



RESTful Web API Design with Node.js

Saleh Hamadeh

Video 1.2

What Is an API?



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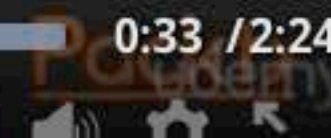


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In this Video, we are going to take a look at...

- What is an API
- What are APIs used for
- What are web APIs

W Application programming

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Application programming interface

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"API" redirects here. For other uses, see [API \(disambiguation\)](#).

For the MediaWiki (the software used by Wikipedia) API, see [mw:API](#)

In computer programming, an **application programming interface** (**API**) is a set of [routines](#), protocols, and tools for building [software](#) and [applications](#).

An API expresses a [software component](#) in terms of its operations, inputs, outputs, and underlying types, defining functionalities that are independent of their respective implementations, which allows definitions and implementations to vary without compromising the interface. A good API makes it easier to develop a program by providing all the building blocks, which are then put together by the programmer.

An API may be for a web based system, operating system, or database system, and it provides facilities to develop applications for that system using a given programming language. As an example, a programmer who develops apps for Android may use an Android API to interact with hardware, like the front camera of an Android-based device.

In addition to accessing [databases](#) or [computer hardware](#) like [hard disk drives](#) or [video cards](#), an API can ease the work of programming GUI components. For example, an API can facilitate integration of new features into existing applications (a so-called "plug-in API"). An API can also assist otherwise distinct applications with sharing data, which can help to integrate and enhance the functionalities of the applications.

APIs often come in the form of a [library](#) that includes specifications for [routines](#), [data structures](#), [object classes](#), and variables. In other cases, notably [SOAP](#) and [REST services](#), an API is simply a specification of [remote calls](#) exposed to the API consumers.^[1]

An API specification can take many forms, including an International Standard, such as [POSIX](#), vendor documentation, such as the [Microsoft Windows API](#), or the libraries of a [programming language](#), e.g. the [Standard Template Library](#) in C++ or the [Java APIs](#).

An API differs from an [application binary interface](#) (ABI) in that an API is source code-based while an ABI is a binary interface. For instance [POSIX](#) is an API, while the [Linux Standard Base](#) provides an ABI. ^[2] ^[3]

APIs are one of the most common ways technology companies integrate with each other. Those that provide and use APIs are considered as being members of a

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What is an API?

Please explain the basics to a fledgling programmer.

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Originally Answered: In layman's terms, what is an API?

An API (Application Programming Interface) is best thought of as a *contract* provided by one piece of computer software to another.

It's important to note that pieces of software can interact with or without an API.

For example:

Without API:

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What Is an API?

- An API is an interface

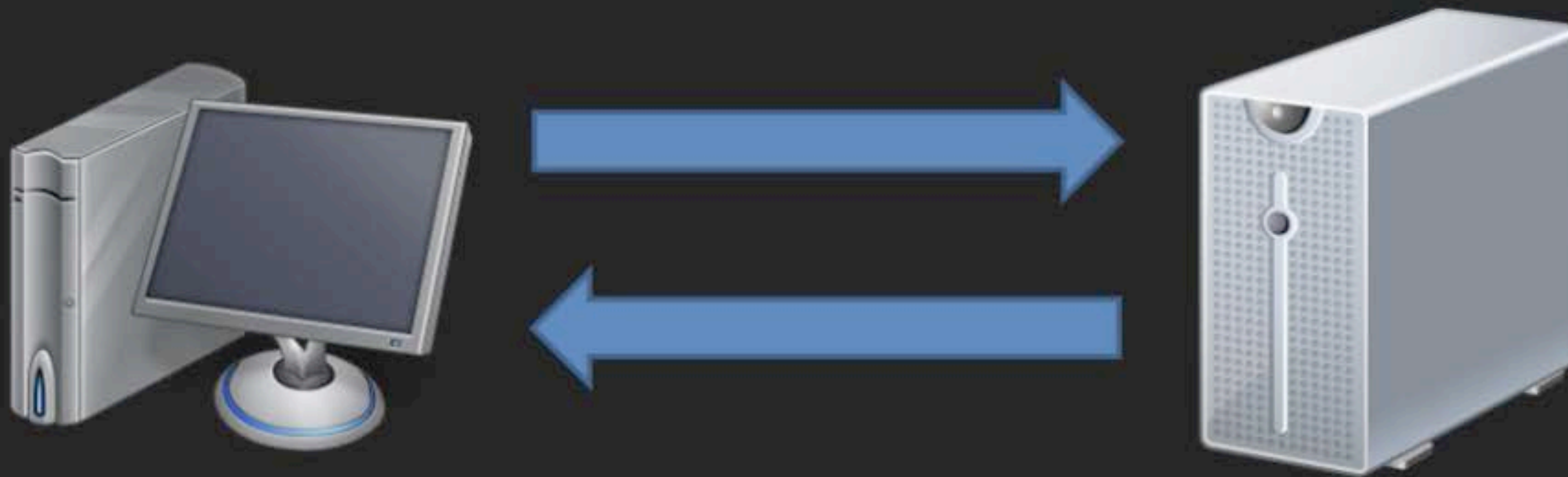


What Are APIs Used for?

- Abstracting complex functionality
 - Performing tasks
 - Retrieving data
 - Manipulating data

What Is a Web API?

- A web API is an interface that runs on a network



Next Video

Communication via HTTP