

Introducing Web APIs

In this chapter, you'll learn how to leverage real-world web services in your applications.

The API acronym stands for *Application Programming Interface*. An API is an entry point offered by a software program or service to other programs. It is a set of well-defined methods of communication. Through APIs, developers can easily integrate external technologies or services into their applications.

APIs exist under a wide variety of forms. As an example, the Document Object Model is itself an API for interacting programmatically with a web page: it defines methods for navigating and updating the page structure.

A *web API* is an API available on the Web and accessible through web technologies, namely the **HTTP** protocol or its secured counterpart **HTTPS**. Web APIs are a key technology for software interactions: whenever you authenticate into a website using your Google account, or click a button to post something on your favorite social network, you're using them. A ever growing number of services are exposed through web APIs, forming a thriving ecosystem for building digital products.