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Google has introduced new APIs to help developers build better games for Android OS. The announcements were made at the start of Google I/O, which kicked off in San Francisco Wednesday. The APIs (application programming interfaces) include Cloud Save, which will save information about how far a player has advanced in a game, said Sundar Pichai. Google's vice president for Android and Chrome. That means if players finish Level 1 on their smartphones and then pick up their Android tablets, they'll be able to resume Level 2 without needing to do anything. It also launched APIs to help developers build multiplayer games for playing across Android devices. They'll make it easier for players to find opponents to play against — either friends on Google+ or people they don't know who are looking for an opponent, Pichai said. Google will handle the back-end connections to keep the players connected over a wireless network. It's also introducing a leader board for Google+ to encourage "friendly competition." Google said there have now been 900 million Android device activations, up from 400 million at last year's I/O. Zach Miners covers social networking, search and general technology news for IDG News Service. Follow Zach on Twitter at @zachminers. Zach's e-mail address is zach_miners@idg.com Google recently launched its Awareness API, which provides the ability to add more contextual awareness to Android apps. The increase in convenience and efficiency has obvious trade-offs in privacy. Smartphone applications for both Android and iOS have been using data from the device to add more context to apps for quite some time, but it was usually disparate and each data point had to be accessed separately. Now, Google is bundling "context" signals in a readymade API for developers. On Thursday, at the 2016 Google I/O conference, Google announced the Google Awareness API. The Awareness API provides more context around the app user to that the app can respond more intelligently. SEE: Mobile app development policy template (Tech Pro Research) Awareness collects and aggregates data from the smartphone's sensors to provide seven distinct data points: Current local time Location Specific place and type of place Activity, such as walking, running, or biking Nearby beacons and their content Whether headphones are plugged in Current weather conditions The Awareness API is actually made up of two separate APIs, a Fence API and a Snapshot API. The Fence API allows developers to set the app to respond to specific situations the user may be in, or when certain conditions are met. For example, the Fence API can be set to alert an app when the user plugs in his or her headphones and begins walking, so that it might be able to suggest a playlist. The Snapshot API is the part of Awareness that requests user information, such as their current location and activity. Of course, access to the sensors has been readily available to developers, but Google is making it easier than ever to collect and use this data with the Awareness API. This ups the ante for developers as their competitors race to make their apps more intelligent. Awareness also has implications for marketers and advertisers who now have a potentially easier path for delivering more relevant in-app ads, and pushing promotional material to consumers. Contextually-aware, smart services were a key component of Google's keynote address on Wednesday as well, when it announced the new Google Assistant (replacing Google Now) and Google Home, its smart home hub. In fact, Google seems to be betting big on technologies like automation and machine learning—trying to fold AI capabilities more into our everyday lives. The question then becomes: Is that something we really want? SEE: AI, VR, messaging, and wearables: Everything you need to know from Google I/O 2016 (TechRepublic) Of course, the major quandary created by Google's new products is how much of a hit user privacy will take with tools like Google Assistant and Awareness. Google has enabled end-user permissions for each of the seven context signals available through Awareness, but that could make for poor app experiences if the apps come to heavily rely on this context. The 3 big takeaways for TechRepublic readers Google announced its Awareness API that gives developers a bundled set of data points available from smartphone sensors, which could enable more contextual and intelligent apps. AI and machine learning are a growing aspect of Google's business, and the company will likely continue its push toward personalization that we've seen with Google Assistant and Google Home. Awareness creates some interesting questions around the cost of convenience for smartphone users, and whether or not they will have to sacrifice privacy for usability. An Application Programming Interface (API) allows computer programmers to access the functionality of published software modules and services on the web. APIs play an important role in app development and network programming. Learn more about what an API is and why developers use them. An API defines data structures and subroutine calls that extend existing applications with new features. They are also used to build new applications on top of other software components. On the web, APIs make it possible to integrate apps with services such as Google Maps and Facebook. Some APIs support network programming. Network programming is a type of software development for applications that connect and communicate over computer networks, including the internet. Network APIs provide entry points to protocols and reusable software libraries. Network APIs support web browsers, web databases, and many mobile apps. They are widely supported across many programming languages and operating systems. Traditional network programming followed a client-server model. The primary APIs used for client-server networking were implemented in socket libraries built into operating systems. For example, Berkeley sockets and Windows Sockets (Winsock) APIs were the two primary standards for socket programming for many years. RPC APIs extend basic network programming techniques by adding the capability for applications to invoke functions on remote devices instead of only sending messages to them. With the explosion of growth on the web, XML-RPC has emerged as a popular mechanism for RPC. SOAP was developed in the late 1990s as a network protocol using XML as its message format and HyperText Transfer Protocol (HTTP) as its transport. SOAP generated a loyal following of web services programmers and became widely used for enterprise applications. REST is another programming model that supports web services. Like SOAP, REST APIs use HTTP, but instead of XML, REST applications often use a Javascript Object Notation (JSON). REST and SOAP differ in their approaches to state management and security, both key considerations for network programmers. Mobile apps may or may not use network APIs, but ones that do often use REST. Both SOAP and REST continue to be actively used for the development of new web services. Being a newer technology than SOAP, REST is more likely to evolve and produce other offshoots of API development. Operating systems have also evolved to support the many new Network API technologies. In modern operating systems such as Windows 10, for example, sockets continue to be a core API, with HTTP and other additional support layered on top for RESTful style network programming. As is often the case in computer fields, newer technologies tend to roll out faster than old ones become obsolete. Look for interesting new API developments to happen especially in the areas of cloud computing and the Internet of Things (IoT), where the characteristics of devices and their usage models are different from traditional network programming environments. Thanks for letting us know! Get the Latest Tech News Delivered Every Day Subscribe Tell us why! When it comes to banking, there are plenty of acronyms that maybe only financial industry pros instantly know what they mean. Think ACH, DDA, FCRA, LTV, NSF. One member of this alphabet soup family that every consumer should know, however, is APY. That's because it helps them to know just how much money they stand to earn in terms of interest. APY stands for annual percentage yield, and it is a key financial metric designed to give bank account holders a clear understanding of the interest income generated by their deposits. APY does this by measuring the amount of interest paid on money that is held in an account for a full year, whether it's a savings account, interest-bearing checking account, money market account or certificate of deposit. Understanding APY is useful for a number of reasons, including helping you keep track of where your finances are now and where they might be a year from now. Keep reading to learn more about what APY is and how it can affect your savings. The simplest way to look at APY is that it's the projected rate of return over the course of a year, after accounting for compounding interest. So before you can grasp APY, you need to know how compound interest works. Compound Interest Compound interest is the interest you earn on all the money in your account — not just the principal deposit, but also the interest itself. This distinguishes compound interest from simple interest, which is the interest you earn on the deposit only. Interest can compound in different increments, including daily, monthly, quarterly and annually. With APY, the money earned in interest is annualized over the course of a year. How To Calculate APY Because APY includes both the interest rate and the impact of compounding interest, calculating it requires more than just plugging in a couple of numbers, the way you would with simple interest. Here's how to calculate APY. Divide the simple interest rate by the number of compounding periods in each year, e.g., monthly or quarterly. Take the resulting number and add one. Raise that number to the power of the number of compounding periods. Take that number and subtract one. A much easier way to calculate APY is by using a compounding interest calculator. If you have one, here's the info you'll need to input: Initial deposit amount Amount of money you plan to deposit each month APY and compounding frequency for the account Amount of time you plan to save and let the interest compound APY = (1 + r/n) – 1 How Does APY Work Per Month? Suppose you have a savings account that pays an annual 1.20% interest rate, with interest paid on a monthly basis. Each month, this account will pay 0.10% interest on the balance, and the new funds will compound. The resulting APY will be 1.21%, which is slightly higher than the simple interest rate on the account. An account with \$50,000 at the above rate will grow to \$50,600 if interest is only applied once a year, but the same amount will grow to \$50,603 if the compounding period is monthly. The main reason APY is important is that it can give you an idea of how the money in your savings account — or any interest-bearing account — is working for you. The higher the APY, the greater the return. That's why savvy bank customers seek out high-yield savings accounts, which help them grow their money faster than with most standard savings accounts. Ensuring that your interest is compounded monthly instead of yearly brings an even higher return. Understanding APY can also help you make smart decisions about how to allocate capital. It's important to weigh the potential benefits and risks of different assets, including rate of return and opportunity cost. With a firm grasp of APY, you can assess the rate of return and opportunity cost of putting your money into a savings account or CD vs. another asset such as a stock or bond. This is especially important for people on a fixed income. For example, retirees who partly depend on interest income need a clear understanding of how much cash flow a deposit account could generate to meet their basic needs and lifestyles. If the APY is insufficient to cover those costs, they'll need to consider an alternative option. Someone carrying a lot of debt might want to use funds from a deposit account to pay the debt down, but that might not be wise if the APY on that account is higher than the interest rate on the loan. This is a case when properly calculating the APY comes in especially handy. What Is a Good APY? You don't need an economics degree to figure out that a "good" APY is one that's much higher than average. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corp. reported that the average savings account interest rate as of July 18, 2022, was 0.10% APY. A very good APY is one that earns 10 to 25 times more than the average savings account. A generation ago, a 5.00% APY wasn't uncommon, but today's rates don't typically approach that, with the highest rates falling under 2.00%. A lot of people probably look at APY and APR — annual percentage rate — as interchangeable, but they're actually two different things. APR measures the total cost of debt, expressed as an annual percentage, and applies to borrowing, such as credit cards and mortgage loans. Its calculation includes interest as well as fees, closing costs and other related expenses. The APR is disclosed by lenders to help borrowers understand the actual costs of using a debt instrument. APR is so important in the analysis of debt that the U.S. government requires lending institutions to disclose APR whenever rates are advertised. The APY is also a representation of interest, but it is disclosed by financial institutions to holders of deposit accounts — not debt — so that account holders know how much interest will accrue on an account. From the perspective of a consumer, APY is the opposite of APR, as it measures cash inflows rather than outflows. Takeaway Since APY impacts how much you can earn on your money, it's worth doing the research to find the best account to stash your money. You work hard for your money. Put it back to work for you. Vance Cariaga and Jami Farkas contributed to the reporting for this article.

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