



Let your PostgreSQL data
travel back in time

French acronym for
"Enregistrement des Mises A Jour"
i.e. "updates recording"

E-Maj, what is it for?

- E-Maj allows the data content to **travel back in time**, with a table level granularity
- By recording updates on sets of application tables, it is possible to
 - **Count** them (statistic function),
 - Easily **view** them (audit function),
 - **Revert** them ("rollback" function),
 - **Replay** them (script generation, or revert a revert...)
- Usable with
 - applications in test or in production
 - databases of all sizes

The gains

- In **test** environment
 - Helps the application tests management by providing a quick way to
 - Examine updates generated by the application, for debugging purpose
 - Cancel updates generated by the application in order to easily repeat tests
- In **production** environment
 - Allows to cancel processings
 - Without being obliged to save and restore the instance by `pg_dump/pg_restore` or by physical copy
 - With a finer granularity
 - Avoids to loose entire batch processing nights by helping the recovery after failure
 - Very interesting with large tables and few updates

The components

- **E-Maj**, the heart
 - A PostgreSQL extension
 - Open Source, under GPL licence
 - Download from pgxn.org - <https://pgxn.org/dist/e-maj/>
 - Sources available on github.com - <https://github.com/dalibo/emaj>
- **Emaj_web**
 - A web client - https://github.com/dalibo/emaj_web
- The online **documentation**
 - In English (or French) - <https://emaj.readthedocs.io/en/latest/>



The characteristics which drove the design

- **Reliability**
 - Absolute data integrity after updates cancellation
 - Management of all usual objects (tables, sequences, constraints,...)
- **Ease of use** for DBAs, production people, application developers and testers,...
 - Easy to understand and use
 - Easy to integrate into an automatized production (thus scriptable)
- **Performance**
 - Limited log overhead
 - Acceptable “rollback” duration
- **Security**
- **Maintainability**

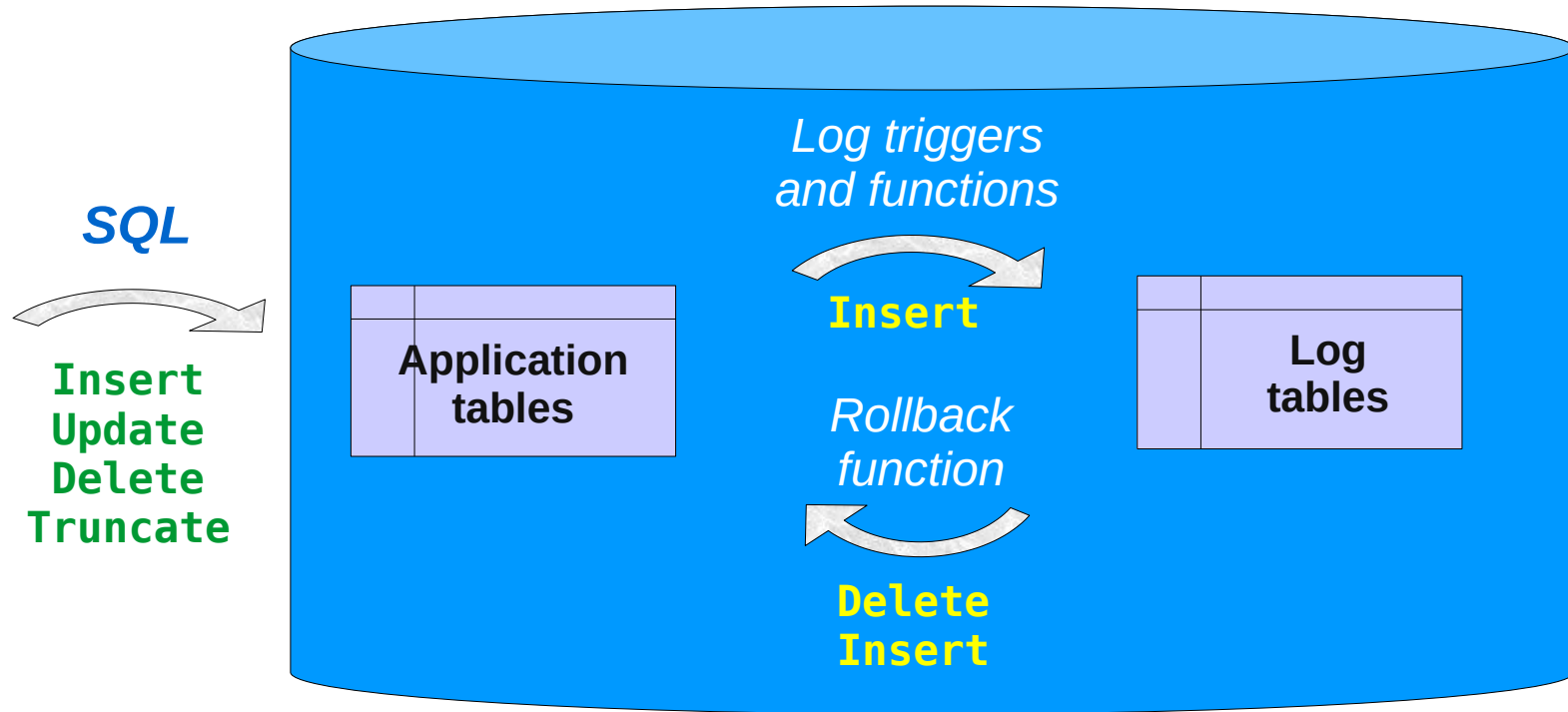
Concepts

- **Tables Group** = a set of tables and/or sequences belonging to one or several schemas and having the same life cycle ; it's the only object manipulated by users
- **Mark** = stable point in the life of a tables group, whose state can be set back ; identified by a name
- **E-Maj Rollback** = positioning of a tables group at a previously set mark state
 - NB: this concept is different from the transaction rollbacks performed by the RDBMS
 - a “RDBMS-rollback” cancels the current transaction
 - a “E-Maj rollback” cancels updates from several committed transactions

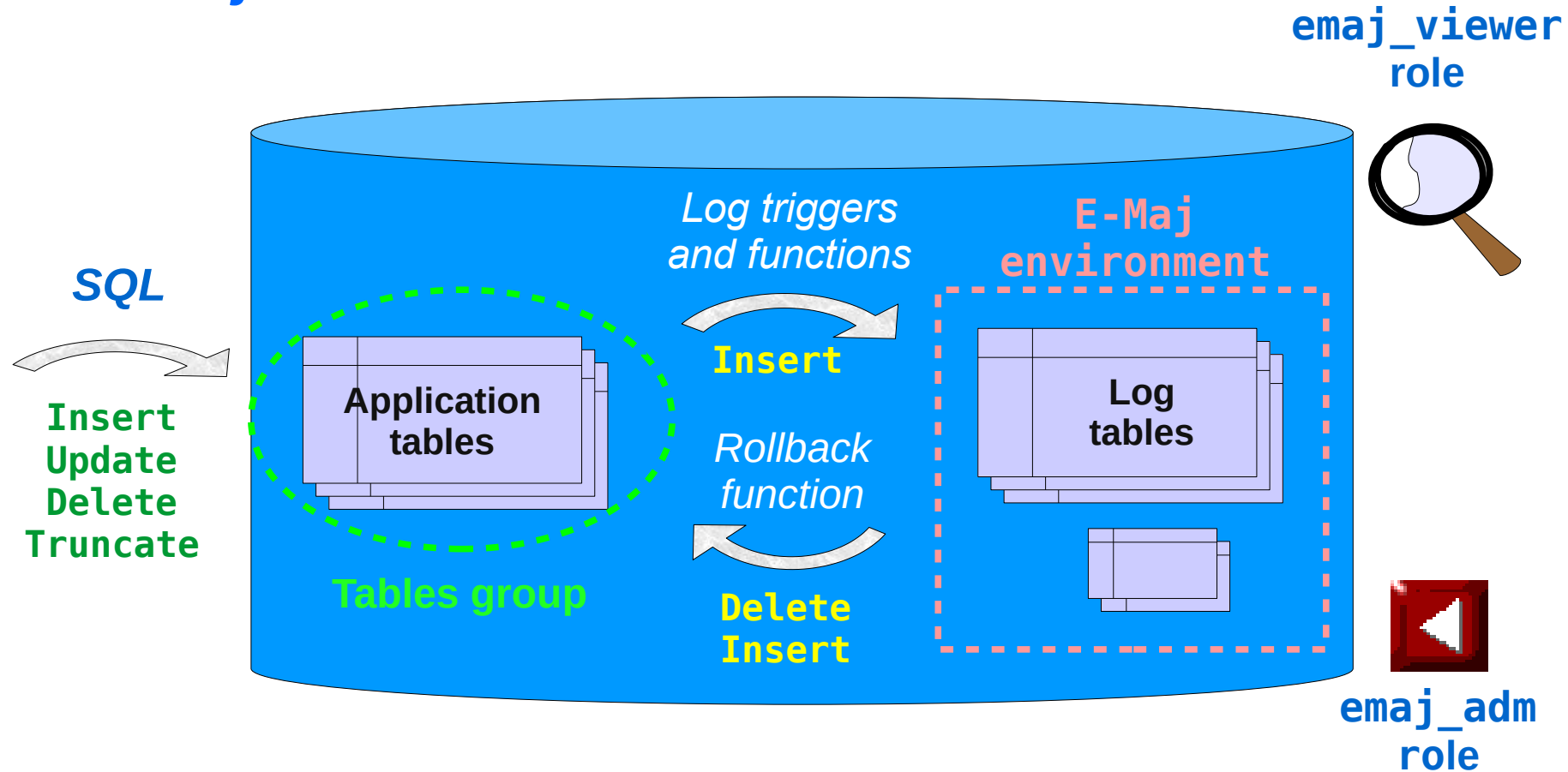
Concepts (2)

- By default, a tables group is created as “**rollbackable**”
- A tables group may be created as “**audit-only**”
 - E-Maj rollbacks are not possible
 - But
 - A table may have no declared PRIMARY KEY
 - A table may have been created as UNLOGGED or WITH OIDS

An updates recording based on triggers



Main objects



Management of application sequences

- Sequence increments are not individually recorded
- At set mark time
 - The state of each sequence of the group is stored into an internal table
- At E-Maj rollback time
 - Each sequence is reset to its state recorded at the targeted mark

Install E-Maj

- Download and unzip the extension
- Standart install
 - Copy emaj.control and sql/*.sql files into \$SHAREDIR/extension
 - Log on the target database as super-user and execute
 - `CREATE EXTENSION emaj CASCADE;`
- Install on DBaaS cloud environment
 - `psql ... -f sql/emaj-<version>.sql`
- This adds to the database
 - the extensions `dblink` et `btree_gist` if needed
 - 1 schema, named 'emaj', with about 110 functions, 15 technical tables, 8 types, 1 view, 1 sequence, 2 event triggers
 - 2 roles

Initialization

- For each group:
 - 1) Create an empty group
`SELECT emaj_create_group (group, is_rollbackable);`
 - 2) Add tables and sequences
`SELECT emaj_assign_tables (schema, inclusion regexp, exclusion regexp, group);`
`SELECT emaj_assign_sequences (schema, inclusion regexp, exclusion regexp, group);`
 - Ex: all tables of a schema except those suffixed by sav:
`'.*', 'sav$'`
 - Create for each application table: 1 log table, 1 log sequence, 1 log trigger and its function
- NB: `SELECT emaj_drop_group (group)`
 - ... drop an existing group

The 3 main functions to manage groups

- “Starting” a group
 - `emaj_start_group (group, mark)`
activates the log triggers and sets a first mark
- Setting a mark
 - `emaj_set_mark_group (group, mark)`
sets an intermediate mark
- “Stopping” a group
 - `emaj_stop_group (group [,mark])`
deactivates the log triggers => a rollback is not possible anymore
- The % character in a mark name represents the current date and time

Examine logs

- Examining log tables may largely help the application debugging
- Each application table has its own log table
 - `emaj_<schema>.<table>_log`
- A log table contains
 - The same columns as its related application table
 - And some technical columns
- A single row change in an application table generates
 - 1 log row for an INSERT (image of the new row)
 - 1 log row for a DELETE or a TRUNCATE (image of the old row)
 - 2 log rows for an UPDATE (image of the old and the new rows)
- A TRUNCATE generates also a single log row

Log tables technical columns

- 6 technical columns at the end of each log row
 - `emaj_verb` : SQL statement type - INS/UPD/DEL/TRU
 - `emaj_tuple` : row type - OLD/NEW
 - `emaj_gid` : internal sequence number
 - `emaj_changed` : time of the update - `clock_timestamp()`
 - `emaj_txid` : transaction identifier - `txid_current()`
 - `emaj_user` : connection role of the client - `session_user`
- ... and some others can be added
- It is possible to identify clients and transactions, and analyze the timing of the program execution

Counting updates

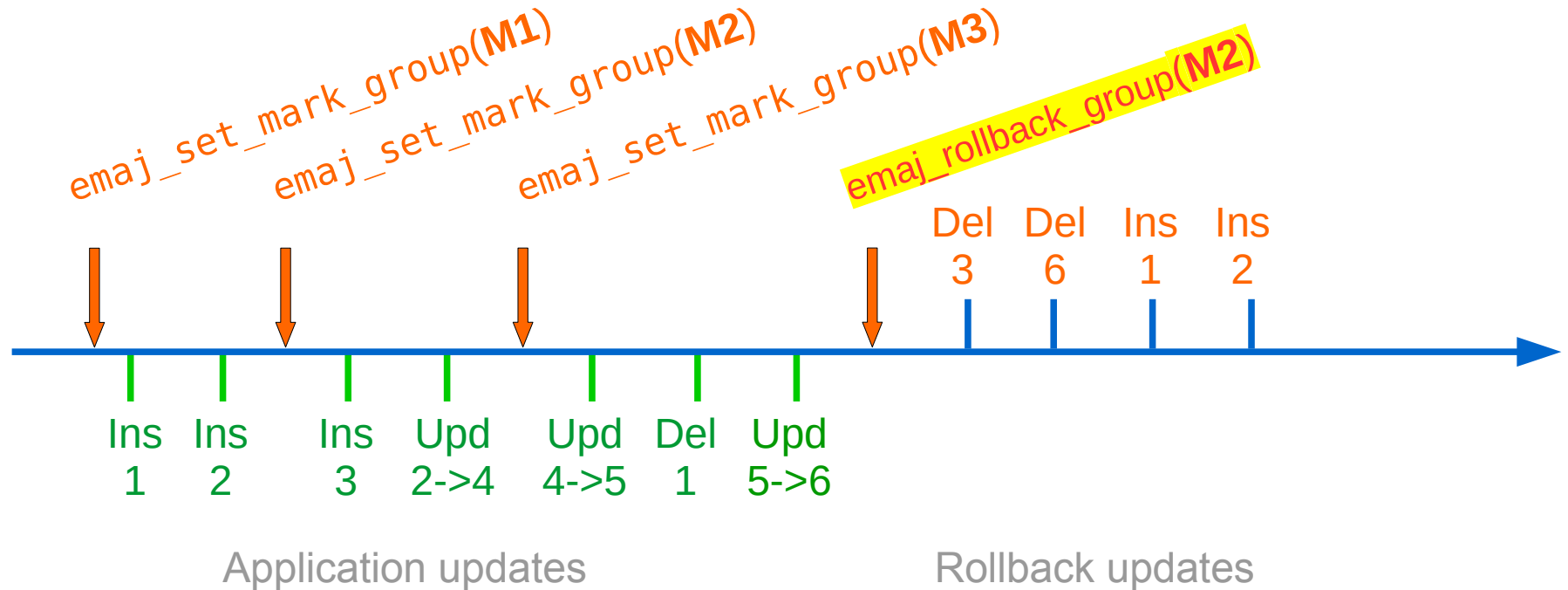
- 2 statistical functions
 - `emaj_log_stat_group (group, start_mark, end_mark)`
quickly returns an estimate of recorded updates
 - by table
 - between 2 marks (or between 1 mark and the current state)
 - `emaj_detailed_log_stat_group (group, start_mark, end_mark)`
scans log tables and returns precise statistics on their content
 - by table
 - by statement type (INSERT / UPDATE / DELETE / TRUNCATE)
 - by ROLE
 - between 2 marks (or between 1 mark and the current state)

Cancel updates : the “simple” rollback

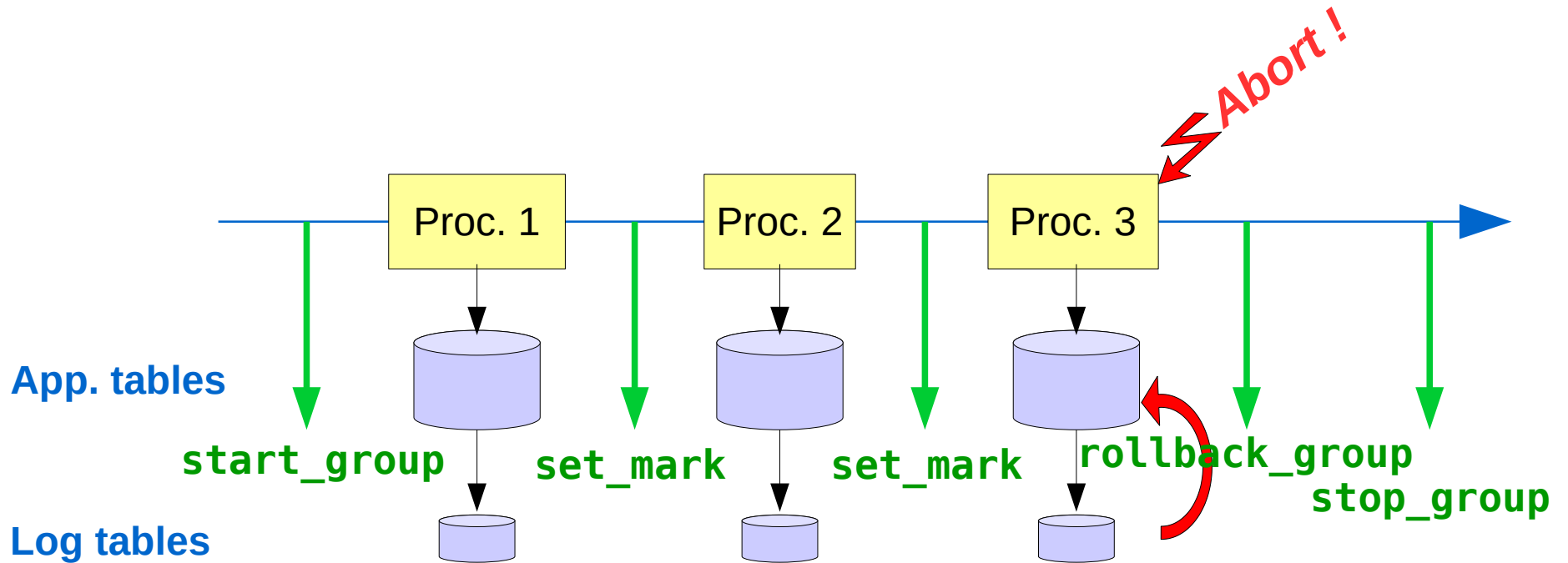
- A “rollback” function allows to reset a tables group in the state it had at a given mark
 - `emaj_rollback_group (group, mark, false)`
- How this works
 - Log triggers are deactivated during the operation
 - Each table is reset to its mark state using an optimised algorithm
 - Application sequences are reset to their mark state
 - Takes into account the foreign keys, if any
 - The canceled logs and marks are deleted
 - => all what is after the rollback mark is forgotten

An optimised rollback algorithm

- It processes each primary key value only once



A typical E-Maj usage (production batch processing)

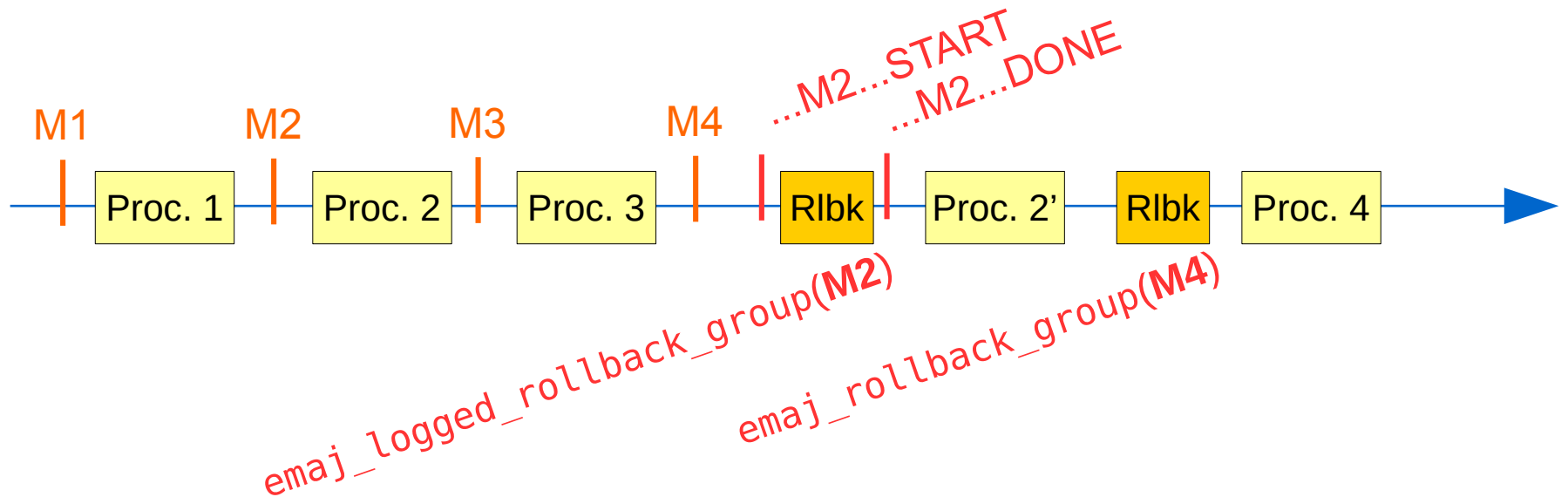


Cancelling updates : the “logged” rollback

- `emaj_logged_rollback_group (group, mark, false)`
- Different from the “simple” rollback
 - Log triggers are NOT deactivated during the operation
=> the updates generated by the rollback are recorded
 - Cancelled logs et marks are NOT deleted
- So we can revert an E-Maj rollback ! And more generally let a tables group travel back and forth in time !
- 2 marks are automatically set before and after the rollback
 - `RLBK_<marque cible>_<HH.MI.SS.MS>_START`
 - `RLBK_<marque cible>_<HH.MI.SS.MS>_DONE`
- During the rollback, tables remain accessible in read mode

A typical E-Maj usage in test environment

- 4 processings to test in sequence
- After test 3, a new version of processing 2 must be re-tested
- Then perform the remaining tests



Estimating an E-Maj rollback duration

- In order to know if we have enough time to perform the operation or if another way to recover would be more efficient
- A function estimates the time needed to rollback a group to a given mark
 - `emaj_estimate_rollback_group (group, mark)`

Executing a parallel E-Maj rollback

- A php or perl client performs rollbacks with parallelism
 - `emajParallelRollback.php -d <database> -h <host> -p <port> -U <user> -W <password> -g <group_name or groups_list> -m <mark> -s <nb_sessions> [-l]`
- Automatically spreads the tables to process into a given number of parallel sessions
- All sessions belong to a single transaction (2PC)
 - => `max_prepared_transaction` >= nb sessions
- Needs php or perl with its PostgreSQL extension

Monitoring E-Maj rollbacks in execution

- A function
 - `SELECT * FROM emaj.emaj_rollback_activity ();`
 - returns
 - The characteristics of rollbacks (group, mark...)
 - Their state
 - Their current duration
 - An estimate of the remaining duration and the already executed %
- Needs to setup the value of the “`dblink_user_password`” parameter in the `emaj_param` table

Monitoring E-Maj rollbacks

- A php or perl client to monitor the executing or completed rollbacks
 - `emajRollbackMonitor.php -d <database> -h <host> -p <port> -U <user> -W <password> -n <nb_iterations> -i <refresh_rate_in_seconds> -l <nb_completed_rollbacks> -a <completed_rollbacks_history_depth_in_hours>`

```
E-Maj (version 2.2.0) - Monitoring rollbacks activity
```

```
-----  
04/09/2017 - 12:07:17
```

```
** rollback 35 started at 2017-09-04 12:06:21.474217+02 for groups {myGroup1}  
status: COMMITTED ; ended at 2017-09-04 12:06:21.787615+02
```

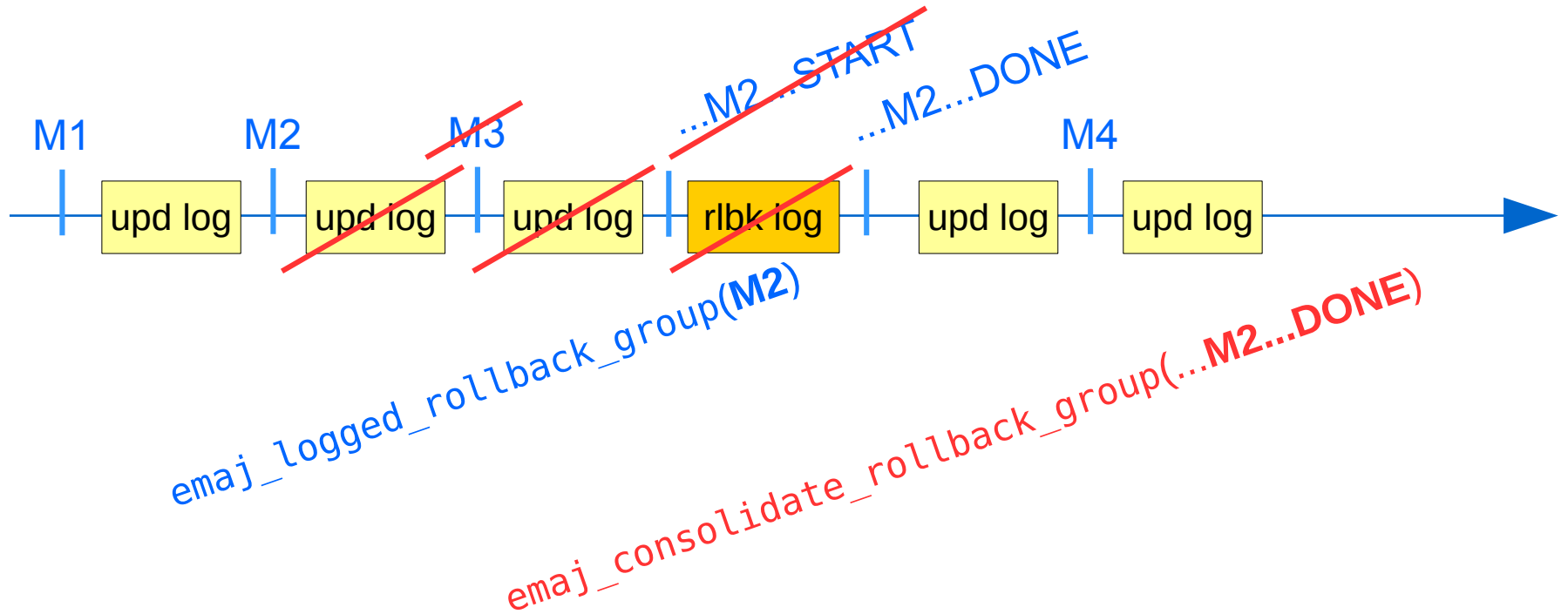
```
-> rollback 36 started at 2017-09-04 12:04:31.769992+02 for groups {group1232}  
status: EXECUTING ; completion 89 % ; 00:00:20 remaining
```

```
-> rollback 37 started at 2017-09-04 12:04:21.894546+02 for groups {group1233}  
status: LOCKING ; completion 0 % ; 00:22:20 remaining
```

Consolidate a “logged” rollback

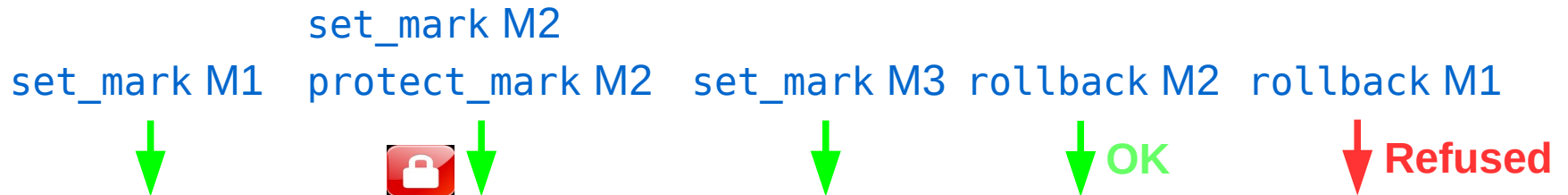
- “Consolidate” a rollback means transform a “logged rollback” into a “simple rollback”
- Intermediate logs and marks are deleted, recovering some place in the logs
 - `emaj_consolidate_rollback_group (groups, end_rollback_mark)`
- Tables can be updated during the consolidation
- A function returns the list of consolidable rollbacks
 - `emaj_get_consolidable_rollbacks ()`

Example of E-Maj rollback consolidation



Being protected against unattended E-Maj rollbacks

- 2 functions to manage the protection of a tables group
 - `emaj_protect_group (group)`
 - `emaj_unprotect_group (group)`
- 2 functions to manage the protection of a mark
 - `emaj_protect_mark_group (group, mark)` blocks any attempt to rollback to a mark prior the protected mark
 - `emaj_unprotect_mark_group (group, mark)`



Exporting from an E-Maj environment

- Useful in test to compare several executions of a processing or to “replicate” the updates produced by a processing
- Generate a sql script replaying the recorded updates between 2 marks, for some or all tables and sequences of a group

- In the instance disk space:

```
emaj_gen_sql_group (group, start_mark, end_mark,  
dest_file [,tables/seq_list])
```

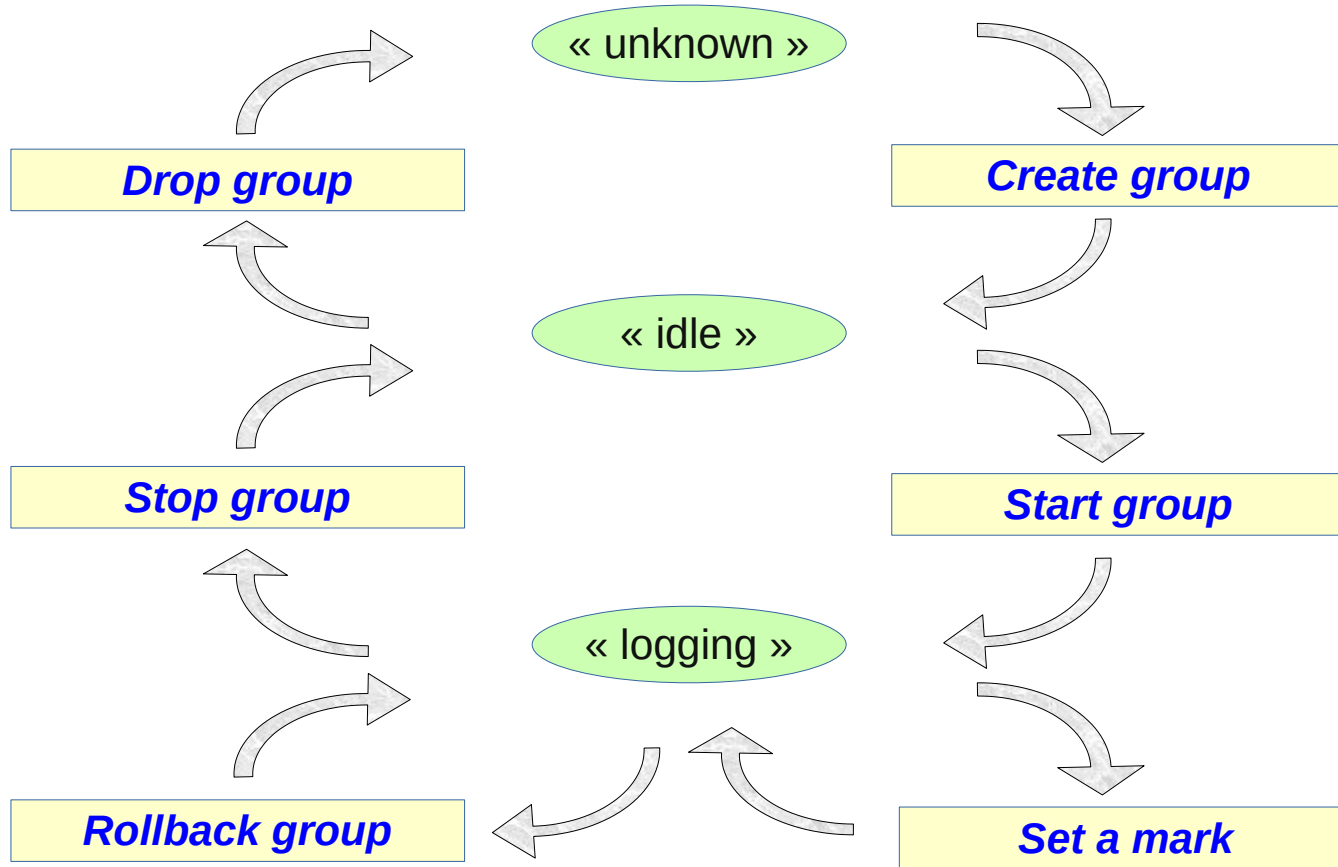
- Anywhere, with psql:

```
SELECT emaj_gen_sql_group (group, start_mark,  
end_mark, NULL [,tables/seq_list])  
\copy (SELECT * FROM emaj_sql_script) TO 'dest_file'
```

Exporting from an E-Maj environment (2)

- Snap on files in a given directory, by COPY, all tables and sequences of a group
 - *emaj_snap_group (group, directory, copy_options)*
- Snap on files in a given directory, by COPY, a part of log tables and sequences of a group
 - *emaj_snap_log_group (group, start_mark, end_mark, directory, copy_options)*

The tables group life cycle



Tables groups dynamic adjustment

- To add one or several tables
 - `emaj_assign_table(schema, table, group, properties [, mark])`
 - `emaj_assign_tables(schema, tables list, group, properties [, mark])`
 - `emaj_assign_tables(schema, selection filter, exclusion filter, group, properties [, mark])`
- Properties:
 - JSON format
 - To define the priority and the tablespaces for log data and index
- Selection and exclusion filters: RegExp

Tables groups dynamic adjustment

- Example

- `emaj_assign_tables('myschema', 'tbl.*', '_sav$', 'mygroup',
'{"priority":1}')`

assigns to the group 'mygroup' and with the priority 1 all tables of the schema 'myschema' whose name starts with 'tbl' and doesn't end with '_sav'

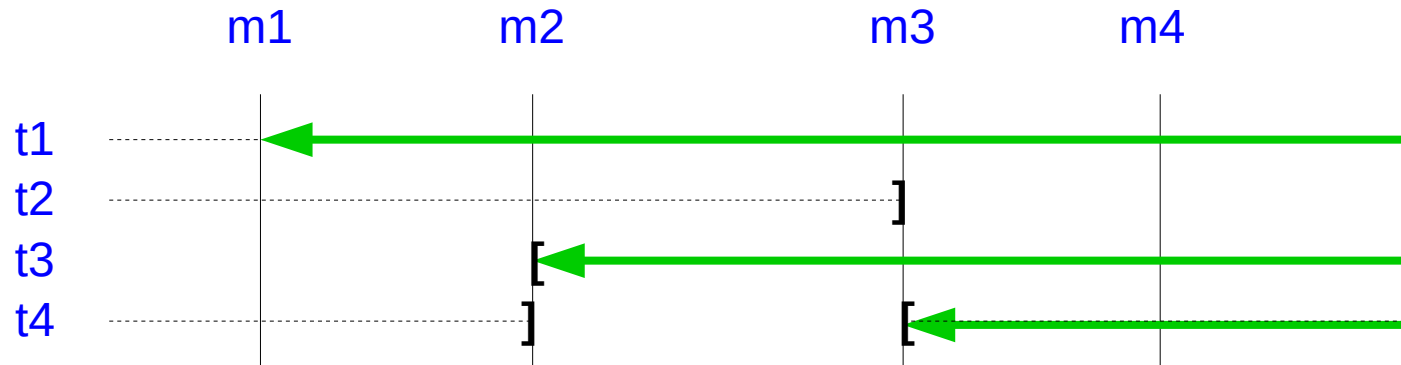
Tables groups dynamic adjustment

- Similarly:
 - `emaj_assign_sequence()` and `emaj_assign_sequences()`
 - `emaj_modify_table()` and `emaj_modify_tables()`
 - `emaj_move_table()` and `emaj_move_tables()`
 - `emaj_move_sequence()` and `emaj_move_sequences()`
 - `emaj_remove_table()` and `emaj_remove_tables()`
 - `emaj_remove_sequence()` and `emaj_remove_sequences()`

Impact of logging group structure changes on rollbacks

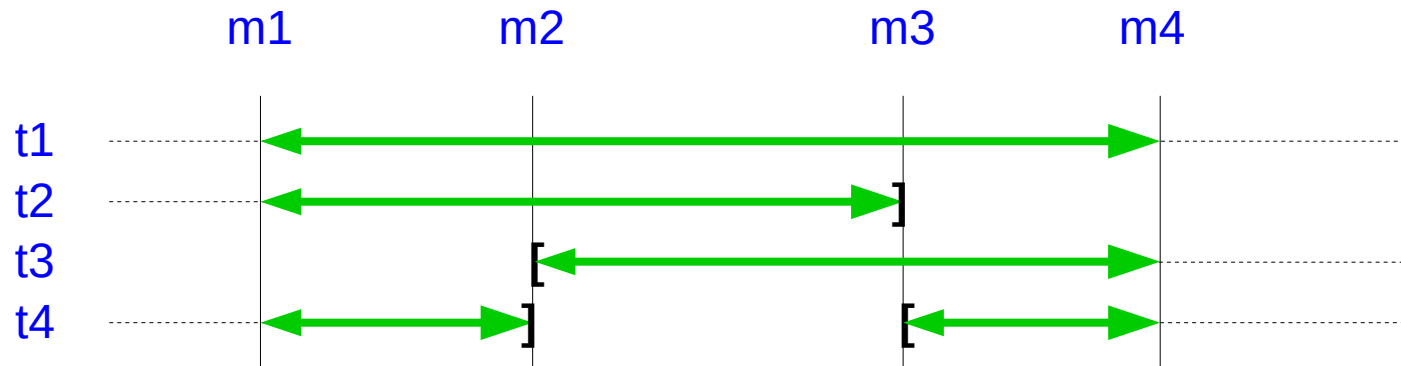
Table t2 removed at mark m3, t3 added at m2, t4 removed at m2 and added at m3

`emaj_rollback_group(<groupe>,'m1')` would process:



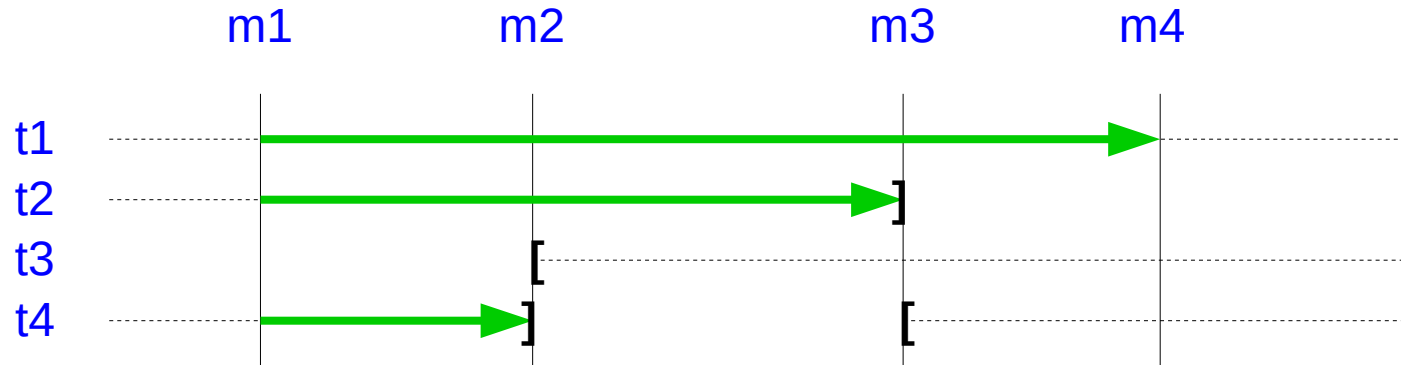
Impact of logging group structure changes on statistics

`emaj_log_stat_group(<groupe>,'m1','m4')` would report:



Impact of logging group structure changes on the SQL scripts generation

`emaj_gen_sql_group(<group>,'m1','m4')` would process:



Modify the structure of a table in a LOGGING group

- For actions like: rename the table, change its schema, add/drop/rename a column, change a column type
- The log table structure is impacted
- 3 steps
 - Remove the table from its tables group
 - ALTER TABLE
 - Add the table into its tables group
- Constraint: an E-Maj rollback to a prior mark will not be able to go beyond the structure change
- Idem to rename a sequence of change its schema

Processing several groups in a single operation

- Some “multi-groups” variants of functions
 - `emaj_start_groups (groups_array, ...)`
 - `emaj_stop_groups (groups_array, ...)`
 - `emaj_set_mark_groups (groups_array, ...)`
 - `emaj_rollback_groups (groups_array, ...)`
 - `emaj_logged_rollback_groups (groups_array, ...)`
 - `emaj_log_stat_groups (groups_array, ...)`
 - `emaj_gen_sql_groups (groups_array, ...)`
- Allows to get marks shared by several groups
- Both PostgreSQL syntaxes for groups arrays
 - `ARRAY['group 1', 'group 2', ...]`
 - `'{"group 1", "group 2", ... }'`

Managing marks

- Comment a mark for a group (add/modify/suppress)
 - `emaj_comment_mark_group (group, mark, comment)`
- Rename a mark
 - `emaj_rename_mark_group (group, old_name, new_name)`
- Delete a mark
 - `emaj_delete_mark_group (group, mark)`
 - If the deleted mark is the first one, logs prior the second one are deleted
- Delete all marks prior a given mark
 - `emaj_delete_before_mark_group (group, mark)`
 - Deletes logs prior the mark (it may take a long time...)

Managing mark (2)

- Search for marks
 - `emaj_find_previous_mark_group (group, date-time)` returns the mark immediately preceding a given date and time
 - `emaj_find_previous_mark_group (group, mark)` returns the mark immediately preceding a given mark
- “`EMAJ_LAST_MARK`” represents the last set mark for a group
 - Usable for all parameters defining an existing mark

Other actions on groups

- Comment a group (add/modify/suppress)
 - `emaj_comment_group (group, comment)`
- Purge log tables of a stopped group (anticipating its next restart)
 - `emaj_reset_group (group)`
- Export / import tables groups configurations
 - `emaj_export_groups_configuration ()`
 - `emaj_import_groups_configuration ()`
- Force a group stop (in case of problem with the normal stop function)
 - `emaj_force_stop_group (group)`

Other actions

- Verify the good health of the E-Maj installation
 - `emaj_verify_all ()`
- Get the current log table of a given application table
 - `emaj_get_current_log_table ()`
- Manually purge obsoletes traces
 - `emaj_purge_histories ()`
- Export/import parameters configuration
 - `emaj_export_parameters_configuration ()`
 - `emaj_import_parameters_configuration ()`

Temporary or permanent logging?

- **Temporary logging** = steps like
 - `emaj_start_group()`
 - repeat
 - processing
 - `emaj_set_mark()`
 - `emaj_stop_group()`
 - At next start, old logs are purged
 - But stops and starts set very heavy locks
- **Permanent logging** = no repeated group stop/restart
 - Obsolete data in log tables must be regularly deleted, using the `emaj_delete_before_mark()` function
 - The deletion can be costly if the volume of log to delete is big

For large databases...

- Log tables and indexes can be stored into **tablespaces**
 - 2 optional properties set when assigning tables to groups


To ensure the reliability

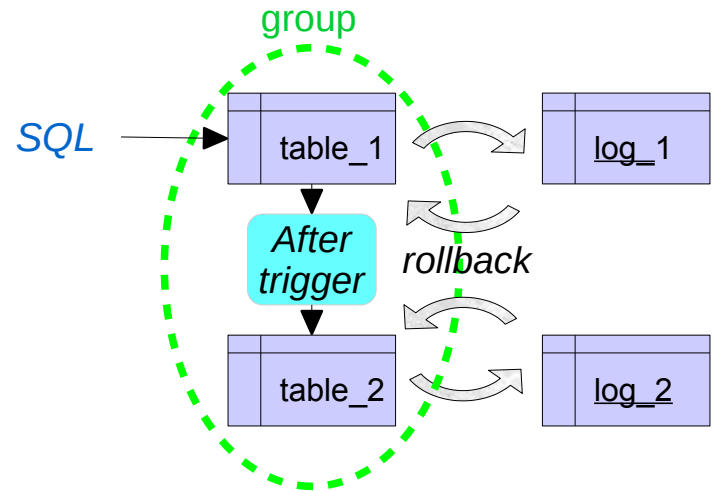
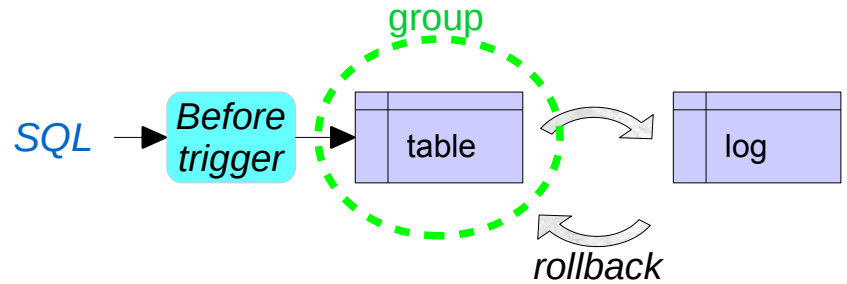
- No change in the PostgreSQL engine
- Many systematic **checks**, in particular at group start, mark set or rollback times:
 - Do all required tables, sequences, functions and triggers exist?
 - Consistency of columns between the application tables and the related log tables (existence, type)?
- Heavy **locks** on tables at `start_group`, `set_mark_group` and `rollback_group`, to be sure that no transaction is currently updating application tables
 - The order of lock setting can be influence by a priority level defined for each table
- Rollback all tables and sequences by a single **transaction**

To ensure the reliability (2)

- “**event triggers**” block unintentional drops or some component changes (tables, sequences, functions...)
 - 2 functions to deactivate/reactivate the lock-in
 - `emaj_disable_protection_by_event_triggers ()`
 - `emaj_enable_protection_by_event_triggers ()`

Impact of application triggers on E-Maj rollbacks

- Triggers of type *BEFORE* on a table belonging to a tables group
 - Values really inserted into the database are recorded into the log
 - => to be disabled at E-Maj rollback
- Triggers of type *AFTER* updating a table belonging to the same tables group
 - The rollback will reset both tables with the right content
 - => to be disabled at E-Maj rollback
- Other cases : study the impacts 



Impact of application triggers on E-Maj rollbacks

- By default, application triggers are automatically disabled by E-Maj rollbacks
- A trigger may be left in its state at rollback time if it is registered as is
- 2 properties for `emaj_assign_table()`, `emaj_assign_tables()`, `emaj_modify_table()` and `emaj_modify_tables()` functions to specify the triggers that must be ignored by the E-Maj rollback processing
 - `"ignored_triggers": ["trg1", "trg2", ...]` lists trigger names
 - `"ignored_triggers_profiles": ["regexp1", "regexp2", ...]` lists regular expressions that select trigger names

To contribute to the security

- 2 NOLOGIN roles whose rights may be granted:
 - `emaj_adm` for the E-Maj administration
 - `emaj_viewer` to just look at E-Maj objects (logs, marks, statistics)
- E-Maj objects are only created and handled by a super-user or a member of the `emaj_adm` role
- No other right has to be granted on E-Maj schemas, tables and functions
- Log triggers are created with the “SECURITY DEFINER” attribute
- No need to give additional rights to application tables or sequences

Performances

- Log overhead
 - Highly depends on hardware and on the application read/write SQL ratio
 - Typically a few % on elapse times
 - But can be much higher on pure data loading
- Rollback duration
 - Of course depends on the number of updates to cancel
 - Also highly depends on
 - The hardware configuration
 - Tables structure (row sizes, indexes, foreign keys, other constraints...)
 - But almost always shorter than a logical restore

Emaj_web

- For administrators and users
- All E-Maj objects (groups, marks...) and their attributes
- (almost) all possible actions on E-Maj objects

Connection: localhost:5411 - role "postgres" SQL | History | Logout English

Emaj_web > Pg 11 > postgres

Groups Schemas Triggers E-Maj Rollbacks E-Maj

Tables groups in "LOGGING" state

Y	Group	Created at	Tables	Sequences	Type	Marks	Actions	Comment
<input type="checkbox"/>	myGroup1	22 Jul 2020 07:56:51	5	1		3		Useless comm...
<input type="checkbox"/>	myGroup2	22 Jul 2020 07:56:51	4	2		4		

Select Actions on objects (0)
All / Visible / None / Invert

Tables groups in "IDLE" state

Y	Group	Created at	Tables	Sequences	Type	Marks	Actions	Comment
<input type="checkbox"/>	phil's group#3	22 Jul 2020 07:56:51	2	1		0		

Select Actions on objects (0)
All / Visible / None / Invert

New group Export Import

Tables groups list

Emaj_web : tables group details

Connection: localhost:5411 - role "postgres" SQL | History | Logout English

Emaj_web > Pg 11 > postgres > myGroup1

Properties Log statistics Content

Tables group "myGroup1" properties

State	Created at	Type	Tables	Sequences	Marks	Log size
	Wed 22 Jul 07:56:51		5	1	3	144 kB

Comment: *Useless comment!*

Set a mark
Protect
Stop
Set a comment

Tables group "myGroup1" marks

	Mark	State	Set at	Row changes	Cumulative changes	Actions	Comment
<input type="checkbox"/>	MARK3		Wed 22 Jul 07:56:52	0	0		
<input type="checkbox"/>	MARK2		Wed 22 Jul 07:56:52	7	7		End of 1st p...
<input type="checkbox"/>	MARK1		Wed 22 Jul 07:56:51	19	26		

Select Actions on objects (0)

All / Visible / None / Invert

Current limitations

- Since E-Maj 3.0, the minimum required PostgreSQL version is **9.5**
- Every application table belonging to a rollbackable group needs a **PRIMARY KEY**
- **DDL** statements cannot be managed by E-Maj

To conclude...

- Many more **informations** in the documentation and in the README et CHANGES files
- Many thanks for their help to :
 - Andreas Scherbaum, Jean-Paul Argudo and the Dalibo team, CNAF DBA, Don Levine (for the english translation)
 - People who already contacted me for comments, requests...
- Feel free to give any **feedback** through github or email (phb.emaj@free.fr)