PagerDuty

Tackling Alert Fatigue with SLOs

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O'REILLY®

Building a DevOps Culture

DevOps is as much about culture as it is about tools.
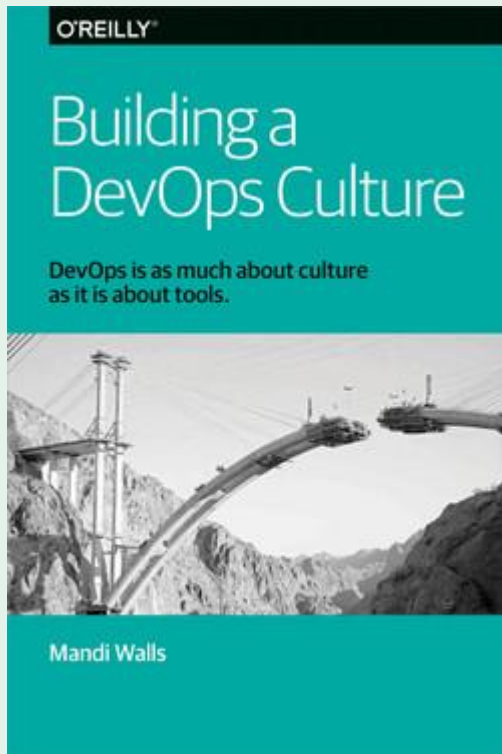
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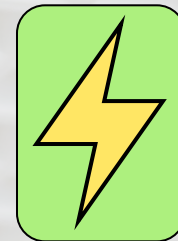🦋LNXCHK
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What is Alert Fatigue?

Alerts, alarms, notifications, etc all contribute to alert fatigue

Whether positive or negative, alerts pull teams out of their work

Signs of Alert Fatigue

1. Delayed response times
2. Missed alerts
3. Ignoring false positives
4. Increased stress and burnout
5. Decreased productivity
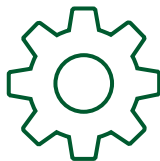6. Lower quality incident reviews and documentation

Photo by Erik Mclean on Unsplash

Methods for Dealing with Alert Fatigue
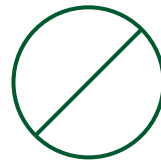
Don't alert on **success**

Don't send alerts that aren't **actionable**

Set appropriate urgency, and defer **low-urgency** alerts

Delete or suspend **broken** alerts

Task 1: Alert Cleanup Sprint

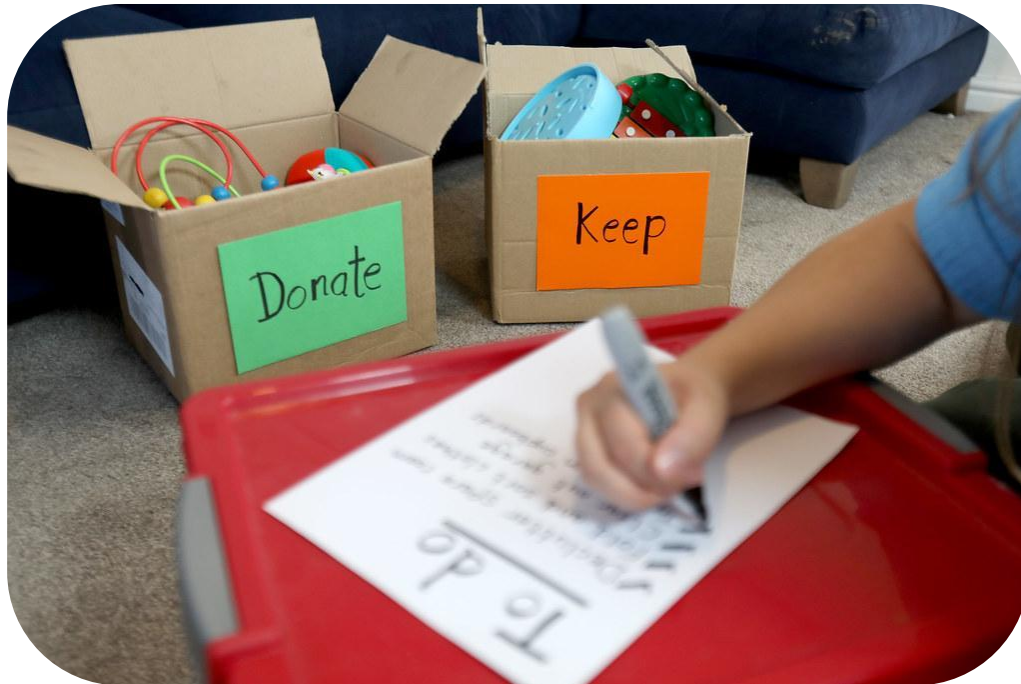**Make time to concentrate on cleaning up your existing alerts**

. . . .

Is it actionable?

Is it urgent?

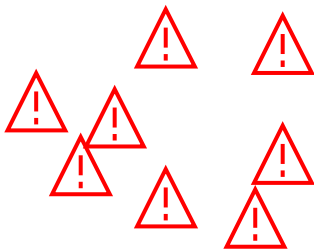**Is it helpful?**

Does it bring you joy?

SLOs

Service Level Objectives

Your goals for your production metrics

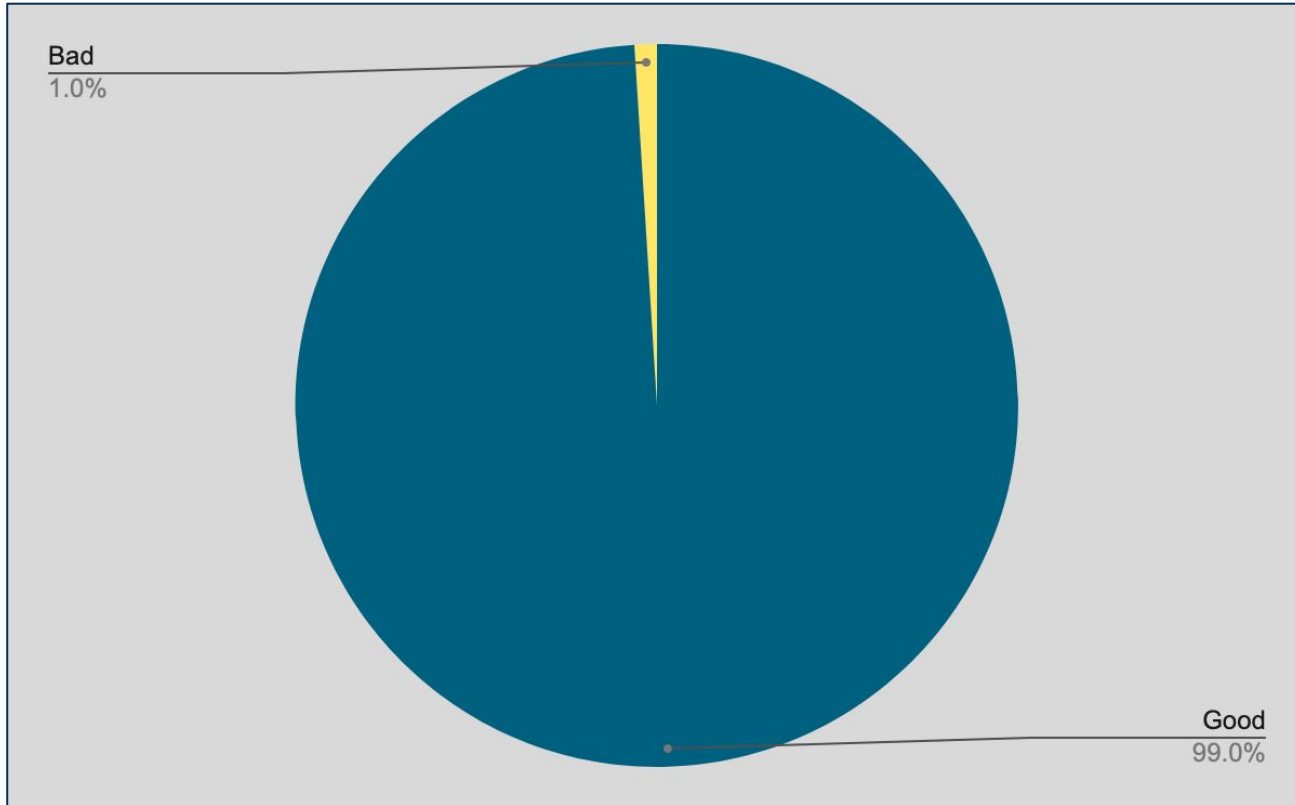Stop alerting on **every** error

Allow you to calculate an **Error Budget** - what's left after your 9s

9 9 9 **9**

Change the volume of alerts by adding **thresholds** based on your Error Budget

Error Budgets

The Users are the Point

What is important to the users?

How do you know?

Is it different for different parts of the application?
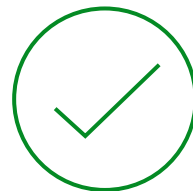
Goals

Reduce Overall **Alert Load**

Low volume of high urgency

Every alert that reaches a **human** responder is **actionable**

Most alerts are **novel**

Summary

1. Clean up alerts!
2. Focus on your users with SLOs and prioritize alerts on those metrics
3. Get the junk out of the human workflow with automation
4. Train the machines to be effective teammates

Manager not bought in?

Discuss the negative impacts already felt on the team and on the performance of your services.

Resources

- Understanding Alert Fatigue and How to Prevent It
  - https://www.pagerduty.com/resources/learn/alert-fatigue/
- 8 Ways to Reduce Alert Fatigue
  - https://www.pagerduty.com/blog/reduce-alert-fatigue/
- What's the Difference Between SLAs, SLOs, and SLIs?
  - https://www.pagerduty.com/resources/learn/what-is-slo-sla-sli/
- Google SRE Workbook
  - https://sre.google/workbook/implementing-slos/
- Nobl9 https://www.nobl9.com/