

API Build Assignment — Flickr

I've created an application using the Flickr API. It is generally used for accessing the site functionality with multiple methods outside developers can use in their applications. Methods included but not limited to, Flickr's activity, blogs, collections, contacts, favourites, galleries, people, photos, photosets, places, tags, urls, and more. I noticed many people creating applications with galleries, photos, and searching photos by search engines using the Flickr API which gave me the idea to create a simple application that allows any user to search anything and have the results outputted on my application. I used the flickr.photos.search method to access the search engine of Flickr.

To begin creating my API application, I needed to notify Flickr about whether I'm using the API for commercial or personal use. I was asked to fill out a form explaining what my app was and to give some detail on what I plan on building with the API. I was also asked to create a yahoo email account so that Flickr can easily keep track of who is using their APIs. They sent me a code through my mobile device which lead to me the API secret key which I was to use for access to the Flickr server.

I used the `file_get_contents()` function in PHP to read the Flickr URL as a string in JSON. I faced a technical issue here because the Flickr URL included a Flickr API disclaimer in the JSON which did not allow the program to read the JSON as proper JSON. I had to use the `substr()` function to remove a snippet of code at the beginning and end that made the string not proper JSON. I, then, `json_decoded` the data. After researching the Flickr App Garden API Documentation I found a format in which all the photos are saved as, and I created variables to match the variables found in the sample URLs (farm, server, id, secret) so I can create a base URL in which my data can run through. I set up a tester `$userinput`, but then later connected the variable to a `$_GET` method so that the user can input their response in the HTML form input. My application outputs the first photo in the category in which the user chooses. I noticed some key words don't necessarily work right away, my assumption is the Flickr server in getting too many photo inputs to process which is necessary the most recent/first. Another technical issue or limitation is that key words are very simple so if the user searches "dog" they may not necessarily get a photo of a dog. I've noticed this as I tested the user input. I assume this is because it connects to the live server without any filtering of what is a proper tag or not, also any Flickr user can tag their photos with any tags; there is no regulation of tags. Listed below are some of the websites I used for references throughout this assignment.

References:

<https://www.flickr.com/services/api/>

<https://www.w3schools.com/php/>

<http://php.net/manual/en/>

<https://stackoverflow.com>