fiddler

Total Cost of Ownership for Operationalizing Agents

External LLMs vs. Fiddler Trust Models at enterprise scale

Every observability platform promises visibility into your agents. But most don't tell you the full cost of that visibility, including a hidden cost called the Trust Tax.

How Most Platforms Evaluate Agents

When an agent generates a trace, it needs to be scored for quality, safety, and performance. The most common approach is to send each trace to an external LLM (OpenAI, Anthropic, etc.) to act as a judge. This means every trace scored is an API call to a third-party model provider, and that cost shows up on your bill, not your tooling vendor's.

This approach is called LLM-as-a-Judge. When the judge is an external LLM, the dependency on third-party API calls is what drives up your total cost of ownership (TCO).

The Cost of Evaluating with External LLMs

1 Your trace is generated by your agent

2 API call to external LLM provider for scoring (OpenAI, Anthropic, etc.)

$ **You pay the Trust Tax**

The Hidden Costs of Calling External LLMs

Risk Gaps

To control costs, some teams may consider sampling, but the traces you skip are often the ones that matter most: jailbreak attempts, policy violations, hallucinations, edge-case failures. These are low-frequency, high-impact events that sampling could potentially miss.

Operational Overhead

The engineering effort to set up, manage, and maintain your evaluation infrastructure, whether that's orchestrating external API calls or standing up your own models. Your team carries the burden of prompt versioning, scoring calibration, model hosting, and ongoing maintenance.
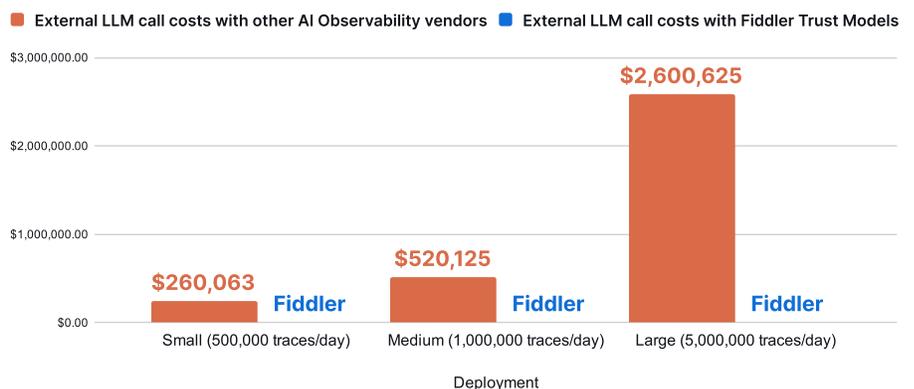
The Trust Tax

You are charged every time a trace is scored via an external LLM API call. This shows up on your invoice. At enterprise scale, it compounds fast.

What the Trust Tax Looks Like at Scale

These are potential external LLM API costs you pay annually, in addition to your tooling fees.

* Calculations based on Open AI GPT 5 mini.
  1 trace = 1 API call to GPT 5 mini.
  Contact sales@fiddler.ai to receive a custom calculation.

■ External LLM call costs with other AI Observability vendors ■ External LLM call costs with Fiddler Trust Models

$3,000,000.00

$2,000,000.00

$1,000,000.00

$0.00

$2,600,625

$520,125

$260,063

Fiddler · Small (500,000 traces/day)
Fiddler · Medium (1,000,000 traces/day)
Fiddler · Large (5,000,000 traces/day)

Deployment

Fiddler Trust Models: Evaluate and Observe Agents Without the Trust Tax

Fiddler Trust Models are specialized, task-specific models built in-house and deployed securely in your environment. They score agent and LLM prompts and responses at runtime for hallucination, toxicity, jailbreaks, PII/PHI exposure, and other critical risks.

Trust Models are built to cover a range of use cases:

Out-of-the Box Models
- Hallucination detection, safety scoring, toxicity, jailbreak detection, and PII/PHI identification
- Ultra low-latency and task-specific

Customizable Models
- Enterprises submit prompts to create domain-specific evaluators
- Fully managed, handles 300K+ daily events without the burden of infrastructure management

⚲ **Why Sampling Doesn't Solve the Trust Tax**

Sampling reduces your bill but introduces risk gaps. **Fiddler Trust Models cover 100% of traces by removing the cost barrier that draws teams to sample in the first place.**

Fiddler Trust Models Power AI Observability and Security

Evaluation
Test and benchmark agents before they go live. Run evals against test sets, compare model versions, and validate guardrail thresholds before launch.

Observability
Continuously score and monitor every trace in production. Surface issues in real time, diagnose root causes, and trigger alerts.

Guardrails
Enforce safety policies in real time across input, execution, and output, preventing violations before they occur.

Analytics
Roll up aggregate reports down to granular insights across agents for a single-pane-of-glass view of behavior, risk, and performance.

Trusted by Industry Leaders and Developers

> "Fiddler delivered unified observability, protection, and governance across agents and predictive models, making it fundamental to our AI strategy."
>
> **Karthik Rao**, CEO, Nielsen

Nielsen   Thumbtack   AIG

LENDINGPOINT   AAA   CSAA Insurance Group, a AAA Insurer

Elevance Health   mastercard