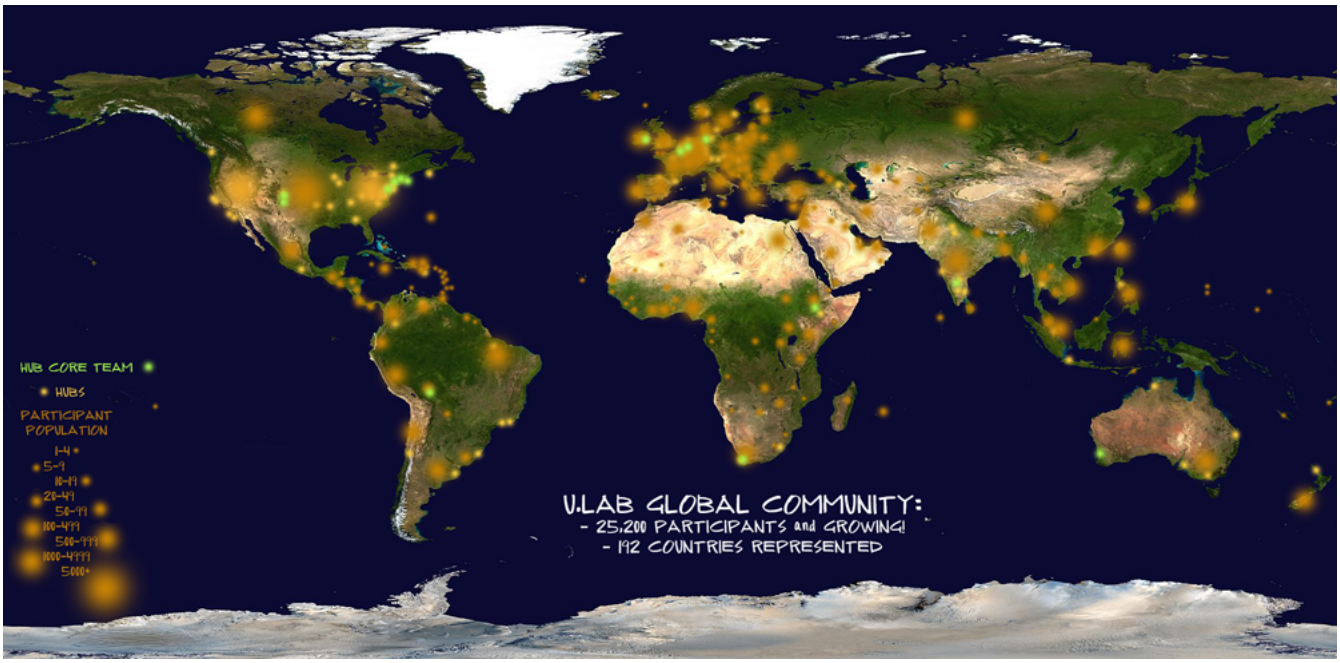
U.LAB:

TRANSFORMING BUSINESS, SOCIETY, AND SELF



HUB HOST GUIDE

21 July 2015 - Version 1

Hello Hub Host!

This guide intends to support your efforts in organizing hubs during the edX course U.Lab: Transforming Business, Society, and Self, which will bring together thousands of participants from around the world for an eight-week experiential learning journey.

The U.Lab is an opportunity to co-sense and co-create the emerging future within a challenge, issue, or system that matters to you. As a hub host, you will play a key role in helping local change-makers meet, learn, and create together.

This guide is designed to give you the basic components of what might be needed to host your hub. Please take notes and share them back with us as you find useful, in order to document, aid in reflection, learn, and iterate our shared hub experiences.

With gratitude for your support and energy in making the U.Lab a truly global and local experience!

Angela, Adam, Julie, Kelvy, Otto on behalf of the U.Lab team

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OVERVIEW

WHAT IS A HUB?

A hub is any physical space where U.Lab participants come together to learn and co-create using the frameworks and methods offered through the U.Lab MOOC. Hubs enhance the typical MOOC experience by serving as self-organized, decentralized, democratically run *learning and doing* environments.

Hubs may serve different purposes at different times during U.Lab. For example, the first time they meet, hub participants may find it helpful to share their individual intentions for the U.Lab, and explore whether a collective intention exists, or could be developed.

As the course enters the second and third weeks, you (and all U.Lab participants) will be asked to go to the "edges" of a system of your choice and apply deep listening and sensing practices. Since everyone in your Hub will be applying the same practices – though not necessarily on the same challenge, issue, or system – the hub can be a place for people to make sense of what they have experienced with others who will not judge them about it, but will support and inquire into their observations.

In the latter parts of the course, the U.Lab will introduce you to a variety of prototyping methods that require a physical space and are helpful to do with other people. At this point, you could transform your hub into a "maker space".

In these (and possibly many other) ways, hubs are essential supportive infrastructures for helping people develop insights into action co-creating with others.

WHY HOST A HUB?

In U.Lab, we believe in learning by doing – which means it's not enough to learn new concepts intellectually; the real learning happens through application and practice in the real world.

At a local level, hubs can help connect people who have shared experiences or interests, and can help deepen the learning that happens through real-world application of the U process.

At a global level, the various hubs around the world will be part of a network of place-based action learning environments that exchange insights, experiences, and knowledge about how to create a more aware and effective approach to leading change on the key issues of our time.

SIZE AND LOCATION

Hubs can be almost any size: five friends in a living room, ten co-workers in a conference room, 100 people gathered in a local community center or university. Anything is possible – it's up to you!

Similarly, hubs can be anywhere. During U.Lab 1.0 (January – February 2015), over 350 hubs formed all across the world, from northern Canada to South Africa and China. Hubs exist wherever U.Lab participants choose to form them!

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INFORMATION ABOUT U.LAB

- The U.Lab is an eight-week course, beginning September 10th 2015. Every week, new pre-recorded videos and practical methods will be taught through the main course site on edX.org. In addition – during three of these weeks (and one week in December) there will ALSO be live sessions, broadcast from the campus of MIT, from 10am-11:15am EDT. See the dates in the next section for detailed information.
- We strongly recommend that hubs **watch the live sessions together** (time-zone permitting).
- You may prefer to **watch pre-recorded videos individually** – they are not necessarily designed to be watched together in a group setting.
- If you watch live sessions together, the minimum recommended allocation of time is 2.5 hours (this includes pre- and post-session activities that you can design and offer).
- You may also want to convene as a hub during weeks when there are no live sessions. There are other activities you may do together. See the following sections for more detailed information.

IMPORTANT DATES

Week 0: Sept 10
Launch, orientation and local co-initiation

Week 1 *LIVE SESSION* Sept 17
Co-initiating our U.Lab journey

Week 2: Sept 24
Suspending and listening

Week 3: Oct 1
Co-sensing from the edges of the system

Week 4 *LIVE SESSION* Oct 8
Presencing: Connecting to Source

Week 5: Oct 15
Crystallizing the emerging future

Week 6: Oct 22
Co-creating to prototype the future

Week 7 *LIVE SESSION* Oct 29
Co-evolving prototype initiatives

Week 8: Nov 5
Global movement building

LIVE SESSION Dec 17
Sharing results, co-shaping the journey ahead

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HOSTING A HUB

WHAT QUALIFIES SOMEONE TO HOST A HUB?

To be a hub host, you only need three things:

1. A physical space to meet
2. A little extra time to plan for hosting
3. An intention to create a safe space for learning and prototyping

It also helps serve the global U.Lab infrastructure if you can commit to documenting and sharing what you learn locally with the global community on the Presencing Institute website beginning Sept 2015.

KEY ROLES

As a hub host, the key roles you play might include:

- **Finding and helping organize a space** conducive to reflective learning and prototyping.
- **Outreach and communication** with other U.Lab participants in your area.
- **Manage event logistics** by ensuring technical needs are met, prepare or arrange for food (optional), and so forth.
- **Document** what happens locally and share it globally with other hubs and the broader U.Lab community.
- **Facilitation** (Optional) – while U.Lab is facilitated "globally" through videos and text-based instructions, local facilitators may choose to contextualize the course content so that it is relevant locally. This may require facilitating additional "sense-making" or dialogue activities with hub participants.

PREPARING TO HOST

Here are a few tips, as you prepare to host a hub:

- **Form a hosting team** – When you decide to host a hub, it's often helpful to invite others to do this with you. In our experience, it is often easier if you divide and share hosting responsibilities amongst 2-3 people.
- **Invitation** – Outline as clearly as possible what people are being invited to, where, when, etc.; who else may be participating, what they can expect (or not); direct them to the online U.Lab introductory videos and registration page. Please note, each person in your hub should register individually for U.Lab on edX.
- **Venue** – Make sure the place where you meet is suitable in size and access, and free from undue outside interference or noise; that your internet connectivity is strong and reliable, and that you have what's needed (e.g. projector, screen, sound) for everyone to be able to see and hear the live session.
- **Welcome people** so they feel comfortable arriving and getting to know each other
- **Set Intention** ("why are we doing this?") with your hosting team (if applicable), and also with the participants. During the first session, take some time together prior to the session to clarify the purpose for your coming together. There may be individual and collective reasons; it may be a desire simply to learn alongside peers, or you may be using this opportunity to address a specific common issue, or core question. Try to establish as much clarity and alignment upfront, so you can avoid fallout later.
- **Clarify Commitment** – Encourage clarity about the amount of time people will invest in this experience and commit to that as a journey.
- **Cultivate an atmosphere of non-judgment and a curiosity** – Each person's experience & exploration is valid.
- **Build trust and confidence** by requesting that confidentiality be respected, so that people can safely move into their own new learning and awareness.
- **Encourage co-ownership**, so that people share responsibility for the space and for their own experience. This might include sharing practical tasks like setting up the room or providing refreshments, as well as ensuring that you don't find yourself unwittingly responsible for fulfilling every unmet need.
- **Connecting hubs** – Reach out to other near/far hubs in the area, to connect people, offer support and share learning.

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HOW OFTEN TO HOST

There are many ways to organize a hub. Every context is different. Here are some options to help you shape your own hosting experience.

Host Only the Live Sessions

Some hubs convene on the four Thursdays when there are live sessions. Others chose to convene another day or time or during the week or weekend and watch the recorded version live sessions (which is typically made available within a few hours after the conclusion of the live broadcast).

Meet Weekly

Some hubs convene every week of the course. On the weeks when there is no live session, these hubs may use the time to reflect on course materials or they engage in other possible activities such as:

- Coaching circles
- Dialogue walks
- Sensing journeys
- Prototyping activities

These activities will be described in detail, and instructions given, during the U.Lab course itself.

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EXAMPLES OF HUBS

Placed based hubs

Initiated in a place (a city, for example) with an open invitation for anyone participating in the U.Lab, who lives or works there, to join for regular gatherings.

Theme based hubs

Initiated for those who intend to use U.Lab to explore deeper into a certain challenge, issue, or system.

Organization based hubs

Within an organization such as an NGO or a company, forming U.Lab hubs can be an effective way to ignite the field for cross-department/sector innovation and change. Self-organization combined with some guidance is key. Some useful practices include:

- Identify the core group members: 3-5 people who share the common intention of holding the space within the organization; this might include U practitioners from both inside and outside the company.
- Introduce U Lab: send out table tents or messages to different departments/functions and organize off-line; face-to-face “salons” can help to give people some basic ideas of what the U.Lab is and how they can use it.
- Encourage place or theme based coaching circles.
- Organize periodic face-to-face gatherings (such as every other week), watch live sessions or key videos together followed by group activities such as coaching circles or Social Presencing Theater.
- Encourage prototypes, learning by doing.
- Share stories and allow the collective whole to see itself through connections within the organizations and to the bigger ecology.

SAMPLE SCHEDULE: LIVE SESSION

1 hour prior to the live session:
Welcome – optional tea, coffee, or snacks.

30 minutes prior to the live session:
Check-in – each person shares the intention that brings him or her here today.

Watch the live session together

Post-live session:
Break into pairs or trios to share immediate thoughts and responses, based on the reflection questions Otto shares to end the session.
(Duration: 10-15 min)

Post-live session:
Come back together as a whole group to share and “harvest” thoughts, insights or questions in the whole group. (Duration: 10-15 min)

Post-live session:
Wrap-up comments or observations; intended actions, and how participants might support each other in between the sessions.
(Duration: 10-15 min)

Post-live session:
Check-out – a brief closing word from each person.
(Duration: 10-15 min)

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KEY HOSTING PRINCIPLES

Here are a few principles to be mindful of while hosting. This list will evolve as we learn together, as a global ecology of U.Lab hubs, how best to support each other:

1. Understand and align with the intention as stated in U.Lab/U.school vision papers (https://www.presencing.com/sites/default/files/Uschool%20Vision_0.pdf)

2. Operate financially on a pay-it-forward basis to the degree possible.

3. Activities designed to “augment” the U.Lab should be done with the intention to support the global ecosystem. For example, communication (newsletters and social media [use hashtag #ulab]), translation (whenever possible should by done in a way that can be uploaded into edX and shared globally), prototypes (document and share within the U.Lab eco-system).

4. Those who take on facilitation roles are free to use the U.Lab material however they like - but they are not authorized in any way to identify themselves as official PI / Theory U / U.Lab facilitators. To do the latter requires the proper training and quality gates that we have spelled out in the capacity building work of PI.

5. Use of Logos: MIT logos cannot be used. PI Logos can be used to the degree that each specific use is reconfirmed first by PI.

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FAQ'S

What kind of time commitment should I prepare for if I host a hub?

It's up to you – you'll need to factor in preparation time (before the group convenes), the amount of time you spend together as a group, and any follow up and documentation you intend to do.

How long are sessions?

The length of a hub-session depends on the format you choose. The live session lasts 75 minutes. If you host only the live session, you might need two and a half hours, including the welcoming and short debrief. Other hubs gather for half a day and include more time to debrief and reflect on their different idea, projects or prototypes.

Finances

We offer U.Lab as a free online offering. If you decide to host the U.Lab for the duration of the course and to charge for the use of a space, you can do it in any way that stays true to our (U.Lab) longer-term intention and is aligned with the intention as stated in U.Lab/u.school vision papers. We encourage you to use a pay-it-forward approach. (https://www.presencing.com/sites/default/files/Uschool%20Vision_0.pdf)

Minimum number of people

While there is no minimum number of people required to form a hub, we suggest you convene at least five people.

Do hub participants have to work on the same prototype?

No. People in hubs can work on their own prototype or a prototype that emerges from a group of hub participants.

Are live sessions recorded?

Yes. They are typically posted within a few hours (often less) to the U.Lab course on edX.org, along with all the other course material.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Below are some further practices and methodologies that offer participants the opportunity to deepen the quality of how they pay attention. The ability to pay attention to previously unnoticed information and/or relationships is a precondition for innovation and change.

These are some practices and methodologies that could be used at your Hubs:

CIRCLE CONVERSATIONS

http://peerspirit.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/06/PeerSpirit-Circle-Guidelines2010.pdf

WORLD CAFÉ

http://www.theworldcafe.com/pdfs/cafetogo.pdf

OPEN SPACE TECHNOLOGY

http://www.openspaceworld.org/files/tmnfiles/2pageos.htm

http://www.artofhosting.org/what-is-aoh/methods/

https://vimeo.com/channels/393360

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