

## Yes, Analytics Are “Just Another Feature,” But...



### **Analytics are boring...**

*Visualizations are yesterday's news... who uses dashboards anyway?*

If you're like most product managers, analytics, dashboards and visualizations may seem like “just another feature” you need to have, but under-investing in this critical element of your application could put you at a competitive disadvantage you're not even aware of.

Dashboards and visualizations often seem less exciting and marketable than artificial intelligence or process automation. That's why many companies are content to just build their own reporting capabilities using free libraries such as high charts or D3. These free

libraries are powerful and continually improving, but they are very developer heavy, they lack self-service capabilities and they offer minimal white labeling. There's also no dedicated support available beyond just posting to the general community.

But delivering inferior capabilities doesn't matter, right? It's just analytics, after all.

In fact, most software vendors use these features as a key value driver. How do we know? Because almost everywhere you look, software vendors have positioned these capabilities as a key component of their product on their websites.

Pick any software category, then stop by any software review site for the top vendors in that category and you'll find websites replete with mentions of analytics as a key part of their user experience. For many, even their pricing tiers are built around analytics features.

To understand the role analytics are playing in software, we randomly selected a category of applications on [G2 Crowd](#) and then analyzed the product positioning of the top 5 vendors.

The first category we evaluated was Cyber Security – Managed Detection and Response (MDR) Software. The top five vendors included Huntress, Cynet 360, Arctic Wolf, Blackpoint and Alert Logic.

Unsurprisingly, 3 of the top 4 vendors all extensively touted their dashboards as critical elements in their software. The fifth was more professional services than software rendering them less relevant for this analysis.

The capabilities of the dashboards highlighted had many common elements, including:

1. Unique Visuals. Dashboards that went well beyond simply pie charts or combo charts and featured custom visualizations which are difficult to find in open source libraries.
2. Custom Reporting. Powered by self-service analytics – which require a higher tier of pricing – often at the enterprise level – driving additional revenue.
3. Actionable Data. Some vendors touted how data was not passive, and how interacting with it could kick off workflows or actions.

When it comes to unique visualizations, having an extensive library which is easy to customize is critical to delivering beyond the bar chart. While most open source libraries

make it easy to add the basics – those charts do little to differentiate your application. More advanced open source charts require extensive developer resources limiting them to only the most well resourced companies. Having controls to adjust look and feel are equally important but over-riding that is the ability to customize the interaction to match your user experience. This simply isn't feasible with open source and is difficult to do with previous-generation embedded analytics vendors who often integrate through an iFrame.

Custom reporting can be accomplished by delivering self-service- i.e. they create the reports they need without asking you – to your customers or to your internal professional services teams.

While easy to use, self-service can be accomplished with a code heavy platform, developers and designers will be required for the launch and subsequent support of the UX they designed. By contrast, a low-code or no code self-service capability will allow all product teams to quickly embed and customize self service. Ultimately, these options must deliver a WYSIWYG interface to end users who will not tolerate anything but a drag and drop experience.

The second option – providing these capabilities to your professional services / success teams should be done with a low-code platform to allow for maximum flexibility. The result from either of these options are higher level tiers of service which come at a premium.

The vendors we evaluated actually tiered out their offerings based on delivering all of the above.

### **Tier 1 – Pre-canned reports**

These are typically basic reports and dashboards which offer information deemed most important by the software vendor. Sometimes they have more advanced visualizations and feature filtering to make the reports more useful but the end-user gets what's defined in the application and nothing more.

## **Tier 2 – Self-service capabilities**

The application provides all of the above but also allows the end user to select from a library of chart types, connect to the data they deem necessary, establish parameters and add these visualizations to a custom or pre-defined dashboard.

## **Tier 3 – Custom reports created by a ProServe team**

Focused primarily on enterprise customers, professional services offer white glove treatment where they will use the platform (or enlist dev teams to use a code heavy backend) to build and deploy reports on behalf of clients. This tier of service is typically very expensive, but can be high margin if the platform is easy to use and lower cost employees can field these inbound requests. This tier can be done in conjunction with Tier 2.

Finally, while a dashboard shows data, the most powerful dashboards allow end users to take action on that data directly from the interface. This requires more than just charts and graphs but a platform which has built in automation capabilities, the ability to create custom workflow interactions based on your defined user experience, and the ability to write data back to the database. Increasingly, this is where analytics will differentiate. Selecting a vendor with a strong roadmap in this area is critical because delivering an improved analytics experience will be the future of your application.

What we have seen in our extensive software reviews is that visualizations and dashboards actually DO matter. And they matter a lot more than you might think. Many vendors even named their dashboards in a compelling way. So, yes, visualizations are just another feature. But they're also just another feature that can differentiate your product. Just another feature which can reduce churn. And just another feature which can drive new revenue. That sounds like "just another feature" worth investing in and one that should be at the top of your priority list.

# Our Detailed Analysis:

Below is a breakdown of the individual vendors we looked at during our cybersecurity software review at G2 Crowd.:

## Cynet 360

Dashboards, visualizations and analytics are shown throughout the Cynet website, but are not explicitly discussed.

## Blackpoint

Blackpoint is more of a managed services vendor than a software provider.

## Huntress Software

Huntress combines a powerful managed detection and response (MDR) platform with a team of human threat hunters—so you can protect your business from today's determined cybercriminals.

- a. One of the four key features includes a reference to: custom incident reports
- b. Analytics are the top item on their platform page - The Huntress Dashboard
  - i. About: Your dashboard combines data and insights from each of our core services. It delivers a birds-eye view into active incidents and investigations, enabling you to remediate and correct issues as they arise. With a lightweight agent, simple interface and integrations with leading IT management tools, our platform makes it easy for you to defend against hidden threats and advanced attacks.
  - ii. This dashboard is featured throughout their website
  - iii. It appears Huntress offers some custom reporting
- c. Internal employees also use their dashboards - Our threat hunters review suspicious activity and send you easy-to-understand incident reports that explain the scope and severity of a threat.
- d. Several 5-star reviews on G2 mention their dashboard as a key capability

## Arctic Wolf

Using the cloud-native Arctic Wolf® Platform, we help organizations end cyber risk by providing security operations as a concierge service. Arctic Wolf solutions include Arctic Wolf® Managed Detection and Response (MDR), Managed Risk, Managed Cloud Monitoring, and Managed Security Awareness; each delivered by the industry's original Concierge Security® Team. Highly-trained Concierge Security experts work as an extension of internal teams to provide 24x7 monitoring, detection and response, as well as ongoing risk management to proactively protect organizations while continually strengthening their security posture.

1. Key feature - The Arctic Wolf® Managed Risk Dashboard is a cloud-based portal that provides visibility into the real-time risk landscape on your networks, endpoints, and cloud environments.
2. The company customizes analytics for each customer - We tailor the dashboard to your organization's priorities to help you make sense of vulnerabilities, while also managing and prioritizing patching to reduce cyber risk exposure.
  - a. A single interface for all things cyber risk
  - b. Visibility into your cybersecurity posture, including prioritized threats and your overall cyber risk score
  - c. Insight into your organization's risk trends and industry comparisons
  - d. Operational optimization by giving insight into prioritizing your information security and technology activities
  - e. Security observations collected across internal and external networks, endpoints, and cloud environments are enriched with threat feeds, OSINT data, CVE information, and more to provide granularity and context to incidents investigated and triaged by the Concierge Security® Team. These security experts help cut through the noise to remediate and contain threats before they can spread across your network and cause broader damage.

## Alert Logic

1. Alert Logic is the only managed detection and response (MDR) provider that delivers comprehensive coverage for public clouds, SaaS, on-premises, and hybrid environments. Since no level of investment prevents or blocks 100% of attacks, you need to continuously identify and address breaches or gaps before they cause real damage. With limited expertise and a cloud-centric strategy, this level of security can seem out of reach.
2. Dashboard visuals are prominently features on the homepage
  - a. Offers real time access to information on risk, vulnerabilities, remediation activities, configuration exposures, and compliance status. Focus on a prioritized order of threats that need further triage, drill down into threats to act on or mitigate exposure, and provide intuitive visualization of risk to executive leadership.
3. Threat Visibility is highlighted as a key feature for their web application
  - a. You are kept informed through real-time access to exposure information and broad reporting.
4. Their highest tier offering - Enterprise - includes Tailored reports that detail key findings and recommendations, threat trends, and risk analysis.

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