Building Great APIs from the Ground Up



One Day Workshop
Mike Amundsen
@mamund



Morning





Morning -- Session One

- Web APIs
- Exploring APIs (curl)
- Tracking your Project (git)
- Managing your Project (npm)





Web APIs

- HTTP
- The Web
- REST





Web APIs -- HTTP (protocol)

- HTTP is an open standard protocol (IETF)
 - That means you can be WRONG!!!!<g>
- The big three:
 - Messages
 - Methods
 - Other Stuff





Web APIs -- HTTP (protocol)

- HTTP is all about messages
 - Not objects
 - Not functions
 - Just messages
- Every message has (up to) three parts
 - Start line
 - Header collection
 - Message body





Web APIs -- HTTP (messages)

REQUEST

GET onboarding HTTP/1.1

User-Agent:

Host: apis.example.org

Accept: application/json

Accept-Language: en-us

Accept-Encoding: gzip, deflate

RESPONSE

HTTP/2.0 200 OK

Date: Mon, 27 Jul 2019 12:28:53 GMT

Last-Modified: Wed, 22 Jul 2009 19:15:56 GMT

Content-Length: 88

Content-Type: application/json

Connection: Closed





Web APIs -- HTTP (methods)

- HTTP clients use Methods to communicate intention.
- GET, PUT, POST, DELETE
- Methods are NOT functions
- There are lots of registered methods

https://www.iana.org/assignments/http-methods/http-methods.xhtml





Web APIs -- HTTP (methods)

Method Name 🖫	Safe 🖫	Idempotent 🖫	Reference 🖫
ACL	no	yes	[RFC3744, Section 8.1]
BASELINE-CONTROL	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 12.6]
BIND	no	yes	[RFC5842, Section 4]
CHECKIN	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 4.4, Section 9.4]
CHECKOUT	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 4.3, Section 8.8]
CONNECT	no	no	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.6]
COPY	no	yes	[RFC4918, Section 9.8]
DELETE	no	yes	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.5]
GET	yes	yes	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.1]
HEAD	yes	yes	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.2]
LABEL	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 8.2]
LINK	no	yes	[RFC2068, Section 19.6.1.2]
LOCK	no	no	[RFC4918, Section 9.10]
MERGE	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 11.2]
MKACTIVITY	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 13.5]
MKCALENDAR	no	yes	[RFC4791, Section 5.3.1][RFC8144, Section 2.3]
MKCOL	no	yes	[RFC4918, Section 9.3][RFC5689, Section 3][RFC8144, Section 2.3]
MKREDIRECTREF	no	yes	[RFC4437, Section 6]
MKWORKSPACE	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 6.3]
MOVE	no	yes	[RFC4918, Section 9.9]
OPTIONS	yes	yes	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.7]
ORDERPATCH	no	yes	[RFC3648, Section 7]
PATCH	no	no	[RFC5789, Section 2]
POST	no	no	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.3]
PRI	yes	yes	[RFC7540, Section 3.5]
PROPFIND	yes	yes	[RFC4918, Section 9.1][RFC8144, Section 2.1]
PROPPATCH	no	yes	[RFC4918, Section 9.2][RFC8144, Section 2.2]
PUT	no	yes	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.4]
REBIND	no	yes	[RFC5842, Section 6]
REPORT	yes	yes	[RFC3253, Section 3.6][RFC8144, Section 2.1]
SEARCH	yes	yes	[RFC5323, Section 2]
TRACE	yes	yes	[RFC7231, Section 4.3.8]
UNBIND	no	yes	[RFC5842, Section 5]
UNCHECKOUT	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 4.5]
UNLINK	no	yes	[RFC2068, Section 19.6.1.3]
UNLOCK	no	yes	[RFC4918, Section 9.11]
UPDATE	no	yes	[RFC3253, Section 7.1]
UPDATEREDIRECTREF	no	yes	[RFC4437, Section 7]
VERSION-CONTROL	no	ves	[RFC3253, Section 3.5]





- HTTP offers two powerful assurances:
- Safety (GET vs. DELETE)
- Idempotency (PUT vs. POST)





- HTTP offers two powerful assurances:
- Safety (GET vs. DELETE)
- Idempotency (PUT vs. POST)





• Safety (GET vs. DELETE)

GET /company/delete?id=21

What's wrong with this HTTP request?





Idempotence (PUT vs. POST)

The bank-transfer dilemma

```
POST /bank-transfer HTTP/2.0
```

Host: apis.example.org
Accept: application/json

Content-Type: application/x-www-form-urnencoded

amount=1000&from-account=q1w2e3&to-account=zaxscd



What if I never get a response?



Web APIs -- The Web

- Tim Berners-Lee built the first Web server and client in the 1980s
- HTTP & HTML
- Later CSS and Javascript was added by others







Web APIs -- The Web

- The WWW is not a standard or specification
- It is a set of common practices
- "A linked information system"
- Basic principles:
 - Pass messages
 - Include links to follow (GET)
 - Include forms to write data (POST)





Web APIs -- REST

- Roy Fielding created REST in 2000
- A list of properties and constraints
- REST not a standard or a common practice, it is a style

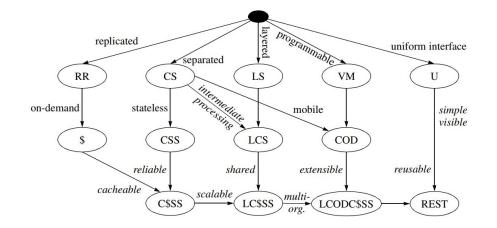


Figure 5-9. REST Derivation by Style Constraints



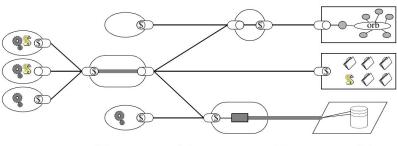


Web APIs -- REST

- List of System Properties
 - Performance
 - Scalability
 - Simplicity
 - Modifiability
 - Visibility
 - Portability
 - Reliability

- List of Implementation Constraints
 - Client-Server
 - Stateless
 - Caching
 - Uniform Interface
 - Layered System
 - Code on Demand





Client Connector: Client+Cache: Server Connector: Server+Cache: S





Web APIs

- HTTP (messages w/ intention)
- The Web (common practices for linking)
- REST (set of properties & constraints for building)





Exploring APIs

- BigCo & the Onboarding API
- Using curl





Exploring APIs -- BigCo, Inc

The Bayesian International Group of Companies (BigCo) was founded in 1827 in Scotland. Originally focused on demography and finance based on the work of Richard Price, by the 1900s BigCo was a manufacturer of important turn-of-the-century technologies including mobile x-ray machines and hydrophones by working with inventors Frederick Jones and Reginald Fessenden, respectively. BigCo was also one of the few non-US contractors attached to the Manhattan project, providing parts for the first nuclear reactors designed by Dr. Leona Wood.



Exploring APIs -- BigCo, Inc

We'll be helping BigCo, Inc. design, build, and deploy a brand-new API called the Onboarding API. True to the API First design ethos, we'll only be building the API and not spending time writing the services behind the API.

- Company
- Accounts
- Activity







Exploring APIs -- Using curl



command line tool and library for transferring data with URLs





Exploring APIs -- Using curl

- Download & Install: https://curl.haxx.se
- Documentation: https://curl.haxx.se/docs/

http://company-atk.herokuapp.com/company/list

https://account-atk.herokuapp.com/account/list

https://activity-atk.herokuapp.com/activity/list







Tracking your Project

- Project Folder Layout
- Using git





Tracking your Project - Folder Layout

- Organize your API projects using folders on disk
- Root folder is the project name (onboarding)
- Common subfolders are:
 - o assets (design documents, notes, etc.
 - tests (test scripts and results)
 - o data (local/captive data -- files, db, etc.)
 - Other folders per framework conventions, etc.
 - config
 - views
 - controllers
 - models
 - etc.





- Download & Install https://git-scm.com/downloads
- Documentation https://git-scm.com/doc







- Create root folder
- Initialize as a git repo

```
mca@mamund-ws:~$ mkdir onboarding
mca@mamund-ws:~$ cd onboarding/
mca@mamund-ws:~/onboarding$ git init
Initialized empty Git repository in /home/mca/onboarding/.git/
mca@mamund-ws:~/onboarding$
```







Check repo status

```
mca@mamund-ws:~/onboarding$ git status
On branch master
Initial commit
nothing to commit (create/copy files and use "git add" to track)
mca@mamund-ws:~/onboarding$
```







Add new files to the repo & commit

```
mca@mamund-ws:~/onboarding$ git add --all
mca@mamund-ws:~/onboarding$ git commit -m"add README to the repo"
[master (root-commit) 6f509d4] add README to the repo
  1 file changed, 4 insertions(+)
  create mode 100644 README.md
mca@mamund-ws:~/onboarding$
```







Managing your Project

- Project Elements
- Code Dependencies
- Using **npm**





Managing your Project -- Elements

- Every project has its own metadata (data about the project)
- Typical values:
 - Name
 - Version
 - Description
 - Repo
 - Keywords
 - Author
 - License
 - Bug reporting
 - Docs page



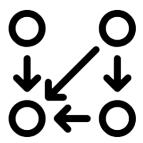




Managing your Project -- Code Dependencies

- Code dependencies are a challenge
- They are other people's work
- Often they are provided free of charge on the open web
- You don't control these projects
- Your project may not work without them
- Tracking use (and tracking their changes) is a big job







Managing your Project -- Using npm

- In the NodeJS world, this info is handled by npm
- Similar to git
- Understood by a wide range of tools
- Build, test, & deployment, etc.
- Usually installed when you install NodeJS







Managing your Project -- Using npm

- Download & Install (NodeJS/npm)
 https://www.npmjs.com/get-npm
- Documentation
 https://docs.npmjs.com/
- Create an Account (optional)
 https://docs.npmjs.com/creating-a-new-npm-user-account







Managing your Project -- Using npm

Running a CLI questionnaire

To create a package.json file with values that you supply, use the npm init command.

1. On the command line, navigate to the root directory of your package.

cd /path/to/package

2. Run the following command:

npm init

3. Answer the questions in the command line questionnaire.



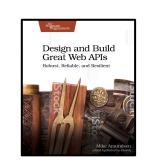




Session One -- Summary

- Web APIs
 - HTTP, WWW, REST
- Exploring APIs (curl)
 - Use curl to explore other APIs
- Tracking your Project (git)
 - Use git to track changes in your project
- Managing your Project (npm)
 - Use npm to manage project metadata





Morning -- Session Two

- Designing APIs
- Diagramming (wsd)
- Describing (alps)
- Sharing your Project (github)





Designing APIs

- Design Thinking
- API Design Process
- Using schema.org





Designing APIs - Design Thinking

"A design discipline that uses the designer's sensibility and methods to match people's needs with what is technologically feasible and what a viable business strategy can convert into customer value and market opportunity."

-- Tim Brown, CEO of IDEO







Designing APIs - Design Thinking

- Match people's needs
- Technologically feasible
- Viable business
- Customer value







Designing APIs - API Design Process

- List all data and action names
- Create a workflow diagram
- Normalize your naming
- Write up an API Profile document





Designing APIs - List data and elements

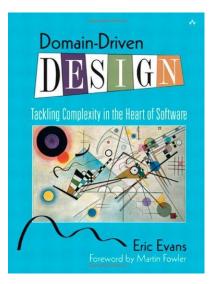
- Refer to the supplied onboarding-story.md
- What are the "things" or "properties"?
- What are the "tasks" or "actions"?
- Are any properties required?
- Are any properties enumerated?





Designing APIs - Using schema.org

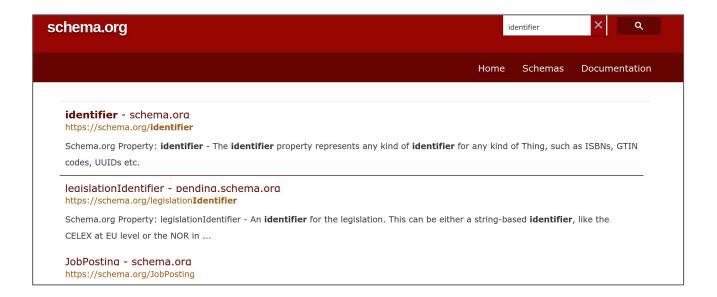
- Schema.org is an open web vocabulary
- Launched in 2011 by Google, Yahoo, Microsoft, Yandex
- Common vocabulary/glossary/terms
- Domain-Driven Design calls it "ubiquitous language"
- Use schema.org to "reconcile names" in your API







Designing APIs - Using schema.org







Diagramming APIs

- API Workflow
- Using websequencediagrams.com





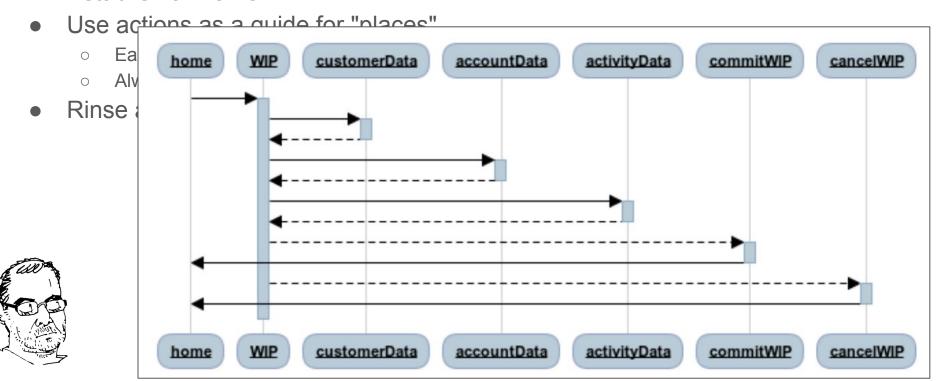
- Establish a "home"
- Use actions as a guide for "places"
 - Each action happens at a place
 - Always return "home"
- Rinse and repeat

```
home->+WIP:
WIP->+customerData:
customerData-->-WIP:
WIP->+accountData:
accountData-->-WIP:
WIP->+activityData:
activityData-->-WIP:
WIP-->+commitWIP:
commitWIP->-home:
WIP-->+cancelWIP:
cancelWIP->-home:
```





Establish a "home"



- Decorate each transition with an action
- Actions have two parts
 - Collect data
 - Write/send data
- Rinse and repeat

```
home->+WIP: startOnboarding
WIP->+customerData: collectCustomerData
customerData-->-WIP: saveToWIP
WIP->+accountData: collectAccountData
accountData-->-WIP:saveToWIP
WIP->+activityData: collectActivityData
activityData-->-WIP:saveToWIP
WIP-->+commitWIP:completeOnboarding
commitWIP->-home:goHome
WIP-->+cancelWIP:cancelOnboarding
```

cancelWIP->-home:goHome







- Add arguments to each action
 - List args for reading
 - List args for sending
- Rinse and repeat





- Add arguments to each action
 - List args for reading
 - List args for sending
- Rinse and repeat

```
home->+WIP: startOnboarding(onboardingId)
WIP->+customerData: collectCustomerData(companyName, email, companyStatus)
customerData-->-WIP: saveToWIP(companyName, email, companyStatus)
WIP->+accountData: collectAccountData(accountType, accountStatus)
accountData-->-WIP:saveToWIP(accountType, accountStatus)
WIP->+activityData: collectActivityData(activityType, dateScheduled, activityStatus)
activityData-->-WIP:saveToWIP(acivityType, dateScheduled, activityStatus)
WIP-->+commitWIP:completeOnboarding(onboardingId)
commitWIP->-home:goHome
WIP-->+cancelWIP:cancelOnboarding(onboardingId)
cancelWIP->-home:goHome
```

Add arguments to each action



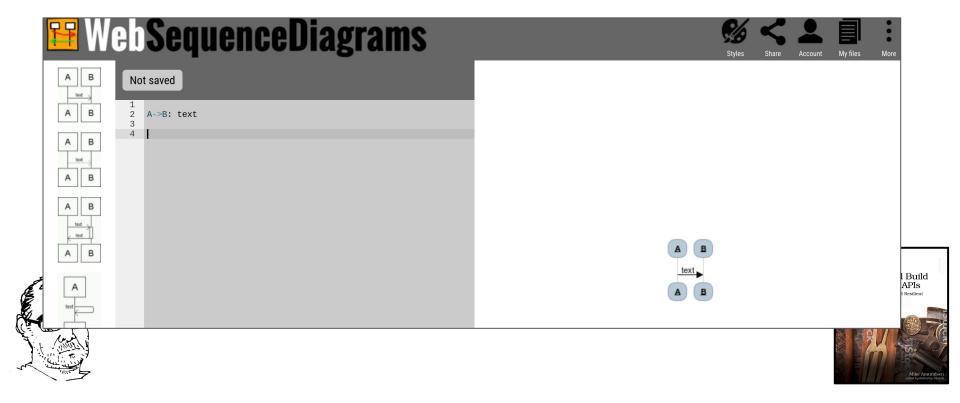
Diagramming APIs - Using WSD

- No need to install
 https://www.websequencediagrams.com/
- Documentation
 https://www.websequencediagrams.com/examples.html
- Create an account (optional)
 https://www.websequencediagrams.com/ (and select "account")



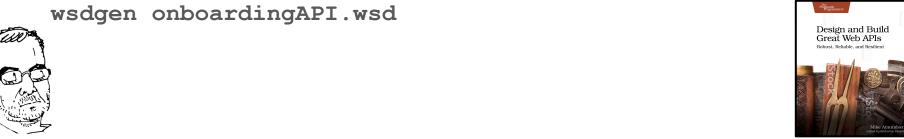


Diagramming APIs - Using WSD



Diagramming APIs - Bonus Utility wsdgen

- Generates WSD images from command-line
- Download repo from github https://github.com/mamund/wsd-gen
- Install using npm:npm install -g wsdgen
- Usage: wsdgen onboardingAPI.wsd



Describing APIs

- Descriptions vs. Definitions
- Data and Actions
- Using ALPS





Describing APIs - Descriptions vs. Definitions

- Descriptions are implementation-agnostic
- Descriptions are the bridge between design and implementation
- Examples of API description formats
 - Dublin Code Application Profile (DCAP), 2009
 - Application-Level Profile Semantics (ALPS), 2011
 - JSON Home, 2012
 - Profiled Hypertext Application Language (PHTAL), 2019





Describing APIs - Data and Actions

- List actions and properties
- Indicate action intentions
- DO NOT document
 - o URLs
 - Protocol Methods
 - Message Formats

BTW - We'll deal with definition languages this afternoon!





- Comes in two flavors (XML and JSON)
- Simple model

Descriptors detail actions or properties

```
     <descriptor id="..." name=""... type="..." href="..." />
```

- Descriptor types are:
 - o semantic
 - o safe
 - o unsafe
 - o idempotent





Start with a minimal ALPS XML doc





List properties (API vocabulary)

```
<alps version="1.0">
    <doc>Sample ALPS Document</doc>
   <!-- properties -->
    <descriptor id="onboardingId" />
    <descriptor id="status" />
    <descriptor id="dateCreated" />
    <descriptor id="dateUpdated" />
   <!-- actions -->
</alps>
```





List Actions (API vocabulary)

```
<alps version="1.0">
    <doc>Sample ALPS Document</doc>
    <!-- properties -->
    <descriptor id="onboardingId" />
    <descriptor id="status" />
    <descriptor id="dateCreated" />
    <descriptor id="dateUpdated" />
    <!-- actions -->
    <descriptor id="StartOnboarding" type="unsafe" />
    <descriptor id="CollectionCompanyData" type="safe" />
    <descriptor id="SaveCompanyData" type="unsafe" />
</alps>
```





Optionally, add resources and containers

```
<!-- actions -->
<descriptor id="StartOnboarding" type="unsafe" rt="work-in-progress" />
<descriptor id="CollectionCompanyData" type="safe" />
<descriptor id="SaveCompanyData" type="unsafe" rt="work-in-progress"/>
<!-- containers -->
<descriptor id="work-in-progress">
    <descriptor href="#onboardingId" />
    <descriptor href="#status" />
    <descriptor href="#dateCreated" />
    <descriptor href="#dateUpdated" />
<descriptor>
<!-- resources -->
<descriptor id="home">
    <descriptor href="#work-in-progress" />
    <descriptor href="StartOnboarding" />
</descriptor>
```





Diagramming APIs - Bonus Utility wsd2alps

- Generates ALPS (JSON) from WSD on command-line
- Download repo from github https://github.com/mamund/wsd-util
- Install using npm:npm install -g ./
- Usage: wsd2alps onboardingAPI.wsd





Sharing your Project

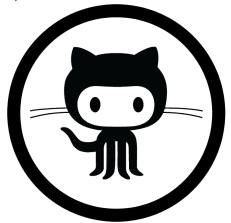
- More than one machine/programmer
- Using Github



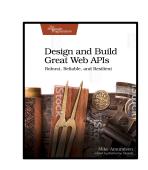


Sharing your Project - More than One

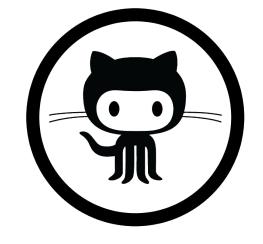
- Sometimes you work in a team
- Sometimes you work on multiple devices
- Sometimes you work in multiple locations
- Git is cool, github is cool -> shared
- Also see bitbucket, gitlab, etc.







- Nothing to download
- Documentation
 https://guides.github.com/
- Create an Account (required)
 https://github.com/
- Using SSH (recommended)
 https://help.github.com/en/articles/connecting-to-github-with-ssh







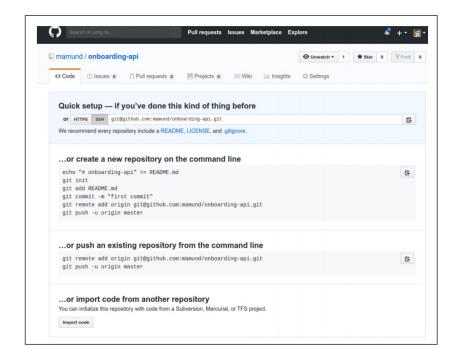
Create an empty repo on Github

	new repository ntains all the files for your project, including the revision history.
Owner	Repository name
mamund	d → / onboarding-api
Great repository	y names are short and memorable. Need inspiration? How about symmetrical-octo-succotash.
Description (op	otional)
remote repo for	or the BigCo onboardingAPI project
Private	can see this repository. You choose who can commit.
	s repository with a README u immediately clone the repository to your computer. Skip this step if you're importing an existing repository.





Copy git commands to connect github and your local repo







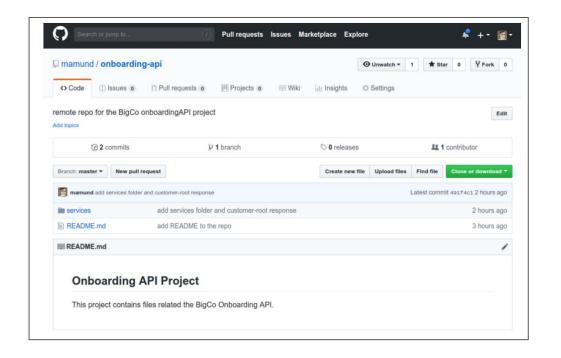
Commit changes after adding the remote github connection

git remote add origin git@github.com:mamund/onboarding-api.git





Now your local repo should be duplicated at Github!







Morning -- Summary

Session One

- Web APIs (HTTP, WWW, REST)
- Exploring APIs (curl)
- Tracking your Project (git)
- Managing your Project (npm)

Session Twp

- Designing APIs (Design Process)
- Diagramming (wsd)
- Describing (alps)
- Sharing your Project (github)





Building Great APIs from the Ground Up



Morning
Mike Amundsen
@mamund

