An application is like an automobile: you can’t just deploy it and forget about it. You need to monitor it, just as you need to monitor your vehicle’s speed to ensure that you don’t go too fast. Your vehicle also has warning devices built into its dashboard to tell you if your engine stops or if you lose oil pressure. In a similar vein, AppFabric includes monitoring features that enable you to view the status of your current applications.

Monitoring produces a good deal of data. AppFabric lets you retain that data in a database for reporting purposes. You can purge data when it’s old. AppFabric even includes support for archiving older data, in case you decide that you need that older data again.

Finally, AppFabric includes a built-in tracking capability. You might think of tracking as what a mechanic does when he troubleshoots a problem in your automobile. AppFabric’s tracking gives you visibility into AppFabric workflows. You can view events, and you can look at data in a currently executing workflow. Tracking gives you the ability to troubleshoot and resolve problems that might occur in your production environment.

Monitoring

Taking a look at the whole application development lifecycle reinforces why developers and system administrators need the ability to monitor an application, see the state of its service instances and workflows, and view workflow instances with problems. AppFabric provides a dashboard that allows both developers and systems administrators to peer into the running system and see what is going on.

The AppFabric Dashboard

You can access this dashboard by clicking the Dashboard icon under the Application Server Extension for .NET 4 section in the Internet Information Services (IIS) Manager at the desired scope in the IIS hierarchy. Figure 11-1 shows the icon to click.
You probably remember from previous chapters that the different scope levels are server, site, and application. The metrics displayed in each section at each scope are the same, but the values change based on what is included at the specific scope. Depending on what scope level you select, you might see metrics from the instances of all services on the server or site, or you might be able to select an application and see only the metrics for those instances.

**Note** The amount of monitoring data displayed for a specific view corresponds to the values that you configure on the Monitoring tab in the Configure WCF and WCF dialog box for that scope.

The dashboard will display categories for **Persisted WF Instances**, **WCF Call History**, and **WF Instance History** (see Figure 11-2). The dashboard will also show you the pertinent statistics for each of these three categories.

![Dashboard](image-url)

**Figure 11-2. AppFabric Dashboard**

The **Persisted WF Instances** section of the dashboard displays a live summary. It also shows the active instances, idle instances, and suspended instances. The idle and suspended instances are important because they point to Workflow instances that are blocked or that have encountered an error. These are the states that require human intervention, so you can right-click on any of the instances that appear to see a dropdown menu that lets you drill down on and look at either **Tracked WF Instances** or **Tracked Events**. When you click the **Tracked Events** menu item, AppFabric takes you to the **Tracked Events** page, where you can see the Event Level, Event Type, WF Activity Name, Time, Service Name and the Service Virtual Path (see Figure 11-3).