APIs.io and APIs.json Launched at Gluecon to Make API Discoverability More Like Search

News, Search

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{API}Search

A new API Discoverability search engine and a robots.txt type-format have been launched today at Gluecon. As API deployment continues to grow exponentially, API providers face increasing challeneges in getting their public APIs noticed, while API developer-consumers are facing more difficulties in discovering potential APIs that can add value to their supply chain. With API discoverability set to become a key marketing and platform growth challenge, a new open source project from 3scale and API Evangelist hopes to solve the chaos. *ProgrammableWeb* talked to the creators of the new APIs.io Search Engine and APIs.json discovery format ahead of today's launch.

APIs.io is an open-source search engine that indexes sites that have included a file in the new API discovery format APIs.json. "Our main aim is to encourage people to publicly publish information about where their APIs are via APIs.json," says Steven Willmott, CEO of 3scale which created the project with API Evangelist, Kin Lane. "APIs.json is the thing that is missing for API growth in our view."

Promoted Listings

Nicolas Grenié, Developer Evangelist at 3scale has been leading the project work on APIs.io. "Ideally, the same way businesses add robots.txt to their root domain to make their site easily crawlable by search engines, we hope that people will do that with an APIs.json file as well," Grenié told *ProgrammableWeb*.



Grenié explains how to use the APIs.io website:

1. Builder

“Builder is visual interface to help you build the APIs.json file. For those who do not want to write the .json file directly, you can submit this form, and an APIs.json file will be automatically generated so that you can load it to your root domain.”

2. Validating that the APIs.json format works

“You can click on the Validator menu option which helps you check that your APIs.json works with the specification before you upload it. This lets you correct your file before adding it to the database, so you can still make changes.”

3. Adding an API to the APIs.io search engine

API providers can then easily add their API to the APIs.io search engine. After creating the APIs.json file and uploading it to a site’s root domain (usually in the same place a site manager would add the robots.txt file), API providers can then add the site URL to APIs.io so the API is included in the APIs.io search engine. “This is link submission just like early search engines,” says Willmott.

The hope is that eventually, APIs.json will take off as a format, and APIs.io will crawl the web looking for these files and add them to the APIs.io search engine without API providers needing to manually add it to the database. Already, APIs.io has plans to crawl the top 10,000 domains in Alexa to look for APIs.json files.

“The objective is certainly to get to the point where there is no need to register URLs - and that domain crawling is all that is necessary. However, this is still too early,” says Willmott.

Initial Industry Response

APIs.io is already attracting interest after its launch at Gluecon. According to Grenié, Co-creator Kin Lane will be adding APIs.json for all of the APIs he is building with partners, particularly government open data providers.

Keran McKenzie, Developer Evangelist at financial software MYOB has already added their company’s API to the directory:



While the initiative has been started by API Management Provider 3scale, the hope is that others will help the project take off by encouraging their customers using the APIs.json format as a new step in best practice API creation. Mike Amundsen, Principal API Architect at Layer 7/CA has already tweeted his support for the project:



The open source nature of the project means that anyone can fork the search engine and embed it on their own site. For example, a service with a specific vertical, like EDGAR Online, could use the open source code to create a finance APIs search engine for their site.

Where an API has been opened with the Creative Commons-type accesibility rights, APIs.json also automatically include a reference to the copyright status of the API specification direct from API Commons.

While an API for APIs.io is expected to come on board in the next week, API providers can begin uploading details of their APIs to the search engine (and to their root domains) now.

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About the Author:



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