

REST API Design

Computing

Conventions that make an API predictable, and the ones worth arguing about.

Conventions, not laws — but breaking them surprises every consumer.

URLs

/users – collection

/users/42 – one item

/users/42/orders – nested

Plural nouns, no verbs

Lowercase, hyphen-separated

Methods

GET list or read

POST create

PUT replace

PATCH update fields

DELETE remove

Responses

201 + Location on create

204 on delete

Consistent error shape

Paginate every collection

Versioning

/v1/users – in the path

Accept header – purer, less visible

Never break v1 silently

Paginate collections from the first version. Adding pagination later is a breaking change for every client.