

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) Application Programming Interface (API) Day

hosted by the CWS API Task Force

Virtual, June 17, 2020
13:00 – 15:30 (CEST)

SUMMARY OF DISCUSSIONS

prepared by the International Bureau of WIPO

AGENDA ITEM 1: INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME ADDRESS

1. The meeting was opened by Mr. Patrice Cousineau, the Director for Innovation at the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO). He provided a background of his experience with the dramatic evolution of APIs and their use. This in his opinion was escalated by technology giants such as Amazon and Google, who recognized their potential early on. APIs have now infiltrated a wide array of industries including social media, household items, remote scientific equipment and fitness-monitoring wearables. He acknowledged that the IP community also recognized the value of leveraging APIs in particular to improve the efficiency of data exchange and the ability of IP offices to collaborate. Mr. Cousineau finalized his address by indicating that the world truly runs on APIs and that the future looks promising considering the opportunities available for inventors and companies looking to make use of IP data.

2. Mr. Jean-Charles Daoust, Director General, Programs Branch, CIPO, the Chairperson of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) 7th session, facilitated the discussions. He was joined by the two CWS API Task Force co-Leaders, Mr. Graham Rivers-Brown (United Kingdom IP Office, UKIPO) and Mr. Derek Spero (CIPO).

AGENDA ITEM 2: PURPOSE OF THE API TF AND STANDARD

3. Mr. Spero, provided an introduction on the work of the API Task Force and the vision behind the development of the new WIPO standard on Web API.

4. The API Task Force was created at the seventh session of the CWS to bring together IP organization experts to collaborate and finalize the draft Web API standard. Mr. Spero further detailed the important components of the standard and how it is intended to be used once adopted by the CWS.

AGENDA ITEM 3: API TRENDS

5. Mr. Steve Ferson, an invited speaker from Deloitte, was introduced by Mr. Rivers-Brown, to present Deloitte's point of view on the future of APIs. Mr. Rivers-Brown provided a brief overview of the work the UK IPO are doing with Deloitte to deliver business transformation, data management and API delivery.

6. Mr. Ferson began by outlining the topics he intended to cover: the importance of APIs, how commercial organizations should be using them and what he believes are the important trends in APIs.

7. Mr. Ferson indicated that APIs allow organizations to innovate by making their available data visible to an external audience, which allows organizations to concentrate on their main business. Using APIs to streamline access to data sources improves the quality of information through consistency of operation. Microservices present a modular component which can be reused and assist in the further automation of processes.

8. There were three main trends highlighted by Mr. Ferson during his presentation:

- (a) **Microservices**: by defining these types of web services which perform a single task, developers can design their systems in a more modular and reusable way;
- (b) **Multi-cloud**: instead of relying on a single vendor, organizations are moving towards distributing load across a series of cloud providers. This also ensures that they are dynamically selecting the best available provider; and
- (c) **REST versus GraphQL versus gRPC**: although REST is in effect the current standard adopted by developers, other new players are providing competitive alternatives. GraphQL was originally developed by Facebook before being provided publicly and gRPC is an open-source alternative provided by Google.

AGENDA ITEM 4: COMMERCIAL ORGANIZATION API STRATEGY

9. Mr. Mike Baycroft, the CEO of IFI Claims, appeared as a representative of The Patent Committee (PatCom), an organization representing commercial intellectual property data suppliers. Mr. Baycroft provided a timeline of his experience using APIs in the IP field and the case study of the development of his company's IFI Claims Direct platform, which uses API technology.

10. Through the lens of this product, Mr. Baycroft provided the evolution of the use of APIs. Initially, there were four web services provided to access the data in their platform and this expanded to seven with a continual push for more. APIs allow users to have a simple interaction and all the complexity of their request is abstracted away. He finalized his presentations by reflecting on the need to "expect the unexpected" from the use of your API and confirmed his APIs could be easily updated to be compliant or compatible with the new WIPO Web API standard.

AGENDA ITEM 5: IP OFFICE API STRATEGY

11. Mr. Josh Burns, a representative from IP Australia, shared with the audience the modernization of the tools they provide for their stakeholders. This was the result of recommendations made after consultation with small businesses and developers engaged by the Office that revealed their preference for the exposure of Australian data using APIs.

12. Mr. Burns detailed their vision for the use of APIs, which includes providing a simple and low-cost means for small businesses to file their applications and the opportunity for software developers engaged by the Office to produce application and case management systems to support such stakeholders.

13. They have already produced 50 APIs, including access to Australian trademark and design databases. They have established a working group, consisting of software developers and IP professionals, to support the direction of future development of new APIs and have run a series of workshops to support their use by stakeholders.

AGENDA ITEM 6: IP OFFICE API IMPLEMENTATION

14. Two IP Offices provided specific case studies of APIs they had developed in order to support their business areas: European Patent Office (EPO) and IP Australia.

15. The EPO provided a summary of its experience establishing an API to communicate with Finish Office, including the benefits and challenges experienced. The business case for this API was shown through a series of examples that demonstrate the different types of data that are exchanged between EPO and the Finish Office. Some of the benefits Mr. Miguel Albrecht outlined included real-time communication, reliable recovery from failures and the ability to transmit to multiple receivers. Some of the problems they experienced were the need for monitoring and the amount of disruption in the back office to established systems.

16. IP Australia (IPA) provided a summary of the progress in the development of the Patent Legal Status API they have been developing, which aims to provide real-time legal status data, based on WIPO Standards ST.27 and ST.96, to users for Australian patent applications. There are two use cases defined: legal status data can be provided either for a particular patent application or for all of the legal status events within a particular date range. Mr. Michael Burn indicated that the API specification for this web service is compliant with the new proposed draft Web API standard, with WIPO ST.96 in the instance where the response body is provided as XML, and also with WIPO ST.27, the Standard for patent legal status data. There are plans to extend this API to trademark and design legal status data in the future.

AGENDA ITEM 7: NEXT STEPS AND CLOSE

17. Mr. Young-Woo Yun, Head of the WIPO Standards Section, WIPO, outlined the next steps in the development of the new WIPO API standard. He indicated that the new proposed draft standard would be submitted for consideration by the CWS this year. The recommendations provided in the draft standard are already being implemented internally during the development of some WIPO web services.

18. Mr. Yun stressed the importance of standardization considering the need for interoperability between all stakeholders as more and more data is exchanged using machine-to-machine communications. The International Bureau intends to establish an electronic forum to promote collaboration between these stakeholders.

19. All of the presentations presented during API Day are available on the WIPO website at: https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=56888 .

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