

# 7 CRITICAL CONSIDERATIONS

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for Evaluating Infrastructure  
Monitoring Platforms



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Written By  
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I remember how excited I was to build my first Network Operations Center (NOC). It was a new idea at the time (yes, I know I'm dating myself), and boy, did we feel like we were cutting edge. The mere idea that we needed a place and a set of tools to monitor our entire infrastructure (because it's never really been about just the network) was a big transition at the time.

How things have changed.

Compared to the situation today, what I did was the equivalent of putting my 5-year-old brother "on watch" for when our parents got home (don't ask what we were doing!) — all he had to do was sit there and yell if they showed up.

Today's situation for enterprise IT operations leaders is much more complex — regarding the tech stack to be monitored and managed and the stakes involved.

The technology infrastructure now powers virtually every aspect of how an organization operates. But the "how" of it is a jumbled mess. The days of monolithic (and therefore easier to manage) systems are long gone, and tracing workloads as they snake through a spaghetti bowl of connections, transactions, and relationships is not for the faint of heart.

But because everything relies on the ability to manage each of these connections, relationships, transactions, and workloads discretely, it's up to you to figure out a way to manage it all. Walk the floor of any IT ops conference (virtual or otherwise), and you'll know that sorting out which tools can best help you with your particular situation is almost as hard as managing your infrastructure in the first place.

That's why this buyer's guide exists. As independent technology analysts, we are continually assessing the market.

As we've looked at the infrastructure monitoring space, we've identified seven critical considerations that will help you make sense of your infrastructure monitoring choices and select the best tool or tools.



## The 7 Critical Selection Considerations for Infrastructure Monitoring Platforms

Let's get one thing out of the way up front: no single tool will magically solve all your problems or be suitable for every organization. Every situation is different, and every team's needs are unique (at least somewhat).

Therefore, the key is to know what to look for to figure out what's best for you.

And while no one can tell you which tool is best (especially vendors!), seven critical considerations can help you figure it out for yourself. But, of course, these seven items are merely things to consider as you weigh the pros and cons of any infrastructure monitoring tool.

Ready?



# CONSIDERATION #1

## A Unified, Relational View

You should begin by assessing a tool's ability to help you see your entire environment in a single, unified, and relational view. It's almost impossible to manage an environment you cannot see in one place — and having several tools with monitors smashed together on a desk or ops center doesn't count!

The most significant issues that IT ops folks encounter almost always relate to a lack of visibility or context. That's why getting a unified view that enables you to understand the relationships between the various elements of your infrastructure stack is crucial. It's also essential that you're able to see those relationships in a bi-directional way so you can understand the relational landscape from whatever perspective is most relevant to you in any circumstance.

Admittedly, these are pretty prescriptive statements. Where's the consideration part, right?

When selecting a tool that will give you a unified, relational view, the consideration is to understand what's important to you — what types of infrastructure components you have (or might you have in the reasonable future) in your environment. You want to ensure that any tool you select is going to be able to incorporate each of them.

**The key here is to ensure that the infrastructure monitoring tool you ultimately select doesn't leave you with blind spots.**



# CONSIDERATION #2

## Perspective Scalability

Just as it's essential to understand relationships bi-directionally based on your needs at any given time, the same goes for your ability to scale your perspective. In other words, there will be times that you'll wish to see things from a super macro level (i.e., from 50,000ft) and others in which you'll want on-the-ground details.

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This perspective scalability will be essential to explore, discover, and manage your environment from whatever depth is necessary to solve your issues, build your plan, or do whatever you need to do.

The considerations here come in two flavors:

- **What degree of scalability is necessary and appropriate?** Generally, the macro perspective is essential for almost all organizations. Zooming out high enough to see your entire infrastructure in one place is important to most. But how granular you need your monitoring tool to go will depend on your specific use case(s).
- **What is the ease of that scaling and how intuitive is it for your operators?** Can they easily go from soaring at 50,000ft to an ant-level view? Do they need to be able to do so? Again, an interface and a contextual perspective that fits your work will be essential.



## CONSIDERATION #3

### The Hybrid IT Question

The next thing to consider is the nature of your tech stack. In the past, it was pretty straightforward — everything was on-premises. Today, however, your environment may be all over the place, spanning traditional on-prem environments, public cloud, private cloud, co-location facilities, and, increasingly, the so-called intelligent edge.

Every additional environmental class increases the management complexity and difficulty for a tool to deliver a consistent management experience across those various environments.

Again, what's critical here is your environment. To what degree have you embraced this idea of hybrid IT? Are you primarily on-prem, or has your organization got one of each and two of most of these environments in play? And what about the criticality of assets deployed in each type of environment — is it a pretty even spread, or are your most critical assets in only one environment?

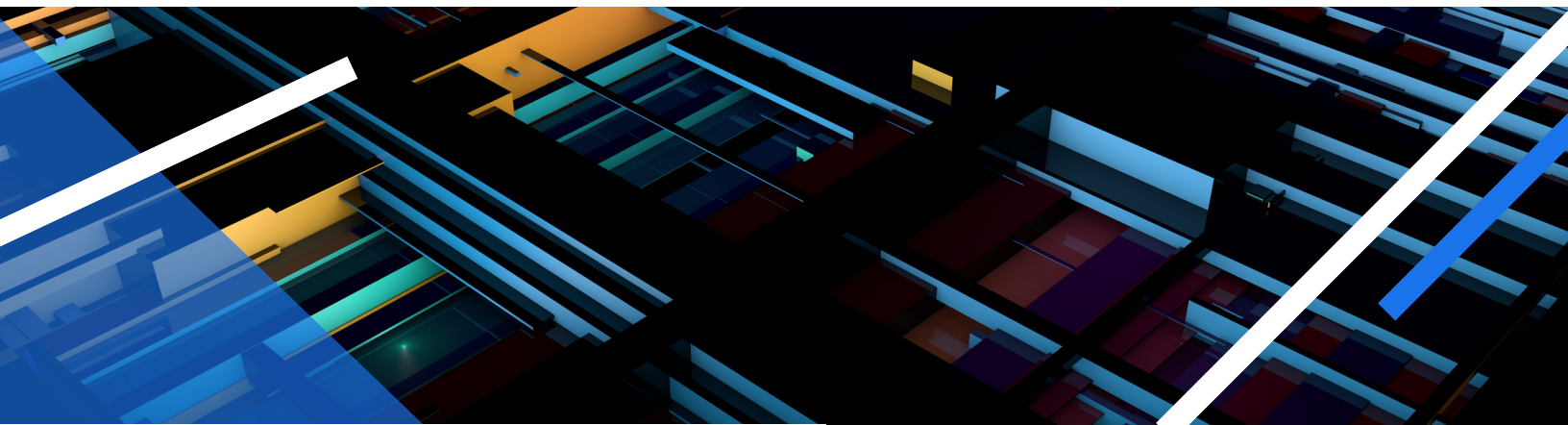
Finally, you need to consider not only your current state but the direction you're heading. The last thing you want is a tool that does a great job supporting you today but is ill-equipped for your future. As with many of these considerations, more flexibility is generally better, but it will always come down to striking the best balance.

# CONSIDERATION #4

## Open Integration

Up to this point, we've talked a lot about the benefit of having a tool that unifies everything, allowing you to see it from a high-level or an in-the-weeds perspective and across the vast hybrid IT environment.

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But even with that, the truth remains that no tool can do it all.

Regarding monitoring and managing your complex environment, your platform will stand alone. Whatever infrastructure monitoring tool you select needs to be a part of your entire IT management ecosystem. There's just no way around that.

Therefore, the ability to integrate your infrastructure monitoring tool as widely and as easily as possible is an important consideration. Ideally, you want a tool that adopts an “open integration platform” approach, making it as easy as possible to connect to anything and everything.

**The ability to integrate your infrastructure monitoring tool as widely and as easily as possible is an important consideration.**



# CONSIDERATION #5

## Data, Insights, and Reactive vs. Proactive



The fifth consideration takes things to another level. Monitoring tools of the past have mostly been about in-the-moment alerting. Sort of like my five-year-old brother, the job was to sit patiently and wait for something to go wrong. And then yell as loud as possible when it did.

That's great and important, but it's also reactive — which isn't good enough in a world where everything relies on your infrastructure.

The good news is that monitoring tools capture and generate data — and lots of it. So the question is, what (if anything) is it doing with all of that data?

At a minimum, you need the ability to harness it and dump it into another tool where you can use it somehow. Ideally, however, you want an infrastructure monitoring tool that uses data natively to produce analytics, surface insights, and create proactive alerts (and perhaps even predictive alerts) based on it.

Again, the focus must be on the insights, alerting, and analytics vital to you, your scope, and your environment. But the reality is that this set of capabilities is becoming evermore essential, so more is generally going to be better in this category.



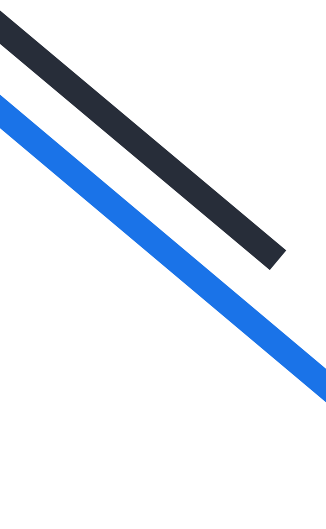
## CONSIDERATION #6

### Discovery Automation

The next consideration may be one of the most important. Almost as soon as the first engineer deployed the first infrastructure monitoring tool, they realized they would have to maintain this thing! And that was before the exponential complexity we're dealing with today.

An infrastructure monitoring tool will only ever be as good as it is accurate. **Three things drive that accuracy:**

- The ability to know what's in your environment
- The ability to understand the contextual specifications and relevance of each item in your environment
- The ability to know when either of the first two elements has changed



When we had relatively more simple environments, we could manage this manually. Good luck with that now.

## CONSIDERATION #6 CONT.

### Discovery Automation

This is why discovery automation is essential when selecting an infrastructure monitoring tool. As you assess tools in this category, you want to look at three things:

01

#### Scope

Is it likely to discover the classes of assets currently in your environment or those you expect to add? With what level of expected accuracy?

02

#### Detail

Will it capture data to the relative level of granularity that you require (or pull that information from other systems that have it)?

03

#### Management Automation

How will it help you identify environmental changes, and how easy is it to manually update, correct, or enrich discovered data?

This technology is now improving exponentially, which is good news. However, the key to finding the best fit for you will be understanding the intersection between discovery capabilities and your current and planned environments.



## CONSIDERATION #7

### Customization & Manageability

On the surface, the final consideration might seem like a “nice to have.” It’s what I call customization and manageability. I realize that in some IT circles, customization is a four-letter word. But here’s the thing: you’re going to need it.

As we discussed earlier, every organization’s environment and needs are different. Your functional remit, rate of change, and simple desires and preferences all add up to needing the ability to make your infrastructure monitoring tool fit into your existing operating model.

After all, you can have every bell and whistle you can imagine, but if you can’t deploy and use the tool in a way that makes sense to you, it won’t matter in the least.

When looking at tools, look for the ability to tune your monitoring platform to your unique needs and preferences. Oh, and you should be able to deploy and manage it without having to hire an army of consultants or spend a year in training.

Nothing against consultants or trainers, but the stuff needs to just work at this stage of the game.

# CONCLUSION

## The Power of the Right Decision — and Why It Will Matter to Your Executive Team

So that's it — seven critical considerations that will help you make the right decision when you're selecting an infrastructure monitoring tool. If you still have doubts, let's be clear: making the right decision will make all the difference in your day-to-day operational life.

But this decision isn't just about making life a bit easier for your ops team (although, come on, they deserve it, right?), it's about the very real business outcomes that are at stake. The entire organization relies on this infrastructure for just about everything — even if they don't understand it.

So, while they don't want to know how the sausage is made (or monitored and managed), they too will care about these seven considerations and how you used them to make the right decision for your organization.

Use these considerations as a guide, and you'll be on the right track to choosing a platform to help you solve your organization's most pressing issues while making life better for the IT Operations Team — precisely what you both want.



A WORD FROM GALILEO

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IT teams feel pressured daily to keep systems running efficiently to fuel business growth. But unfortunately, most IT teams are paying a hefty price for multiple redundant monitoring tools that delay incident resolution, contribute to silos within the IT organization, and slow down your business.

### **We know firsthand how traditional monitoring tools fall short.**

Like you, we manage complex systems. And we've felt the pain of configuring a slew of overly complicated tools that failed to give us what we needed. It's a dumpster fire of time and cash.

That's why we built Galileo. Our interactive 3D engine automatically visualizes your asset relationships, analyzes device health, and displays it in a single view so you can quickly remediate issues and get on with your day.

**Set up a Galileo demo, change how you see your infrastructure and analyze its health – FOREVER!**



# ABOUT THE AUTHOR



## CHARLES ARAUJO

Charles Araujo is a technology analyst and internationally recognized authority on the Digital Enterprise, the Digital Experience, and the Future of Work. Researching Digital Transformation for over 10 years, he is now focused on helping leaders transform their organizations around the digital experience and to reimagine the future of work.

Publisher and principal analyst of The Digital Experience Report, founder of The Institute for Digital Transformation, co-founder of The MAPS Institute, and author of three books, he is a sought-after keynote speaker and advisor to technology companies and enterprise leaders.



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