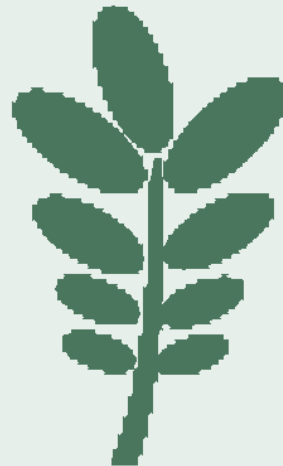
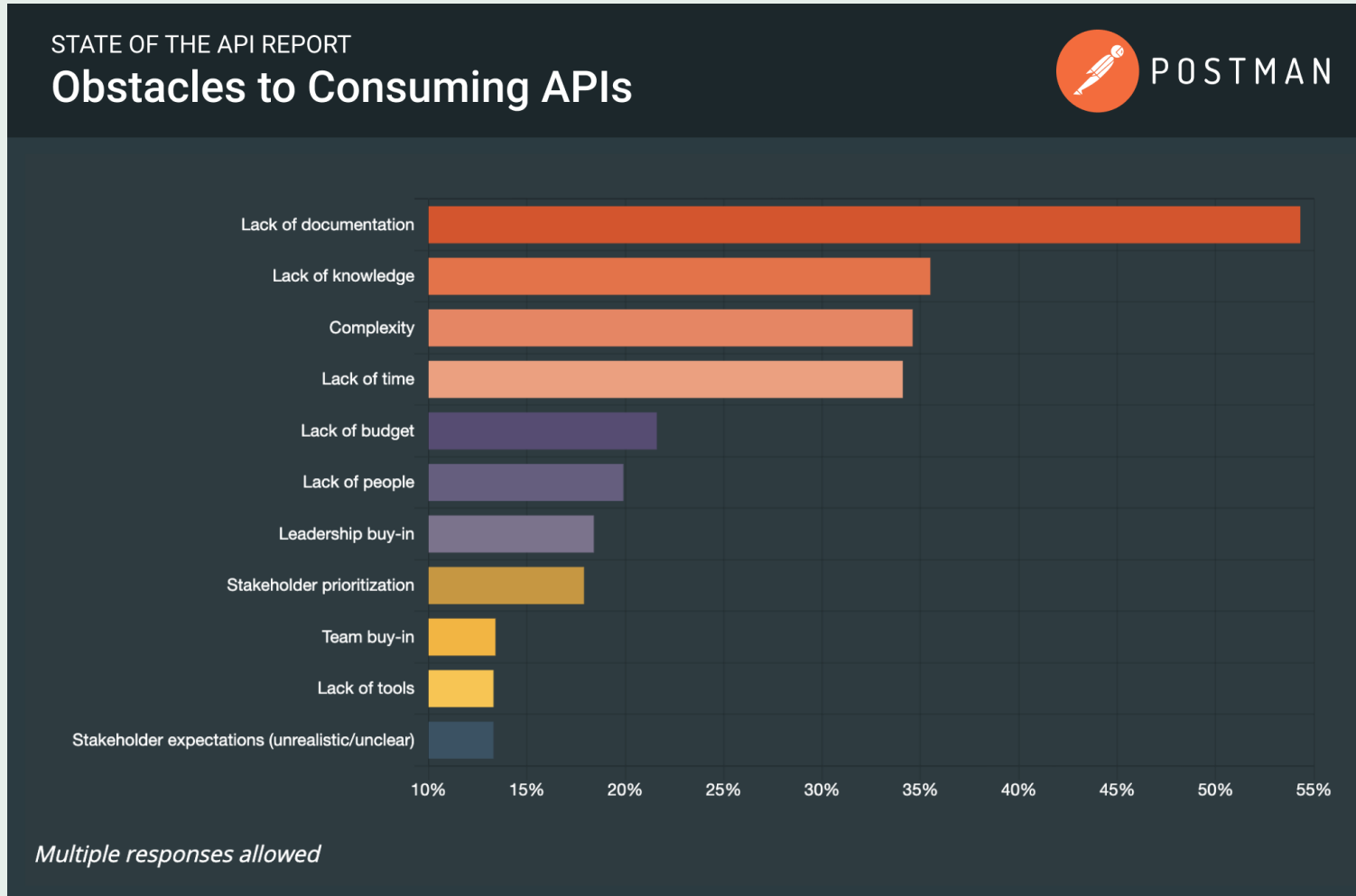


Beyond the API Reference

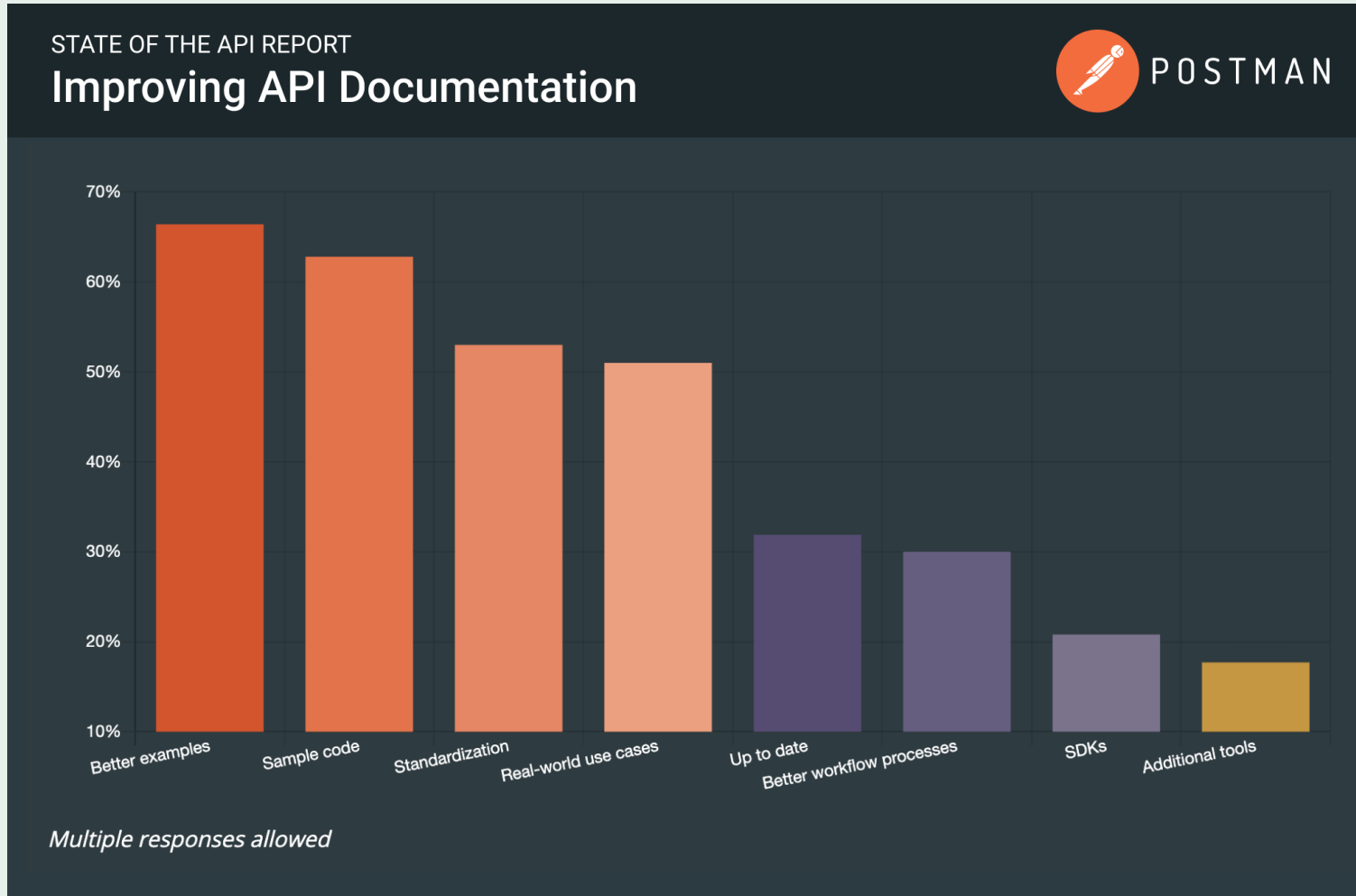
Lorna Mitchell, Vonage



In Praise of API Documentation



Improving API Documentation



MENU

Getting Started Docs | 4€

An ideal vanilla opener,
introducing a twist of freshness

SDKs and Libraries | 12€

A main course to satisfy all
appetites by providing
ready-to-run libraries

Tools Platter | 10€

Perfect for sharing! A variety
of in-season tools to improve
and enhance the developer
experience

Authentication Overview | 8€

Smooth notes in this starter to
get users up and running easily

Request/Response Examples | 7€

Tasty requests and responses,
served with a side of sample data

Troubleshooting Guide | 8€

Sample a selection of delectable
solutions to common problems
and gotchas

Common Tasks | 5€

A fusion of tastes bringing
together non-trivial use cases.

Served with your choice of:

- Java
- Node.js
- PHP

Human Contact | 4€

We specialise in service with a
digital smile! Find us online.

Extras | 2€

Add a little something more:

- video content
- code snippets
- demo apps

Getting Started Content

Developers do read documentation (sometimes)

- **Overview content:** introduce developers to the landscape
- Include (at least) one **working example**
- Link to any **dependencies**
 - sign up page
 - pricing information



Examples are Worth Many Words

Include example responses in the API reference.

🔍 Search...

POST Request a Verification

POST Verify Check

GET Verify Search

POST Verify Control

POST PSD2 (Payment Services Directive 2) Request

[Documentation Powered by ReDoc](#)

Response samples

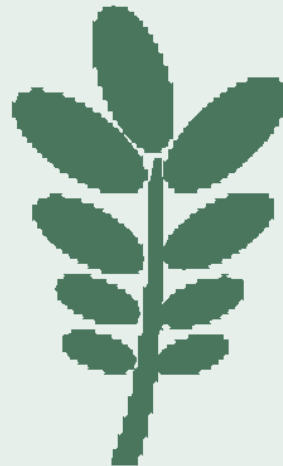
200

Content type
application/json ▼

Example
The request was found ▼

Copy Expand all Collapse all

```
{
  "request_id": "abcdef0123456789abcdef0123456789",
  "account_id": "abcdef01",
  "number": "447700900000",
  "sender_id": "verify",
  "date_submitted": "2020-01-01 12:00:00",
  "date_finalized": "2020-01-01 12:00:00",
  - "checks": [
```



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Code Samples Are Awesome

Copy-and-paste examples to get developers started quickly.

To send an SMS, replace the following variables in the example below:

Key	Description
VONAGE_API_KEY	You can find this in your account overview
VONAGE_API_SECRET	You can find this in your account overview
VONAGE_BRAND_NAME	The alphanumeric string that represents the name or number of the organization sending the message.
TO_NUMBER	The number you are sending the SMS to in E.164 format. For example 447700900000 .

 cURL  Node.js  Java  .NET  PHP  Python  Ruby

Write the code

Add the following to `send-sms.sh`:

```
curl -X "POST" "https://rest.nexmo.com/sms/json" \  
  -d "from=$NEXMO_BRAND_NAME" \  
  -d "text=A text message sent using the Nexmo SMS API" \  
  -d "to=$TO_NUMBER" \  
  -d "api-key=$NEXMO_API_KEY" \  
  -d "api-secret=$NEXMO_API_SECRET"
```

 Copy to Clipboard



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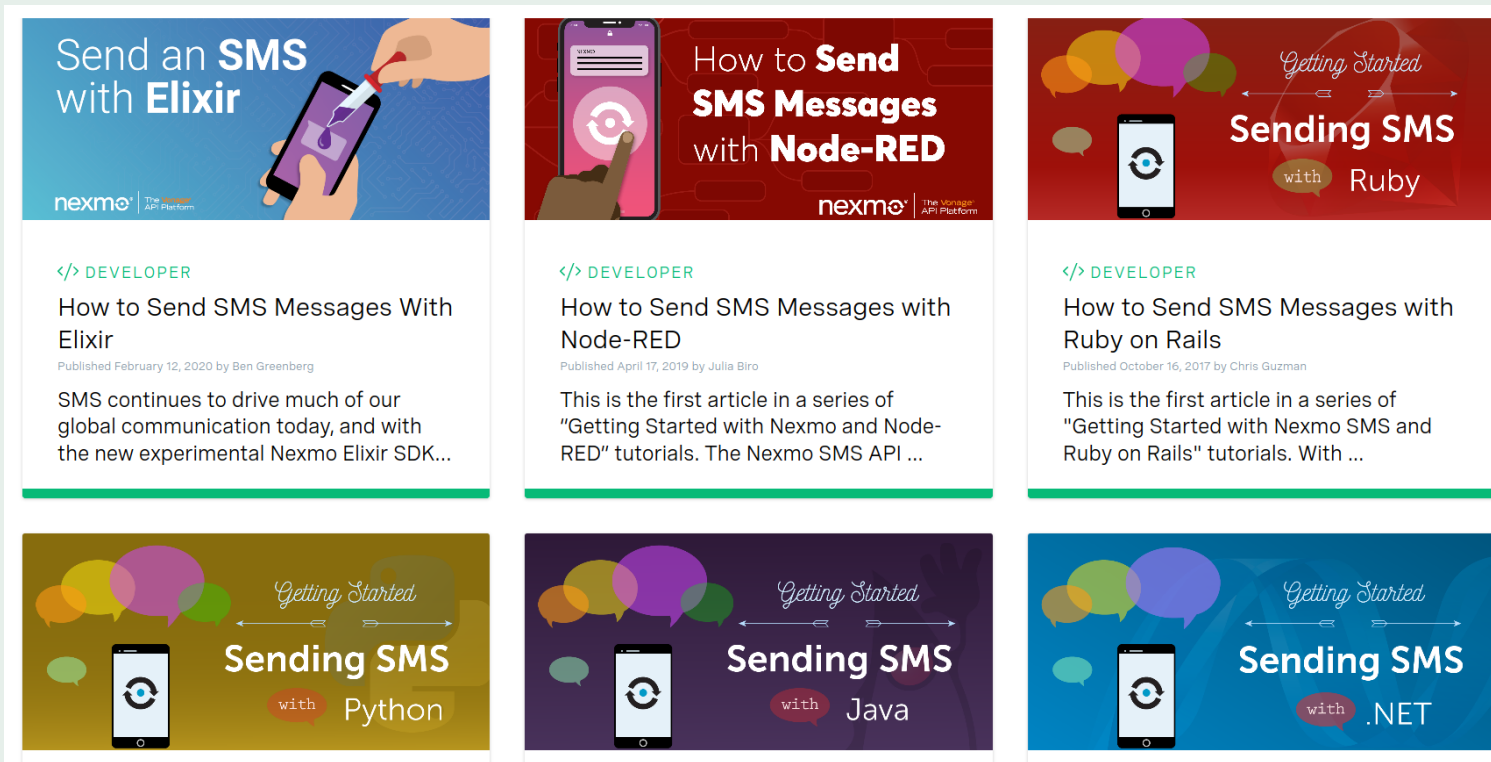
Code Sample Mechanics

1. Create a repository full of working **standalone examples**
2. In your documentation, **write words** and then refer to the code by repo/file/line number
3. Repeat for as many languages as you wish, plus curl



HowTo: X with Y

X is a common task; Y is a tech stack



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Troubleshooting Guide

Create a dedicated space for **common solutions to common problems**, and consider it a living document

- Does a common error indicate a **missing dependency**?
- A generic message have a **non-obvious remedy**?
- A **great tool** help with a common gotcha?

Share the knowledge!



Recommend Related Tools

Are there tools that work well with your products? Share them!

For example we have:

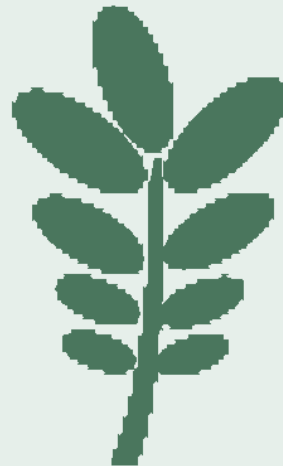
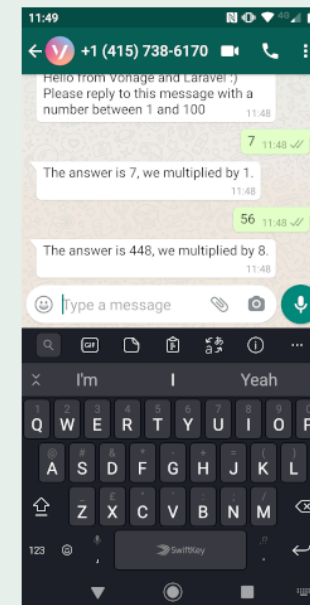
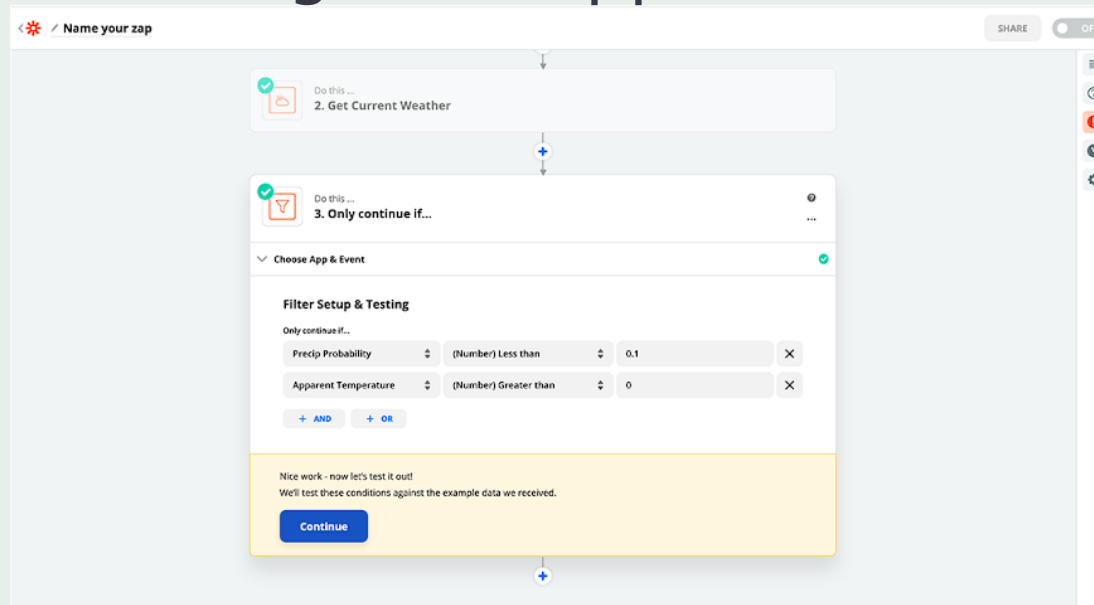
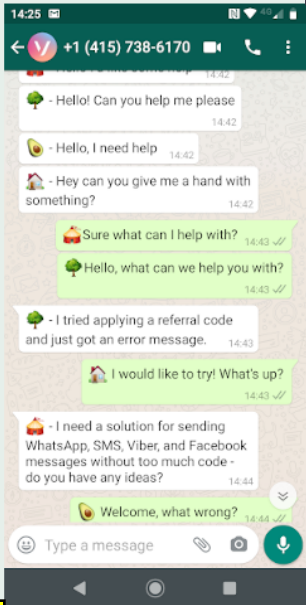
- **Ngrok** for local development with webhooks
- **Postman** (of course!) for API calls
- **Prism** for a mock API server for testing
- Sample apps to help debugging events



Demo Apps

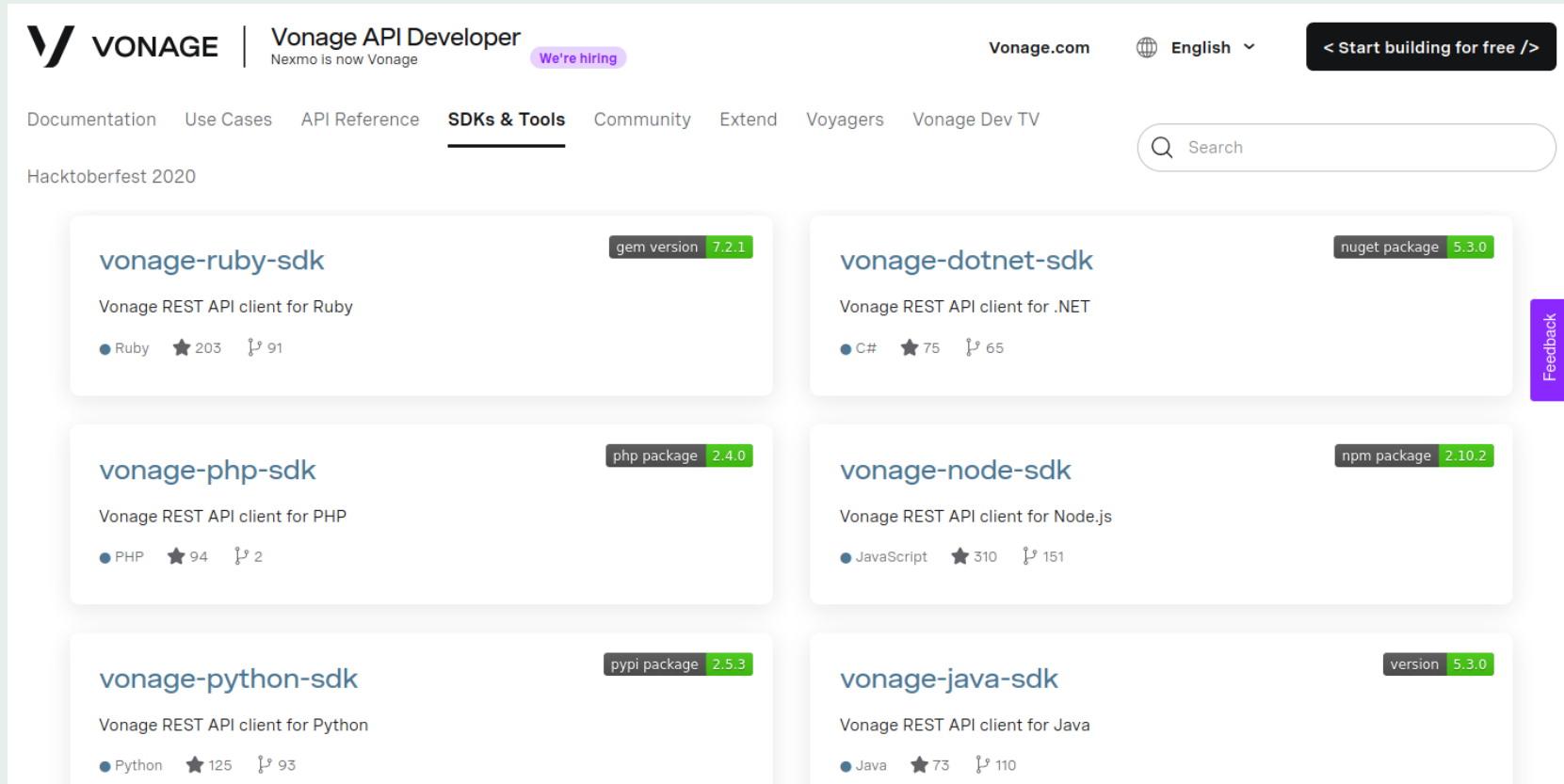
Working but minimal versions of likely applications

- Pick your favourite use cases
- Take inspiration from Sales' "verticals"
- Mix up technologies to appeal to different communities



SDKs

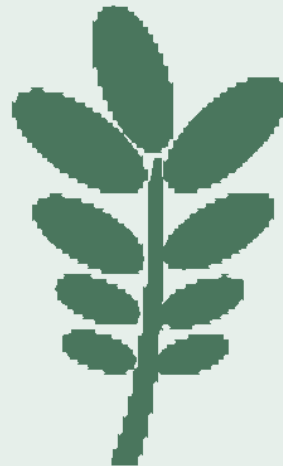
(OK, this is a whole other talk, I know)



The screenshot shows the Vonage API Developer website. The header includes the Vonage logo, the text "Vonage API Developer" with a subtext "Nexmo is now Vonage", a "We're hiring" badge, the website URL "Vonage.com", a language selector set to "English", and a button to "< Start building for free />". The navigation menu includes links for Documentation, Use Cases, API Reference, SDKs & Tools (which is underlined), Community, Extend, Voyagers, and Vonage Dev TV. A search bar is located on the right. Below the navigation, there's a "Hacktoberfest 2020" banner. The main content area displays six SDK cards in a 3x2 grid:

- vonage-ruby-sdk**: Vonage REST API client for Ruby. Includes a "gem version 7.2.1" badge, 203 stars, and 91 forks.
- vonage-dotnet-sdk**: Vonage REST API client for .NET. Includes a "nuget package 5.3.0" badge, 75 stars, and 65 forks.
- vonage-php-sdk**: Vonage REST API client for PHP. Includes a "php package 2.4.0" badge, 94 stars, and 2 forks.
- vonage-node-sdk**: Vonage REST API client for Node.js. Includes an "npm package 2.10.2" badge, 310 stars, and 151 forks.
- vonage-python-sdk**: Vonage REST API client for Python. Includes a "pypi package 2.5.3" badge, 125 stars, and 93 forks.
- vonage-java-sdk**: Vonage REST API client for Java. Includes a "version 5.3.0" badge, 73 stars, and 110 forks.

A vertical "Feedback" button is located on the right side of the SDK cards.



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Be Real

Don't hide behind the team or company.

- Use your name (or handle)
- Direct people to where they can find you/help



Lorna Mitchell

Lorna is a software engineer with an incurable blogging habit. She works on the Developer Relations team at Nexmo and tries to tame words and code in equal measure.

[See All Posts by Lorna Mitchell](#) →



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Chef's Recommendations

Request/Response Examples | 7€

Tasty requests and responses, served
with a side of sample data

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Common Tasks | 5€

A fusion of tastes bringing
together non-trivial use cases.
Served with your choice of:

- Java
- Node.js
- PHP

Resources

- State of API Report: <https://www.postman.com/state-of-api>
- Vonage SDKs: <https://developer.nexmo.com/tools>
- Vonage Blog: <https://nexmo.com/blog>
- Consistent and Delightful SDKs: <https://nordicapis.com/>
- These slides: <https://noti.st/lornajane/SEO0Bm>
- My blog and more: <https://lornajane.net>

