Zahava Gopin

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Documenting an API

The goal of a use case is to describe the application and how it can be used to achieve different goals. There are many tools a developer can use to describe a use case to a potential client. If the use case is very basic all you need is some formatted text and diagrams. You can use a CMS (content management system), a portal, or create a simple website. You can simply add text and images into the OpenAPI files using a Markdown format.

When you are documenting your application, you need to include security information. If you are using ReDoc, an authentication menu is added to components.securitySchemas in the OpenAPI file.

It’s important to document the goals because they provide an explanation for the user. It includes what the user needs to provide for it to be used and any feedback that the user may receive while implementing this goal. While documenting goals of an API its preferable to provide a human readable description of them to make them even more user friendly. For example, when you provide possible reasons for an error, make them human readable. This will cut out a lot of frustration and time on the user’s side.

Reference documentation is a list that provides a description for every part of the API interface. Every single API has documentation of the goals and their inputs and outputs. Reference documentation could be completed in any format from a text file to a spread sheet. A popular tool for reference documentation is called ReDoc.