Discussion 3.1 Describing an API with an API Description Format

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In previous weeks we learned what an API is. An API stands for application programming interface. An interface that lets your product connect to other products. But what really goes into creating an API? How do you identify the goals, how to create them into a programmable representation and how do we describe the programming using OAS?

According to our book creating API descriptions “benefits not only the API providers but also the API consumers.” (Lauret, 2019). A basic description may have general information such as the name and version. (Lauret, 2019). But it will also describe the resources, identify the paths and actions through the HTTP methods (Lauret, 2019). Remember our tables from the previous chapter, those are part of the process for creating a description. Other things to include in the description are operation parameters and responses.

From here you could start writing your code based on the description, but according to the book there are tools that simplify this process. Tools like YAML are like JSON but it allows comments and doesn’t have quotes and can be converted to JSON easily (Lauret, 2019).

Lastly, we could of course use tools to help with our API descriptions using OAS, OpenAPI Specification. Which is “a programming language-agnostic” which will use the REST format for descriptions. A tool for this is swagger which assists you in building OAS with the OAS format found on page 80 of our API book. Specification, general info, Resources, HTTP Methods, operation parameters and responses. (Lauret, 2019)

Reference:

Lauret, A. (2019b). *The Design of Web APIs*. Manning.