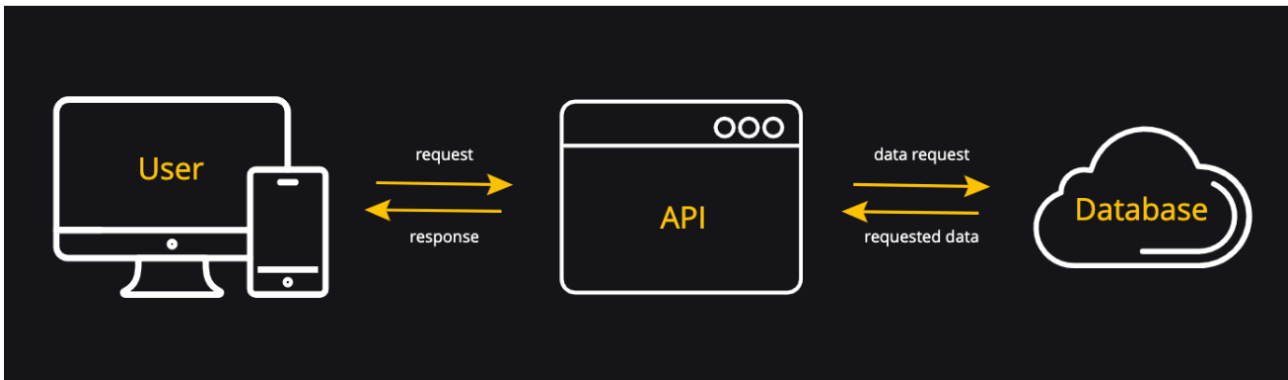# Difference between API and Plugin

API: the initials stand for *Application Programming Interface*. It refers to a set of routines, protocols and tools for building software and applications. An API basically defines *how a component interacts with a system*, facilitating the communication between them.

Plugin: also called an extension, a plugin is a *software component* that makes it possible to *modify an existing computer program or platform*, for instance, adding new features to it. Such modification does not usually alter the design of the system, which often has a Plugin API defining how the extensions can interact with the whole system.