



Recap – APIs

What is an API?

- An API (Application Programming Interface) is a **means of communication between 2 servers**. Typically, it can be a **"portal"** between you (the **"client"**) and a **server**.
- Concretely, it's just an **URL**, to which you can send **HTTP requests**. If you want to ask for data from the server, you will send a **GET** request to the URL (the API), like in scraping. If you want to send data to the server, you will send a **POST** request, containing the data you send (the "payload").
- You can request an API **voluntarily** with code, or **connect servers together** so that information is exchanged **automatically** - we call this a **"webhook"** (ex: Zapier, a webhook manager).

Why are APIs useful?

- To **download official data** – ex: Twitter API.
- When there is **repeated communication** involved – ex: connect Stripe to your website, connect Airtable to Google Sheets, etc.

How do you request an API?

You just use the *requests* package (ex: `requests.get(URL, args)`), with the necessary arguments:

- the **base URL** of the API (ex: `http://api.twitter.com`)
- the correct **endpoint**, i.e. the adress of your data on the server (ex: `http://api.twitter.com/tweets`)

- the **API key** if required (the key is a kind of password to use the API)
- the **payload** you want to send if it's a POST request
- **other parameters** ("headers", etc.) to detail your request if required.

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