

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 guick 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

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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, contraints,...)
- **Ease of use** for DBAs, production people, application developpers and testers,...
 - Easy to understand and use
 - Easy to integrate into an automatized production (thus scriptable)
- Performance
 - Limited log overhead
 - Acceptable "rollback" duration
- Security
- Maintenability

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

An updates recording based on triggers

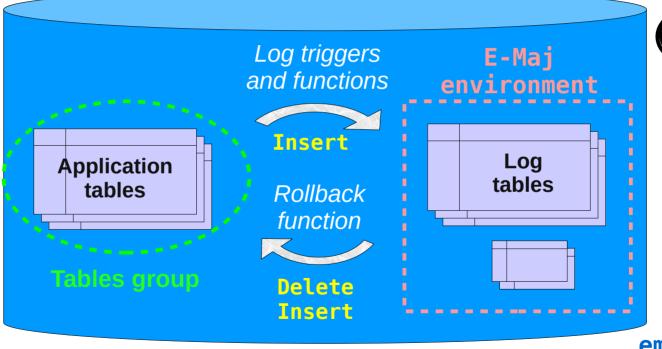
Log triggers and functions SQL Insert Log Application **Insert** tables tables Rollback **Update** function Delete **Truncate** Delete **Insert**

Main objects

emaj_viewer
role

SQL

Insert
Update
Delete
Truncate





emaj_adm
role

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 180 functions, 16 technical tables, 11 types, 1 view, 1 sequence, 3 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 debuging
- Each application table has its own log table
 - emaj_<schema>._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 recorded data changes

- 3 statistical functions, at tables group level and for a given marks interval
 - emaj_log_stat_group (group, start_mark, end_mark)
 quickly returns an estimate of recorded changes per table

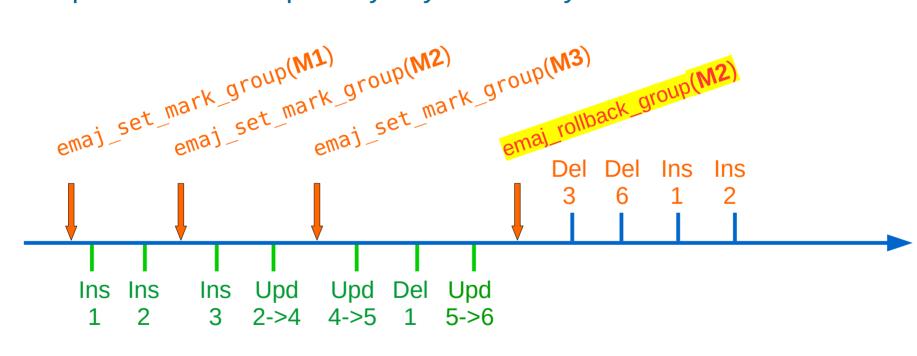
 - emaj_sequence_stat_group (group, start_mark, end_mark)
 returns the number of increments per sequence

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 [, comment]])
- 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

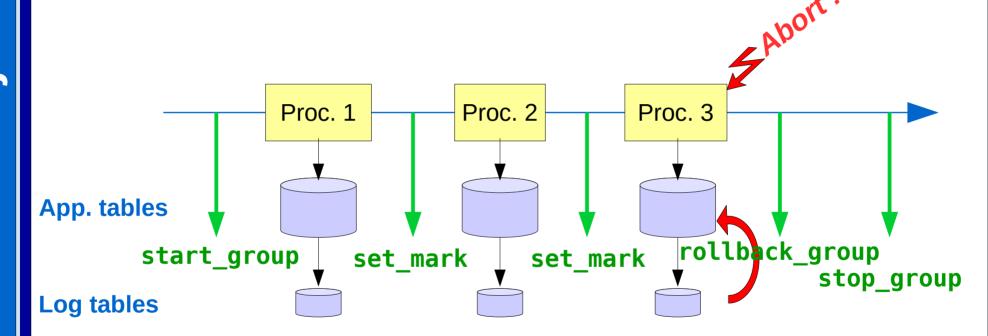


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Application updates

Rollback updates

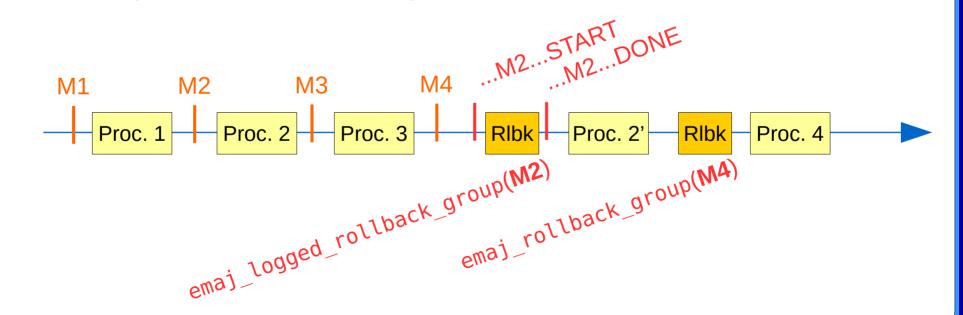
A typical E-Maj usage (production batch processing)



- emaj logged rollback group (group, mark[, false [, comment11)
- 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
- Automatically spreads the tables to process into a given number of parallel sessions
- All sessions belong to a single transaction (2PC)
 - => max_prepared_transactions >= 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 4.2.0) - Monitoring rollbacks activity

21/03/2023 - 08:31:23

** rollback 34 started at 2023-03-21 08:31:16.777887+01 for groups {myGroup1} status: COMMITTED; ended at 2023-03-21 08:31:16.9553+01

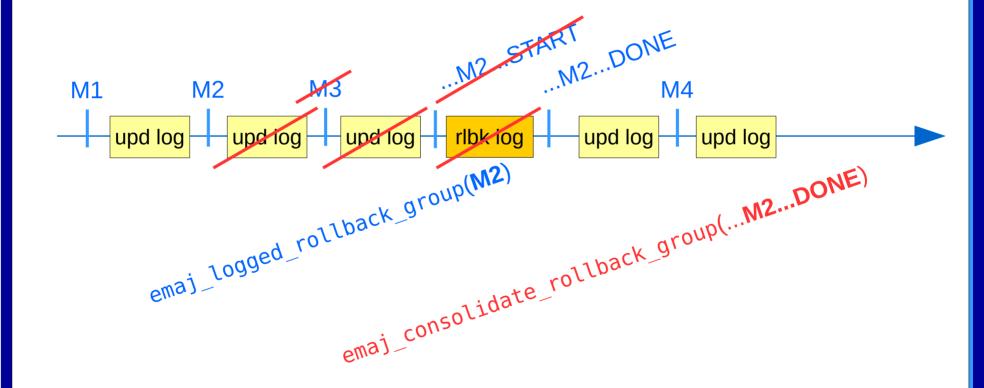
** rollback 35 started at 2023-03-21 08:31:17.180421+01 for groups {myGroup1} status: COMMITTED; ended at 2023-03-21 08:31:17.480194+01

-> rollback 36 started at 2023-03-21 08:29:26.003502+01 for groups {group20101} status: EXECUTING; completion 85 %; 00:00:20 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



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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)

```
set_mark M2
set_mark M1 protect_mark M2 set_mark M3 rollback M2 rollback M1

Refuse
```

Analyse recorded data changes

- Dump on files, by COPY, in a given directory, a log tables extracts and sequences of a group
- Generate SQL to extract recorded changes between 2 marks for all or some tables or sequences of a group
 - In the instance disk space :
 emaj_gen_sql_dump_changes_group (group, start_mark,
 end_mark, options_list, tables/seq_array, file)
 - In an emaj_temp_sql temporary table, for any use by any client:
 emaj_gen_sql_dump_changes_group (group, start_mark,
 end_mark, options_list, tables/seq_array)

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Analyse data changes: the options

- Common to emaj_dump_changes_group() and emaj_gen_sql_dump_changes_group()
 - CONSOLIDATION = NONE (default) | PARTIAL | FULL
 - **EMAJ_COLUMNS** = ALL | MIN | (list) : selects E-Maj technical columns
 - COLS_ORDER = LOG TABLE | PK : sets the order of delivered columns
 - **ORDER_BY** = PK | TIME : sets the order of delivered rows, by PK or emaj gid
 - **SEQUENCES_ONLY**: excludes tables
 - TABLES_ONLY : excludes sequences
- For emaj_dump_changes_group()
 - COPY_OPTIONS = (options list) : for the COPY TO generation
 - NO_EMPTY_FILES : removes empty files (tables without changes)
- For emaj_gen_sql_dump_changes_group()
 - PSQL_COPY_DIR = directory : generates a \copy for each statement, with this directory
 - PSQL_COPY_OPTIONS = (liste options) : sets the \copy options
 - **SQL_FORMAT** = RAW | PRETTY : formats each statement on 1 or several lines

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Analyse data changes: the consolidated vision of changes

- The consolidated vision of changes provides a net outcome of recorded changes, for a given time range and for each primary key
 - At most: 1 "OLD" row (the initial state) and 1 "NEW" row (the final state)
 - Ex: if UPDATE 'A' → 'B' then UPDATE 'B' → 'C', row OLD = 'A' and row NEW = 'C'
- Therefore each examined table must have an explicit PK
- 2 consolidation kinds
 - "Partial consolidation": without taking into account the columns content
 - "Full consolidation": examining the changed data
 - For a given PK, no change is reported if all columns of both "OLD" and "NEW" rows are equal
 - Ex: no change reported for a given PK if UPDATE 'A' → 'B' then UPDATE 'B' → 'A', or if INSERT then DELETE
- Sequences
 - 1 "OLD" row and 1 "NEW" row for the initial and final sequence's characteristics
 - In "Full consolidation" mode, no row is returned if the sequence has not been changed

Analyse data changes: emaj_temp_sql temporary table structure

```
CREATE TEMP TABLE emaj_temp_sql (
  sql_stmt_number
                              INT,
                                             -- Statement number
                                             -- (0 for the initial comment)
                              INT,
                                             -- Line number within the statement
  sql_line_number
                                                 (0 for the initial comment of the statement)
                                             -- Relation kind: "table" or "sequence"
  sql_rel_kind
                              TEXT,
                                             -- Schema name
  sql schema
                              TEXT,
  sal tblsea
                              TEXT,
                                             -- Table or sequence name
  sql_first_mark
                              TEXT,
                                             -- Fist mark name (for the table/sequence)
  sql_last_mark
                              TEXT,
                                             -- Last mark name (for the table/sequence)
  sql group
                              TEXT,
                                             -- Tables group owning the relation
  sql_nb_changes
                              BIGINT,
                                             -- Estimated number of changes to process
  sql_file_name_suffix
                              TEXT,
                                             -- File name suffix
  sql_text
                                             -- SQL statement text
                              TEXT,
  sql_result
                                             -- Column dedicated to the caller for its operations
                              BIGINT
                                                 (some other can be added with ALTER TABLE)
```

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An index on the 2 first columns

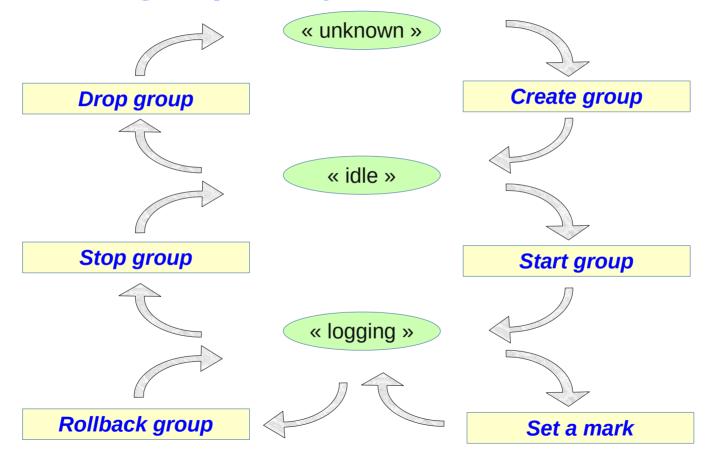
Replay data changes

- Generate a sql script replaying the elementary recorded changes 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'
```

Useful in test environment to "replicate" the changes produced by a processing

The tables group life cycle



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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

Tables groups dynamic adjustment

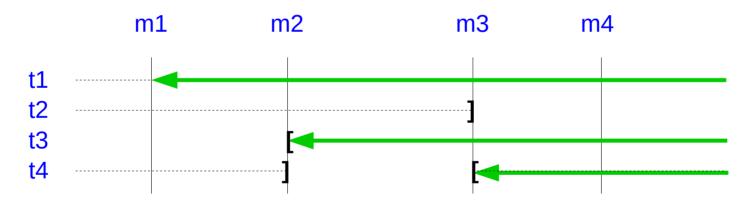
• Similarly:

```
- 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

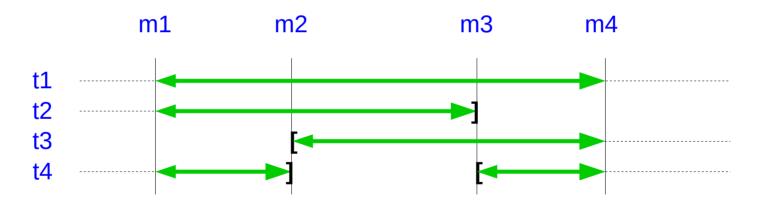
Table t2 removed at mark m3, t3 added at m2, t4 removed at m2 and added at m3

emaj_rollback_group(<groupe>,'m1', true) would pr



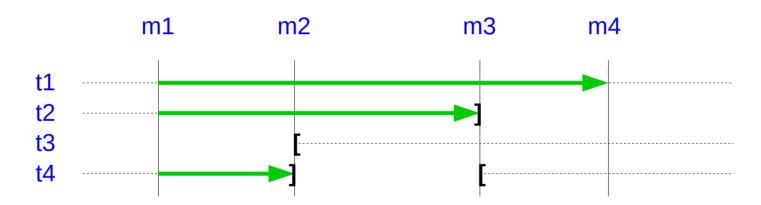
Impact of logging group structure changes on statistics and content changes extracts

emaj_log_stat_group(<groupe>,'m1','m4') and
emaj_dump_changes_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)
- Snap on files in a given directory, by COPY, all tables and sequences of a group
 - emaj_snap_group (group, directory, copy_options)

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 ()
- Manualy purge obsoletes traces
 - emaj_purge_histories ()
- Create/modify/delete a comment on a rollback
 - emaj_comment_rollback ()
- Export/import parameters configuration
 - emaj_export_parameters_configuration ()
 - emaj_import_parameters_configuration ()

Temporary or permanent logging?

- **Temporary logging** = steps like
 - emaj start group()
 - repeat
 - processiong
 - 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

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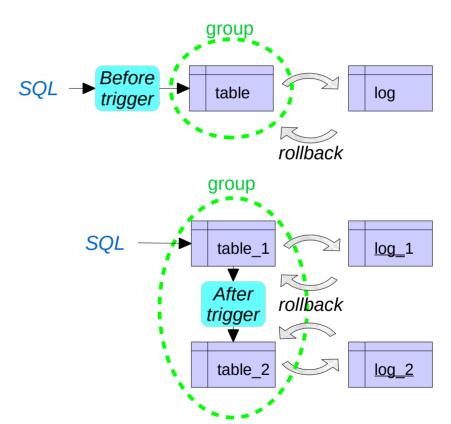
To ensure the reliability (2)

- "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

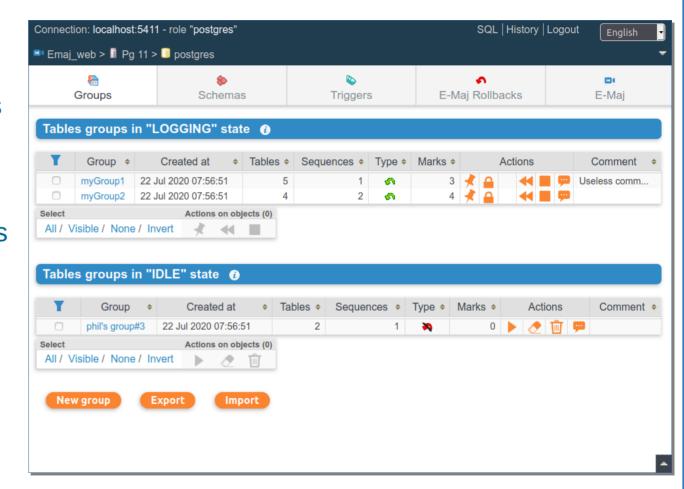
- 2 NOLOGIN roles whose rigths may be granted:
 - emaj_adm for the E-Maj administration
 - emaj_viewer to just look at E-Maj objects (logs, marks, statistics)
- E-Maj objects are only created and handled by a super-user or a member of the emaj_adm role
- No other right has to be granted on E-Maj schemas,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

Performances

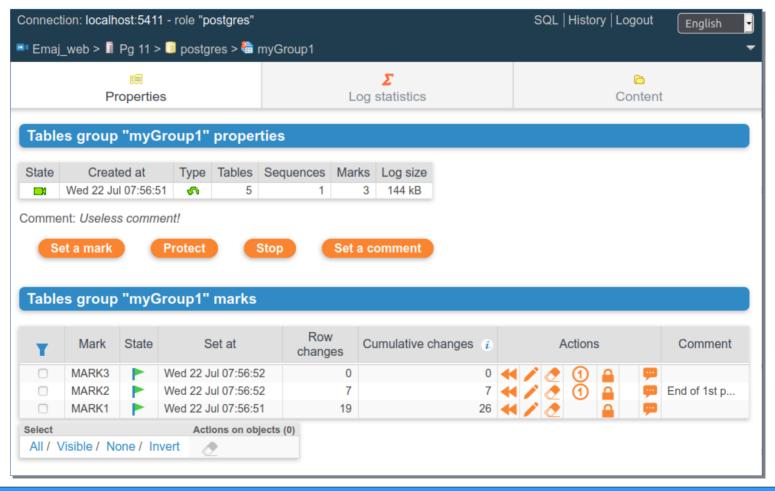
- Log overhead
 - Highly depends on hardware and on the application read/write SQL ratio
 - Typically a few % on elapse times
 - But can be much higher on pure data loading
- Rollback duration
 - Of course depends on the number of updates to cancel
 - Also highly depends on
 - The hardware configuration
 - 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



Emaj_web : tables group details



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Current limitations

- Since E-Maj 4.2, the minimum required PostgreSQL version is 11
- Every application table belonging to a rollbackable group needs a PRIMARY KEY
- DDL statements cannot be logged or cancelled by E-Maj

To conclude...

- Many more informations in
 - the documentation: https://emaj.readthedocs.io/en/latest/index.html
 - the README et CHANGES files
- Many thanks to all contributors and users
- Feel free to give any feedback through github or email (phb.emaj@free.fr)