API Experience is Developer Experience

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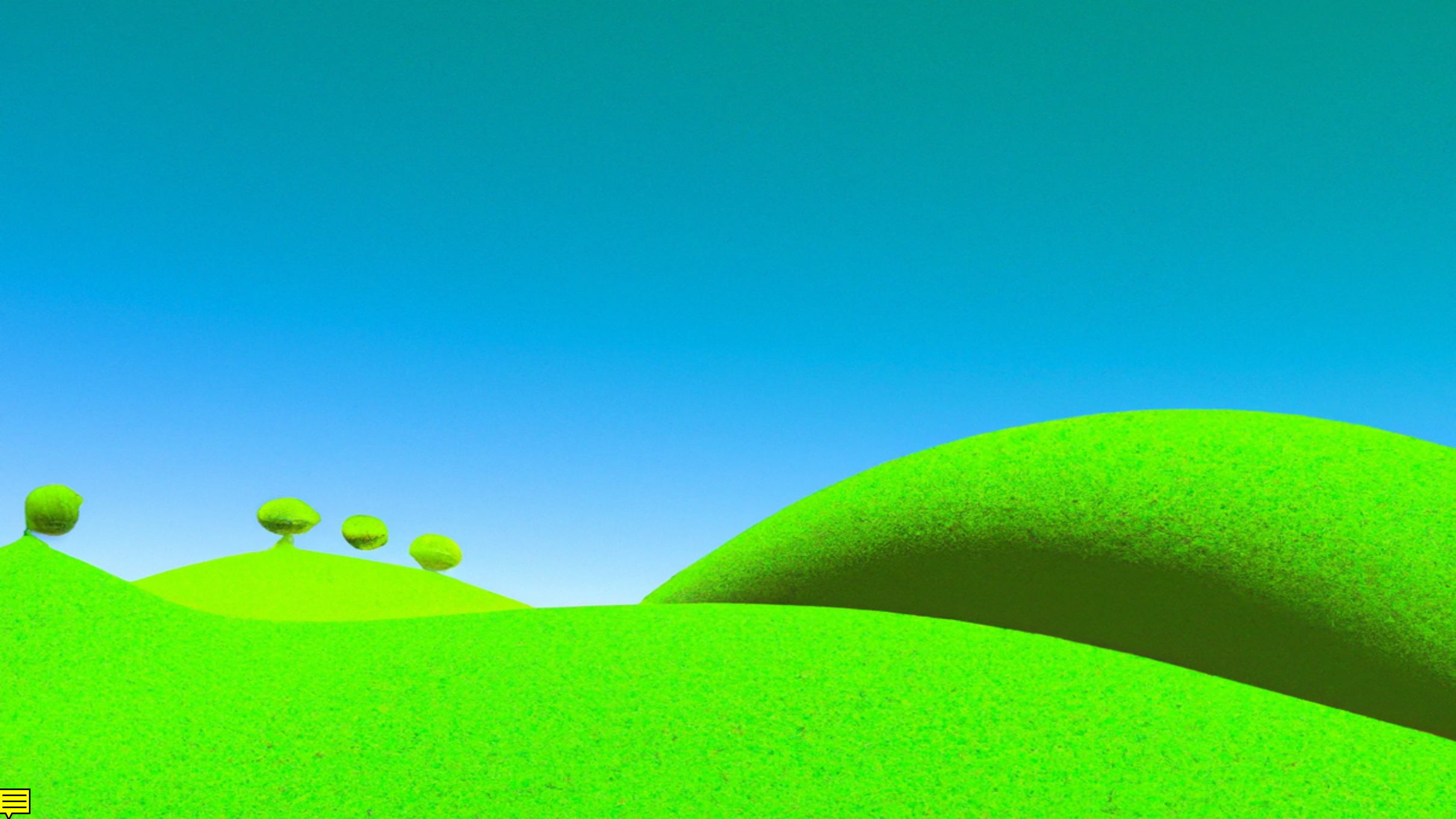
Postman State of the API report 2023

Top decision factor: how well an API integrates with internal apps and systems.

https://www.postman.com/state-of-api/

API project pre-requisites

- API styles and governance
- Versioning and deprecation policy
- Change review process
- Tools to support the lifecycle



Start with standards

OpenAPI descriptions

A standard way to describe an API

- JSON/YAML format
- Endpoints and verbs
- Parameters and schemas
- Reuse elements with `$ref`
- Responses, including error responses

https://openapis.org

OpenAPI example

```yaml
openapi  3.0.1
servers
  - url  http://datasette.local
  - url  https://datasette.io
info
  description  Execute SQL queries against a Datasette database and return
      the results as JSON
  title  Datasette API
  version  v1
paths
  /content.json
    get
      description  Accepts SQLite SQL query, returns JSON. Does not allow
          PRAGMA statements.
```

Credit: https://github.com/APIs-guru/openapi-directory

Design API governance

Start with an existing ruleset

Designing rulesets

- Level 0: Is the document valid?
- Level 1: Does it meet basic (compliance) standards?
- Level 2: Is it consistent with the rest of the API?
- Level 3: Is it a joy to work with?

Process matters

Proposing API changes

Use a source control workflow

- Useful and timely feedback mechanisms
- Consider user needs, and existing conventions
- Think (very hard) about how things are named

Automate for success

- Use linting to check API fits guidelines
- Create documentation previews
- Spin up mock servers

API Council

Bring key API contributors together for every review:

- Would you want to use this API?
- Is the naming sensible and intuitive?
- Is the change consistent with the existing API?

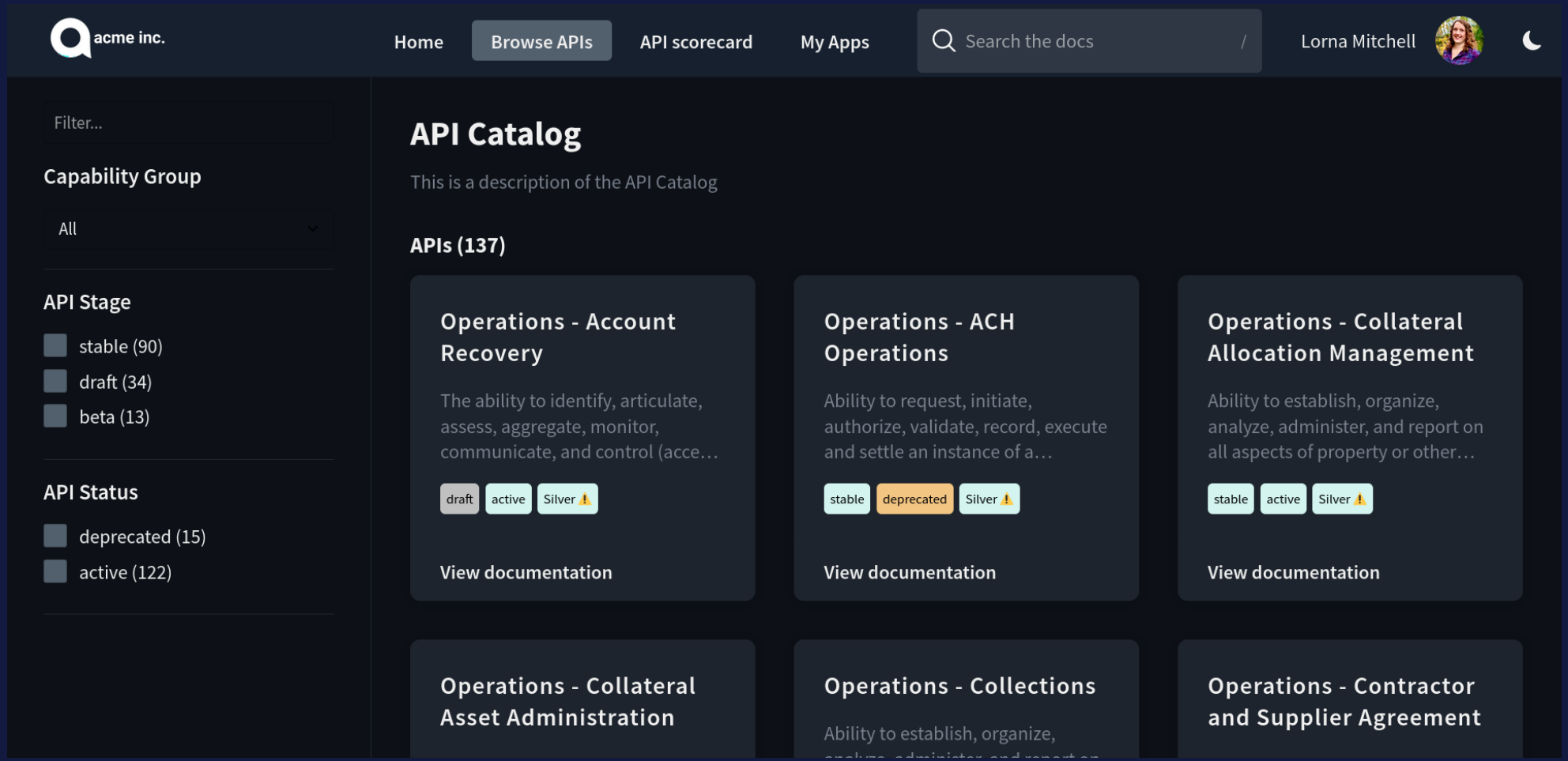
API experience at scale

API catalog

Central registry/marketplace/inventory

- All APIs are registered here
- OpenAPI descriptions
- Establish documentation conventions
- Team contact information
- Standards/readiness

API catalog



@redocly ~ @lornajane

API lifecycle tools

tl;dr https://openapi.tools/

API lifecycle tools

- Linting, standard rulesets or make your own
- Documentation, build a preview of proposed changes
- Mock servers, try before you build
- Extensions, improve an existing description
- SDKs, improve developer onboarding

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API Lifecycle DevX

Resources

- https://lornajane.net
- https://redocly.com
- https://openapi.tools
- https://www.postman.com/state-of-api/
- https://github.com/APIs-guru/openapi-directory