Top 10 Games APIs: EVE Online, Riot Games, Battle.net

According to a recent research report[1] by the Entertainment Software Association (ESA), more than 150 million Americans play video games and approximately 42 percent of Americans play video games at least three hours per week. PwC forecasts[2] that by 2019, total global video games revenue will reach $93.18 billion USD and the global social/casual gaming market will reach $22.52 billion USD. With statistics like these, it's not surprising that Games is one of the most popular API categories on *ProgrammableWeb*.

There has been a lot of interesting gaming industry news recently involving APIs. Last September, a DMCA notice[3] caused a number of Minecraft community projects to be shut down including Bukkit, CraftBukkit, Spigot, and Cauldron. Not long after the DMCA notice was issued, Minecraft developer Mojang was acquired by Microsoft for $2.5 billion.

Last month, 343 Industries announced[4] that the company plans on releasing a public stats API for the Halo 5: Guardians video game recently released for Xbox One. Earlier this year, ArenaNet announced[5] the addition of OAuth 2.0 support to the Guild Wars 2 API then replaced it two months later with an API key system.

The APIs that made it to our top 10 Games APIs list provide a wide range of capabilities including (but not limited to) retrieving video game data, game monetization, video game streaming and recording, video game reviews, and video game modding. The APIs also scored well against a diverse set of criteria:

- Popularity
- Potential
- Documentation
- Ease of Use
- Functionality

API popularity is determined using a variety of metrics including PW followers,

GitHub activity, Twitter activity, and search engine popularity based on Google Trends.

EVE Online

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/eve-online-crest-carbon-restful[6]
Provider: CCP Games

API Documentation URL: https://developers.eveonline.com/[7]

Game Site: http://www.eveonline.com/[8]

EVE Online is one of the most popular science fiction massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPG). EVE Online has won quite a few awards and was included in the 2015 PC Gamer top 100 games of all time list (it ranks at #36). There is even a permanent Eve Online exhibit[9] at the New York Museum of Modern Art (MoMA). The exhibit is in the Applied Design installation at MOMA and features a 4K UltraHD video that demonstrates a "day in the universe" of Eve Online.

The EVE Online CREST and XML APIs provide programmatic access to characters, industries, markets, solar system, alliances and corporations, and other game data. The EVE Online developer site includes a resources page with links to EVE Online APIs, API documentation, client libraries, forums, and more. The API documentation for the EVE Online CREST RESTful API is in an easy-to-follow Wiki format. The API documentation for the Eve Online XML API has been moved to a nicely designed and comprehensive third-party developers documentation Web site.
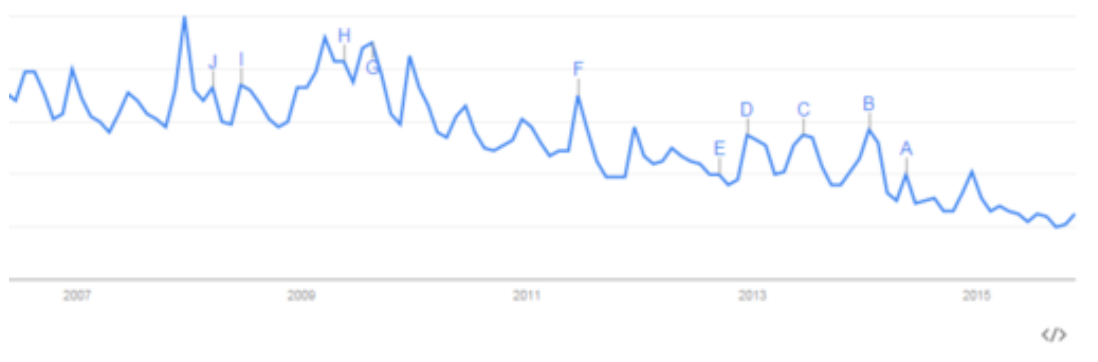
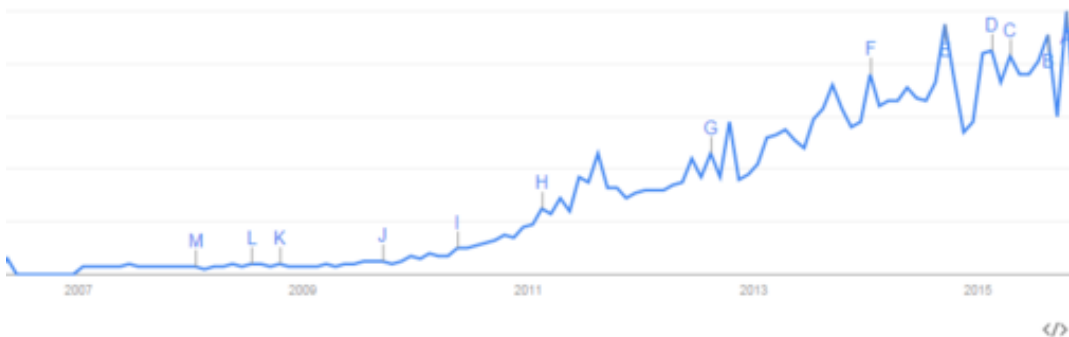Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Riot Games

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/riot-games[10]

Provider: Riot Games

API Documentation URL: https://developer.riotgames.com/[11]

Game Site: http://na.leagueoflegends.com/[12]

Riot Games is the developer of League of Legends, a very popular multiplayer online battle arena (MOBA) video game. According to the company Web site, there are approximately 27 million people playing League of Legends every day and 67 million people play the game every month. In July of this year, Riot Games shut down[13] ranked play due to a game-breaking recall bug that was discovered after a patch was applied to the game. The recall bug issue did not impact the popularity of the game, as League of Legends was ranked #35 in the 2015 PC Gamer top 100 games of all time list.

The Riot Games API provides programmatic access to recent games, ranked statistics, runes, masteries, and other League of Legends game information. The Riot Games Developer site is nicely designed and well organized featuring an API status page, developer forums, interactive API documentation (Swagger), and more.

Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Battle.net

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/battle.net-apis[14]

Provider: Blizzard Entertainment

API Documentation URL: https://dev.battle.net/[15]

Game Site: http://us.blizzard.com/en-us/[16]

Battle.net is an online video game Web site that features a collection of games developed by Blizzard Entertainment including (but not limited to) the action role-playing video game (ARPG) Diablo III (D3), the massively multiplayer online role-

playing game (MMORPG) World of Warcraft (WoW), the military science fiction real-time strategy video game StarCraft II (SC2), and the online strategy card game Hearthstone. Diablo III, StarCraft II, and World of Warcraft were all included in the 2015 PC Gamer top 100 games of all time list; the games ranked #79, #29, and #31 respectively.

The company recently launched a redesigned developer site that features developer forums, OAuth and community APIs guides, and interactive API documentation (I/O Docs). At the time of this writing, the available Battle.net APIs include D3, WoW, SC2, Community APIs, and Game Data APIs. Blizzard recently announced[17] in the Battle.net forums that a Hearthstone: Heroes of Warcraft API is coming soon.
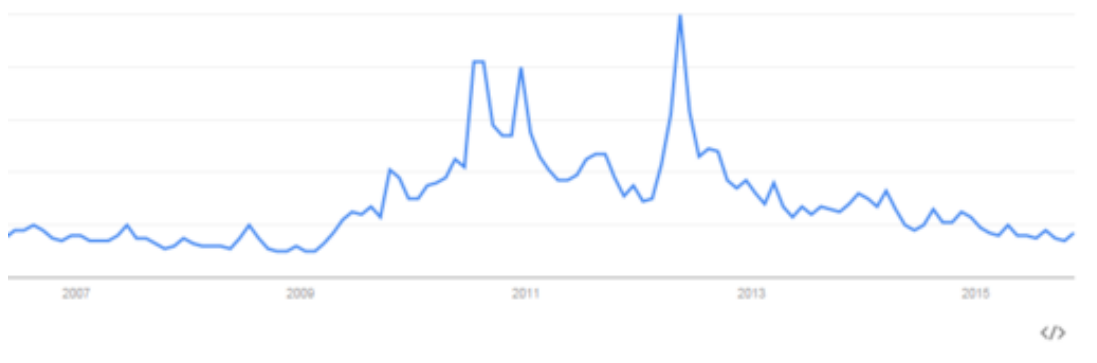
Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Facebook Game Services

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/facebook-graph[18]
Provider: Facebook
API Documentation URL: https://developers.facebook.com/docs/games[19]
Game Site: https://www.facebook.com/games/[20]

At the time of this writing, there are about 2,000+ Facebook games with some of the most popular[21] being Candy Crush Saga, Clash of Clans, Farm Heroes Saga, Pet Rescue Saga, and Words With Friends. While many Facebook users play games on smartphones and tablets, there are still some users that play Facebook games on their desktop computer. Earlier this year, Facebook started rolling out[22] desktop video app ads to help increase game installs.

The Facebook Games Developer Center features a variety of services for game developers including (but not limited to) Achievements API, Scores API, App

Notifications, Requests, Feed Gaming, and Facebook SDK for Unity. There is a lot of information available at the Facebook Games Developer Center such as games overview, API migration guide, tutorials, production and checklists, game monetization, and more.

Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Google Play Games Services

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/google-play-game-services[23]
Provider: Google
API Documentation URL: https://developers.google.com/games/[24]
Game Site: https://play.google.com/store[25]

Launched in March 2012, Google Play features music tracks, e-books, games, movies, newsstand, and other applications for Android devices. In March of this year, Google announced[26] several new features for Android game developers including player analytics, AdMob native ads, AdMob in-app purchase ads, and the Nearby Connections second-screen API for Android TV. Last month, Google began rolling out[27] a new, streamlined design of Google Play that organizes applications into two main sections; Apps and Games, and Entertainment.

The Google Developers Games site provides a variety of APIs, SDKs, and services including (but not limited to) game publishing API, Unity Plugin, Play Games Services (achievements, leaderboards, player stats, etc.), and Google AdMob. There is a lot of information provided on the Google Play Games Services site, however, it is well organized and easy to follow.
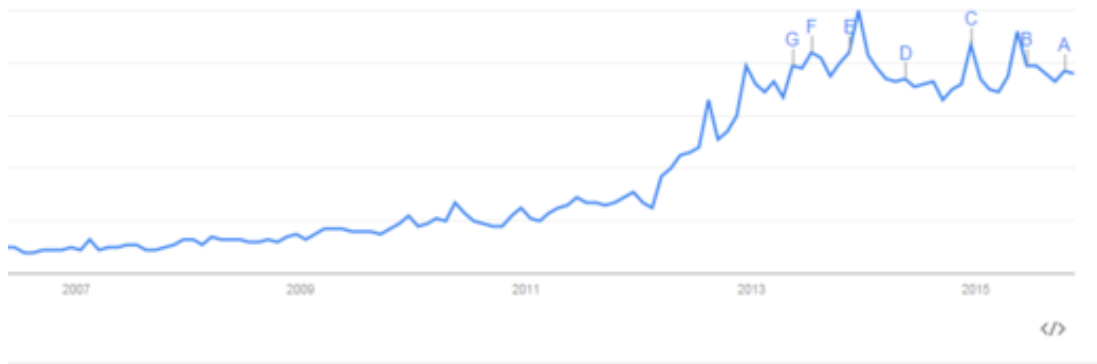
Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Guild Wars 2

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/guild-wars-2[28]
Provider: ArenaNet / NCSOFT

API Documentation URL: https://wiki.guildwars2.com/wiki/API:Main[29]

Game Site: https://www.guildwars2.com/en/[30]

Guild Wars 2 is a very popular massively multiplayer online role-playing game (MMORPG) set in the fantasy world of Tyria. Last month, ArenaNet launched[31] Guild Wars 2: Heart of Thorns, the first expansion to Guild Wars 2. At the time of this writing, over 7 million accounts have been created, over 1.4 billion hours have been played, and 223,484,104+ gifts have been sent between players, in the time leading up to the first expansion[32] of Guild Wars 2. Guild Wars 2 is also featured in the 2015 PC Gamer top 100 games of all time list, it's ranked at #47.

The Guild Wars 2 API provides programmatic access to game data such as items, maps, trading post, world vs. world, and achievements. The Guild Wars 2 API documentation is provided in Wiki format that is easy to follow and comprehensive. There is an active Guild Wars 2 API forum where developers can find API updates, post questions about the API, discuss errors and bugs, participate in the API CDI thread, and more.

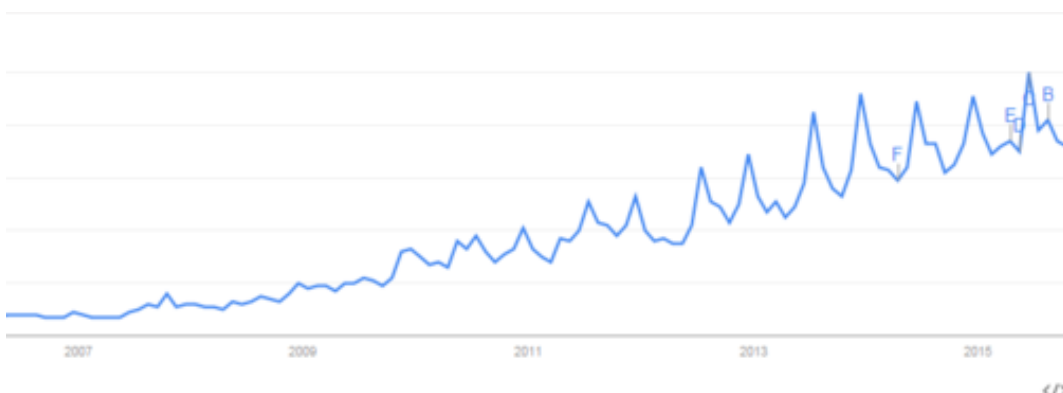Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Steam

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/steam-web[33]
Provider: Valve Corporation

API Documentation URL: http://steamcommunity.com/dev[34]

Game Site: http://store.steampowered.com/[35]

Steam is a popular video game and entertainment platform that features over 6,000 games and an active community with over 100 million members. According to GameStop[36], the Steam platform has been gaining a lot of steam (pun intended) in the last year or so, going from about 3,700 game titles in 2014 to over 6,000 at the end of August 2015. Earlier this year, Valve Corporation announced[37] that content creators can sell mods for existing games via the Steam Workshop.

The Steam Web API can be used to retrieve news for apps, global stats for games, player summaries, player achievements, recently played games, and much more. The Steam Web API documentation is provided on one page in Wiki format. There are a number of client libraries available and the API can return data in JSON, XML, CSV, and VDF (Valve Data Format).

Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

TwitchTV

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/twitchtv[38]

Provider: Twitch Interactive

API Documentation URL: http://dev.twitch.tv/[39]

Game Site: http://www.twitch.tv/[40]

Twitch is a very popular social video platform and community for gamers. At the time of this writing, Twitch averages over 100 million unique viewers and over 1.7 million unique broadcasters per month. While Twitch focuses primarily on gaming, the company recently announced[41] the launch of Twitch Creative, a community of artists, crafters, builders, and other creatives. Twitch has also been integrated with popular video game platforms such as Battle.net and Google Play Games allowing users to stream, record, and share live gameplay with their Twitch accounts.

The TwitchTV API makes it possible for developers to integrate Twitch Connect, video, streaming, search, and other capabilities with third-party applications. The comprehensive API documentation is available on GitHub and there are developer forums on the Twitch Web site.

Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Giant Bomb

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/giant-bomb[42]

Provider: CBS Interactive

API Documentation URL: http://www.giantbomb.com/api/[43]

Game Site: http://www.giantbomb.com/[44]

Giant Bomb is a Web site that provides information about video games and features news, reviews, a wiki, videos, podcasts, forums, and more. In March 2012, Giant Bomb was acquired by CBS Interactive which also owns GameSpot, a site that is similar to Giant Bomb.

The Giant Bomb API provides programmatic access to a lot of the information available on the Giant Bomb Web site such as game titles, ratings, videos, companies, themes, genres, and much more. API documentation if provided on one page in Wiki format, however, the API Developers forum features an API Quick start guide, API change log, and other API information.
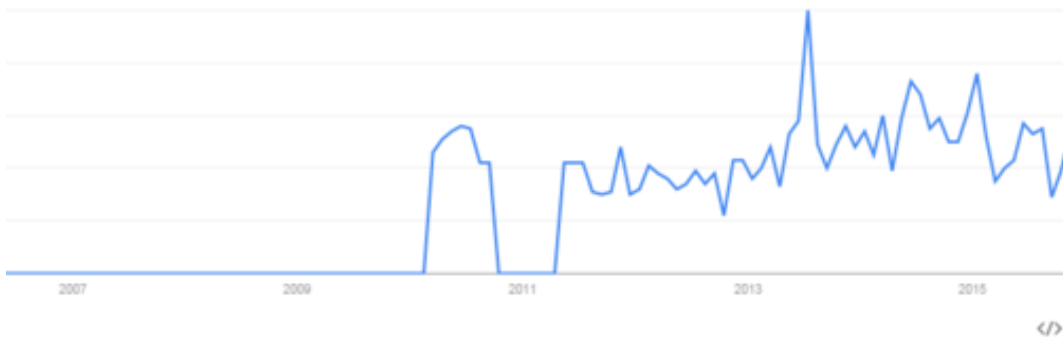
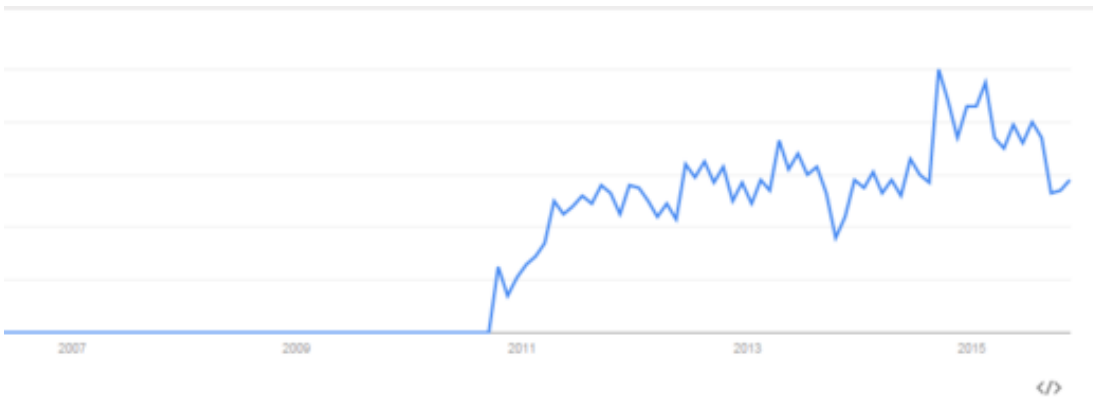Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

SpongeAPI

Link: http://www.programmableweb.com/api/sponge[45]
Provider: Sponge

API Documentation URL: https://docs.spongepowered.org/en/index.html[46]

Game Site: https://www.spongepowered.org/[47]

Sponge is a project that is supported by members of the Minecraft server and modding communities. Sponge is intended to be both a server and client API that allows anyone to mod their Minecraft game, including server owners. The Sponge Project was created shortly after the shutdown[48] of CraftBukkit in September 2014 due to a DMCA takedown notice. CraftBukkit was a mod for the official Minecraft server that was used with the Bukkit API to create plug-ins capable of adding new features to Minecraft servers.

At the time of this writing, The SpongeAPI is under heavy development and a stable release isn't actually expected until late 2015. However, the API has already become rather popular and there are quite a few developers using and testing the API. There is easy to follow, comprehensive API documentation available on the Sponge Web site as well as on GitHub. Developers can also find a lot of information about Sponge project development and the SpongeAPI in the forums on the official Web site.

Google Search Interest Over Time - Data Source: Google Trends

Disclaimer: The metrics used to determine *ProgrammableWeb's* top 10 Games APIs were obtained shortly before the time of publication. The metrics used, pricing, and other product information provided in this article is accurate as of the time of publication.

What are your thoughts?

- What APIs would you add?
- Are there any on our list that don't belong? *Let us know how you are making use of any Games APIs in the comments section below.*

Links

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