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# Introduction to the Kibana Interface

In this section, I am going to introduce you to the Kibana interface. This will give us a nice foundation before going more in-depth with specific parts of Kibana in the following sections. What I want to talk about in this lecture is apps.

## Overview of Kibana Apps

Kibana consists of a number of apps, similar to what you see on a smartphone or tablet. Even the start page is an app. Within the Kibana interface, the apps are listed on the left-hand side, being the menu. The apps are grouped into logical categories. We won’t cover all of the apps in this course because a number of them are use-case specific.

These use cases are referred to as solutions and include observability and security analysis, for instance. This requires setup of a number of tools, including the Elastic Agent. I won’t cover these solutions in this course because they utilize the whole Elastic Stack, and they are therefore not specific to Kibana.

That being said, I will briefly go through all of the apps and explain their purpose. Just a quick note before we get into it. The apps that I am about to mention change quite frequently and pretty much with every release of Kibana. Not that the apps themselves change much, but rather how they are named and organized. I will do my best to keep everything up to date, but please keep in mind that this is really a moving target. For a bit of context, there were three significant changes to this while making this course. So if you see something that looks different, I will update it as soon as possible.

## Kibana Category Apps

### Discover App

The Discover app is like a playground for running ad hoc queries against your data. Perhaps you want to filter documents based on certain criteria and display the results in a pretty interface. As you will see in a couple of lectures, the Discover app provides a lot of convenient shortcuts, making it much faster to use than writing entire queries manually. You can easily click to apply filters, inspect matching documents, etc.

### Visualize App

The Visualize app is where we build and manage visualizations, such as pie charts, line charts, and many more. We will explore this app in detail once we get to working with visualizations.

### Dashboard App

The Dashboard app is where we build, manage, and display dashboards. A dashboard is an orchestration of visualizations, so we could build a dashboard consisting of pie charts, line charts, and tables, for instance. Basically anything we build using the Visualize app. It’s common to have multiple dashboards with each of their focus or scope. For instance, we could have a dashboard showing information about HTTP access logs and another that shows hardware utilization of servers. You could also have a non-technical dashboard that displays data for a sales team or management. Dashboards are therefore a great way of presenting data in an easily digestible format, perhaps for different groups of people.

### Canvas App

The Canvas app is basically dashboards on steroids. Canvas gives you much more control over the visualization and presentation of your data than dashboards do. Dashboards are focused on presenting a limited number of visualizations with simple styling options. Canvas, on the other hand, provides much more control over the visual appearance of your data, including the options to include custom CSS, images, etc. Think of it as building a PowerPoint presentation based on live Elasticsearch data. The data will automatically be updated so you won’t be dealing with static data. In a nutshell, Canvas is a highly customizable way of presenting your data within Kibana.

### Maps App

The Maps app is a bit special because it’s also a type of visualization. This means that you can include maps on dashboards, such as for visualizing the geographical location of website visitors. The reason that there is a separate app for maps is that there are a lot of advanced options for configuring maps, and so it makes sense to have a dedicated app for it. You can really do a lot with the Maps app and with its layers in particular.

### Machine Learning App

The Machine Learning app is where we can create machine learning jobs, such as for anomaly detection and analytics. For instance, we might want to monitor the number of requests made to a website and detect if anything unusual happens.