

SurveyMonkey Optimizes Site Performance and Reduces Licensing Costs



Executive summary

SurveyMonkey is the world's largest survey company, helping customers collect more than 90 million online responses per month. Customers include all of the Fortune 100, as well as academic institutions, small businesses, and civic and government organizations worldwide. Rapid growth has created many challenges for the firm, including the need for a more flexible and powerful site analysis solution. Since deploying Splunk Enterprise, SurveyMonkey has seen benefits including:

- Reduced licensing cost by 45 percent
- Optimized site performance
- Streamlined integration of newly acquired companies

Why Splunk

With a memorable name and an easy-to-use product, SurveyMonkey has experienced continuously strong growth spurred by several key acquisitions, and the introduction of new features and products. The firm is also expanding globally at nearly twice the pace of its domestic market.

This rapid growth has posed challenges for Survey Monkey's business intelligence (BI) and site engineering groups. "We were using SiteCatalyst and Google Analytics, but those tools just couldn't give us the granularity that our users needed," explains SurveyMonkey director of BI Elena Verna. "At a growing company like ours, engineering resources can get stretched pretty thin, so we needed a more flexible way to drill down into our data and associate activity on our website with business results."

The firm's engineering group was already using the free version of Splunk Enterprise when the BI organization chose to join in. "We decided that we could share the cost of a Splunk license with our engineering group and end our license costs for SiteCatalyst," notes SurveyMonkey senior BI analyst Eric Hergenrader. "Splunk made more sense for us because we could share our data with any team that needed access and spread the cost as well."

Industry

- Online services

Splunk Use Cases

- Business analytics
- IT operations

Challenges

- Needed a flexible way to drill down into site data
- Associate web activity with business results
- Reduce or eliminate multiple site analysis tools
- Better manage and integrate new acquisitions and products

Business Impact

- Easier integration of data flows from acquired companies
- Streamlined foreign site expansion thanks to improved localized content and SEO optimization
- Increased ease and effectiveness of A/B site testing
- Reduced licensing costs by 45 percent
- Optimized site performance and resource allocation due to real-time error reporting and exception monitoring
- Improved user experience

Data Sources

- Apache, clickstream logs
- Server, desktop, database and application activity logs
- Java applications and application servers
- .Net applications and servers
- System metrics

Splunk Products

- Splunk Enterprise

Legacy tools give way to shared insight

Between SurveyMonkey's BI and site engineering groups alone, the firm was using three different analysis tools and paying separate licensing costs for each. "It was not only costing us about 45 percent more, but we were not getting the value we should have," Hergenrader notes. "Splunk makes it easier to share critical resources."

According to Verna, "SiteCatalyst, for instance, required us to use JavaScript tagging to collect visitor data, which was a big pain point for us. As the pace of business increased, it became more and more difficult to associate web traffic with business results." SurveyMonkey was able to replicate the functionality of other tools within Splunk software and thereby eliminate them. "We were using Mixpanel for funnel tracking, but could get the same functionality in Splunk Enterprise with even greater granularity," says Hergenrader.

In addition, SurveyMonkey's site engineering group actively uses Splunk Enterprise for real-time error reporting, exception monitoring and overall debugging. When the company pushes releases to the site, the engineering team can monitor them on the fly to ensure optimal performance. Says Hergenrader, "Before Splunk, it was more a matter of hope and pray. Now, they know within seconds or minutes whether something is going to work."

Enhanced revenue potential through optimization

Splunk Enterprise serves multiple roles when it comes to site optimization at SurveyMonkey. First, the firm uses the Splunk platform to track user activity to determine where visitors come from, such as survey pages, search engines or affiliate links. When free users sign up for paid accounts, SurveyMonkey sees the origin of the conversion across multiple channels, allowing them to better allocate marketing resources.

"We're spending less with Splunk than we did for our other solutions and we're getting far greater value. We can share Splunk and the data we capture among all our groups which increases our efficiency and provides a central resource for all."

**Elena Verna, Director of Business Intelligence
SurveyMonkey**

Second, SurveyMonkey has a global appeal, but discovered that in order to attract users to sign up for paid accounts, it needed to translate and localize sites for maximum effectiveness. "We use Splunk software to look at page view volumes for different countries we are targeting and estimate the traffic spikes we might receive if we were to move all of those surveys to a country-specific domain," Hergenrader says.

Finally, he notes, "Our A/B test planning group has really benefitted from Splunk by knowing exactly how many people we can expect to fall into a certain test group. We can anticipate traffic volume and limit the size of a test population if needed."

Survey says: Splunk helps ease acquisitions

Splunk has also made it easier for SurveyMonkey to integrate new companies and products into its operation. The company is using Splunk Enterprise to capture information on all requests processed through its load balancer from every company and new product under its umbrella.

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