

Which Tools Should We Use for Dashboards?

In this lesson, we will see and compare the different tools we can use for dashboards.

WE'LL COVER THE FOLLOWING ^

- Prometheus as a dashboard
- Grafana as a dashboard

Prometheus as a dashboard

It doesn't take more than a few minutes with Prometheus to discover that it is not designed to serve as a dashboard. Sure, you can create graphs in Prometheus but they are not permanent, nor do they offer much in terms of presenting data. Prometheus's graphs are designed to be used as a way to visualize ad-hoc queries. And that's what we need most of the time. When we receive a notification from an alert that there is a problem, we usually start our search for the culprit by executing the query of the alert and, from there on, we go deeper into data depending on the results. That is if the alert does not reveal the problem immediately, in which case there is no need to receive notifications since those types of apparent issues can usually be fixed automatically.

But, as I already mentioned, Prometheus does not have dashboarding features, so we'll have to look for a different tool.

Grafana as a dashboard

These days, the choice of a dashboard is easy. Grafana is the undisputed ruler in the area. Other solutions are too old to bother with, or they do not support Prometheus. That is not to say that Grafana is the best tool on the market. But the price is right (it's free), and it works with many different data sources. We could, for example, argue that Kibana is just as good as Grafana, or even better. But, it is limited to data from Elasticsearch. While Grafana can also

use data from **ElasticSearch**, it supports many others. Some might say that

DataDog is a better choice. Still, it suffers from the same problem as **Kibana**. It is tied to a specific source of metrics. There is no flexibility and no option to combine data from other data sources. More importantly, neither of the two supports **Prometheus**.

I'll save you from further comparison with other tools. You can try them yourself. For now, you'll need to trust me that **Grafana** is good, if not the best choice.



Grafana is limited to data from **ElasticSearch**.

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1 of 1



Now that I enforced Grafana as the choice, we'll move on and install it in the next lesson.

