fully managed service for real-time processing of high-volume, streaming data

- Processes data in real-time
- Highly scalable parallel processing
- Open source libraries for sending data to and reading data from a stream
- Synchronously replicates your data across 3 facilities
- Integrated with many AWS & third party technologies
- Supports SSL and automatic encryption of data once it is uploaded



Amazon Kinesis Streams



Easy administration: Simply create a new stream and set the desired level of capacity with shards. Scale to match your data throughput rate and volume.

Build real-time applications: Perform continual processing on streaming big data using Amazon Kinesis Client Library (KCL), Apache Spark/Storm, AWS Lambda, and more.

Low cost: Cost-efficient for workloads of any scale.

Sending & reading data from Amazon Kinesis Streams

Sending

AWS SDK



Amazon Kinesis
Producer Library



Amazon Kinesis
Agent



AWS Mobile SDK



LOG4J



Flume



Fluentd



Consuming

Get* APIs



Amazon Kinesis Client
Library



+
Connector Library
Lambda



Amazon EMR



Analytics



Apache
Storm



Apache
Spark



Elasticsearch

elasticsearch.

A powerful, real-time, distributed, open-source search and analytics engine:

- Built on top of Apache Lucene
- Schema-free
- Developer-friendly RESTful API

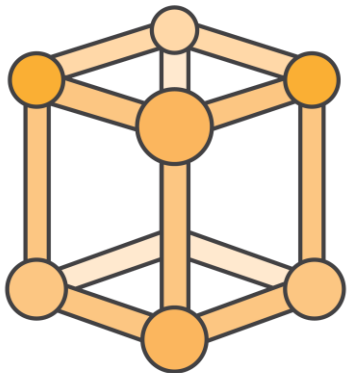
Amazon Elasticsearch Service

Managed service that makes it easy to set up, operate, and scale Elasticsearch clusters in the cloud

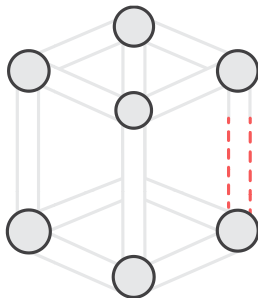
- Built-in Kibana and Logstash plugin
- Modify clusters with no downtime
- Integrated with many AWS services like CloudWatch Logs, Lambda, DynamoDB, etc.
- Supports the ES API and is a drop in replacement for your existing Elasticsearch clusters
- Only pay for what you use



Ease of operation



Easy cluster
creation and
configuration
management



Self-healing
clusters

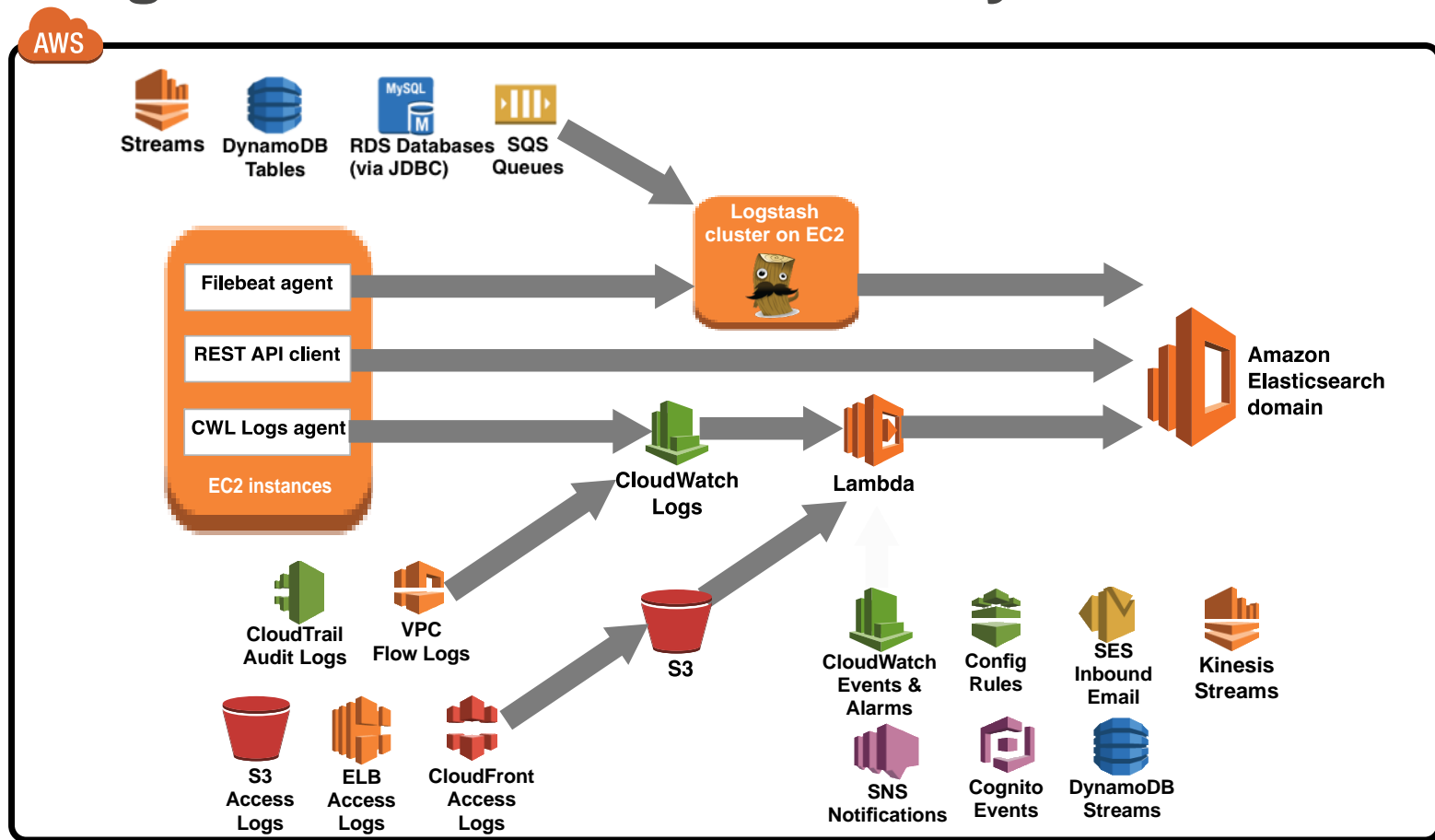


High
availability



Data
durability

Integration with the AWS ecosystem

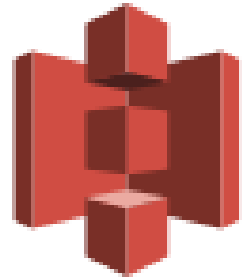


Arrow direction indicates general direction of data flow

Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3)

Secure, durable, low cost, highly-scalable object storage

- Easy to scale
- Designed for 99.999999999% durability and up to 99.99% availability of objects over a given year
- Cost-effective, pay only for the storage you actually use
- Lifecycle policies can move objects to long term storage or lower cost S3 Standard-IA
- Integrated with many AWS & third party technologies
- Supports SSL and automatic encryption of data once it is uploaded



Amazon Simple Storage Service (S3) for Big Data

- Scalable

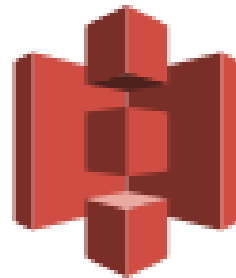
- Virtually unlimited number of objects
- Very high bandwidth – no aggregate throughput limit

- Cost-Effective

- No need to run compute clusters for storage (unlike HDFS)
- Can run transient Hadoop clusters & Amazon EC2 Spot Instances
- Tiered storage (Standard, IA, Amazon Glacier) via life-cycle policy

- Flexible Access

- Direct access by big data frameworks (Spark, Hive, Presto)
- Shared access: Multiple (Spark, Hive, Presto) clusters can use the same data



Amazon Relational Database Service

Fully managed relational database service

- Simple and fast to deploy
- Fully managed = low admin
- Fast, predictable performance
- Easy to scale
- Cost-effective
- Open source engines: MySQL, PostgreSQL, MariaDB
- Commercial engines: Oracle, SQLServer
- MySQL compatible engine: Aurora



Amazon
RDS

RDS PostgreSQL



Amazon RDS makes it easy to set up, operate, and scale PostgreSQL deployments in the cloud. With Amazon RDS, you can deploy scalable PostgreSQL databases in minutes with cost-efficient and resizable hardware capacity.

Key Features

Read Replicas (Same region and cross region)

High Availability with Multi-AZ

VPC and private subnet groups

Geospatial capabilities

Syntactically similar to Oracle



Amazon
RDS

Amazon DynamoDB

Non-Relational Managed NoSQL Database Service

- Schemaless data model
- Consistent, low-latency performance (single digit ms)
- Predictable provisioned throughput
- Seamless scalability
- Practically no storage limits
- High durability and availability (replication between 3 facilities)
- Easy administration – we scale for you!
- Low cost
- Cost modelling on throughput and size

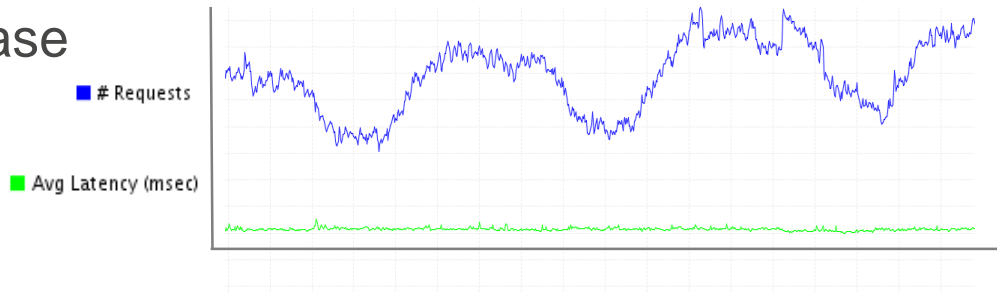
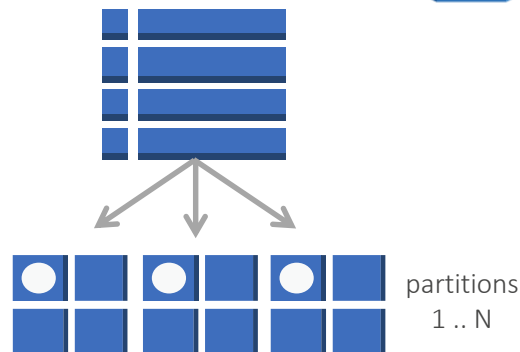


DynamoDB

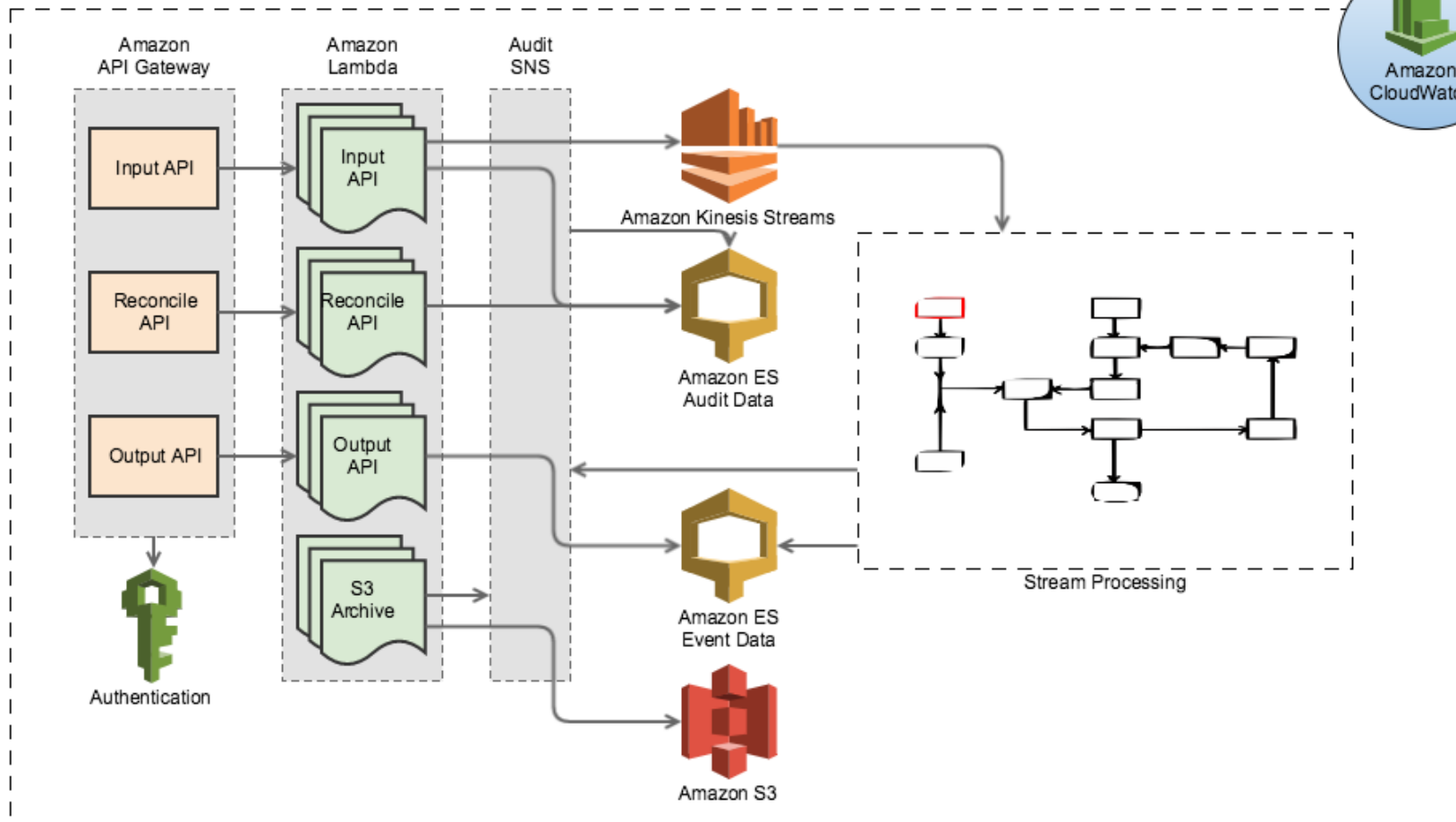
Amazon DynamoDB Scalability



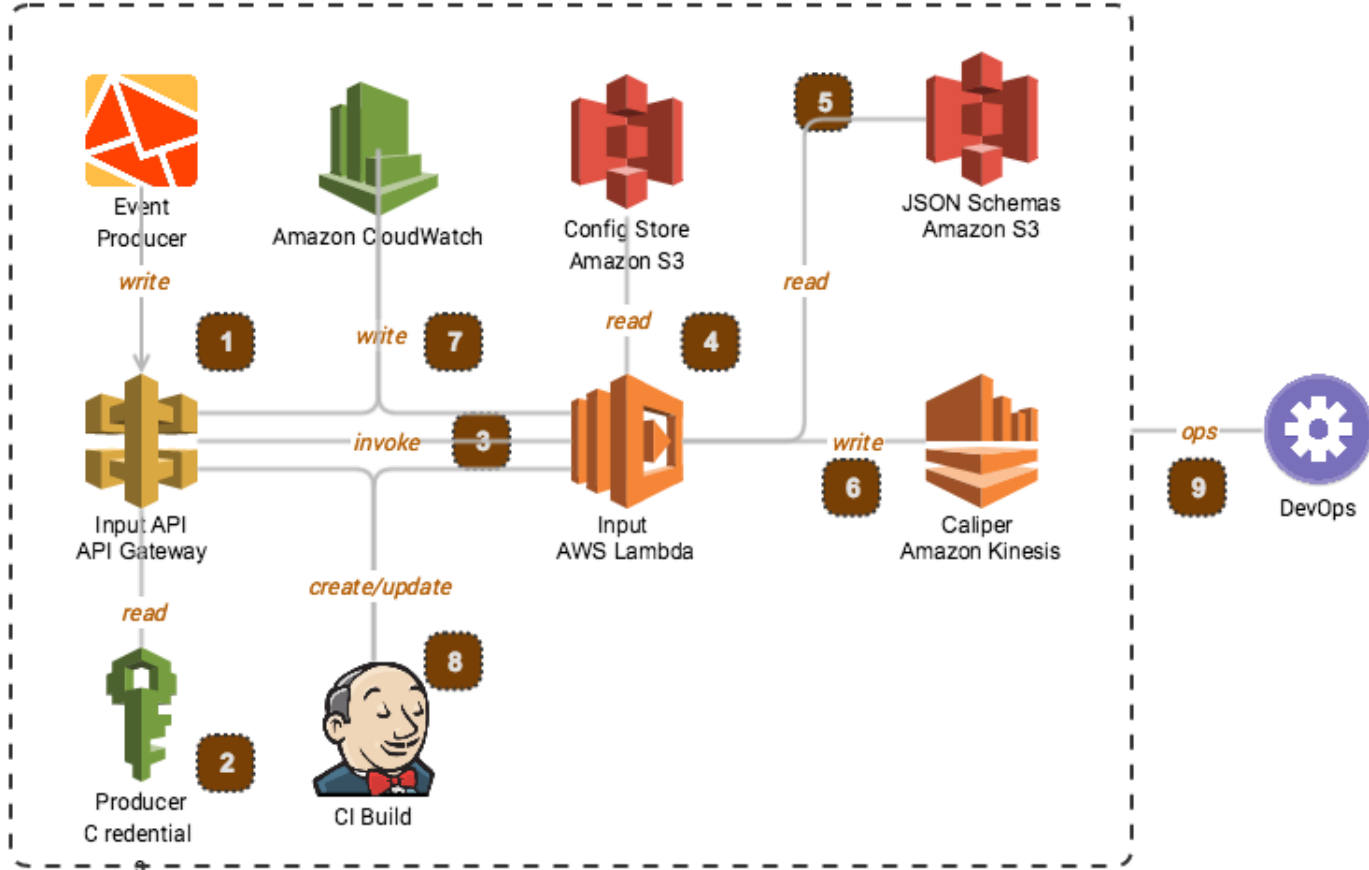
- Virtually no limit in throughput (reads/writes per second)
- Virtually no limit in storage
- DynamoDB automatically partitions data
- Auto-partitioning occurs when:
 - Data set growth
 - Provisioned capacity increase



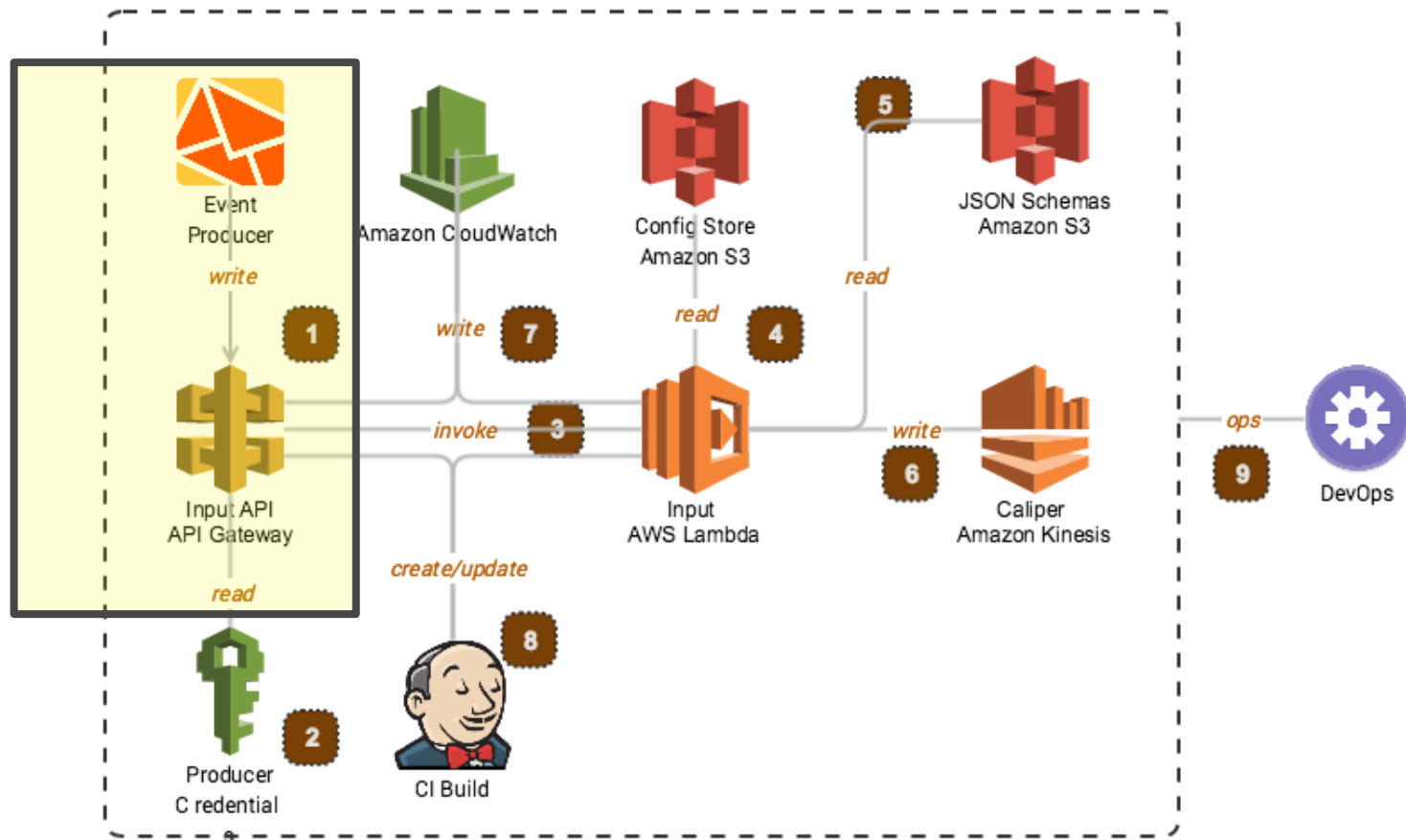
Learning Analytics Platform 2016



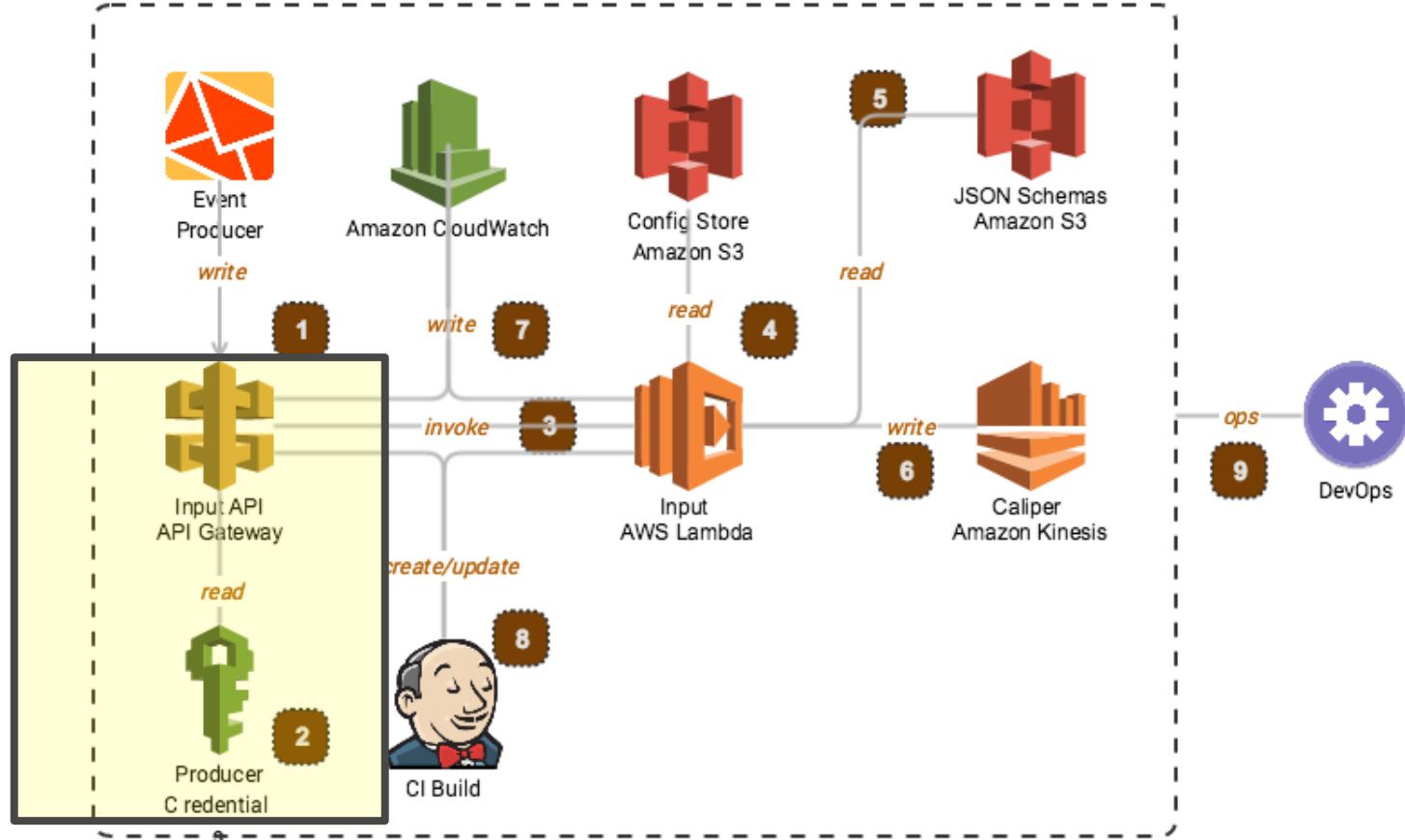
Input API



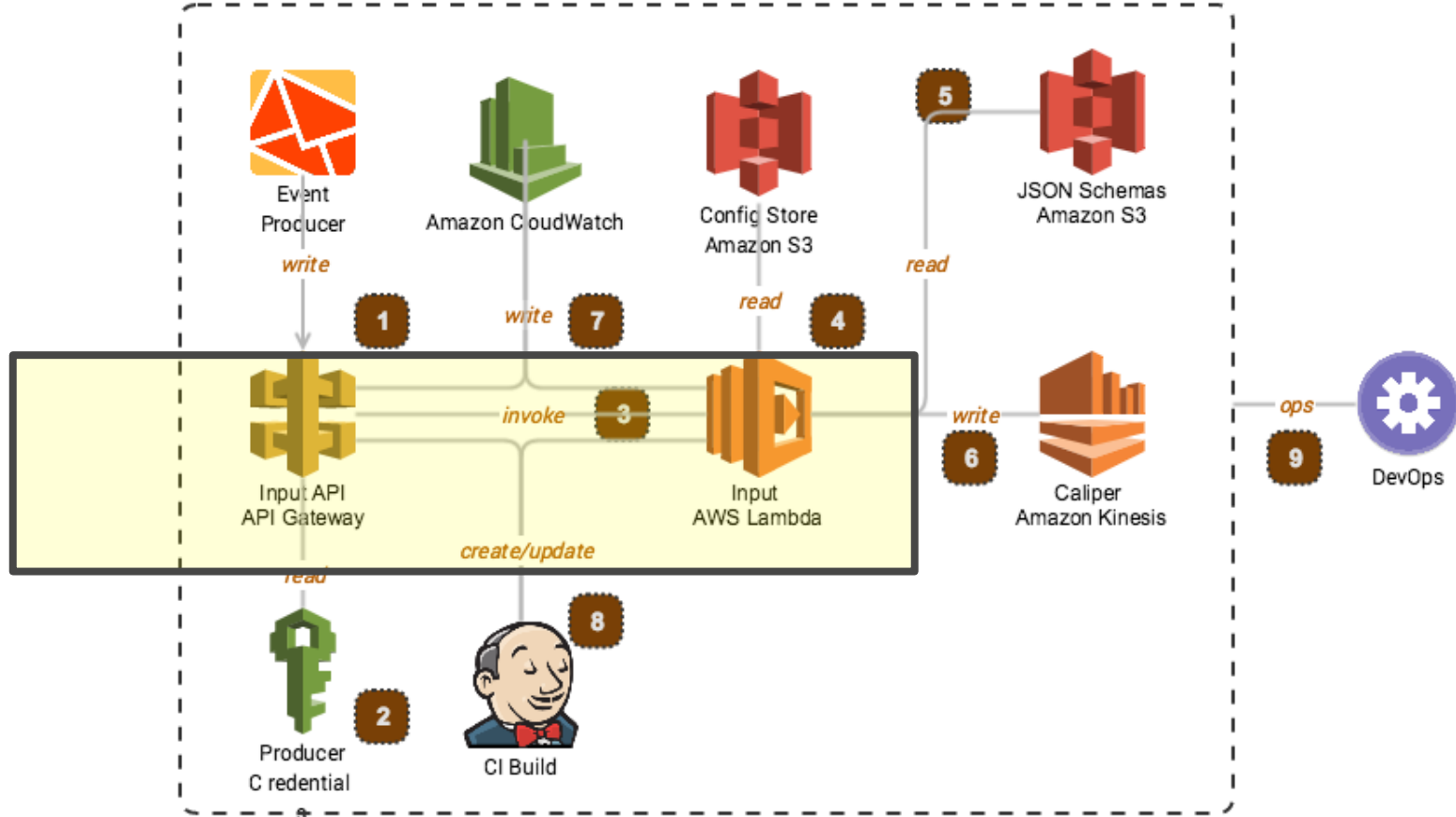
Input API



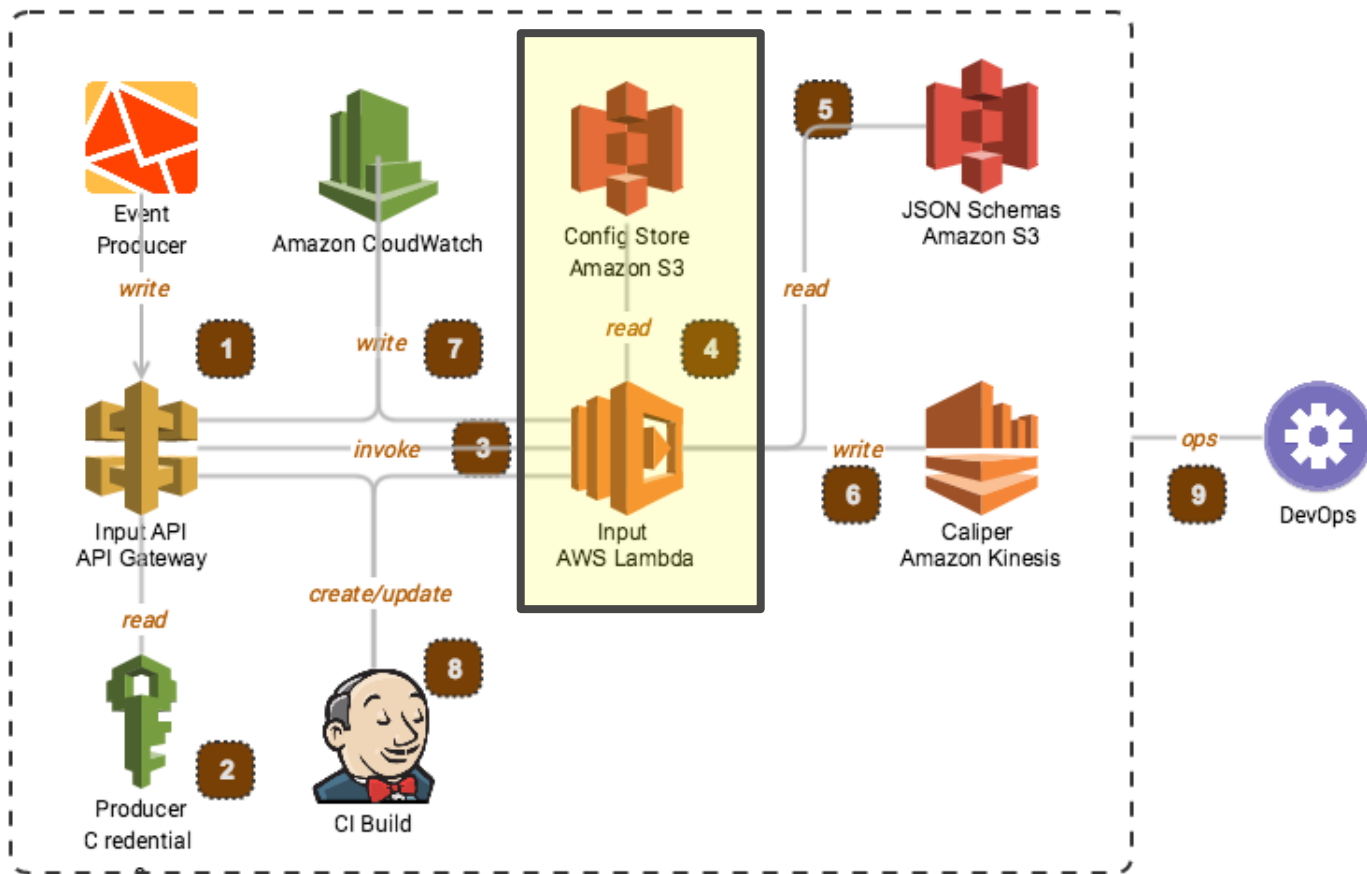
Input API



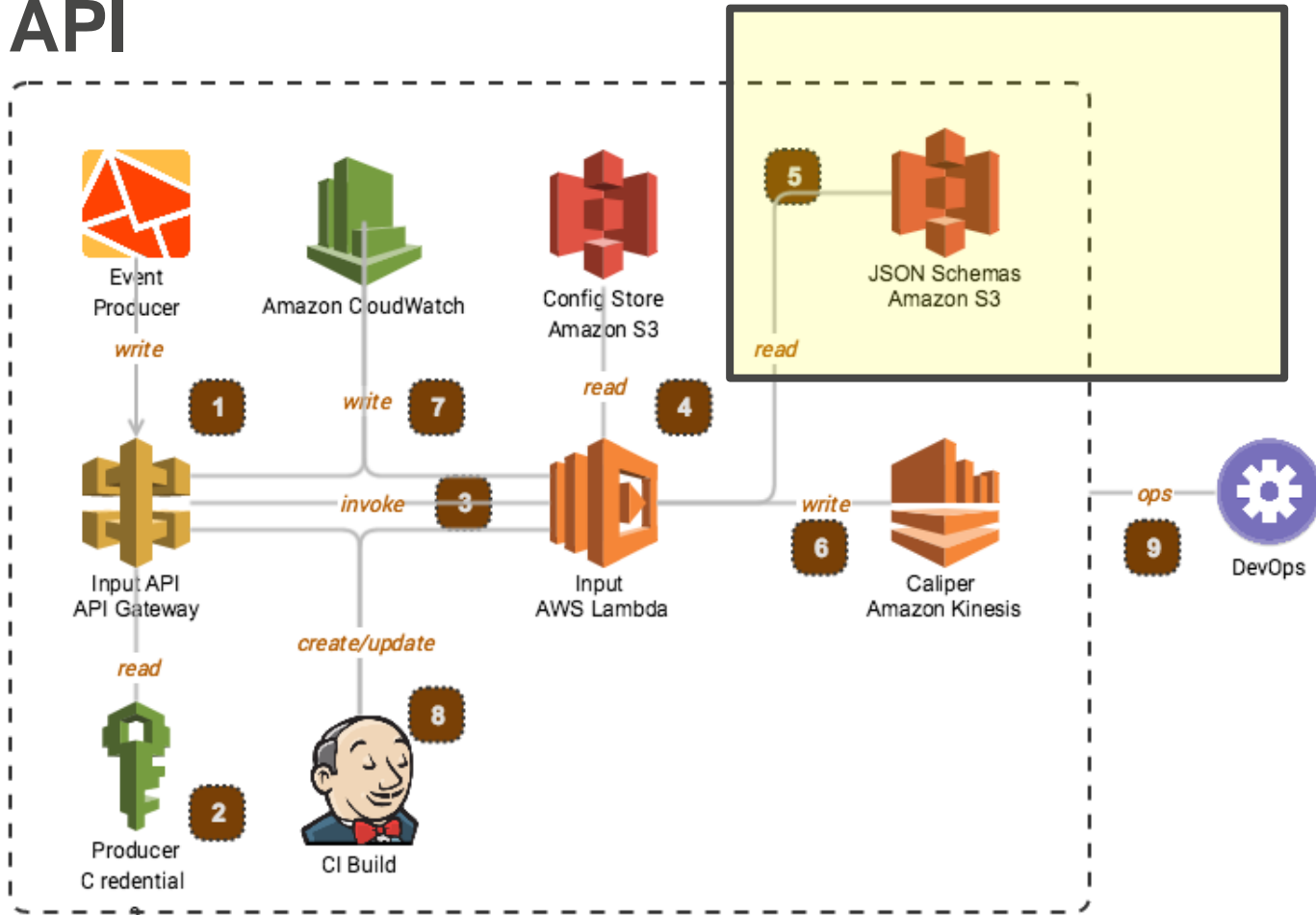
Input API



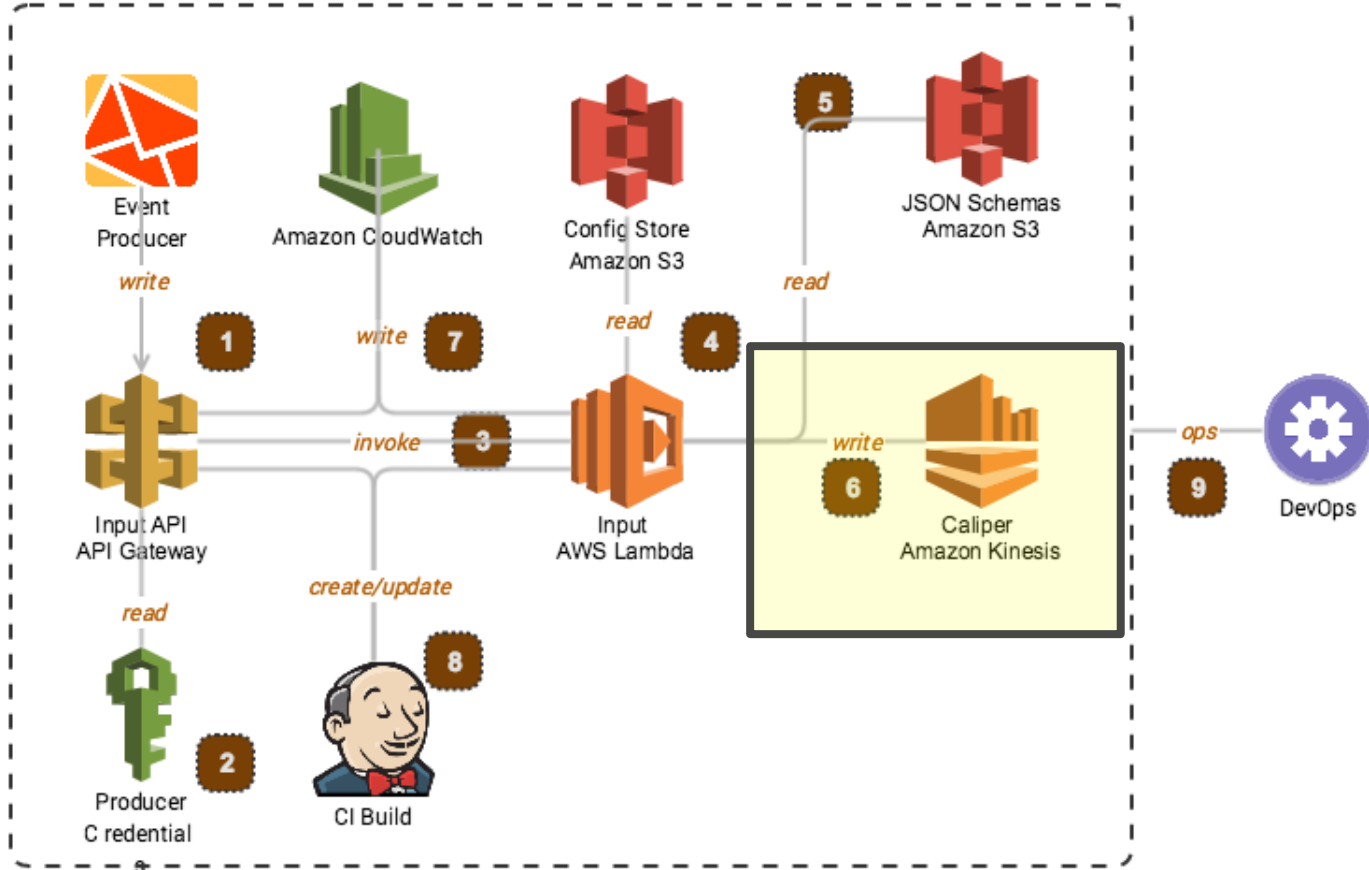
Input API



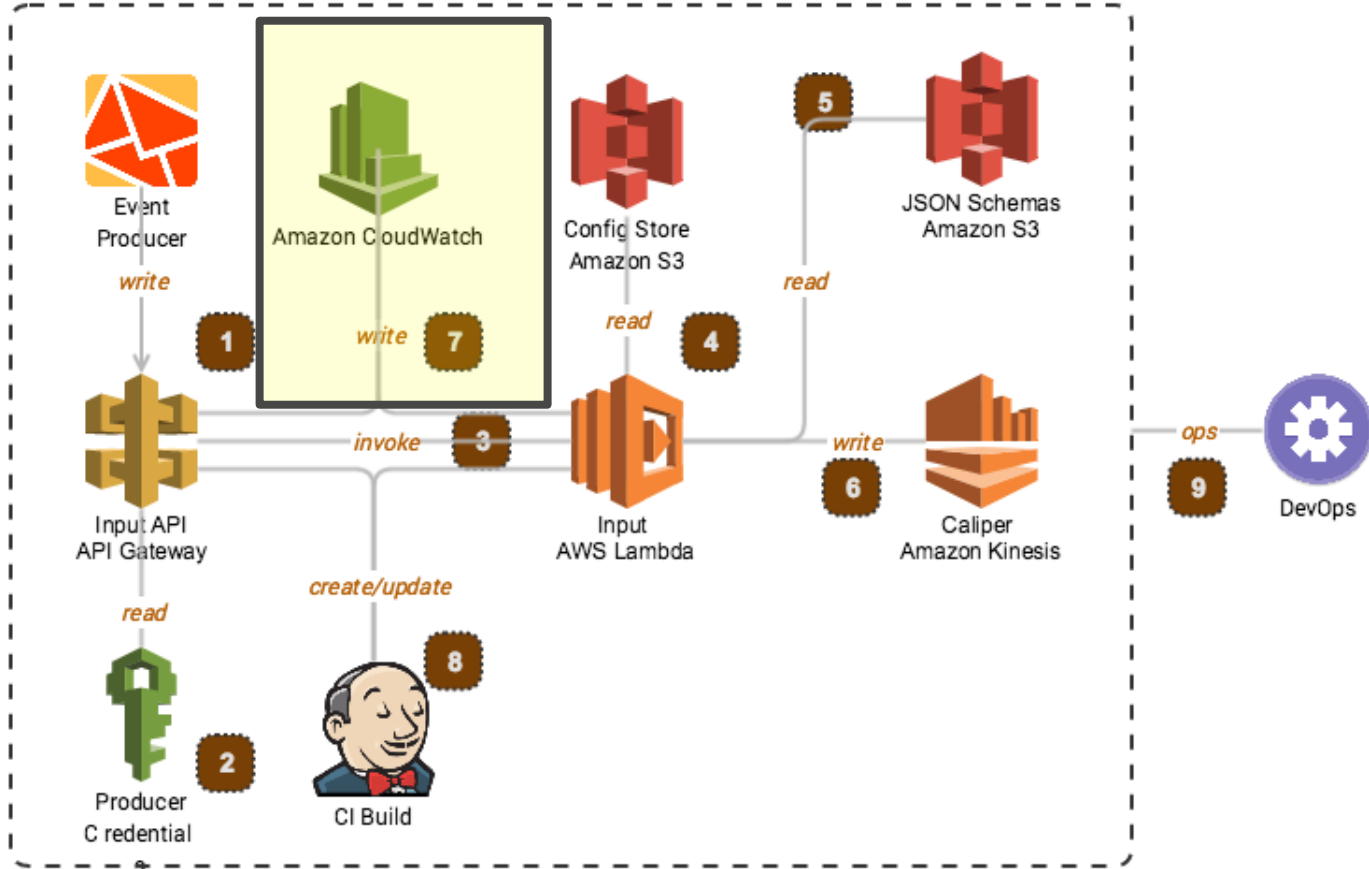
Input API



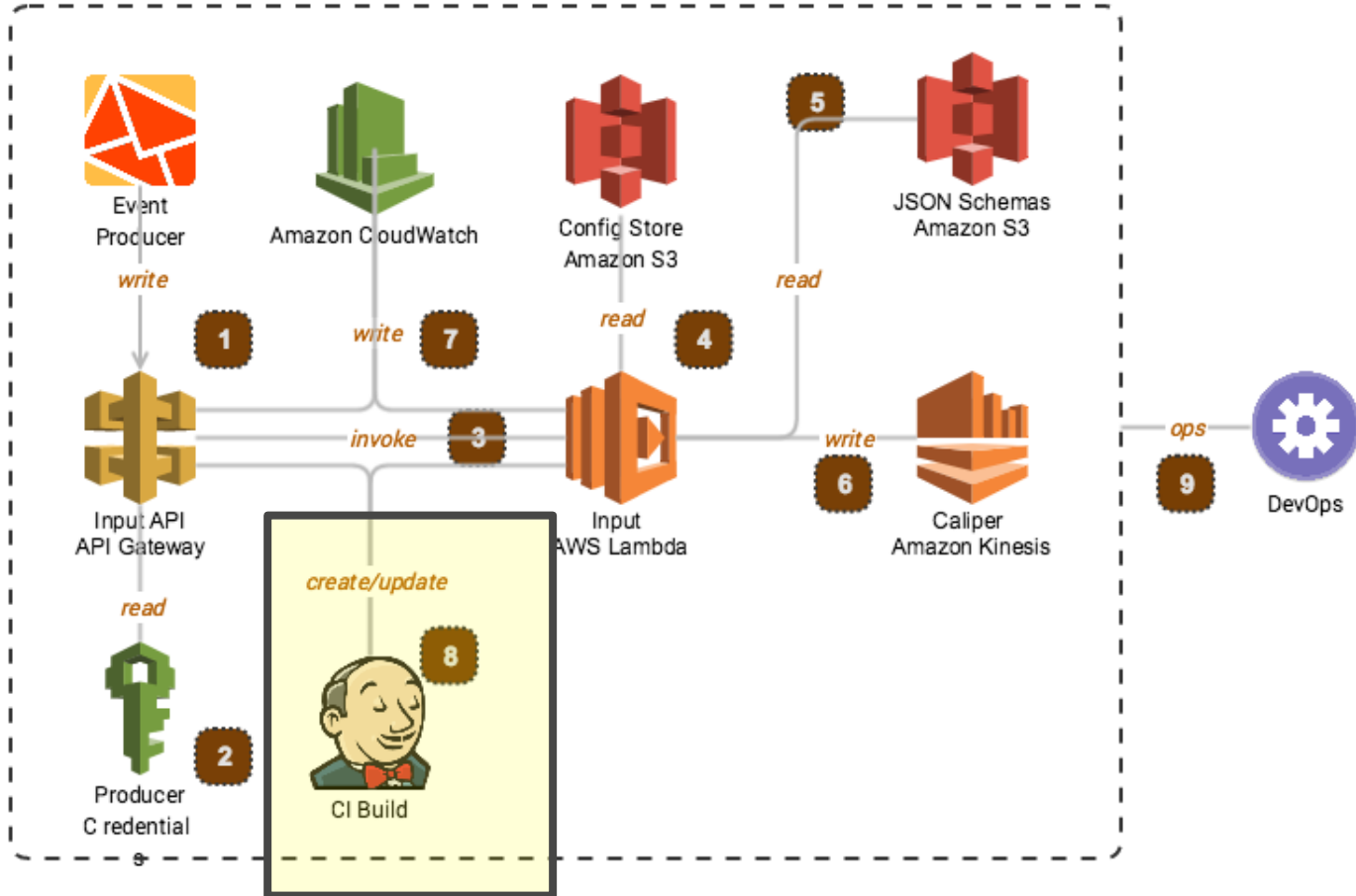
Input API



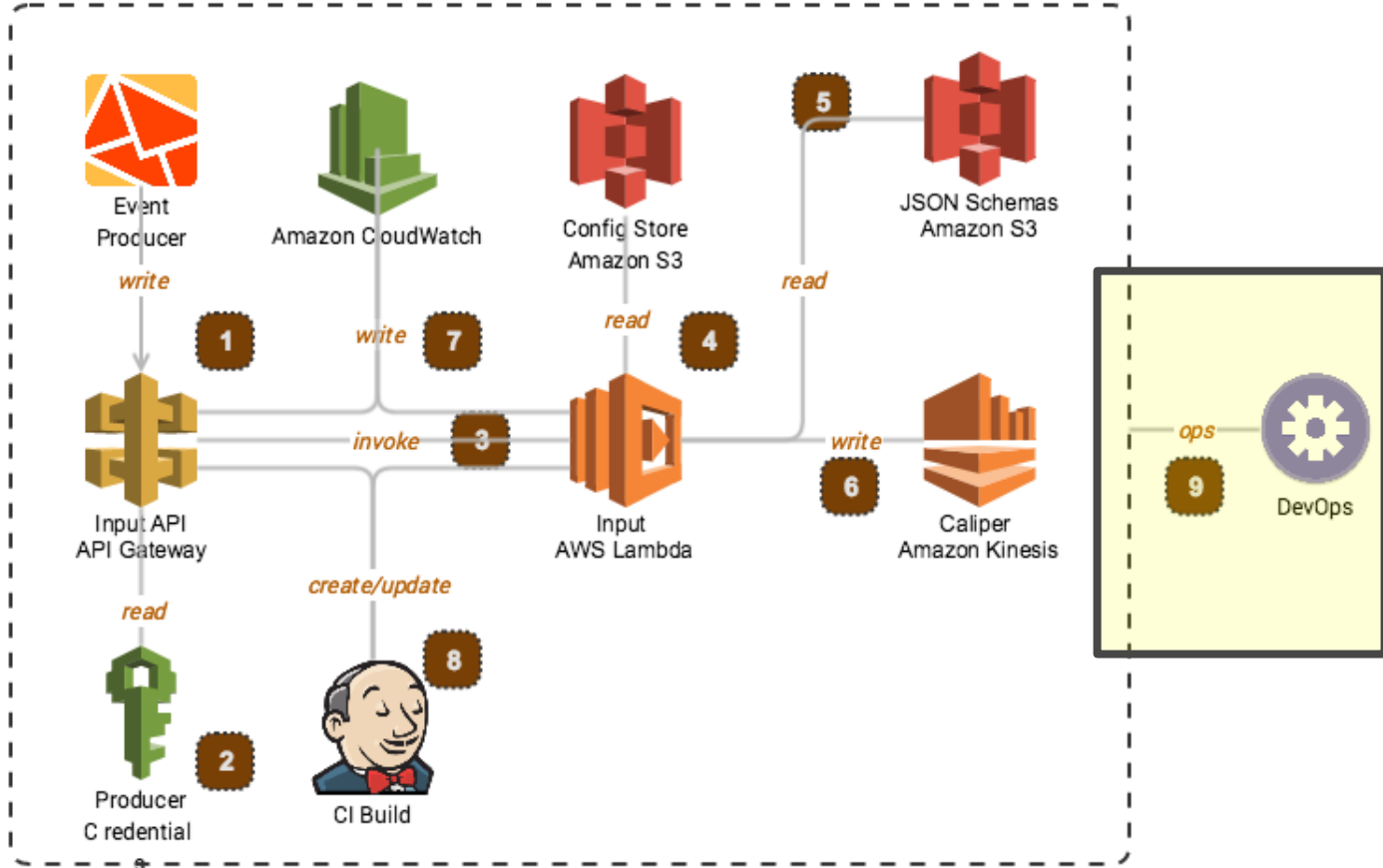
Input API



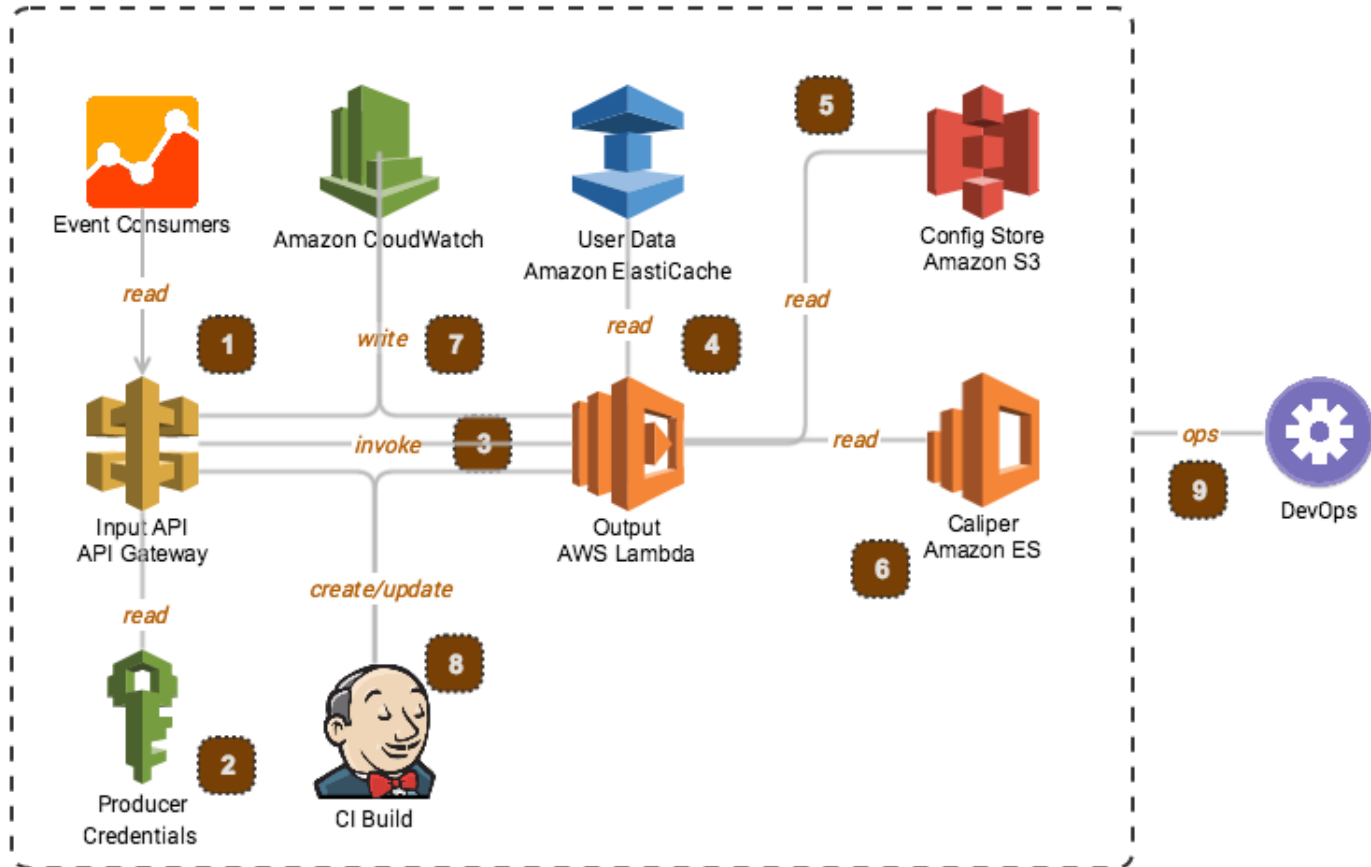
Input API



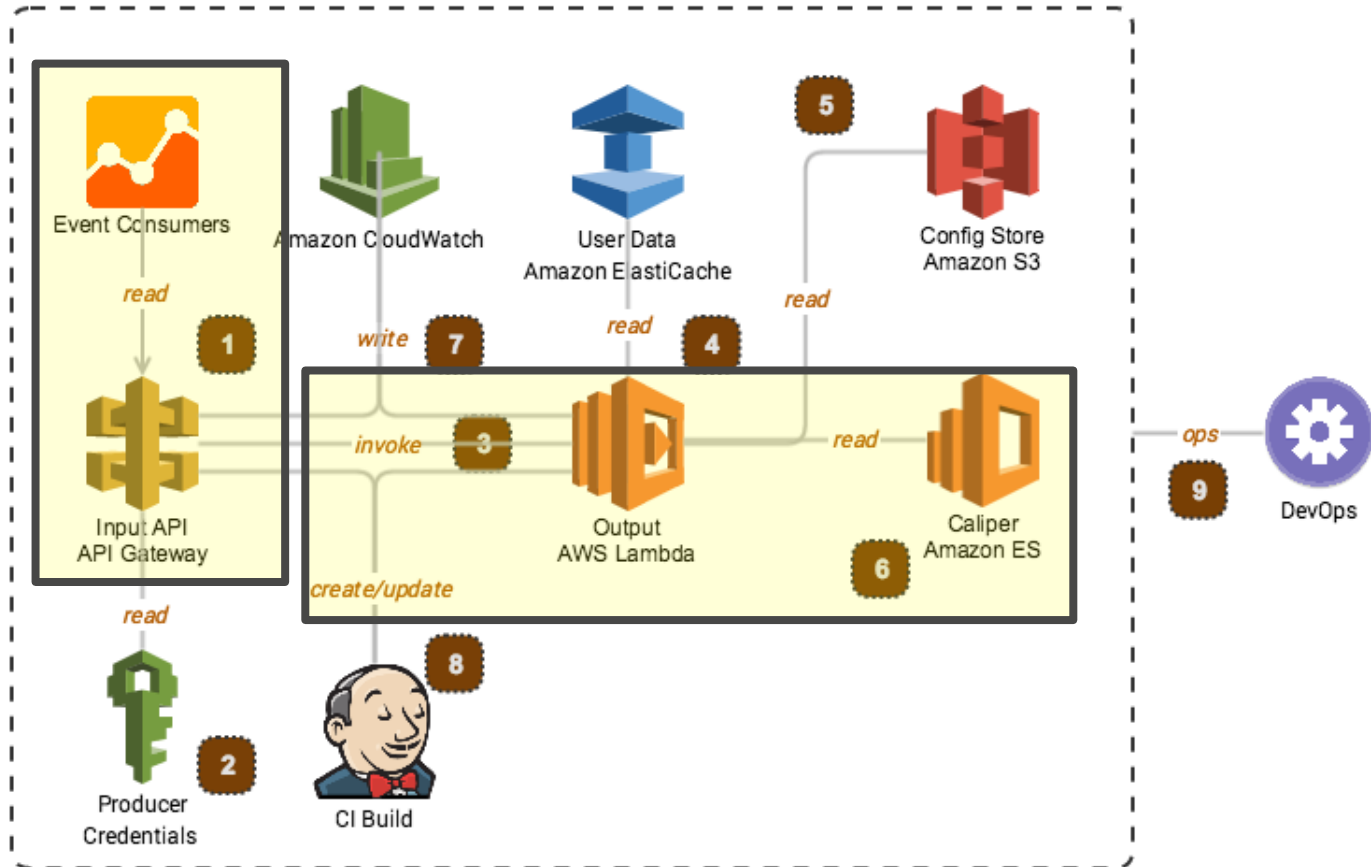
Input API



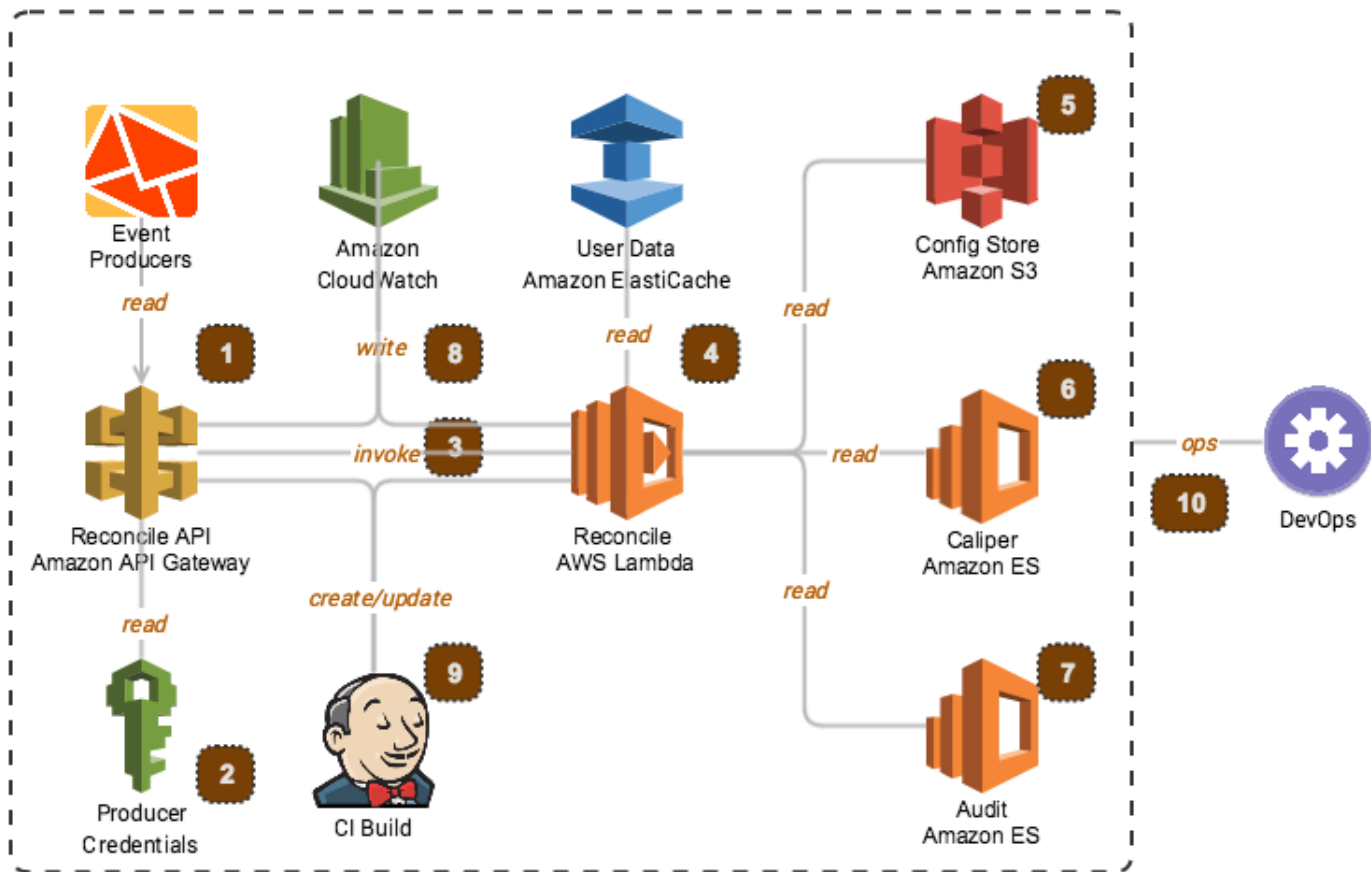
Output API



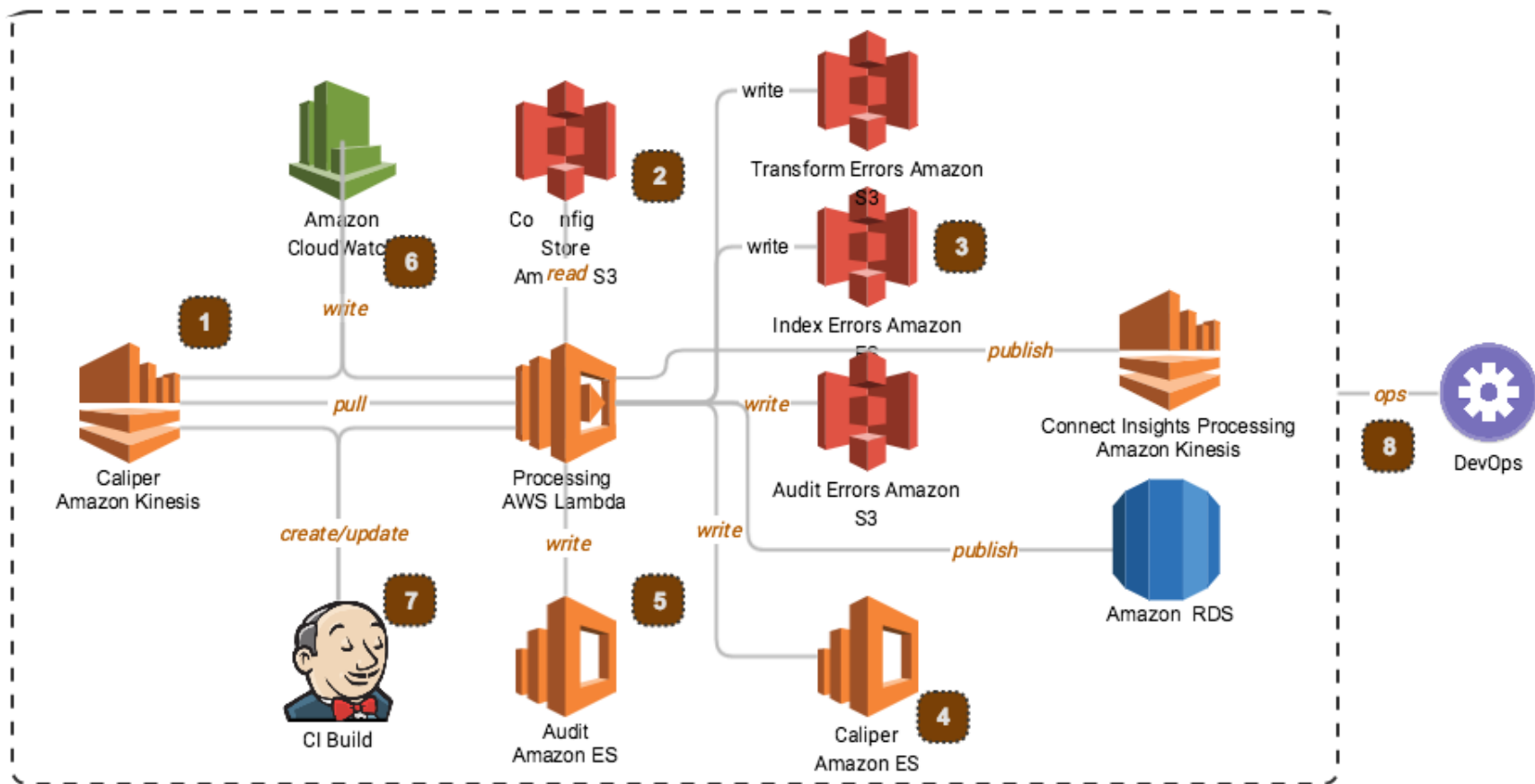
Output API



Reconcile API



Stream Processing



Architecture Tradeoffs (Amazon API Gateway)

- Compare with implementing code for HTTP/HTTPS
- Pro
 - API Gateway is highly integrated service out of the box
 - Automatically scales
 - Handles thousands of concurrent calls
 - Traffic management, authorization and access control, monitoring, and API version management
- Con
 - Does not currently support GZIP compression. Workaround is to set up CloudFront server and enable compression



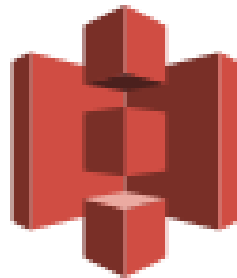
Architecture Tradeoffs (AWS Lambda)

- Compare with provisioning and managing EC2 instances
- Pro:
 - No servers and instances to manage,
 - Built-in automatic scaling
 - Fixed cost model
 - Don't need a team of 7 DevOps resources to manage
- Con:
 - Limited experience with Lambda
 - Limited to CloudWatch and 6 MB data
 - Debugging logs is time-consuming



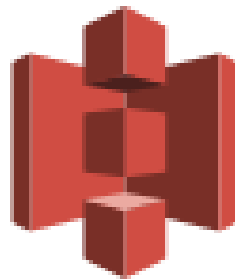
Architectural Tradeoffs (Amazon Kinesis Streams)

- Compare to Kafka and Zookeeper
- Pro
 - Able to process high-volume, streaming data
 - 15 million records at peak load and growing
 - Maintained and don't have to predict storage and volume
 - Managed service with cross Availability Zone replication
- Con
 - May lose records depending on max configuration setting (24 hours to 7 days)



Architectural Tradeoffs (Amazon S3)

- Compare with Rackspace CloudFiles and OpenStack Swift
- Pro
 - Secure, durable, highly-scalable cloud archive
 - Managed service
 - Easy to use, inexpensive, multiple means of security content, backup of content, high availability
- Con
 - SSL mismatch errors if you want to use own domain name as domain name is (bucketname).(region).amazonaws.com



Architectural Tradeoffs (Amazon ES)

- Compare with Lucene and Elasticsearch company
- Pro
 - Managed service that provides out of box integrations with Amazon Kinesis and S3
 - Use as data lake for learning events
- Con
 - Release behind Elasticsearch so may not have needed feature



Architectural Tradeoffs (Amazon DynamoDB)

- Compare to MongoDB
- Pro
 - Experience
 - Low cost
 - Fast and flexible NoSQL data store
 - Fully managed
- Con
 - Limit – 400 KB row size, 1 MB queries
 - Size is multiples of 4 KB for reads



Architectural Tradeoffs (RDS PostgreSQL)

- Compare to RDS Aurora and Amazon Redshift
- Pro
 - Scales to 6 TB – within our immediate needs
 - More concurrent connections than Amazon Redshift
 - Has full analytical engine
- Con
 - Data volumes in future – address using archiving and other strategies to reduce volume

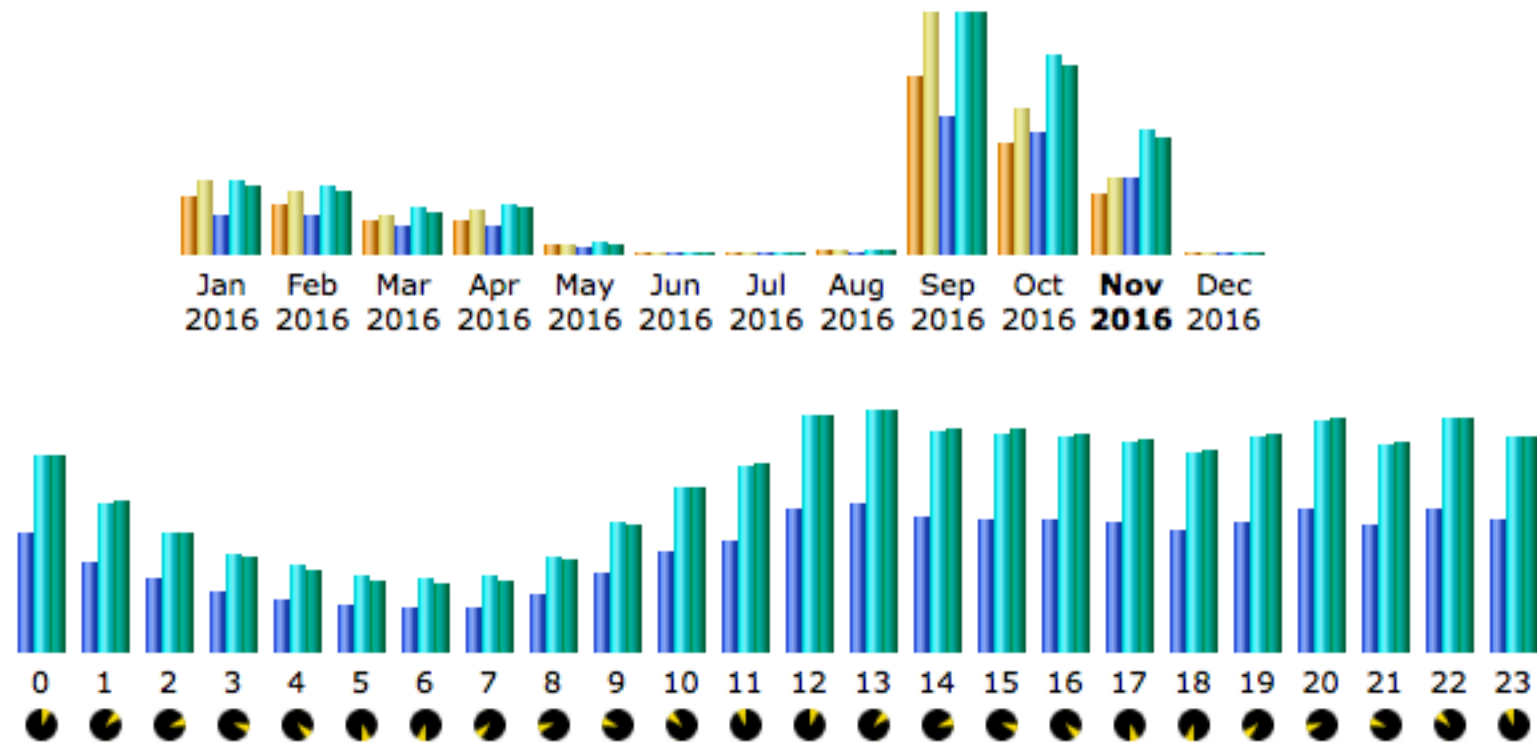


AWS Estimated Cost Savings of 1 Billion Events

AWS Service	Original Cost	Estimated Cost	Estimated Savings
Amazon API Gateway	\$4,319	\$4,319	\$0
AWS Lambda	\$0	\$5,000	-\$5,000
Amazon Elasticsearch Service	\$11,000	\$11,000	\$0
Amazon Kinesis	\$9,232	\$9,232	\$0
Amazon EC2	\$410,000	\$100,000	\$310,000
Total	\$434,551	\$129,551	\$305,000

- Amazon Lambda biggest cost saver
- Pay for what we use
- Auto-scales
- Additional capabilities (logging, monitoring)
- Fewer DevOps resources
- Gains in Agility

Connect Insights Usage Trends



Challenges



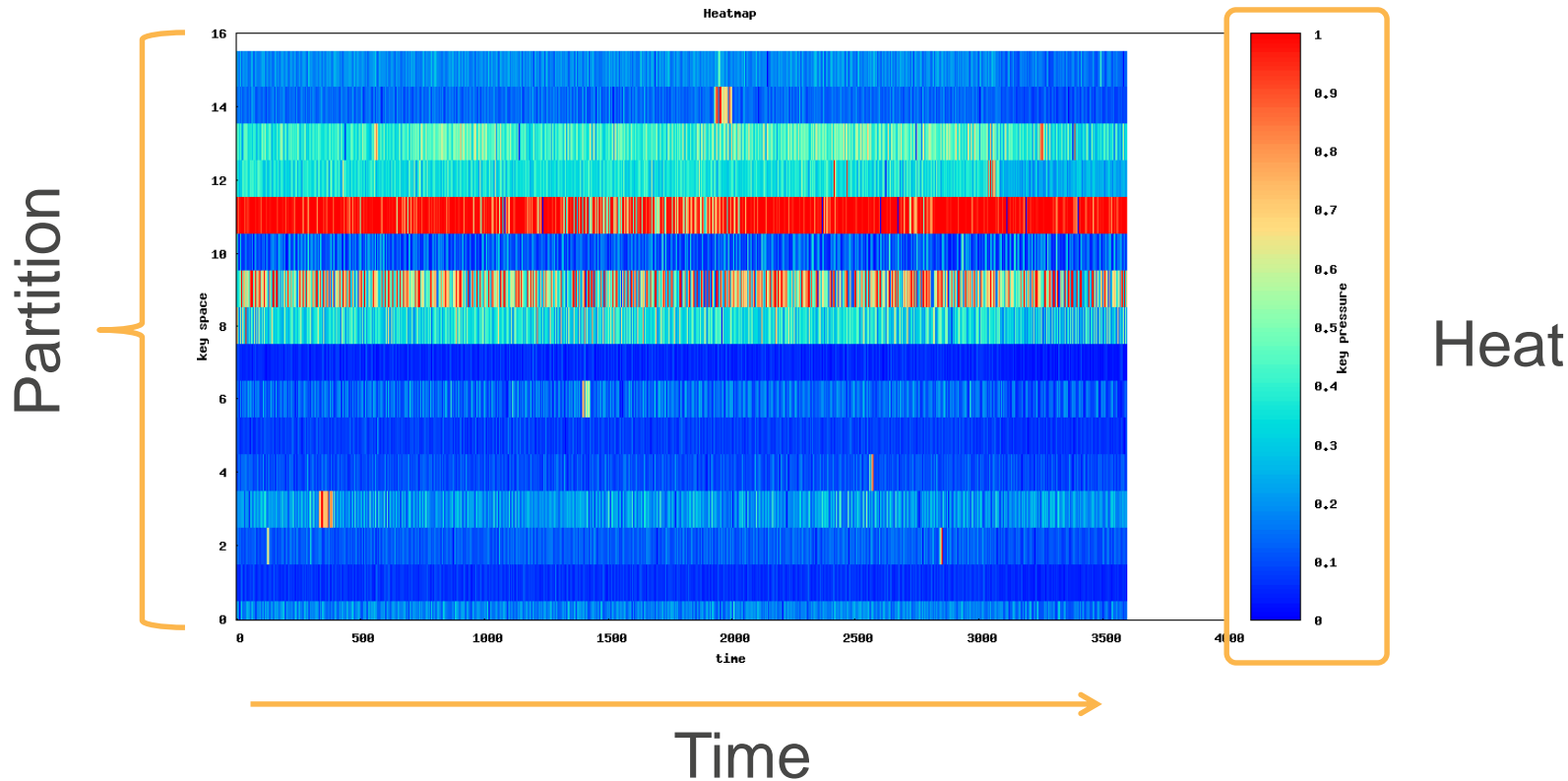
- Lost events
- Elasticsearch performance
- Events to fail indexing in Elasticsearch
- Be aware of Elasticsearch limits
- Amazon Kinesis stream retention from 24 hours to 7 days
- DynamoDB hot spots

Challenges

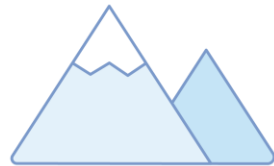


- Lost events
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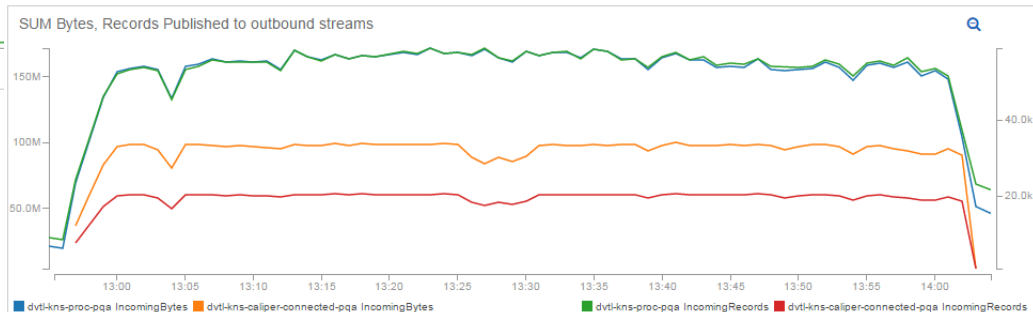
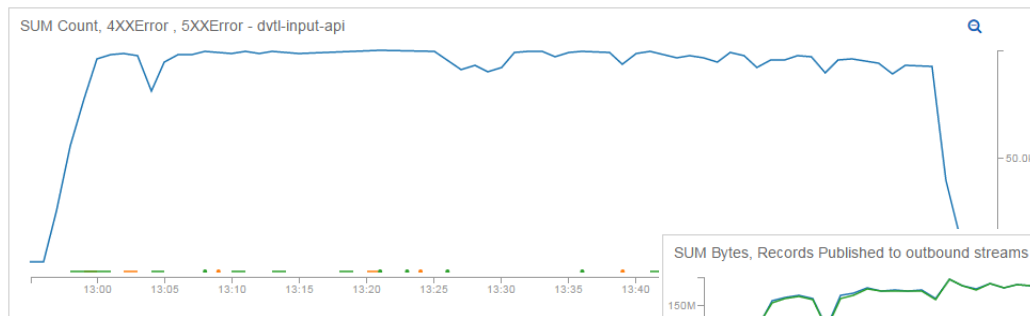
Example Heat Map



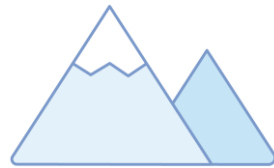
How We Built Confidence



- Built confidence thru robust testing strategy – performance, failover, functional, and business acceptance testing



How We Built Confidence (cont.)



- Caliper events sent to input API, validate persistence to Elasticsearch and S3
- Tools used for testing
- Reconcile API – playback
- Monitoring of components
- Service Level Agreements established

Lessons Learned

- General
 - Serverless framework
 - CloudWatch and Sumologic
 - Automated tests – about 80% coverage
 - Custom dashboards
- Amazon API Gateway
 - SigV4



Lessons Learned (cont.)

- AWS Lambda
 - Cold start
 - Great integration
 - Sensitivity to EC2 and Auto Scaling issues and outages
 - Need better debug tools
- Amazon Kinesis Streams
 - Scaling up and down shards
 - No purge functionality



Lessons Learned (cont.)

- Amazon Elasticsearch Service
 - Scripts
 - Queue capacity limits
 - Performance tuning and monitoring
- AWS Enterprise Support



Summary of Actionable Takeaways

- Think about production scale
- Estimated costs including DevOps, engineers, architects
- Take time and resources to design the right architecture
 - ilities – resiliency, redundancy, security, disaster recovery, reliability, maintainability
- Amazon Enterprise Support

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**AWS
re:Invent**

Thank you!



**Remember to complete
your evaluations!**