Forum

At the Forum the entire OpenStack community (users and developers) gathers to brainstorm the requirements for the next release, gather feedback on the past version and have strategic discussions that go beyond just one release cycle. The OpenStack Foundation offers a Travel Support Program to help cover travel expenses.

Next Forum

- Open Infrastructure Summit, November 4-6, 2019 in Shanghai, China.
  - Gather feedback on Train, start drawing the U release’s requirements
  - 2 parallel tracks over 3 days

How does the Forum work?

The Forum is a part of the Open Infrastructure Summit. It is not a classic conference track with speakers and presentations. OpenStack community members (participants in development teams or working groups, and other interested individuals) discuss the topics they want to cover and get alignment on.

Those scheduled sessions can include the presentation of a few slides but are generally a 40-min long, open brainstorming discussion on a given subject or feature. If you care about a particular subject, please join. Due to the nature of the event, the schedule is a bit dynamic, so check out the summit schedule pages often.

If you suggest a session, you should be ready to moderate that session and make sure the discussion stays on track. Experienced attendees will generally help in that endeavour, but you should plan to attend that session yourself.

The Forum is not the right place to get started or learn the basics of OpenStack. For that it’s better to check the various OpenStack meetups organized by user groups around the world, attend talks in the ‘Conference’ part of the Open Infrastructure Summit, or participate in classes in the ‘Academy’ part of the Open Infrastructure Summit.

Session topics

Sessions happen in rooms organized in fishbowl style (concentric rings of chairs). People wanting to participate to the discussion should move to the inner rings. There are three main types of topics at the Forum:

Project-specific sessions
Where developers can ask users specific questions about their experience, users can provide feedback from the last release and cross-community collaboration on the priorities and ‘blue sky’ ideas for the next release can occur.

Strategic, whole-of-community discussions
To think about the big picture, including beyond just one release cycle and new technologies

Cross-project sessions
In a similar vein to what has happened at past design summits, but with increased emphasis on issues that are of relevant to all areas of the community

Before the Forum: propose sessions

Development Project Teams and User Committee Working Groups and Teams should collaborate to propose sessions for inclusion at the Forum. Sessions are generally proposed on an open document (etherpad...) announced on the appropriate mailing-list, and then discussed at team meetings.
A committee comprised of Technical and User Committee representatives and Foundation Staff will schedule the sessions into the available time.

**Brainstorming**

- Make an etherpad for your team or the group of teams you are working with and list as many ideas as you can think of.
- Add your brainstorming etherpad to the list of etherpads on the wiki so everyone can see what you are thinking about.
- The naming convention for etherpad could be of the format: `<location><year>-Forum-<your topic>-Brainstorming`
- Talk with other teams to see how you can work together.
- Merge similar ideas.
- Prioritise the session ideas.
- Work out which your team thinks are worth proposing for the Forum, and write abstracts for them.
- Find moderators for each of your proposed sessions.
- Tip: The best sessions involve both users and developers working together.
- Tip: Don't expect a lot of dedicated sessions just for your individual project.

**Submission**

- The formal submission tool will be announced as open after a few weeks of brainstorming.
- Work out who will submit your team's proposals and the moderator for each proposed session.
- Get the abstract, title and moderator ready, then submit.

**Scheduling, Review & Promotion**

- The Forum Selection Committee will look at all of the proposals and try to make the best schedule possible.
- A draft schedule will be released to the mailing list - post your comments!
- Look out for conflicts between sessions, missing ideas or anything else you think is important.
- As soon as practical, the schedule will be uploaded to the summit site.
- Once the schedule is live, everyone should share it as widely as we can to get the entire community excited.

**At the Forum**

- The schedule will be available online about a month before the Summit starts. Refer to it early, refer to it often.
- The session should start on time, be there or be square.
- The session lead starts by introducing clearly what the session is about (and what it is not about) to set expectations.
- It is the responsibility of the session lead to keep the discussion live and on-topic.
- Make the best use of the available time!
- Collaborative note taking during the session should be done through http://etherpad.openstack.org, please participate and make sure your points are reported there.
- The naming convention for etherpad could be of the format: `<location><year>-Forum-<your topic>`.
- 5 minutes before the end of the session, the session lead should start making sure (s)he gets clear outcomes, work items and actions from the session.
- End on time, to give participants the time to switch rooms to the next session if needed.
After the Forum: document outcomes!

- Document significant outcomes and post them to the mailing-list, so that the people who could not join the event can still influence the decision.
- For example, Project-Specific Sessions should produce information enough to lead to the creation of one or more specs; a list of users who will help answer questions about specifics; prioritised bugs; answers to burning questions.
- For example, Cross-project sessions - information enough to lead to the creation of a cross project spec; a set of points where users should engage more.

Forum tips

- We organize a special "Forum 101" session to serve as an introduction to how things work.
- Experienced OpenStack contributors share their tips on how to moderate a successful session on this video [1].

What makes a good forum session?

- Involves both developers and users.
- Multiple projects/teams/working groups collaborating.
- Has a concrete outcome/a conclusion to work toward.

About the Forum Selection Committee

The Forum is for the entire community to come together in a neutral space, so it must be jointly organised by users and developers. We are fortunate to have strong governance bodies representing both cohorts within our community. The Technical Committee and the User Committee are comprised of elected representatives who commit to fairly lead for all. The Forum Selection Committee taps into these, and the experience of the past organisers of the Design and Ops Summits (foundation folks) with a subset - six members:

- 2 delegates from the Technical Committee
- 2 delegates from the User Committee
- 2 OpenStack Foundation staff members
- 1 delegate from each of the OpenStack Foundation Pilot Projects

The TC and UC are best placed to decide which of their members should represent each body. The Foundation staffers are Jimmy McArthur and Kendall Nelson.

Importantly, the brainstorming process should allow the entire community to select their best ideas for formal submission, rather than leaving all of the decision making in the hands of the committee.

Committee Timelines
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Upcoming Forum Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>T-12 weeks</td>
<td>Forum selection committee formed.</td>
<td>Aug 12th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-9 weeks</td>
<td>Formal topic submission tool opens: <a href="https://cfp.openstack.org">https://cfp.openstack.org</a>.</td>
<td>Sept 2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-7 weeks</td>
<td>Deadline for proposing Forum topics. Scheduling committee meeting to make draft agenda.</td>
<td>Sept 20th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-5 weeks</td>
<td>Draft Forum schedule published. Crowd sourced session conflict detection. Forum promotion begins.</td>
<td>Sept 30th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-4 weeks</td>
<td>Scheduling committee final meeting</td>
<td>Oct 7th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T-3 week</td>
<td>Forum schedule final</td>
<td>Oct 14th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T=0</td>
<td>Forum Time!</td>
<td>Nov 4th-6th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T+2 weeks</td>
<td>Gather feedback from Forum selection committee</td>
<td>Nov 18th</td>
</tr>
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**Past Forums**

- Open Infra Summit, April 29-May 1, 2019 in Denver, USA
- OpenStack Summit, November 13-15, 2018 in Berlin, Germany
- OpenStack Summit, May 21-24, 2018 in Vancouver, BC.
- OpenStack Summit, November 6-8, 2017 in Sydney, AUS.
- OpenStack Summit, May 8-11, 2017 in Boston, USA.

**References**

[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M4cDyM2s2hc
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