Federal Register API

OFFICE OF THE FEDERAL REGISTER

NATIONAL ARCHIVES & RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

Overview: FederalRegister.gov

- Federal Register 2.0 or "FR2"

- Launched July 26, 2010
  - Built on top of GovPulse.us platform
    - Sunlight Foundation "Apps for America" winner

  - FR2 Team: NARA-OFR/GPO Partnership
    Plus: CriticalJuncture.org (SF, CA) & FedCMS.com (DC area)

- API Released August 2011

Open Source Code

- FederalRegister.gov is fully open source

- GitHub: github.com/criticaljuncture
  - Source code for the main site.
  - Chef cookbooks for maintaining the servers.
  - WordPress themes and configuration.

- We welcome contributions & feedback

API Details

- Pre-processed, cleaned up data provided:
  - Combination of data from GPO MODS (metadata) files and GPO bulk data files after cleanup procedures.

- JSON for lighter-weight, web-friendly data transfer format.

- No API keys needed
  - Just HTTP client or browser.

- The API is fully RESTful
  - URLs provided to navigate to full details or to next page of results (HATEOAS).

- Simple JSONP interface also possible
  - Simply add a `callback=foo` CGI parameter to the end of any URL to have results ready for cross-domain JavaScript consumption.

What Data is in FR API?

- All of FederalRegister.gov – each document & metadata

- Create own FR, or select portions for your app or website

  - Information about all agencies in FederalRegister.gov database.

  - Metadata & details about a particular FR article, or many.

  - Full search, matching our advanced search.

  - Details of documents on Public Inspection on a particular date, or the current date.

  - Public Inspection search.

  - Single or multiple Public Inspection documents.

Consumers of Federal Register API

- Polar Bear App
  - Finds "polar bear" in Federal Register docs; creates browseable list, RSS feed, detailed view of each item; dynamically generates charts and maps.

  - Environmentalists, animal protectionists, trophy hunters track U.S. actions on polar bears, including drafts of new regulations, issuance of permits.

- Financial Services Firms

- Sunlight Labs Scout
  - Legal and Regulatory information/alert system covering Congress, regulations across executive branch, and legislation in all 50 states.

Reaction to Federal Register API

- ## Y Combinator / Hacker News Quotes

  news.ycombinator.com/item?id=2839137

  - I am blown away by how impressive & awesome this is; Implementation itself looks to be very solid (Rails, JSONP, yay!). We get 'our' apps (and data) in a format that is open for us to not only use but to contribute to and improve upon!

  - I really hope that this portends advances in other government agencies, as well. The judiciary, for example, is in massive need of an overhaul on this scale.

  - This is about the coolest thing from government I've ever seen. Finally, they embrace the 21st century.

What's Next: Regulations.gov Integration

- Data Harmonization Working Group
  - OMB/OIRA, Regulations.gov PMO, GSA/RISC, OFR, GPO

- As Is State: OFR crawls Regulations.gov/FDMS for docs open for comment, supporting material, submitted comments.
  - Big green easy button to "Submit a Formal Comment"
  - Comment Countdown Clock
  - Direct Access to Comment Dockets w/out restarting search

- Future State: Consume Regs.gov API into FR2 API for <u>seamless</u> access.
  - Allow users to submit comments directly from FR2 (no wrong portal)
  - Add notifications: when comment accepted; when others comment; when next related doc is published or open for comment (same RIN); when comments are closing
  - Widget sharing: Interest Groups; Agencies, USA Search

Key Links & Contacts

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- federalregister.gov/learn/developers

- github.com/criticaljuncture

- federalregister.tenderapp.com/home (Feedback site)

- Critical Juncture & FedCMS:
    - criticaljuncture.org/contact-us.html
    - info@fedcms.com