Supporting the Vast Airflow Community:
Lessons learned from over 100 Airflow webinars
Introduction

My Background

- Data Engineering consultant
- Field Engineer at Astronomer
- DevRel at Astronomer
- All of these roles have been (at least partially) about helping people adopt Airflow

Kenten Danas
Manager, Developer Relations @ Astronomer
Agenda

- How developer relations can help the Airflow community
- An overview of Astronomer’s webinar program
- 5 lessons learned from over 100 webinars
The Airflow community and ecosystem is enormous

Growth
- 13M+ Monthly downloads

Ecosystem
- 1200 Building blocks

Community
- 30k+ Slack community

Innovation
- 2.4k+ Contributors
And the project moves really fast
Releases always contain important stuff
But we know people can get left behind

Do you use the Taskflow API/Decorators in Airflow?

The author can see how you vote. Learn more

- Yes, my DAGs are beautiful now: 31%
- Never heard of that: 22%
- I heard but never tried: 38%
- No, it’s a pain to use: 10%

Chat: did not realize there was an "airflow 2"
DevRel goals for Airflow

- Ensure existing users know how new features can make their lives easier
- Ensure new users know Airflow *can* support their use case
- Ensure everybody knows how to implement the features they need and get them to production
This can be challenging for such a large community

We want to foster the entire ecosystem, not just one type of user
Webinars can be a great resource - they’re free, highly accessible, and provide a more interactive way to learn than reading a blog post or tutorial.

Community webinars can help
Astronomer’s webinar program

Webinars are held for 1hr every week, where we deep dive into Airflow-related topics like new releases, new features, data quality, ML + Airflow, local dev and more

- > 100 Events held
- > 7000 Unique registrations
- > 20 Speakers
- > 2.5 years Age of the program
- > 500 Typical reg for new release sessions
- > 650 Repeat attendees
- Countless Audience questions answered
- Countless Airflow feedback received
What have we learned?
Lesson 1:
Demo, demo, demo, demo
Demos are really important

- When you can’t speak to everybody’s specific use case, let the features speak for themselves
- Live demos are tough, but they’re much more engaging
- Spending more time on demos makes the webinars informative and a resource for implementation
Lesson 2: Talk about new features A lot
New features need a lot of air time

- It can be tough to get widespread adoption of new features, but it’s really important to make sure everybody gets the most out of Airflow.
- For big features, one webinar probably isn’t enough.

- March 7, 2023
  How to easily test your Airflow DAGs with the new dag.test() function

- April 4, 2023
  How to test and debug your Airflow connections

- January 31, 2023
  Debugging your Airflow DAGs
Lesson 3:
Use use cases
Use cases help with adoption

- It’s important to provide inspiration on how Airflow can help with certain use cases
- Helps draw in more experienced users
- These events sometimes get less attendance, but often more engagement
Lesson 4:
Don’t underestimate the day
to day
Development, testing, debugging, is hard

- Local dev and the process of getting DAGs to production may not be the shiniest topic, but it’s one everybody deals with
- Small improvements can have a big impact

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think is the least discussed topic in Airflow content? (and you would like to see)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting up monitoring/metrics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CI/CD implementation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Azure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Testing/Debugging</td>
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<tr>
<th>What is your biggest blocker implementing CICD with Airflow?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not sure how to set it up</td>
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<tr>
<td>None, we already use CICD</td>
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<tr>
<td>Didn’t know it was possible</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>Airflow environment doesn’t support it</td>
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Lesson 5:
Community over code
Remember the human component

Quality presentations
Keep things interesting, simple (easily understandable), and take feedback.

Provide recordings
Making content as accessible as possible will broaden the reach and help support a vast community.

Answer questions
Live Q&A puts you on the spot, but it’s really important for people to get that interaction and feel heard.
In Conclusion
This program is ongoing!

- We’re excited for the next 100 webinars, and what we’ll learn from those
- Upcoming topics include:
  - Weaviate provider
  - Managing connections
  - LLMs with Airflow
Call to Action

- Register for a webinar!
  - astronomer.io/events/webinars
- Vote for our next topics!
Questions?