DATADOG | vistar media

Vistar Media optimizes global ad delivery with Datadog

ABOUT VISTAR MEDIA

Vistar Media powers programmatic advertising for out-of-home screens, connecting advertisers with digital billboards and displays in public spaces through a technology platform that processes 12 billion monthly impressions across 25+ countries.

Media   **315 Employees**   **New York City**

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Tom Fleischer
Chief Technology Officer
Vistar Media

WHY DATADOG?

· Consolidates metrics and event streams

· Highly taggable custom metrics capabilities

· Easily shareable dashboards across technical and business teams

CHALLENGE

Vistar Media needed a scalable monitoring solution for its complex ad-tech infrastructure that wouldn't require it to divert engineering resources from its core business of powering billions of advertising impressions.

USE CASE

🕐 **Metrics**   **Cloudcraft**

💲 **Cloud Cost Management**   **Real User Monitoring**

Improved incident detection and resolution times

Enhanced visibility across infrastructure and application stack

Optimized AWS spend with Cloud Cost Management

# Improved observability in UI applications

Managing visibility challenges in a high-volume infrastructure

[Vistar Media](#) is a leading technology provider in the digital out-of-home (DOOH) advertising industry. From digital billboards to screens in taxis and bus shelters, Vistar's technology powers advertising content on displays that collectively generate 12 billion monthly impressions.

To accomplish its goals, Vistar operates a complex technological ecosystem that serves multiple stakeholders throughout the advertising life cycle. The company's 70-person technology team builds and maintains solutions for both supply-side and demand-side DOOH advertising, as well as the systems that ultimately display those ads to consumers. "Our breadth of offerings means we're serving six or seven distinct personas with diversity across our product offerings," says Tom Fleischer, chief technology officer at Vistar.

This complexity presented significant challenges for Vistar's engineering teams. Running a sophisticated technical infrastructure at scale required robust monitoring capabilities, but the company's existing custom metrics solution lacked flexibility for new use cases and couldn't provide the comprehensive visibility needed across the company's expanding AWS infrastructure. Vistar needed a monitoring solution that could match its growth trajectory while supporting its diverse product teams.
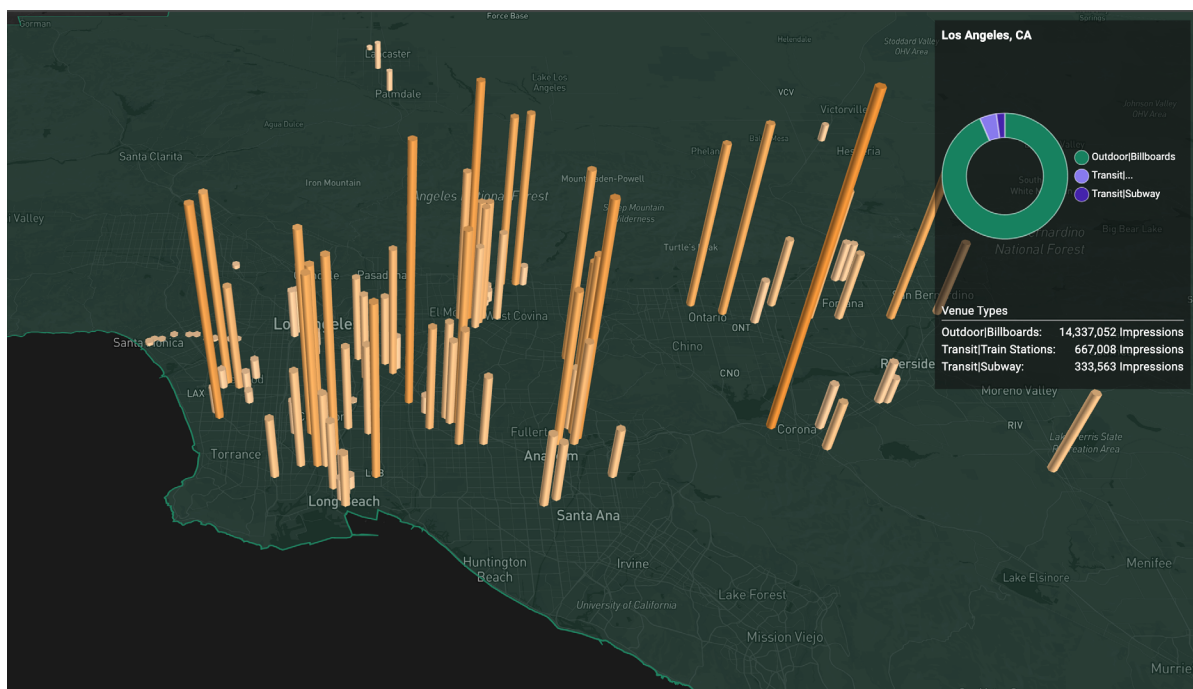
Streamlining observability across a global advertising platform

Vistar Media has been a Datadog customer for 11 years, making them one of the platform's earliest adopters. "The CTO at the time chose Datadog because it was the up-and-coming tool everyone was talking about," says Fleischer. "Having a consolidated place for both event streams and metrics that was searchable and taggable was really valuable. And us not having to maintain it was a big win, allowing us to focus on our actual product rather than infrastructure. This was invaluable as a resource-constrained early-stage startup."

Today, Vistar uses Datadog to monitor its overall system health, track key custom metrics, and investigate issues or alerts when they arise. "Vistar's supply-side platform (SSP) makes an extremely high volume of outgoing requests to our demand-side platform (DSP) partners," says Zach DiCesare, senior staff software engineer at Vistar. "We track DSP performance in Datadog, which enables both engineering and internal business teams to monitor partner health and identify any performance problems that could impact revenue if not resolved."

Vistar has grown substantially over the years, and Fleischer's team now manages 1.2 million ingested custom metrics and 575,000 indexed custom metrics across approximately 20 services. These metrics track everything from requests per second and latency between services to API usage rates and failure rates for web requests. Using Datadog, Vistar can manage its custom metrics volume and cost without sacrificing visibility. "Datadog allows us to manage metric volume and only collect the data when we are actively debugging a particular problem," says DiCesare.

Vistar's business operations teams also use Datadog dashboards to monitor client integrations. "One of our business operations teams uses Datadog to look at queries per second for certain clients to ensure their integrations are in a good state," Fleischer says. "This allows that team to get the data they need before escalating issues to engineering, significantly cutting down on support time."

The company also recently began using Datadog Cloud Cost Management (CCM) to track and optimize AWS expenses with more granular tagging capabilities than native AWS tools provide.

Driving operational excellence and client confidence

Today, Vistar Media's ability to detect and resolve issues across its digital advertising platform is significantly improved. The Datadog platform's unified approach to monitoring has proven especially valuable for Vistar's complex technology stack.

"The ability to correlate and holistically visualize metrics—in one place—and the ability to easily slice, dice, and share findings with the team has been invaluable. The dashboards we've built are heavily used by both engineering and other teams."

Improved visibility has been particularly critical both during new deployments and when troubleshooting client issues and has helped the team spot and address issues much faster than they could before. "We often correlate SSP metrics with our deployments to quickly identify potential performance regressions or bugs affecting DSP communication," adds DiCesare.

Meanwhile, Datadog CCM has helped Vistar optimize its cloud spend. "When I first started using CCM, I was able to identify a lot of things that we didn't need to be spending money on," says Fleischer. "It's definitely saved me time doing cost analysis on AWS."

Fleischer says Vistar values Datadog as a trusted partner and relies on Datadog's innovation pipeline to identify areas they may want to focus on. "We just assume whatever new tool Datadog comes out with is probably going to be better than the thing we're using now," explains Fleischer. "Investing in new Datadog products is also an easy sell to finance, because there's shared trust there."

The partnership extends beyond Vistar's internal operations to directly strengthen client relationships in the competitive digital advertising marketplace. "Anytime we get a questionnaire or do an interview with a client and they ask how we're monitoring the system and we say we're using Datadog, they know what we're talking about right away and they feel comfortable with that," says Fleischer. "That level of trust is invaluable when you're handling advertising campaigns for major brands across hundreds of thousands of digital screens worldwide."

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