elastic | Waitrose

SUCCESS STORY

Waitrose boosts online grocery store performance, reduces errors and improves overall customer satisfaction with Elastic, deployed on AWS

Region
United Kingdom

Industry
Retail

Solution
Elastic Observability

Boosts online customer experience

With Elastic Real User Monitoring (RUM), online customer ratings of 'excellent' for website speed have doubled, significantly increasing overall customer satisfaction for online users by nearly a third.

Increases website reliability

Waitrose responded to customer feedback by utilizing Elastic to eliminate inaccuracies, delivering an improved web experience for its millions of customers that helps cement its reputation as a market leader.

Drives costs down

With its existing Elastic license, Waitrose can quickly configure real user monitoring features without investing in additional software, further enhancing the customer experience.

elastic

Leading UK supermarket delivers superior online shopping experience while reducing costs and website errors with Elastic Real User Monitoring

Waitrose, a grocery brand with 314 U.K. stores responded to surging online demand by investing significantly in technology.

Chris Wenman, Product Manager, Digital Platform & Performance, at Waitrose, says, "Our job is to make sure that our cloud platform supports all of the groups who run digital services across the entire online shopping journey."

His team is also on the front line when it comes to customer feedback, especially page load speeds or interruptions to the online shopping journey.

> One of our team built a really cool custom dashboard in Elastic, which tracks errors and behaviors then breaks them down by reason, code and level. That means we can quickly respond and fix any problem, typically before anyone even notices.

Chris Wenman
Product Manager, Digital Platform and Performance, Waitrose

Capturing user interactions with websites and apps

When he joined Waitrose, Wenman set up a performance function within the business before turning his attention to the tools that monitor cloud operations, which run on AWS. Elasticsearch was already in use within Waitrose, which had migrated the observability stack to Elastic Cloud in 2018. Currently, Waitrose ingests over 2TB of logs and metrics data per day into their Elastic stack.

However, very little had been done to capture client-side performance data, so Wenman focused on Elastic RUM (Real User Monitoring), which captures user interaction with clients such as web browsers and apps.

The RUM JavaScript agent monitors the real user experience and interaction within client-side applications and is framework-agnostic. Waitrose can analyze data by URL, operating system, browser, and location to fully understand how its applications perform on end-user systems.

Waitrose has also expanded into Elastic Observability for CI/CD (continuous integration, continuous delivery) monitoring. "With Elastic, we now have more granular details for pipeline performance and can help streamline and remediate issues within the CI/CD process."

Reducing website errors

Thanks to the granular detail of Elastic's analysis and Kibana dashboards, on the now rare occasion that an issue does arise the Waitrose team can drill down to the specific cause of an issue, even when the supporting information is based on imprecise or anecdotal customer feedback, using Elastic's context-aware insights and frictionless, always-on profiling.

Wenman gives the example of online shoppers who reported being shown a generic error message and being pushed back to the home page, which was difficult for engineers to reproduce locally.

"We have been able to build a really intuitive custom dashboard which was able to track this kind of small error and break instances down by the URL, reason code, corresponding API calls and their overall volumes. This helped us to establish the root cause, and fix the issue really quickly."

Boosting the customer experience

As a premium brand, Waitrose must excel in all customer-facing channels from the in-store checkout to the latest digital services. Elastic helped to optimize the customer experience, including faster website loading and page speeds, translating to an increase in customers rating website speed as 'excellent' doubling, since Waitrose launched Elastic RUM.

This improvement in website performance has also improved the organization's Google Core Web Vitals score. Google uses these metrics to measure the user experience—the higher the score, the higher the organic search page ranking. "It's good to know that we can translate better performance into higher-ranking search positions," says Wenman.

"With Elastic, you move from being technical troubleshooters to making a positive difference to the commercial performance of the organization."

elastic

Controlling costs

"With Elastic as a managed service on AWS, we have the right balance between control and costs which aligns to our business goals."

Elastic was also more cost-effective than other real-time monitoring tools available to Waitrose. "The great thing about Elastic is its versatility. We configured a real user monitoring solution under our existing license that delivered the capabilities we needed" says Wenman.

# Shaping the future of Elastic's software

Wenman also highlights the important role played by the Elastic team, including the solutions architect who was instrumental in helping deploy Elastic RUM at Waitrose. "If we got stuck, he was always available and quickly found a way forward for us."

If Wenman discovers that he needs additional features, he can request an enhancement, and Elastic typically follows through in a future release of RUM. "The Elastic mindset is that what works for us is good for them. Being able to collaborate at that level is a real strength."

Raising the profile of the Platform team

The deployment of Elastic RUM enables Wenman and his team to contribute more to business performance. It supports the company's efforts to pay down tech debt and helps ensure that teams are delivering the necessary standards. Wenman can also point to evidence that customers are happier with the online experience since the deployment of Elastic.

"We have the customer's e-commerce experience front and centre of what we do", says Wenman. "With Elastic, you move from being technical troubleshooters to making a positive difference to the commercial performance of the organization."
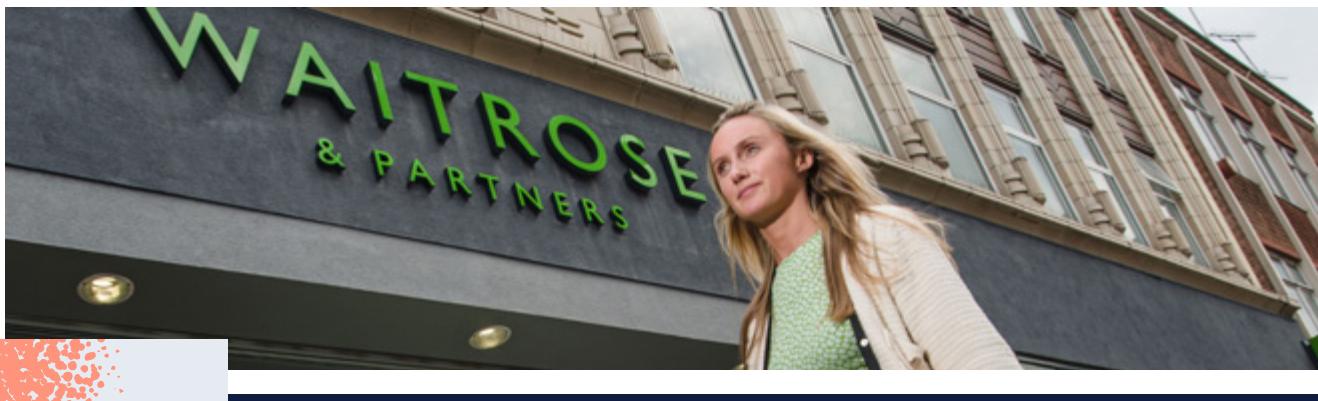
See for yourself how your business can benefit from Elastic in the Cloud, with a free 14 day trial.

Start now