



NVIDIA COLLECTIVE COMMUNICATION LIBRARY (NCCL)

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API



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Chapter 1.

NCCL API

The following sections describe the collective communications methods and operations.

1.1. Communicator Creation and Management Functions

The following functions are public APIs exposed by NCCL to create and manage the collective communication operations.

1.1.1. `ncclGetUniqueId`

The `ncclGetUniqueId` function generates an `Id` to be used in the `ncclCommInitRank` function.

The `ncclGetUniqueId` function should be called once. The `Id` should be distributed to all of the ranks in the communicator before calling the `ncclCommInitRank` function.

```
ncclResult_t ncclGetUniqueId(ncclUniqueId* uniqueId);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclGetUniqueId` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>ncclUniqueId*</code>	<code>uniqueId</code>	Pointer to an already allocated unique <code>Id</code> .

1.1.2. `ncclCommInitRank`

The `ncclCommInitRank` function creates a new communicator object for the current CUDA device. This function allows for multi-process initialization.

```
ncclResult_t ncclCommInitRank(ncclComm_t* comm, int nranks, ncclUniqueId  
commId, int  
rank);
```

The `ncclCommInitRank` function implicitly synchronizes with other ranks, so it must be called by different threads and processes or use the `ncclGroupStart` and `ncclGroupEnd` functions.

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclCommInitRank` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>ncclComm_t*</code>	<code>comm</code>	Returned communicator.
<code>int</code>	<code>nranks</code>	Number of ranks in the communicator.
<code>ncclUniqueId*</code>	<code>uniqueId</code>	Pointer to a unique Id.
<code>int</code>	<code>rank</code>	The rank associated to the current device. The rank must be between 0 and <code>nranks-1</code> and unique within the communicator clique.

1.1.3. `ncclCommInitAll`

The `ncclCommInitAll` function creates a full communicator. For example, a clique of communicator objects. The communicator only works within a single process.

```
ncclResult_t ncclCommInitAll(ncclComm_t* comm, int ndev, const int* devlist);
```

The `ncclCommInitAll` function returns an array of `ndev` newly initialized communicators in `comm`. The argument name `comm`, should be pre-allocated with the size of at least `ndev*sizeof(ncclComm_t)`. If `devlist` is NULL, the first `ndev` CUDA devices are used. The order of `devlist` defines the user order of the devices within the communicator.

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclCommInitAll` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>ncclComm_t*</code>	<code>comm</code>	Returned array of communicators. The <code>comm</code> argument should be pre-allocated with a size of at least: <code>ndev*sizeof(ncclComm_t)</code> .
<code>int</code>	<code>ndev</code>	Number of ranks or devices in the communicator.
<code>const int*</code>	<code>devlist</code>	A list of CUDA devices to associate with each rank.

Type	Argument Name	Description
		Should be an array of <code>ndev</code> integers.

1.1.4. `ncclCommDestroy`

The `ncclCommDestroy` function frees resources that are allocated to a communicator object.

```
ncclResult_t ncclCommDestroy(ncclComm_t comm);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclCommDestroy` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object to free.

1.1.5. `ncclCommCount`

The `ncclCommCount` function returns the number of ranks in a communicator.

```
ncclResult_t ncclCommCount(const ncclComm_t comm, int* count);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclCommCount` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>int*</code>	<code>count</code>	Number of ranks returned.

1.1.6. `ncclCommCuDevice`

The `ncclCommCuDevice` function returns the CUDA device associated with a communicator object.

```
ncclResult_t ncclCommCuDevice(const ncclComm_t comm, int* device);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclCommCuDevice` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>int*</code>	<code>count</code>	CUDA device returned.

1.1.7. `ncclCommUserRank`

The `ncclCommUserRank` function returns the rank of a communicator object.

```
ncclResult_t ncclCommUserRank(const ncclComm_t comm, int* rank);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclCommUserRank` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>int*</code>	<code>rank</code>	Rank returned.

1.2. Collective Communication Functions

The following NCCL APIs provide some commonly used collective operations.

1.2.1. `ncclAllReduce`

The `ncclAllReduce` function reduces data arrays of length `count` in `sendbuff` using `op` operation and leaves identical copies of the result on each `recvbuff`.

```
ncclResult_t ncclAllReduce(const void* sendbuff, void* recvbuff, size_t
    count,
    ncclDataType_t datatype, ncclRedOp_t op, ncclComm_t comm, cudaStream_t
    stream);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclAllReduce` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>const void*</code>	<code>sendbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to read from.
<code>const void*</code>	<code>recvbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to write to.
<code>size_t</code>	<code>count</code>	Number of elements to process.
<code>ncclDataType_t</code>	<code>datatype</code>	Type of element.
<code>ncclRedOp_t</code>	<code>op</code>	Operation to perform on each element.
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>cudaStream_t</code>	<code>stream</code>	CUDA stream to run the operation on.

1.2.2. `ncclBcast`

The `ncclBcast` function copies the count values from the root directory to all of the other devices. The root directory is the rank where data resides before the operation is started.

```
ncclResult_t ncclBcast(void* buff, size_t count, ncclDataType_t datatype, int
    root,
    ncclComm_t comm, cudaStream_t stream);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclBcast` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>const void*</code>	<code>buff</code>	Pointer to the data to read from (root) or write to (non-root).
<code>size_t</code>	<code>count</code>	Number of elements to process.
<code>ncclDataType_t</code>	<code>datatype</code>	Type of element.
<code>int</code>	<code>root</code>	Rank of the root of the operation.
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>cudaStream_t</code>	<code>stream</code>	CUDA stream to run the operation on.

1.2.3. `ncclReduce`

The `ncclReduce` function reduces data arrays of length `count` in `sendbuff` into `recvbuff` using the `op` operation.

```
ncclResult_t ncclReduce(const void* sendbuff, void* recvbuff, size_t count,
    ncclDataType_t datatype,
    ncclRedOp_t op, int root, ncclComm_t comm, cudaStream_t stream);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclReduce` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>const void*</code>	<code>sendbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to read from.
<code>const void*</code>	<code>recvbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to write to.
<code>size_t</code>	<code>count</code>	Number of elements to process.
<code>ncclDataType_t</code>	<code>datatype</code>	Type of element.
<code>int</code>	<code>root</code>	Rank of the root of the operation.
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>cudaStream_t</code>	<code>stream</code>	CUDA stream to run the operation on.

1.2.4. ncclAllGather

The `ncclAllGather` function gathers `sendcount` values from other GPUs into `recvbuff`, receiving data from rank `i` at offset `i*sendcount`.



This assumes `recvcount` is equal to `n ranks*sendcount`, which means that `recvbuff` should have a size of at least `n ranks*sendcount` elements.

```
ncclResult_t ncclAllGather(const void* sendbuff, void* recvbuff, size_t
    sendcount,
    ncclDataType_t datatype, ncclComm_t comm, cudaStream_t stream);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclAllGather` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>const void*</code>	<code>sendbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to read from.
<code>const void*</code>	<code>recvbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to write to. This should be the size of <code>sendcount*n ranks</code> .
<code>size_t</code>	<code>sendcount</code>	Number of elements sent per rank.
<code>ncclDataType_t</code>	<code>datatype</code>	Type of element.
<code>int</code>	<code>root</code>	Rank of the root of the operation.
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>cudaStream_t</code>	<code>stream</code>	CUDA stream to run the operation on.

1.2.5. ncclReduceScatter

The `ncclReduceScatter` function reduces data in `sendbuff` using the `op` operation and leaves the reduced result scattered over the devices so that the `recvbuff` on rank `i` will contain the `i-th` block of the result.



This assumes `sendcount` is equal to `n ranks*recvcount`, which means that `sendbuff` should have a size of at least `n ranks*recvcount` elements.

```
ncclResult_t ncclReduceScatter(const void* sendbuff, void* recvbuff,
    size_t recvcount, ncclDataType_t datatype, ncclRedOp_t op, ncclComm_t comm,
    cudaStream_t stream);
```

The following table lists the arguments that are passed to the `ncclReduceScatter` function.

Type	Argument Name	Description
<code>const void*</code>	<code>sendbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to read from. This should be the size of recvcount*nranks .
<code>const void*</code>	<code>recvbuff</code>	Pointer to the data to write to.
<code>size_t</code>	<code>recvcount</code>	Number of elements to receive by each rank.
<code>ncclDataType_t</code>	<code>datatype</code>	Type of element.
<code>ncclRedOp_t</code>	<code>op</code>	Operation to perform on each element.
<code>ncclComm_t</code>	<code>comm</code>	Communicator object.
<code>cudaStream_t</code>	<code>stream</code>	CUDA stream to run the operation on.

1.3. Group Calls

Group primitives define the behavior of the current thread to avoid blocking. They can therefore be used from multiple threads independently.

1.3.1. `ncclGroupStart`

The `ncclGroupStart` call starts a group call.

All subsequent calls to NCCL may not block due to inter-CPU synchronization.

```
ncclResult_t ncclGroupStart();
```

1.3.2. `ncclGroupEnd`

The `ncclGroupEnd` call ends a group call.

The `ncclGroupEnd` call returns when all operations since `ncclGroupStart` have been processed. This means communication primitives have been enqueued to the provided streams, but are not necessary complete. When used with `ncclCommInitRank`, it means all communicators have been initialized and are ready to be used.

When the `ncclGroupEnd` call is used with the `ncclCommInitRank` function, the `ncclGroupEnd` call waits for all communicators to be initialized.

```
ncclResult_t ncclGroupEnd();
```

1.4. Types

The following types are used by the NCCL library. These types are useful when configuring your collective operations.

1.4.1. `ncclDataType_t`

NCCL defines the following integral and floating data-types.

Data-Type	Description
<code>ncclInt8</code> , <code>ncclChar</code>	Signed 8-bits integer.
<code>ncclUInt8</code>	Unsigned 8-bits integer.
<code>ncclInt32</code> , <code>ncclInt</code>	Signed 32-bits integer.
<code>ncclUInt32</code>	Unsigned 32-bits integer.
<code>ncclInt64</code>	Signed 64-bits integer.
<code>ncclUInt64</code>	Unsigned 64-bits integer.
<code>ncclFloat16</code> , <code>ncclHalf</code>	16-bits floating point number (half precision)
<code>ncclFloat32</code> , <code>ncclFloat</code>	32-bits floating point number (single precision)
<code>ncclFloat64</code> , <code>ncclDouble</code>	64-bits floating point number (double precision)

1.4.2. `ncclRedOp_t`

NCCL defines the following reduction operations.

Reduction Operation	Description
<code>ncclSum</code>	Perform a sum (+) operation.
<code>ncclProd</code>	Perform a product (*) operation.
<code>ncclMin</code>	Perform a min operation.
<code>ncclMax</code>	Perform a max operation.

1.4.3. `ncclResult_t`

NCCL functions always return an error code of type `ncclResult_t`.

If the `NCCL_DEBUG` environment variable is set to **WARN**, whenever a function returns an error, NCCL should print the reason.

Return Code	Description
<code>ncclSuccess</code>	The operations completed successfully.

Return Code	Description
<code>ncclUnhandledCudaError</code>	A call to CUDA returned a fatal error for the NCCL operation.
<code>ncclSystemError</code>	A call to the system returned a fatal error for the NCCL operation.
<code>ncclInternalError</code>	NCCL experienced an internal error.
<code>ncclInvalidArgument</code>	The user has supplied an invalid argument.
<code>ncclInvalidUsage</code>	The user has used NCCL in an invalid manner.

1.5. Constants

NCCL defines two constants `NCCL_MAJOR` and `NCCL_MINOR` to help distinguish between API changes, in particular between NCCL 1.x and NCCL 2.x.

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