

Apache MXNet (Incubating) User Groups recurring meetings

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What, Why, Who and How

What?

The idea behind recurring user group meeting is to provide additional channel of communication between Apache MXNet (Incubating) developers and users who rely on projects and features being worked on by the Apache MXNet community. It is couple weekly 1 hour sessions (individual group meetings are held in different geo regions) during which users and developers of Apache MXNet could ask questions related to its usage.

Why?

This channel would facilitate realtime conversation during which developers and users could:

- provide answers and insights into how particular functionality was implemented and is meant (or not) to be used
- debug user issues
- propose solutions for users needs using projects and features currently available
- have a quick conversation and debug through screen share

While filing issues for the same on GitHub is definitely one way of communicating with users, it could at times be more suitable to have personal communication and provide guidance/help in real time in order to arrive at solution sooner rather than later.

On top of that having this additional channel of communication could help with increasing adoption rate of Apache MXNet as users would be able to get answers to their questions with less delays.

Who?

Apache MXNet developers (committers and contributors) would be primary driver behind facilitating office hours. Developers and users could request help from other developers who have expertise in a certain area. To start with - two groups of Apache MXNet developers, one based in Palo Alto, CA USA and another based in Berlin, Germany. As a part of their day job these two groups who are part of Apache MXNet developers community will offer one hour a week to support this effort. We hope to extend the areas based on the community's bandwidth and welcome other community members to suggest if they would like to contribute to this effort in different parts of the world and also in different timezones.

How?

Developers of both teams (one based in Palo Alto and one based in Berlin) will dedicate 1 hour every week to participate in user group meetings. In order to participate in user group meeting - Apache MXNet users or developers just need to dial into conference bridge using links provided below. As user group meeting is open to everyone there is no other requirements for participants.

Optional, but **recommended**: in order to have more productive discussions, we encourage Apache MXNet users to describe their questions before the meeting so that Apache MXNet developers who will participate in user group discussion would have context and idea about topics users would like to bring to the group meeting. This is not required though - users could just connect to the conference bridge and have conversations ad-hoc, however this is highly recommended for those cases where questions or issues need deeper context to have meaningful conversation.

For such cases where users would prefer to provide context before group meeting we have a lightweight process described below in "How to participate" section.

Typical flow for user group meetings is like this:

- users and developers, optionally, notify user group (by sending email to [dev@](#) list) about topic they would like to discuss;
- at a specific time Apache MXNet developer (host) from either Palo Alto group or Berlin group starts a conference line;
- users dial into that conference and participate in discussions. They will have an ability to share their screens too;
- once user group meeting is conducted corresponding host follows up with summarizing email to [dev@](#) list. Also, if participants have referred to existing artifacts before meeting - host will update those artifacts according to meeting outcome.

How to participate?

TL;DR;

1. choose time and day by referring to Conference info and meeting schedule below
2. book it on your calendar
3. *Optional:* describe your topic/issue/question somewhere (jira, forum, email to [dev@](mailto:dev@mxnet.apache.org) list) and let meeting hosts know about that in advance (by sending short email to [dev@](mailto:dev@mxnet.apache.org) list)
4. when time comes - dial in and discuss!

Mode details

It is very simple: just dial into conference line at specific time and participate!

In order to make user group meetings more productive we strongly encourage users to announce topic they would like to discuss beforehand. This will provide some leeway time for hosts to prepare. There is lightweight and user-friendly way for doing that. Users have 4 options to choose from:

- *using Jira:* create new or refer to existing story with issue description in [Apache MXNet Jira project](#) and send a short email to [dev@](mailto:dev@mxnet.apache.org) list referring to corresponding story and suggestion to discuss it during upcoming user group meeting;
- *using Forum:* create new or refer to existing discussion thread with issue description in Apache MXNet discussion boards (aka [Apache MXNet Forum](#)) and send a short email to [dev@](mailto:dev@mxnet.apache.org) list referring to corresponding thread and suggestion to discuss it during upcoming user group meeting;
- *using GitHub:* create new or refer to existing issue on [Apache MXNet GitHub](#) with context in its description and send a short email to [dev@](mailto:dev@mxnet.apache.org) list referring to corresponding issue and suggestion to discuss it during upcoming user group meeting;
- *using Email:* send email to [dev@](mailto:dev@mxnet.apache.org) list with issue or question description and suggest to discuss it during upcoming user group meeting.

Conference info and meeting schedule

We are using Amazon Chime conference software to power user group meetings. In order to participate in Apache MXNet user group meetings please use one of the following options:

Join via browser: <https://chime.aws/<meeting-id>>. You will need to download [Amazon Chime desktop](#) client in order to be able to share your screen.

The meeting id's will be provided shortly before the start of the corresponding group via an announcement on the [dev@](mailto:dev@mxnet.apache.org) list. Unfortunately, due to security concerns it is impossible to have 1 permanent id for every meeting.

There are two instances of user group meetings provided. One is in PST timezone (Palo Alto, CA) and one in CEST timezone (Berlin, Germany). Please use table below to decide which user group meeting is best fit for you to participate.

	Palo Alto user group meeting	Berlin user group meeting
Meeting time	Every Tuesday 7pm-8pm (CEST) / 10am-11am (PST)	Every Tuesday 6pm-7pm (CEST) / 9am-10am (PST)
Physical address	2100 University ave East Palo Alto, CA 94303	Krausenstraße 38 10117 Berlin, Germany
Areas of expertise	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• MXNet Gluon• Keras with MXNet• ONNX on MXNet• MXNet Scala/Java API• MXNet R API	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CI and infrastructure questions• Build system• Benchmarking• Edge devices (for example Raspberry Pi, Jetson)• C++• General questions
Email contact	dev@mxnet.apache.org	

Additional references for finding answers

Following resources could be useful for finding answers to questions:

- Our discussion forum (<https://discuss.mxnet.io>)
- MXNet user mailing list (<https://lists.apache.org/list.html?user@mxnet.apache.org>)
- MXNet dev mailing list (<https://lists.apache.org/list.html?dev@mxnet.apache.org>)
- StackOverflow mxnet tag (<https://stackoverflow.com/questions/tagged/mxnet>)
- MXNet website (<https://mxnet.incubator.apache.org/faq/>)
- Github issues (<https://github.com/apache/incubator-mxnet/issues>)
- Wiki (<https://cwiki.apache.org/confluence/display/MXNET>)