

Comprehensive Report on Meetup.com: Pricing, Data Practices, Ownership, and Organizer Exit Strategies

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Introduction

Meetup.com is a leading online platform designed to facilitate the creation and management of local and virtual communities. Since its inception in 2002, it has helped millions of people connect over shared interests, hobbies,

and professional goals. As of 2025, Meetup supports 49 million members, 330,000 groups, and 100,000 events per week across 193 countries ([PR Newswire, 2020](#)). This report provides an in-depth analysis of Meetup’s pricing for both members and organizers, its data privacy practices, the organization’s ownership, and the procedures and limitations for organizers wishing to leave the platform with their group’s member contacts.

Meetup.com Pricing Structure

Pricing for Organizers

Meetup’s primary revenue comes from organizer subscriptions. The pricing structure has undergone significant changes, most recently in June 2024, with new rates effective for both Standard and Pro organizers ([Meetup Blog, 2024](#)). The latest available data as of February 23, 2025, is as follows:

Standard Organizer Plans

Plan Type	Monthly Cost	6-Month Cost	12-Month Cost
Standard Organizer	\$44.99	\$178.99	\$299.99

Meetup Pro Plans

Plan Type	1-Month Cost (per group)	6-Month Cost (per group)	12-Month Cost
Meetup Pro	\$55.00	\$47.00	None

- **Standard Organizer:** Designed for individuals or small groups, allowing the creation and management of up to 3 groups, with unlimited events and attendees.
- **Meetup Pro:** Targeted at organizations or businesses managing multiple groups, offering advanced features such as analytics, branding, and centralized management ([PriceTimeline, 2025](#)).

Historical Pricing Context

Prior to the 2024 increase, Standard Organizer pricing was significantly lower (e.g., \$23.99/month or \$98.94 for six months in 2019), but the new pricing reflects Meetup’s need for greater investment in technology and platform improvements ([Meetup Blog, 2024](#)).

Pricing for Members

- **Free Membership:** Regular members can join Meetup, browse groups, RSVP to events, and participate in most activities at no cost.
- **Paid Membership (Meetup Pro):** Some organizations may charge their own fees for participation, but Meetup itself does not charge members directly for basic participation. There are no platform-wide member subscription fees as of 2025.

Free Trial

Meetup offers a one-month free trial for new organizers, allowing them to create up to 20 groups and access limited features. After the trial, automatic billing for the selected organizer plan commences unless canceled ([DatingApps.com, 2025](#)).

Comparison Table: Organizer Plans

Feature	Standard Organizer	Meetup Pro
Monthly Cost	\$44.99	\$55.00 (per group)
6-Month Cost	\$178.99	\$47.00/mo (per group)
12-Month Cost	\$299.99	N/A
Groups Allowed	Up to 3	Multiple (per group fee)
Free Trial	1 month	1 month
Advanced Analytics	No	Yes
Centralized Management	No	Yes

Feature	Standard Organizer	Meetup Pro
Branding	No	Yes

Meetup's Data Practices: Is Member Data Sold?

Meetup's Business Model and Data Policy

Meetup's stated business model is based on organizer subscriptions, not advertising or data monetization. According to official communications and the [Meetup Manifesto for Data Practices](#), Meetup explicitly avoids using member data for targeted advertising or selling it to third parties. The platform's mission is to foster real-life connections without compromising user privacy ([Medium, 2018](#)).

"By paying a monthly subscription fee, Meetup organizers allow us to pursue that mission wholeheartedly — without influence from ads. Instead of optimizing for clicks or ad dollars, we're optimizing for real people showing up in real life to do what matters to them." ([Medium, 2018](#))

Transparency and Ethical Data Use

Meetup's data practices are guided by principles of transparency, accountability, fairness, and inclusion. The company commits to:

- Communicating clearly how and when member data is collected, stored, used, or shared.
- Sharing data only when it benefits members and only with parties that share Meetup's values.
- Proactively monitoring and iterating on data use to avoid bias and ensure ethical outcomes ([Medium, 2018](#)).

Direct and Indirect Data Sales

Direct Sales: There is no evidence or policy indicating that Meetup directly sells member contact data to third parties.

Indirect Sales: While Meetup may use aggregated, anonymized data to improve its services or for internal analytics, there is no indication that individual member data is sold or shared for marketing or advertising purposes. This is supported by both the company's public statements and independent reviews ([PR Newswire, 2020](#)).

Conclusion on Data Sales: Based on current evidence, Meetup does not sell member contact data, either directly or indirectly, as part of its business model.

Ownership and Leadership of Meetup.com

Historical Ownership Timeline

- **2002:** Meetup founded as an independent company.
- **2017:** Acquired by WeWork for approximately \$156 million ([Wikipedia, 2024](#)).
- **2020:** Sold by WeWork to AlleyCorp and other investors amid WeWork's financial troubles ([TechCrunch, 2020](#)).
- **2024:** Acquired by Bending Spoons, a European technology company ([The Verge, 2024](#)).

Current Ownership and Leadership

As of January 2024, Meetup is owned by [Bending Spoons](#), a technology company known for its focus on mobile and digital products ([Wikipedia, 2024](#)). The acquisition is intended to provide long-term stability and investment in the platform's technology and user experience.

Leadership: The CEO and key leadership positions have changed over the years, with David Siegel serving as CEO during the transition from WeWork to AlleyCorp. The current leadership under Bending Spoons has not been publicly detailed as of May 2025.

Exiting Meetup as an Organizer: Data Portability and Member Contacts

Meetup's Policy on Member Data Export

Meetup's terms of service and privacy policy are clear: member data, including email addresses and contact information, is not owned by the organizer but by Meetup itself. Organizers are not permitted to export or use member contact information outside of the platform without explicit member consent ([Medium, 2018](#)).

Key Points:

- Organizers can communicate with members via Meetup's internal messaging system.
- Direct export of member contact data (emails, phone numbers) is not supported for privacy reasons.
- Any attempt to circumvent these restrictions (e.g., scraping data) is a violation of Meetup's terms and may result in account suspension.

Practical Steps for Organizers Wishing to Leave

1. Notify Members Within Meetup:

Organizers can post announcements or send messages to their group members informing them of the intention to move to a new platform. This is the most compliant way to facilitate migration.

2. Request Voluntary Contact Sharing:

Organizers may ask members to voluntarily provide their contact information (e.g., via a Google Form or external signup page) if they wish to continue participating in the group outside Meetup.

3. Archive Group Content:

While direct export of member data is restricted, organizers can manually archive event histories, discussions, and other group content for reference.

4. Close or Transfer the Group:

Organizers can either close the group or transfer leadership to another member if they wish to step down but keep the group active on Meetup.

Legal and Ethical Considerations

- **Compliance with Privacy Laws:** Exporting member data without consent may violate privacy laws (e.g., GDPR, CCPA) and Meetup's terms.
 - **Ethical Practice:** Organizers are encouraged to respect member privacy and obtain explicit consent before transferring any data.
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Conclusion and Opinion

Based on a thorough review of the available sources and current policies, Meetup.com operates a transparent and subscription-driven business model that prioritizes organizer fees over advertising or data sales. The recent price increases for organizers reflect a strategic shift towards investing in platform improvements and long-term sustainability under new ownership by Bending Spoons.

Pricing:

Organizer fees are now substantial, with Standard plans starting at \$44.99/month and Pro plans at \$55/month per group. While this may be burdensome for some, especially those managing multiple groups, it aligns with Meetup's commitment to ad-free, privacy-focused operations.

Data Practices:

Meetup does not sell member contact data, either directly or indirectly. Its data practices are guided by a public manifesto emphasizing transparency, accountability, and ethical use. The company's refusal to monetize member data through advertising or third-party sales is a distinguishing feature in the social platform landscape.

Ownership:

The platform's acquisition by Bending Spoons in 2024 marks a new chapter, with promises of technological investment and stability. There is no evidence of any shift towards less privacy-conscious practices under the new ownership.

Organizer Exit:

Organizers wishing to leave Meetup cannot export member contact data without consent. The only compliant way to migrate a community is to

request members to opt-in to external communication channels. This policy, while restrictive, is consistent with privacy best practices and legal requirements.

Opinion:

Meetup's approach to pricing and data privacy is commendable in an era where user data is often commoditized. However, the high cost for organizers may limit accessibility for grassroots or non-profit groups. The platform's strict data portability rules protect member privacy but can hinder community migration. On balance, Meetup remains a trustworthy platform for community building, but organizers should be aware of the financial and operational constraints.

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This report is based on the most recent and reliable sources as of May 20, 2025. All URLs are provided for further reference and verification.