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▶ What is AWS Jam?

AWS Jam is an event where participants experience a wide range of AWS services in a series of prepared scenarios that represent common use-cases and operational tasks.

These include:

- Remediation at scale
- Automation
- Forensics
- Incident response
- AI/ ML
- DevOps
- Compliance

The events and campaigns are gamified, with teams competing to score points by completing a series of challenges. AWS provides access to pre-created infrastructure that is based on common use cases. Participants will determine what happened, how to best respond, and deploy appropriate solutions. The challenges have varying degrees of difficulty and points associated with them. A live leaderboard provides updates on stats and progress. Clues and guidance help your participants move through the challenges.

AWS Jam is based upon three core principles: **play, learn, validate**. It provides a practical, hands-on approach to learning on the AWS platform – and the ability to assess those skills in a way that reflects real-world usage of AWS.

An AWS Jam events and campaigns are made up of a combination of challenges that allow participants to experiment within the autoprovisioned AWS environments. While each challenge has a set of goals, the path to the solution is open-ended, allowing the participant freedom to play and learn by exploring different approaches and combinations of AWS services. Challenge hints are embedded in the scenario to prevent participants from wasting too much time or hitting a dead-end. AWS Jam not only has the ability to identify whether the goals were achieved, but can also programmatically validate that the solution captures best practices that are known to scale effectively. AWS Jam comes with over 140 challenges pre-created by subject matter experts to experience real-world problems. There is also a Jam community of facilitators and challenge builders who support large scale events.

Challenges cover topics including:

- Security
- DevOps
- AI/ML
- Data analytics
- Migration tooling
- IoT

Customers also have the ability to design their own challenges and tailor them to their particular environment and objectives. Upon the completion of an AWS Jam Event, event owners can access reports measuring the performance of their participants and suggestions on areas for improvement. The AWS Jam provides companies with the training and validation mechanisms they need to pursue their most important business outcomes and also provides individual employees an engaging, gamified way to develop and assess their skills.

What should I expect?

You are going to challenge your AWS skills by solving various scenarios that are presented to you throughout your Jam experience. You can choose to work with a team with different skills and strengths. Together with the team, you will have to build a strategy on the challenges you would like to solve and decide who is doing what. Sometimes you will have to do research and sometimes you will be the one who works hands-on in the environment. Also, similar to a real use case from your organization, you will work with colleagues that may have domain expertise in security, networking, or databases to reach the optimum solution and leverage their knowledge.

There are two types of Jam events:

- **Specialty Jam** – A specialty Jam is typically a 4 to 8 hours hands-on, fun competition session where you register with colleagues to create a team or join an existing team. You will work out to solve as many challenges you can and score points while trying to be among the first three teams winning the competition. The specialty Jam has typically 10-14 challenges on AWS services around a specific theme like security, DevOps, or analytics, or in some cases, it can be a variety of AWS services.
- **Jam Lounge** – The Jam lounge is a hands-on event that can last from one day to a few weeks. You can register at any time during the event and form a team with colleagues, join an existing team, or participate individually. Because the duration of the lounge is long, you can work on challenges at your own pace, at your own convenience. Learning best practices and new AWS features, exploring challenges, and learning something new on the way are just a few things that can be done in the lounge. There are typically 14 challenges, including various AWS services and domains like Security, DevOps, and Analytics or any other AWS service. If you want to be competitive, you can play to win and solve as many challenges as you can to score maximum points.

Registration

You will be provided with a secret key, which allows you to register for the event at any point before its start time. Sometimes the Jam may host a kick off broadcast, so please review the event notes to see if there is one scheduled for your event. Please note that for some events you may be automatically assigned to a team. This will be done by an event facilitator after everyone has registered. For other events, you will be prompted to either join an existing team or create a new team. We recommend that you find 2-3 teammates so you can practice the Jam together. If you don't have a team, it's recommended to try joining an existing team that has available slots. This will also allow you to network with people you don't know.

The Jam application

When you get into the Jam application, you will first have to register. Once done, you will have access to the event challenges that you have been designated to. When you are in the application and start the Jam, the session starts with the following:

1. **Team Chat** - Locate the team chat in the bottom right corner of the page and introduce yourself to the team. Share your skills and level of knowledge in AWS.
2. **Team Video Conference** – During the Jam, you can create a video conference through Amazon Chime. You can also coordinate with your team on a video conference tool you already utilize.
3. **Team Audio/Video meeting** - Locate the Team Video capability and video conference with your team as needed. To operate an audio/video meeting, navigate to the team tab or within the team chat panel. A meeting can only be created by the team owner. However, if teams are auto assigned, anyone can create a team meeting.
4. **Challenge sets** - Take a few minutes to browse the challenges and see what area you have the most chances to score points. The challenges are spread over a “world map”. If you see a “lock” icon on the challenges, it’s not open, or the session has not started yet.
5. **Strategy** - Agree with your teammates if you want to work together on challenges or split challenges by pairs or individuals based on skill level.
6. **Communication** - When you start to work on a challenge, notify the other team members.
7. **Non-Active Members** - If there is a teammate who is not active and you want to remove them from the team, please raise a chat request with a facilitator. If there is a new participant joining the Jam, they can join your team and increase your chance to win. If you don’t see the support chat button, your event manager did not activate that capability.
8. **Lab Details** - Once you start working on a challenge, the AWS Lab account details will appear at the bottom of the page. Pay attention to the account number and the region associated with it.

9. **AWS Lab Access** – Look for the “AWS Console” button at the top of the challenge page. You must start the challenge before you can access the lab environment.
10. **Output properties** – This link on the left side of the screen within the additional links and parameters that have been created as part of the challenges. In many challenges, you will need these in order to complete the challenge.
11. **CLI Access** – CLI access will be provided to you in multiple language scripts. It is located at the top of the challenge page when you are instructed to utilize it.
12. **Validate a Challenge** – Some challenges require submitting an answer, and some challenges are validated automatically once completed. You will get instructions on how to complete a challenge. When you have a button on the challenge page that says, “Check my Progress”, the system will automatically verify your challenge has been completed after you complete the challenge task.
13. **Game dashboards** – On the top of the screen, there are tabs and access to the game dashboard. In those tabs, you can see your team ranking, points earned, and additional trends to understand your success in the game.

How Should I Prepare?

AWS Jam is built on real-life scenarios. Typically, Jam challenges require a level of understanding across multiple domains.

Prerequisites

1. Hands-on experience with the AWS console and familiarity with navigating the AWS services is recommended. Also, you should have some experience with basic services such as S3, VPC, EC2, KMS, Cloud Watch, Cloud Trail. We recommend having a practitioner level. Some challenges may also involve lambda scripting, additional services, and require deep domain expertise. In those cases, consult with the Jam event manager for additional details.
2. A Jam event is typically focused on a specific domain such as DevOps or Security, but could also be a mix of domains. You should know that before beginning the Jam Event.
3. AWS Jam does not provide material for preparing for a session. In most cases, you will be notified of the overall theme. This will be a fair play among all of the participants.
4. It's highly recommended to work as a team. This allows the team to leverage skills, widen the area of knowledge, and allow time for research.
5. If you are not able to find a solution, don't worry. You can always use the clues provided to you as part of the challenge. There is a point deduction for using clues, but you will get the instructions on how to solve the challenge.
6. The Jam challenges do not provide a direct answer to the solution, but you can use clues that will help guide you. As you unlock the clues, each will provide more precise details on how to find the solution.

▷ Should I work with a team or alone?

The Jam challenges spread across multiple domains and skills sets. Each challenge can take one hour or more to solve. It's highly recommended to work as part of a team so you can brainstorm and maximize points by solving as many challenges as possible to win the game.

▷ What happens during the registration phase?

1. If you have not participated in a Jam event before, please register at jam.awsevents.com/register with your email and a password (note - your password is not the secret key). If you participated in a previous Jam event, simply log in using your credentials.
2. Once you have logged in, you may be asked to enter the secret key to join the event. You will receive this from the event administrator.
3. In public events, you will be able to proceed to the next step 30-90 minutes before the event starts. Before then, you will be placed in the lobby and instructed to come back prior the event start time.
4. You will have one or more options based on the event settings which include:
 - **Find me a team:** Our system will assign you to a team based on skill level -and goal (play to win or play to learn)
 - **Join an existing team:** Find a team with open space to join or form a team with colleagues. Once you join a team, reach out to the other members via the Team Page to introduce yourself.
 - **Create a new team:** If there are no teams with available space, or you want to be on a team with specific individuals, you can create a new team. You have the option to keep the team private by assigning a team password.

▷ I don't have experience with AWS, can I still use the Jam?

It is recommended to have on hands-on experience in the AWS console so you know how to log in and navigate the services and features. At the minimum, we recommend having a practitioner level of knowledge. This does not necessarily mean that you will be able to solve the challenges without clues, but it will provide you with the ability to use clues to solve the challenges.

Do you have questions?

Please reach your Jam event organizer or contact aws-jam@amazon.com