

Cox Automotive Shifts Gears, Drives Insights With Splunk IT Service Intelligence



Executive summary

Cox Automotive, a subsidiary of Atlanta-based Cox Enterprises, owns many global brands including Manheim, AutoTrader.com and Kelley Blue Book. Manheim conducts dealer-to-dealer car auctions, registering nearly seven million used vehicles annually, and facilitating transactions representing almost \$46 billion. The company needed better operational visibility into its on-premises and online auction platform so it could pinpoint, troubleshoot and prevent issues in real time. Since deploying Splunk IT Service Intelligence (ITSI), Splunk Enterprise and Splunk Cloud, the company has seen benefits including:

- Increased simulcast reliability boosts bottom line
- Significantly improved mean-time-to-identify (MTTI)
- Reduced number of auction incidents by 90%

Why Splunk

Manheim operates more than 75 car auctions across the U.S., selling thousands of cars daily. These auctions are conducted via a bidding process that can be done in traditional or online formats enabled through simulcast real-time auction video streams. Auctions require network gear, switches and routers, and each auction lane has microphones and high-definition cameras. More than 850 cameras broadcast auctions in real time. An audio-video scanner tool pings and polls devices at each auction lane every 30 to 45 seconds, resulting in massive amounts of data. Cox Automotive must monitor all network traffic across many auctions because failure of any device on any lane affects the customer experience and the company's bottom line.

In the past, Cox Automotive encountered uptime and application stability challenges during its auto auctions, but had little visibility into the root cause. When a problem occurred, its operations teams lacked visibility into whether the disruption was broad across the network or isolated to a single lane that needed investigation. It also lacked the ability to prioritize incident investigations and needed real-time insights into the performance and availability of each auction lane.

Cox Automotive decided to standardize its data aggregation strategy on Splunk IT Service Intelligence to gain much-needed Operational

Industry

- Automotive Services
- Online Services

Splunk Use Cases

- IT operations

Challenges

- Lacked operational visibility into massive amounts of data
- Needed to pinpoint, troubleshoot and prevent auction platform issues to ensure customer satisfaction
- Wanted to improve MTTI and MTTR
- Needed solution designed to scale with the global enterprise

Business Impact

- Improved simulcast reliability ensures consistent level of customer service and positively affects the bottom line
- Resulted in nearly instantaneous MTTI
- Reduced number of auction incidents by 90% with real-time infrastructure monitoring
- Enabled more proactive equipment replacement: KPIs predict outages and provide real-time degradation monitoring
- Empowered to scale on demand with Cloud solutions

Data Sources

- Audio
- Video
- Network
- Storage
- Syslog
- Windows
- Linux
- AWS CloudTrail and VPC Flow Logs

Splunk Products

- Splunk IT Service Intelligence
- Splunk Cloud
- Splunk Enterprise
- Splunk App for AWS

Intelligence. With Manheim, AutoTrader.com and Kelley Blue Book, Cox Automotive is changing the car buying and selling business and enabling people to buy and sell cars from their homes, offices and mobile devices. “Our customers are leveraging our simulcasts more than ever before, and for our bottom line it’s imperative that we protect them,” says Steven Hatch, manager, Enterprise Logging, Manheim, Cox Automotive. “Splunk ITSI has made that possible.”

Real-time auctions precision-crafted with data intelligence

Cox Automotive needed a scalable solution that could provide the company with real-time IT and business visibility. Splunk ITSI wraps intelligence around all of the company’s data, including network, switches, cameras and audio equipment data, and delivers a service perspective that’s relevant to daily IT operations as well as the business.

Since Cox Automotive implemented Splunk ITSI, the platform has delivered tremendous value and helped drive down key metrics such as MTTI and mean-time-to-resolution. As Cox deploys Splunk ITSI across all of its brands, the solution is already providing nearly instantaneous returns and is improving end-user experience and service reliability. “Splunk ITSI brings visibility into our simulcast application that we never had before,” says Hatch.

Now, if an incident with a camera, microphone or other device occurs, staff members get an alert within seconds, can troubleshoot quickly, identify the issue rapidly and determine the exact location for an auction technician to minimize disruption. Moreover,

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Steven Hatch
Manager, Enterprise Logging Services
Manheim, Cox Automotive

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Ken Gavranovic
Vice President of Technology, Cox Automotive

using advanced analytics and machine learning, staff can predict outages and can even monitor equipment degradation for proactive replacement.

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Cloud solutions scale on demand

Given the enormous amount of data at Cox Automotive, Hatch is pleased with the company’s cloud strategy and notes that the ability to have all data flow to one place instead of distributing it among different data centers has been a godsend. With the Splunk platform, the company no longer has to depend on on-premises storage and it has the flexibility to scale on demand. With the adoption of Splunk ITSI as the enterprise monitoring and analytics solution at Cox Automotive, Splunk Cloud has made it possible to scale the implementation and adoption across several brands. The company also relies on many Splunk apps, including Splunk App for AWS, and enjoys integration with Amazon Web Services, Palo Alto Networks, VMWare and Cisco tool sets.

Beyond the data associated with Manheim car auctions, Cox is ingesting approximately 2TB of data per day from across its infrastructure into the Splunk Cloud platform. This is enabling teams to not only understand the health and well-being of production systems but also is giving release engineering and application development teams insights into new software releases.

[Download Splunk for free](#) or get started with the [free cloud trial](#). Whether cloud, on-premises, or for large or small teams, Splunk has a deployment model that will fit your needs.



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