# Elasticsearch vs. OpenSearch Business Decision Tree

Read our full blog this topic.  The people affected by Elasticsearch / Kibana vs. OpenSearch fall into three "buckets".

| DIY Development & Support | Use Managed Services Provider | User or Vendor of Managed Services or Product |

In a nutshell:

- If you are a regular user of Elasticsearch and Kibana and you develop, manage and support your own application using the open-source versions, the new licensing probably works for you fine and you can continue with Elastic's official distributions.

- If you use Elastic and Kibana as a managed service, you will need to find out what the vendor roadmap looks like and decide whether that impacts your choice of cloud or service providers in the future, and what a migration path would look like.

- If you are a managed services or product provider with Elasticsearch or Kibana embedded in your offering, you will have a business decision to make on whether to invest in giving your customers a choice between the Elastic or OpenSearch distribution.

We have documented a more complete set of decision tree diagrams below that may be useful.

**BUCKET 1**

**If you are a current do-it-yourself (DIY) Elasticsearch or Kibana user on**

- **Version later than 7.10.2**, and the Elastic license is acceptable to you, there may never be a reason to change.
- **Version 7.10.2 or earlier**, and you are an open-source "purist", you should consider evaluating OpenSearch during your next major development cycle.
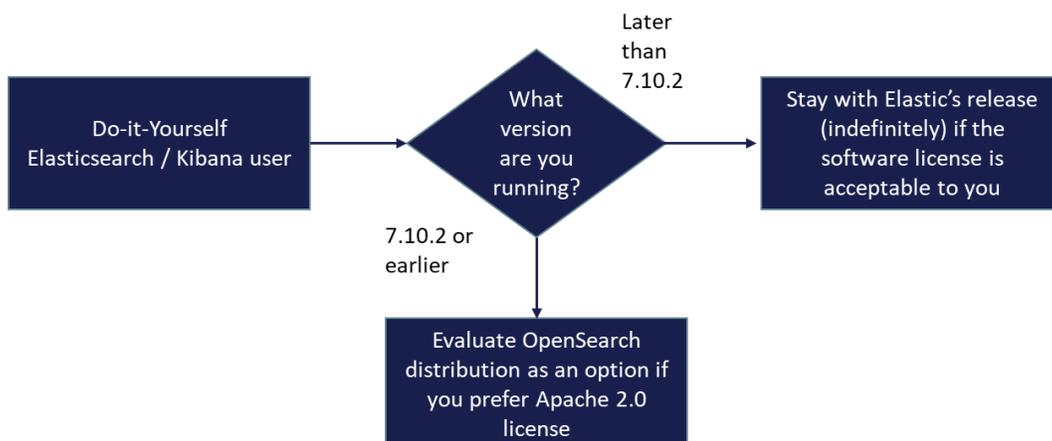
**BUCKET 2**

**If you are using Elastic's managed service for Elasticsearch and Kibana**

- **On Microsoft Azure or Google Cloud** – Do nothing.  Elastic on Azure and Elastic on Google Cloud were respectively announced by Elastic, Microsoft and Google.  These services will likely benefit from the latest developments in Elasticsearch and Kibana.
- **On AWS** – Elastic's offering on AWS will basically go head-to-head with Amazon OpenSearch Service (renamed from Amazon Elasticsearch Service). Your approach depends on what version of Elasticsearch / Kibana you are on.
  - **Version 7.10.2 or earlier**, and your relationship with Elastic is not strategic, you should evaluate Amazon OpenSearch, including its long-term viability and the bonus of dealing with one fewer cloud service vendor.
  - **Later than version 7.10.2** - You can probably stay the course if you are happy with the service.  Amazon is not likely to kick Elastic off AWS.
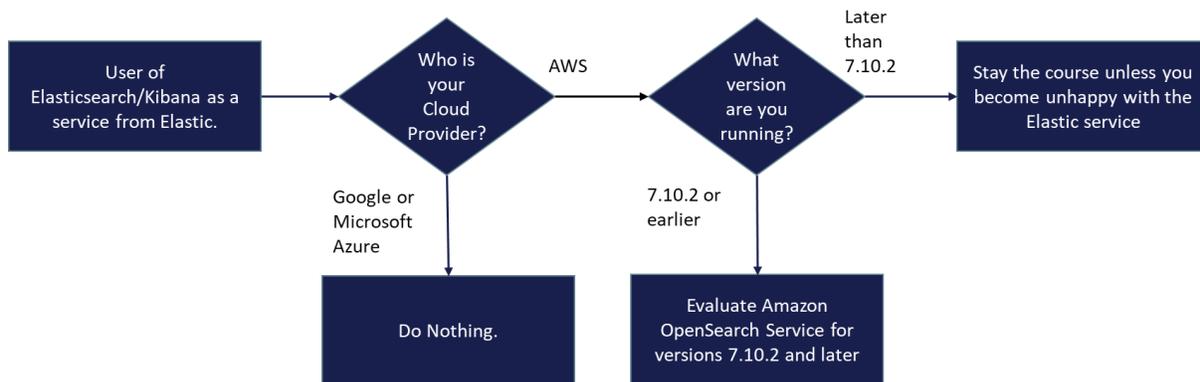


**If you are using a managed service for Elasticsearch and Kibana from a vendor other than Elastic** (and there are many), your approach revolves around the vendor and their roadmap.

- **If the provider is not Amazon** you need to have a serious conversation with the vendor about how the new Elastic licensing impacts their ability to provide the service.  Unless they have a strong business relationship with Elastic, their ability to provide the service is at risk.
- **If the provider is Amazon** your approach again depends on what version of Elasticsearch / Kibana you are running.
  - **Version 7.10.2 or earlier** – you need to evaluate the Amazon OpenSearch Service and develop a migration plan if / when you want to migrate.
  - **Later than version 7.10.2** – downgrading versions to use OpenSearch may not be practical.  If you have concerns about its long-term viability and AWS is not a strategic IT vendor, consider the Elasticsearch / Kibana service from Elastic, Microsoft, or Google.
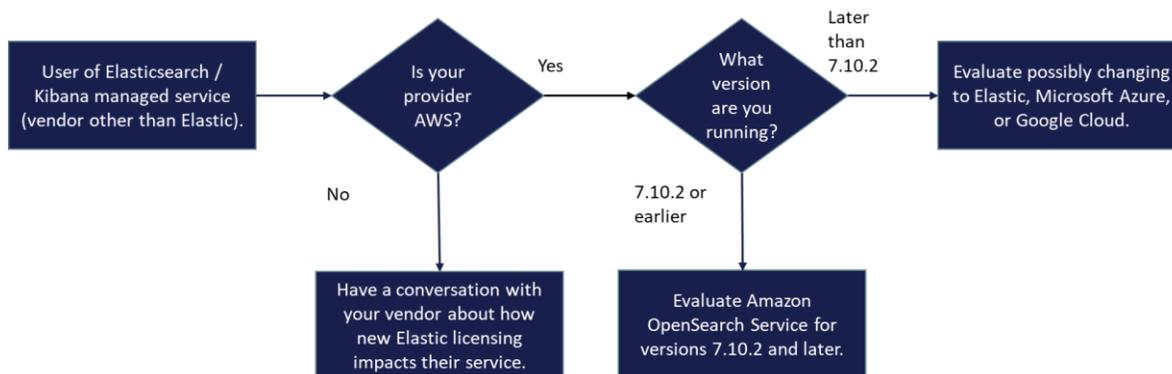
**BUCKET 3**

**If you are using a commercial search application based on Elasticsearch or Kibana**

- **Owned by Elastic** – Examples include Elastic Enterprise Search (formerly SwifType), Elastic Observability, and Elastic Security. No worries here.
- **Not owned by Elastic** – Elastic is mostly wresting with Amazon and OpenSearch. But it doesn't mean your vendor can fly under the radar forever, especially if the underlying version they are using is later than 7.10.2. Have a serious conversation with your vendor about their roadmap and its long-term implication for you, including what choices you may have, and at what cost.
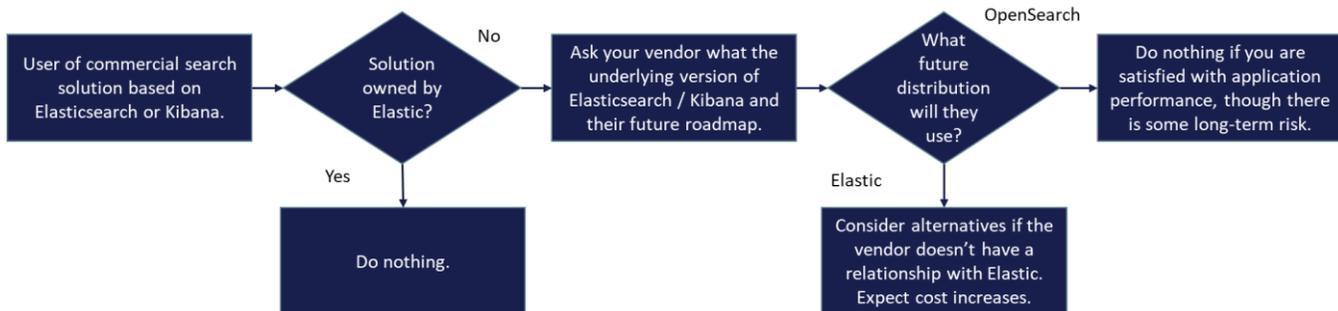


**If you are a developer / vendor of a commercial solution or service based on Elasticsearch or Kibana** – and this could include widely used SaaS based solutions, or bespoke one–off applications, you're in a sticky situation.

- **If you have (or think you have) a relationship with Elastic** – you may need your Business Development team to step up, meet with Elastic and confirm your time window and the steps you need to take to keep you out of trouble with the new Licensing. This could mean a business arrangement, or it could mean having to contribute your solution enhancements to the Elastic code case. *Review the new Licensing carefully*.
- **If you don't** – you will need to determine if your customers and the market will care if your solution includes the official Elastic distributions of Elasticsearch and Kibana. After all, they may not care as long as your application / service works. If the demand is there, you have a business decision to make. Find a viable business approach that gives your customers a choice of distributions, or bite the bullet and place your bet with Amazon and OpenSearch.