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WEB 420: Discussion 3.1

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Describing APIs

“An application programming interface, or API, allows businesses to show the data and functionality of their applications to third-party developers, business partners, and departments within their organization” (Cleo, 2022) . APIs are used to communicate between products and services. “APIs are needed to bring applications together in order to perform a designed function built around sharing data and executing pre-defined processes” (Cleo, 2022).

“Using an API description format has benefits throughout the API lifecycle, and especially during the design phase. It benefits not only the API providers but also API consumers” (Lauret, 81)

APIs can be used multiple times by different organizations, so it’s important to provide clear and understandable documentation throughout the design process.

“During this design phase it is especially useful to keep a link between your earlier work, like the API goals canvas or concept identification, and the programmable representation” (Lauret, 87).

The easiest way to define your goals is to ask yourself who is using the API. This can be multiple answers, for example, consumer and admin, and then being sure with each step that the API is designed for that user.

After the goals are defined, they need to be transposed to a programming interface.

“We used boxes and arrows to describe this programming interface, but this can also be done in a more structured way using the OAS. The resulting document will contain exactly the same information…, but this time the information will be presented as data in a structured document” (Lauret, 85).

“A basic OAS document provides general information about the API, such as its name and version. It describes the available resources (identified by their paths) and each resource’s operations… identified by HTTP methods, including their parameters and responses” (Lauret, 81).

Every OAS document will describe the APIs programming interface in a more direct and clear way and will help maintain the efficiency of the API.

Resources:

*Blog: What is an API? Everything You Need to Know | Cleo*. (2022). Cleo. <https://www.cleo.com/blog/knowledge-base-what-is-an-api>

Lauret, A. (2019). *The design of web APIs*. Manning Publications Co.

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