Augmented Network Visibility

with High-Resolution Metrics

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FOSDEM'19

ntop

Agenda

- Network visibility - state-of-the-art and benefits of high-resolution metrics

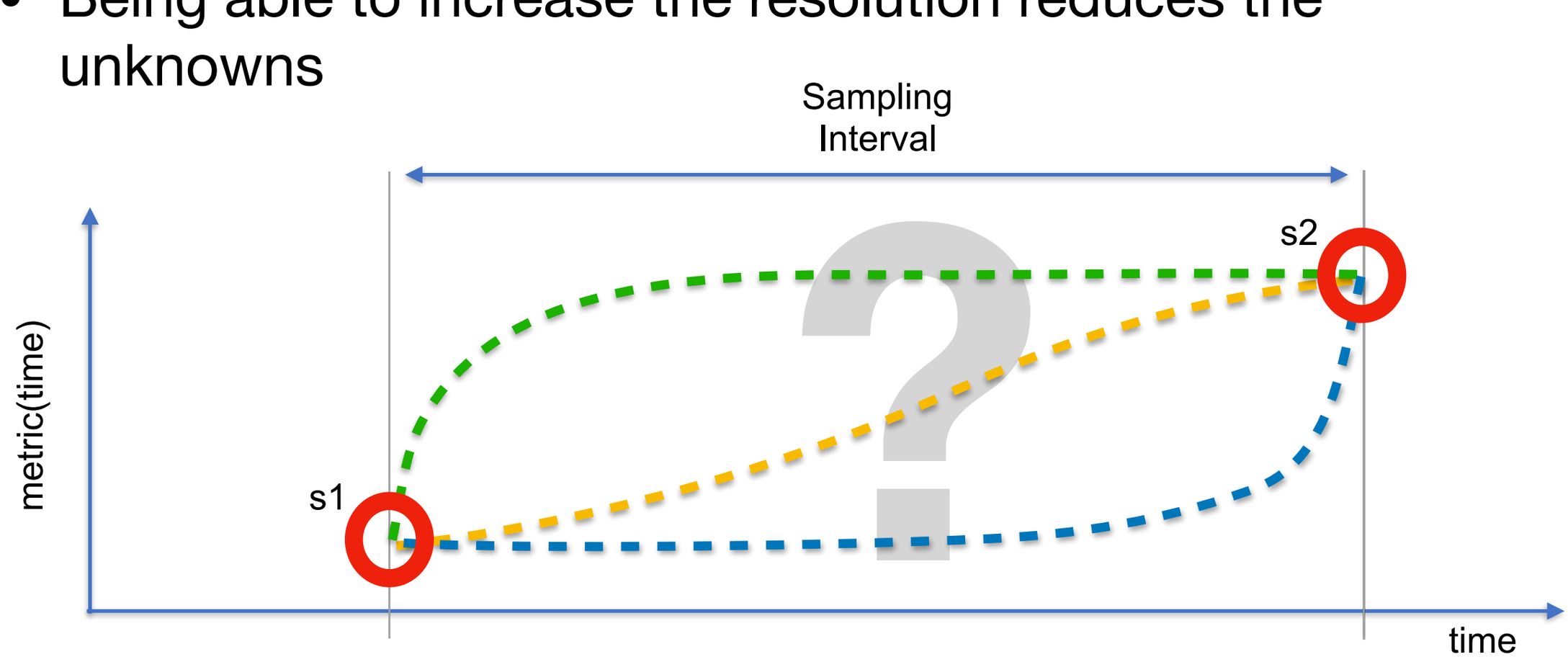
- Building an high-resolution network monitoring solution - ntopng, InfluxDB and Grafana

Network Visibility

- In general, network visibility is provided by means of metrics
    - bytes, packets, applications (e.g, YouTube, FaceBook), …
- Metrics are **sampled** at **discrete time** intervals — the shorter the interval, the higher the **resolution**

Inter-Interval Blindness

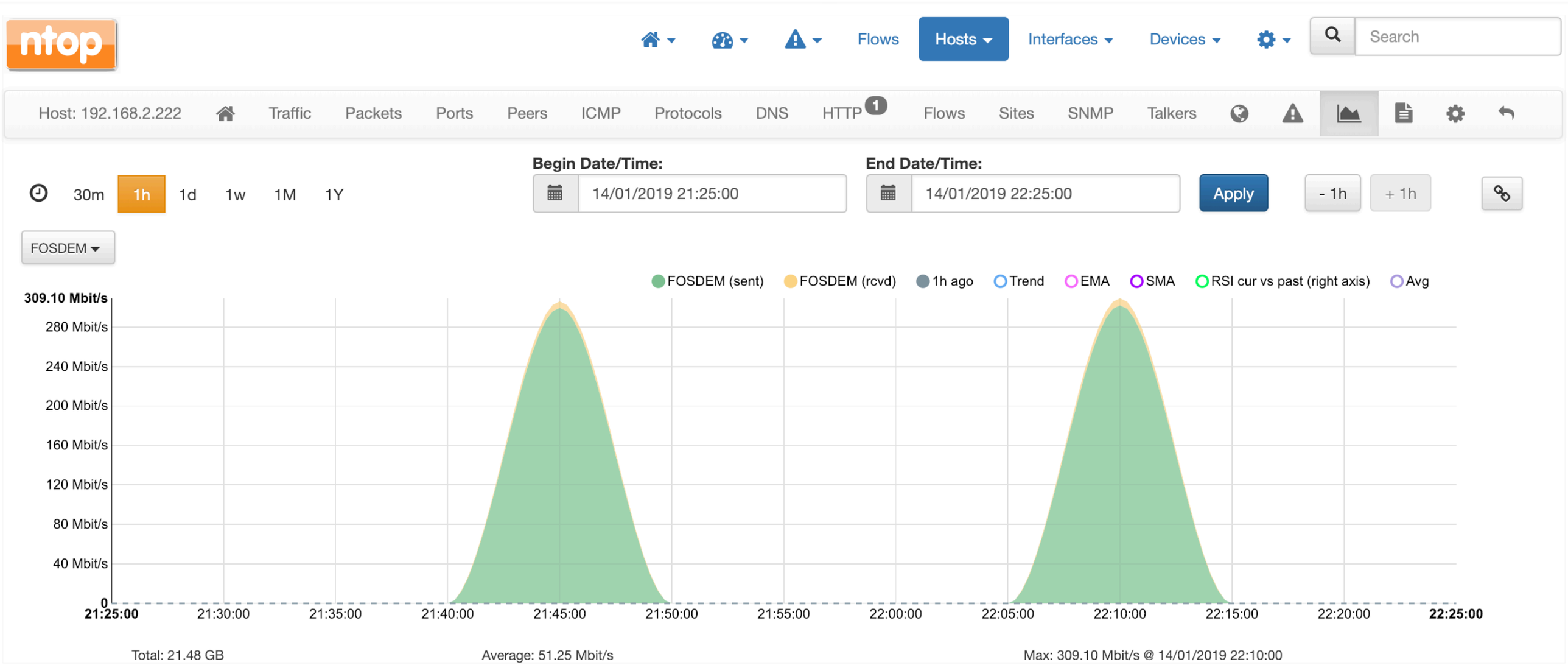
- Nothing is known on the metric evolution between consecutive samples
- Being able to increase the resolution reduces the unknowns



Let’s See an Example

- Same volume of traffic transferred
  - Free link
  - Fully-utilized link
- Client and server connected to a GbE switch
- iperf for the transfer (https://github.com/esnet/iperf)
- monitoring with ntopng (https://github.com/ntop/ntopng)
  - 5-min vs 10-sec traffic samples

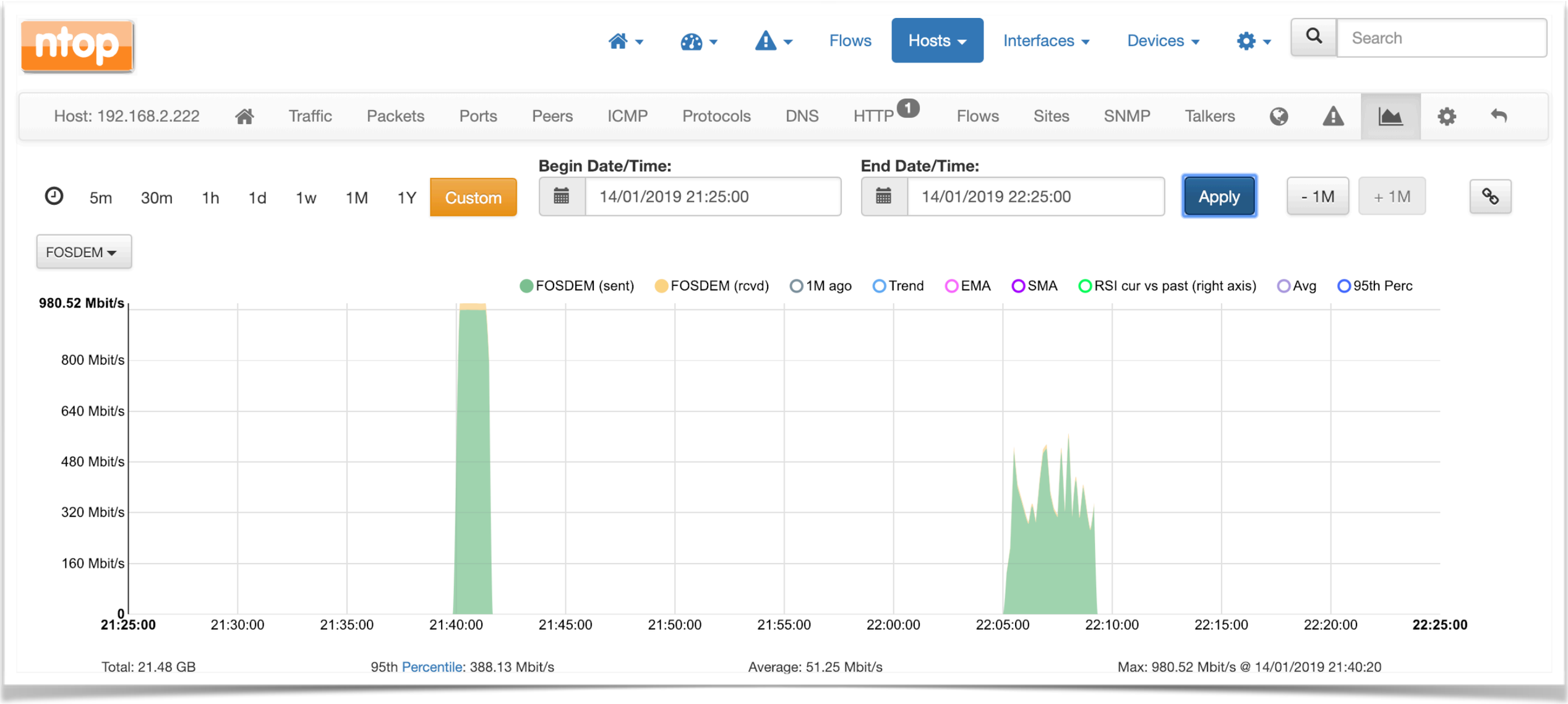
Free vs Fully-Utilized Link: 5-min Samples




```
client: simone@192.168.2.222:~$ iperf -c develv5 -p 8082 -i 1 -t 9999 -n 10240M

server: simone@192.168.2.225:~$ iperf -s -p 8082 -i 1 -t 99999
```

Free vs Fully-Utilized Link: 10-sec Samples

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```

Host: 192.168.2.222 | Traffic | Packets | Ports | Peers | ICMP | Protocols | DNS | HTTP 1 | Flows | Sites | SNMP | Talkers

30m | 1h | 1d | 1w | 1M | 1Y

Begin Date/Time: 14/01/2019 21:25:00 **End Date/Time:** 14/01/2019 22:25:00 Apply - 1h + 1h

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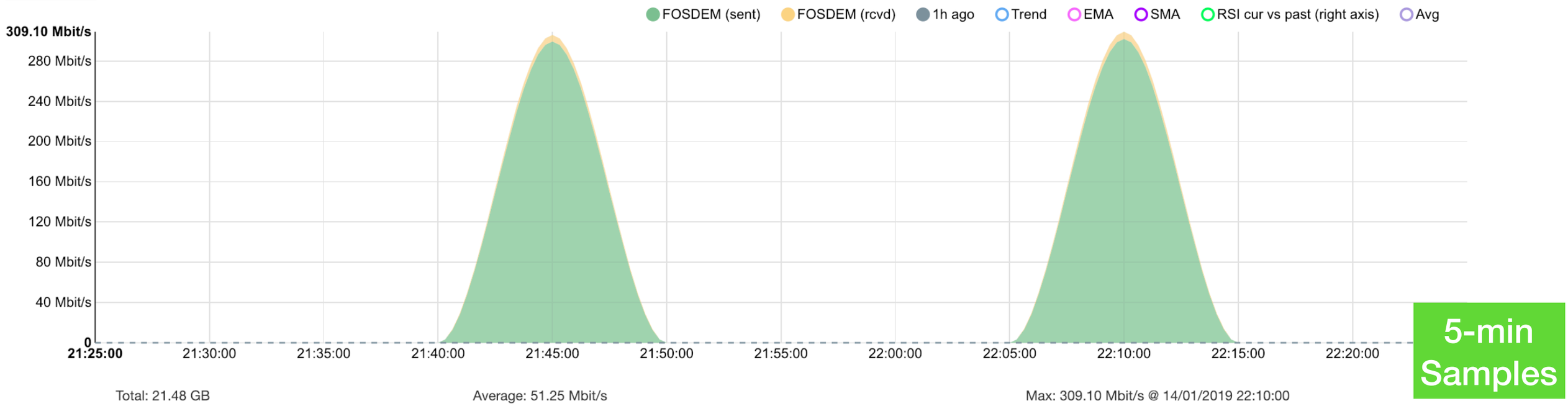

5-min Samples

Total: 21.48 GB | Average: 51.25 Mbit/s | Max: 309.10 Mbit/s @ 14/01/2019 22:10:00

Host: 192.168.2.222 | Traffic | Packets | Ports | Peers | ICMP | Protocols | DNS | HTTP 1 | Flows | Sites | SNMP | Talkers

5m | 30m | 1h | 1d | 1w | 1M | 1Y | Custom

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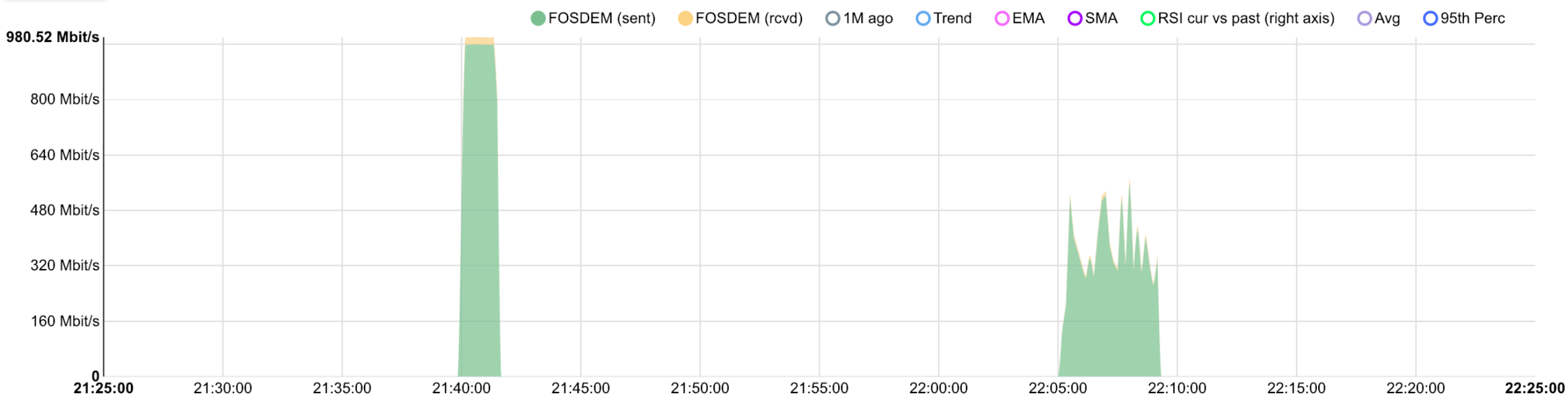


10-sec Samples

Total: 21.48 GB | 95th Percentile: 388.13 Mbit/s | Average: 51.25 Mbit/s | Max: 980.52 Mbit/s @ 14/01/2019 21:40:20

Why Care? Throughput

- Some applications expect the network to provide them a minimum throughput
    - VoIP
    - Realtime Video
- Failing to meet such requirements could cause intermittent user experience and application performance degradation
- 10-sec throughput **!=** 5-min throughput

Why Care? Burstiness

- Detect bursty traffic
- Bursts can cause network buffers to overflow
  - Packet drops while having a low average link utilization
- Cause network equipment further down the line to deliver packets at odd intervals, determining latency and jitter issues
- 10-sec samples can highlight bursts averaged out when using 5-min samples

Augmented Visibility: Theory

- **Monitoring tool** that is able to generate metrics up to a packet-by-packet resolution

- **Big-data store** that is able to retain sub-minute samples

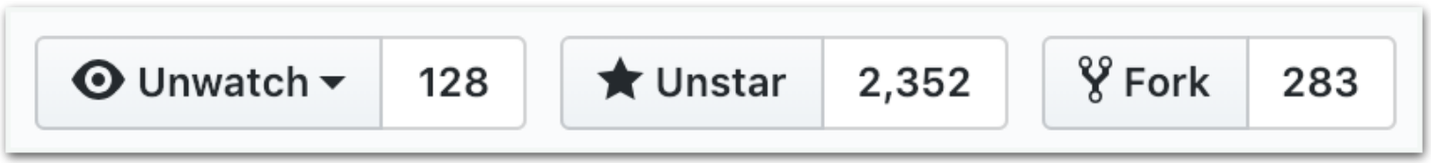
- **Visualization/analytics platform** for the analysis

Augmented Visibility: Practice

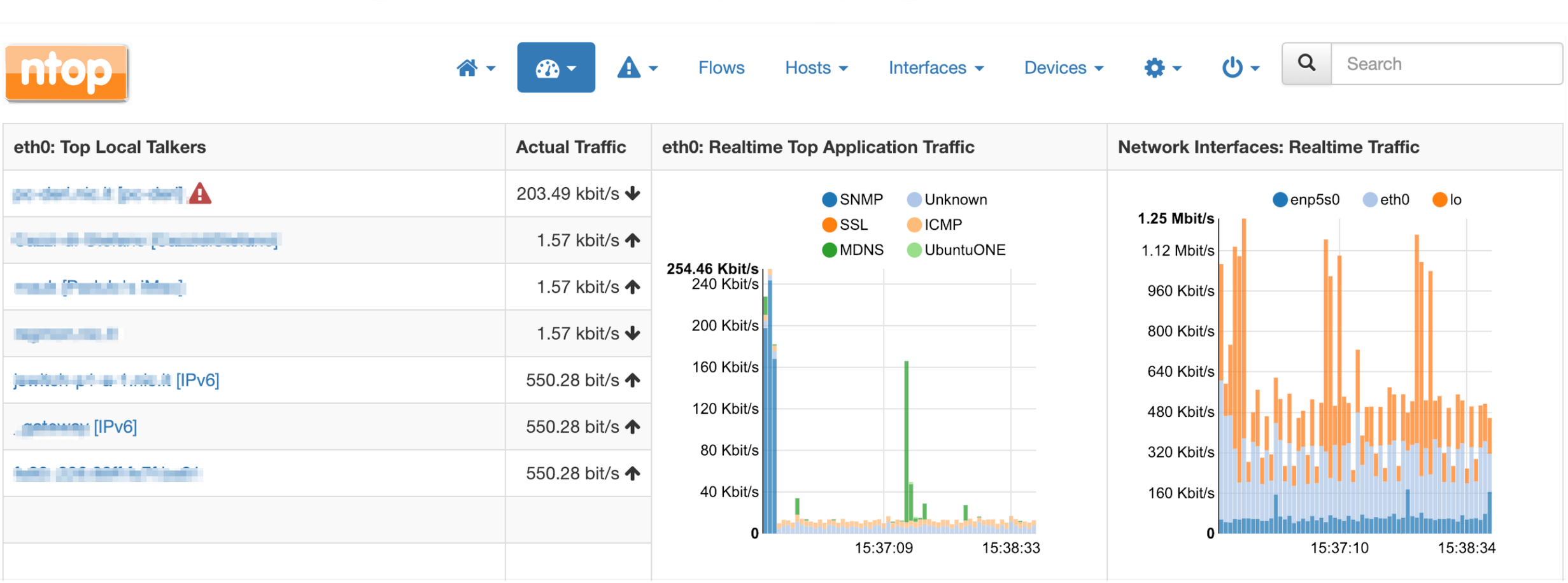
- **Monitoring tool: ntopng**
- **Big-data store: InfluxDB**

- **Visualization/analytics platform: Grafana**

Monitoring Tool: ntopng



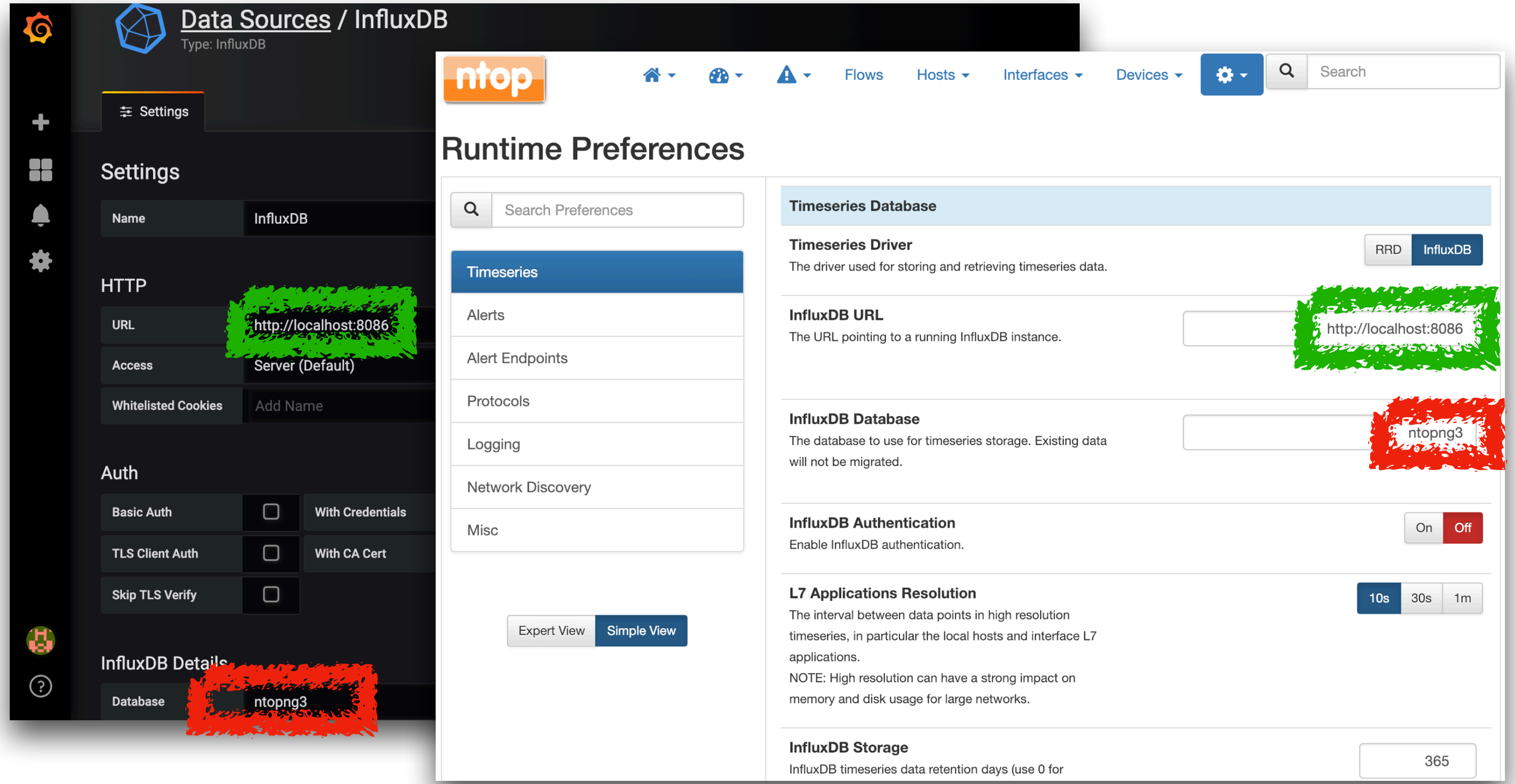
- opensource web-based network monitoring tool
- https://github.com/ntop/ntopng



Sub-Min Samples with ntopng

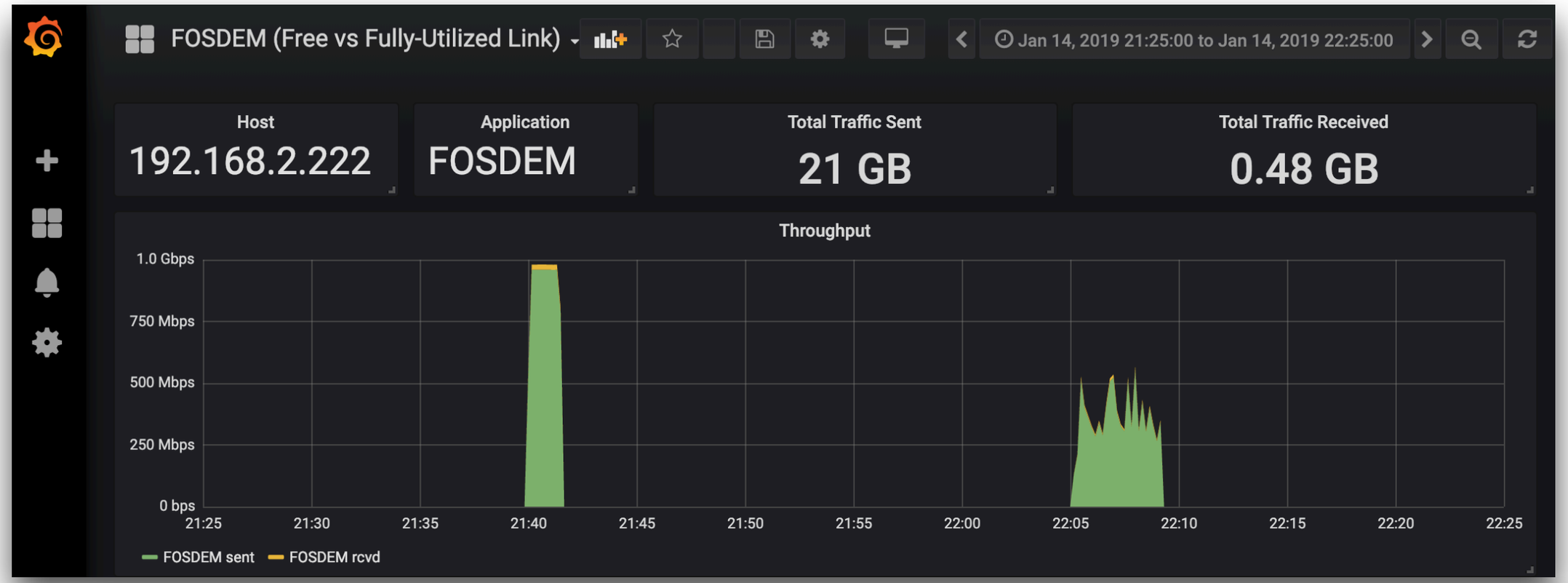
- ntopng architecture
  - Packet capture thread
  - Periodic activities
- Originally based on RRDs, ntopng has been extended to produce 10-second samples, e.g., bytes(t), bytes(t+10), bytes(t+20), …
- Samples are temporary stored and periodically POST-ed to InfluxDB

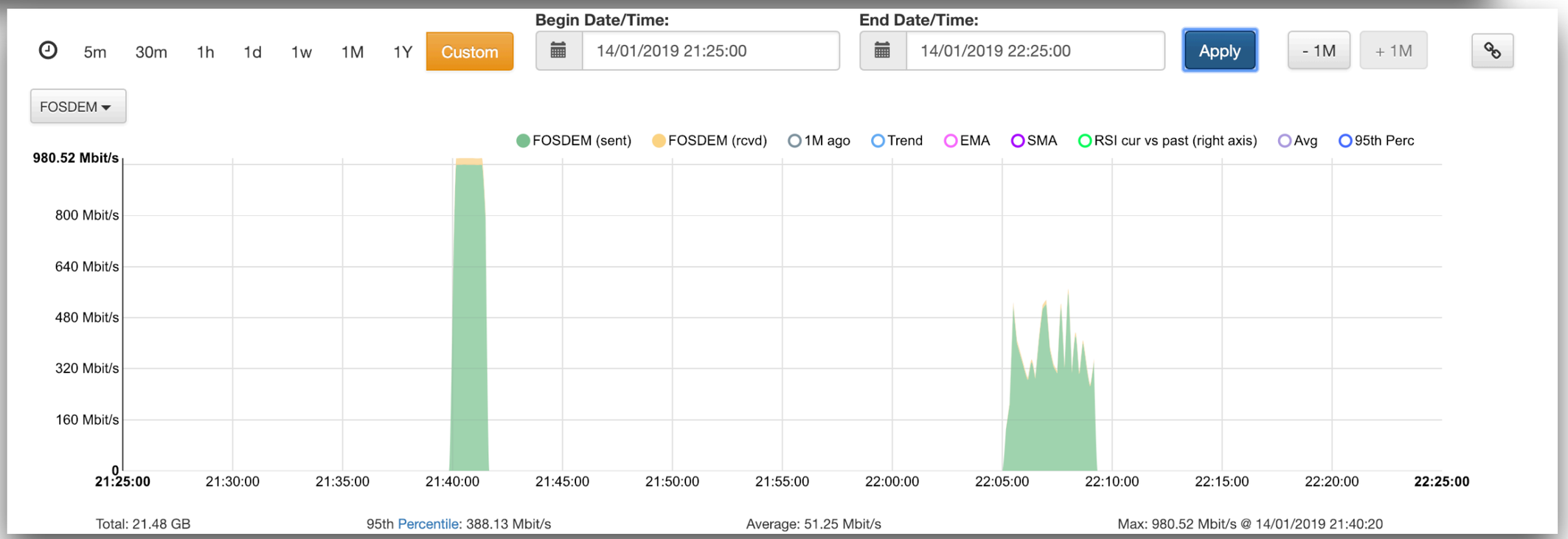
Configurations



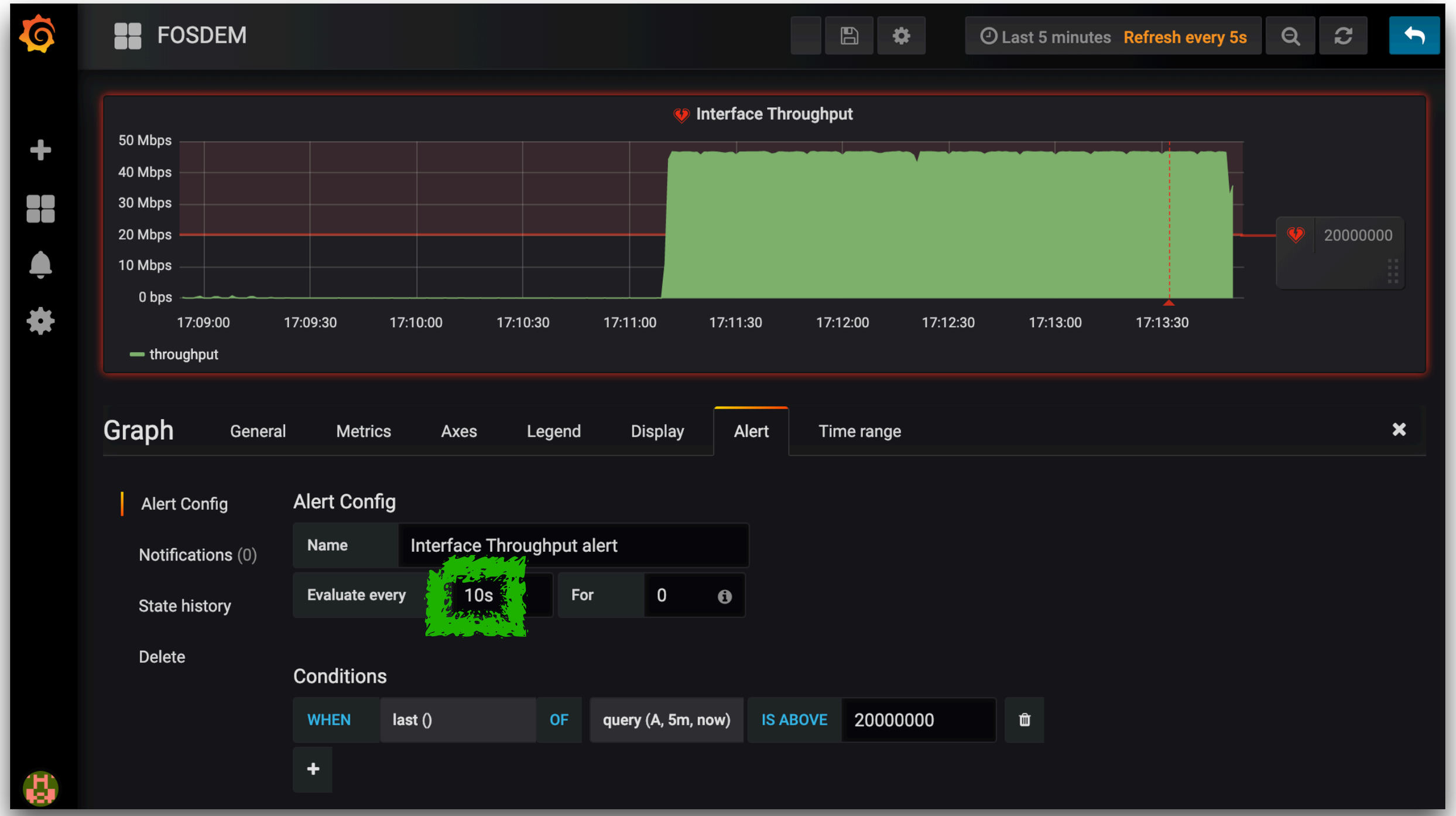

```
simone@192.168.2.222:~$ ps aux | grep influxdb
influxdb 2103  2.3  9.0 3856332 1471988 ?     Ssl  Jan17 297:12 /usr/bin/influxd -config /etc/influxdb/influxdb.conf
```

Grafana: Dashboards





Grafana #2: Alerts

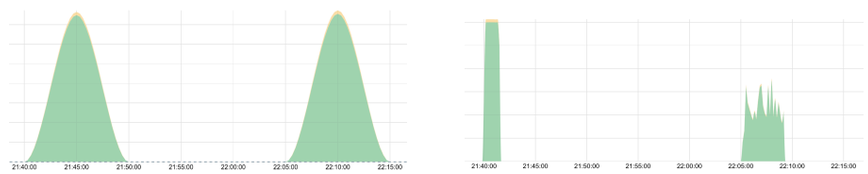


Demo

- Let’s see ntopng, InfluxDB and Grafana in action…

Take-Home

- High-resolution metrics can unveil traffic patterns hidden at lower-resolutions



- Effective solution for high-resolution network monitoring involves ntopng (monitoring) + InfluxDB (storage) + Grafana (visualization / analysis)

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Appendix

Getting the Samples

- A series of technologies can be used to produce samples of network metrics, among which

Technology	How	Max Resolution
SNMP	periodic polls to read counters	minutes
sFlow	read counter samples sent by network devices	minutes
NetFlow	read incoming data records	flow lifetime
ntopng	process raw traffic packets	packet-by-packet

Augmented Visibility: Challenges [1/2]

- Metrics Generation/Storage
    - Hosts in a corporate network can range from hundreds up to tens of thousands
    - Multiple metrics generated for every single host
        - Bytes sent and received
        - Layer-7 application protocols (e.g, Facebook, Youtube, …)
        - RTT / Retransmits / Out-of-Order / Out-of-Sequence
- 10,000 hosts @ 20 metrics / host / 10 seconds produce **~173 M samples per day**

Augmented Visibility: Challenges [2/2]

- Analysis/Visualization
    - Unfeasible to visualize millions of samples on a dashboard
        - Rollups to prevent ‘averaging-out’ effects
    - Computationally expensive to run certain algorithms (e.g., ML, AI)
        - Rollups to produce statistically-meaningful data