API Governance for AsyncAPI
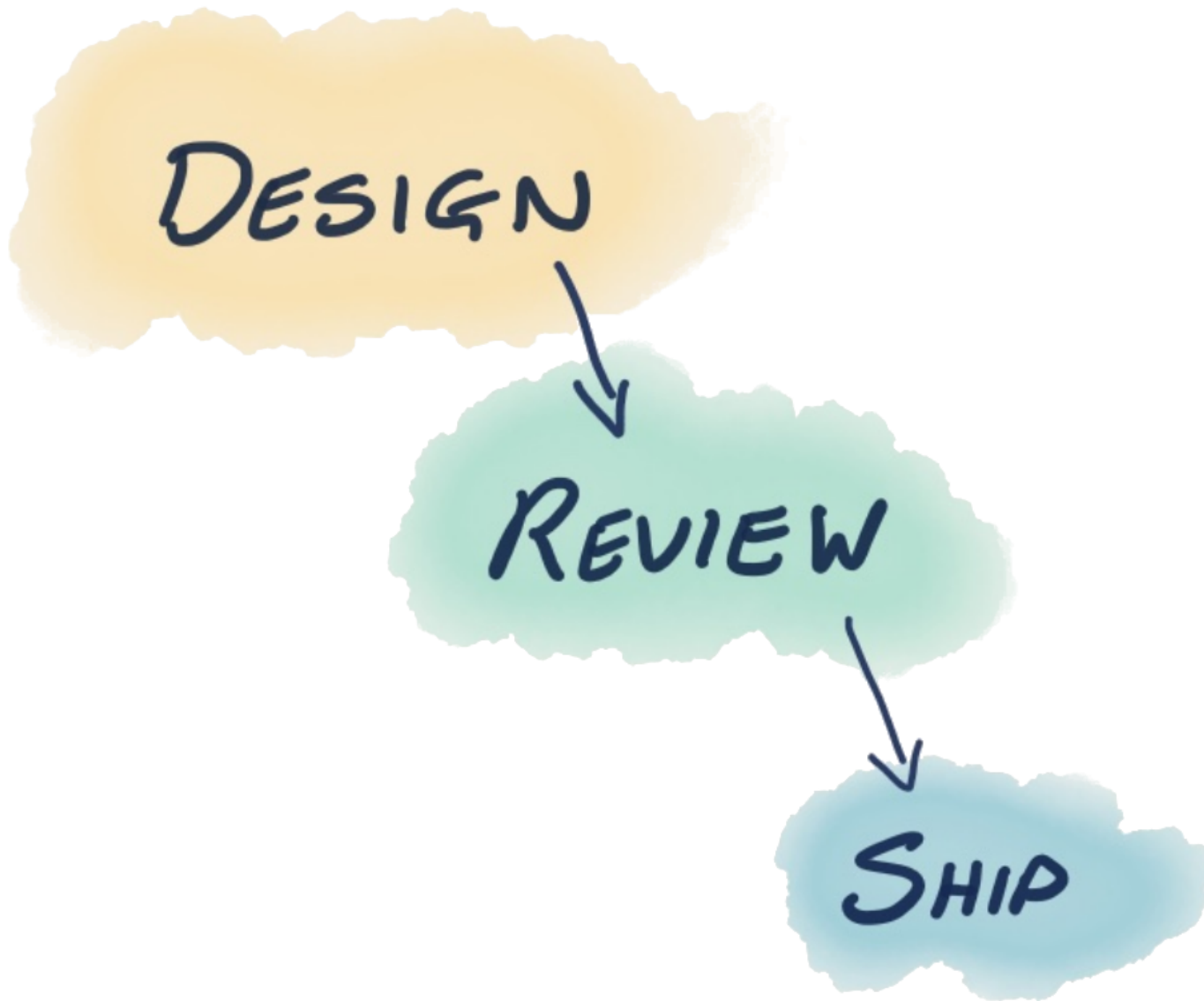
Lorna Mitchell, Redocly

API governance

Good API governance is invisible

Without it:
- designing changes is more difficult
- changes get rejected and need repeat work
- APIs become inconsistent
- more difficult to adopt an API

AsyncAPI and Governance

AsyncAPI is complex! (it's a feature, not a bug)

- Many protocols
- Often multiple API descriptions
- Multiple tech stacks

Start with standards

Written standards define your API identity.

Design good governance

Start small, and formalise existing practices.

Outputs are a written standards set, and linting rules.

One size does not fit all!
Consider mulitple standards and apply as appropriate

Designing rulesets

- Level 0: Valid
- Level 1: Compliant
- Level 2: Consistent
- Level 3: Delightful

Level 0: Valid

Syntax is good and meets the AsyncAPI specification.

- sounds basic
- genuinely a good starting point
- start here for winning workflows!

Level 1: Compliant

Meets agreed API governance standards.

- basic service design
- metadata requirements (license, contact)
- security is required
- basic data types and formats, ISO standards

Level 2: Consistent

Rigid rules about naming make healthy boundaries.

- camelCase or kebab-case?
- all plural, or all singlular
- glossary for consistent naming

Level 3: Delightful

Now add the rules that make things better!

- examples required and useful
- descriptions include rich explanations and links

Governance processes

Change management, done well

Non-lintable standards

The machines cannot do everything *

Humans must review changes too

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

*Try asking an AI "does this naming make sense?"

Reviews matter

In software we can iterate. In published interfaces, that's harder.

Build an API council

- Product specialists
- Technical experts
- Customer advocates (UX, tech writers, DevRel)

Tools for API Governance

https://www.asyncapi.com/tools

Redocly CLI: AsyncAPI

Redocly CLI

- lint and bundle AsyncAPI descriptions
- custom rules and plugins, including transform steps
- support for AsyncAPI 2.6 and 3.0

Good API governance (without tears)

Resources

- https://redocly.com/docs/cli/guides/lint-asyncapi/
- https://lornajane.net
- https://redocly.com
- https://www.asyncapi.com/tools