

Create a Developer Portal - Internet Archive

Announcement 5/13/2022

We are so grateful for the many qualified applicants to our documentation project. After carefully reviewing each of your proposals, we have made our selection and would like to welcome Anindita Basu to the project. For everyone else, please stay in touch, keep writing & coding, and if you believe in our mission of providing universal access to all knowledge, consider volunteering at Open Library or Archive.org.

About the Internet Archive

The Internet Archive, a 501(c)(3) non-profit started in 1996, is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form. Like a paper library, we provide free access to researchers, historians, scholars, people with print disabilities, and the general public. Our mission is to provide Universal Access to All Knowledge. We serve millions of people each day, and our website, Archive.org, is one of the top 300 websites in the world.

In addition to allowing access to content via our website, we also provide extensive access via our open API's, including Python and command-line tool integrations. In this way, developers and researchers around the world are able to work not only with the content within the Archive, but also the rich metadata accompanying the content. Plus, these tools can be used to upload content and metadata to the Archive.

Our Documentation Problem

Given how many people rely on our API's, it is a bit shocking how disorganized our documentation is. We have a number of different verticals within the organization, each with their own set of API's, documentation, and means of managing them. While there have been some aborted efforts to unify the documentation, they have never fully come to fruition, and as a result, it is often confusing and frustrating for new developers to tap into the wealth of information that the archive provides. While the existing API documentation provides somewhat of a reference to those who already know what they're looking for and how to use the API's, there is still no "Getting Started" guide or tutorial that provides a friendly on-boarding experience for people unfamiliar with the Internet Archive.

Project Scope

For this Season of Documentation, we would like to create a new developer portal page, located at archive.org/developers or developer.archive.org (or someplace similar). It should present a friendly landing page for developers, providing guidance to where the developer should head to get their needs met, whether it be to a tutorial or one of the existing API references. In addition,

we would like to make the existing API documentation more consistent, which will entail auditing the existing API documentation, migrating it to a common platform, and improving it.

We anticipate that this project will take approximately 5 months to complete. See the timeline below. The principal supervisor will be a member of the UX Team, while Patron Services will provide additional support to the technical writer.

Project Success Metrics

After the developer portal has been created and the API documentation improved...

- We would expect the total number of page views of documentation pages for all API's to go up overall, e.g. by 10%. Currently, the page metrics, like the documentation pages themselves, are scattered across different platforms and may be challenging to read. Once consolidated, it should be straightforward to generate total metrics.
- We would expect to see page activity on the new welcome page, perhaps on the order of 1k page views per day.
- We would expect the volume of service inquiries to Patron Services viz-a-viz our API's, Python library, and command-line tool to decrease.

Timeline

Dates	Action Items
May	Orientation
June-July	Create developer portal
August-September	Audit & consolidate existing API documentation

Budget

Expense	Amount
Technical writer (10 hours/week, 5 months)	\$6,750
Volunteer stipends (2 @ \$500)	\$1,000
Total	\$7,750

Previous Experiences

The Internet Archive has participated in Google Summer of Code since 2017 to great success. Our interns have created lasting features that continue to empower and delight our users on a daily basis!