IssueLab API Guide

Last modified: 2/15/2018

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Introduction

IssueLab, a service of the Foundation Center (www.foundationcenter.org), is working to more effectively gather, index, and share the collective intelligence of the social sector. We provide free access to thousands of case studies, evaluations, white papers, and issue briefs addressing some of the world's most pressing social problems. We also are committed to increasing access to this knowledge by making it broadly available through issuelab.org, other Foundation Center websites, distributed Knowledge Centers (https://www.issuelab.org/knowledge-center-service), content-sharing partnerships with libraries, archives, and online communities, and our Application Programming Interface (API) service.

IssueLab's API gives you access to our entire collection. You can grab our resources in XML or JSON - your choice, and can use this data for mash-ups and/or as content alongside your own site offerings.

This guide provides descriptions, instructions, and plenty of examples to illustrate how to construct API requests. If while using our API you get stuck or have a question, or need assistance getting started, don't hesitate to get in touch with us at info@issuelab.org.

Request an API Key

To get started, you will need your own API key. We tie API keys to domains, so you will need one for every application you want to bring our data into. Don't have a key yet? Visit http://data.issuelab.org to request one. Once you have a key, you are ready to go!

Create an RSS feed

In addition to providing IssueLab data in XML or JSON for use in web applications, we also offer a convenient way to take your custom data request and generate a valid RSS feed, with or without cover graphics, that's ready for public consumption. All you need is your API key and your API request to get started. We'll take that info and generate a URL that leads to your custom RSS feed. Your API key will be anonymized in this process so you can share and use your feed in any way you see fit.

Continue reading this Guide to find out about the many data request customization options available to you through our API. When you've finalized your API request, try our RSS tool to create your own valid feed. Visit http://data.issuelab.org/request/rssfeedstart to get started.

Using the API

The parameters described below let you constrain your request by issue area(s), publishing organization, publication date, date resources were added to our database, number of resources you'd like to receive, and format (XML or JSON). Used together, these parameters enable you to construct intricate data requests. For example, you can run a weekly request for all resources added in the last seven days that were indexed under the issue area "Children and Youth". On the simpler side, you can request everything available with just two parameters -- your API key and your desired output format. Read on to learn more.

Parameters at a Glance

parameter	required?	notes
key	yes	Need an API key? Visit http://data.issuelab.org to request one.
format	yes	Choose JSON or XML
issues	optional	41 issue areas are available to query
organization	optional	Enables access to all resources available from a publishing

		organization
pub_date and pub_date_end	optional	Choose works published on a particular date or in a particular date range
add_date add_date_end	optional	Choose works added to IssueLab on a particular date or in a particular date range
modified_date and modified_date_end	optional	Choose works modified on a particular date or in a particular date range
number and page_num	optional	Request a specific number of resources
sort	optional	Sort returned records in ascending or descending order
keyword	optional	Request records by keyword or phrase
coverage/coverage_strict	optional	Request records by geographic area covered
pubtype/not_pubtype	optional	19 publication types are available to query
ein_any/ein_gm/ein_org	optional	Request records by the EIN of a publishing organization

Parameters in Depth

Here is everything you need to know about the parameters available to include in your requests.

Parameter: key
required

You need an API key to access our resources. Visit http://data.issuelab.org to request one.

Example request:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml

Parameter: format
required

You can retrieve data in either XML or JSON format. Note that either of the example requests below, which include only the "key" parameter and "format" parameter, are all you need to make a request for data. In other words, if you copy/paste one of these two examples into your browser, and replace your key with your actual key, data will be returned to you.

Example request:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml

Example request:

http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json

Parameter: issues
optional

Accepts one or multiple issue areas.

Single issue request

To request resources from a single issue area in XML format, simply include the issue area identifier in your request like so:

http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/**issues/Education and Literacy**

Multiple issue request

1. To limit results to resources indexed under a specific combination of issue areas, format your request like so: +[issue1|issue2|issue3]. Here, a resource must be indexed under 'issue1' *and* 'issue2' *and* 'issue3' to make it into your result set.

    Example - "Fetch all resources in XML format indexed under Aging *and* Health *and* Women."

    http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/**issues/+[Aging|Health|Women]**

2. To limit results to resources indexed under any or all specified issue areas, format your request like so: -[issue1|issue2|issue3]. Here, any resource indexed under 'issue1' or 'issue2' or 'issue3' will make it into your result set.

    Example - "Fetch all resources in XML format indexed under Aging *or* Health *or* Women."

    http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/**issues/-[Aging|Health|Women]**

Available issue areas

Aging	Humanitarian and Disaster Relief
Agriculture and Food	Hunger
Animal Welfare	Immigration
Arts and Culture	International Development
Athletics and Sports	Journalism and Media
Children and Youth	LGBTQI
Civil Society	Men

Community and Economic Development	Nonprofits and Philanthropy
Computers and Technology	Parenting and Families
Consumer Protection	Peace and Conflict
Crime and Safety	Poverty
Disabilities	Prison and Judicial Reform
Education and Literacy	Race and Ethnicity
Employment and Labor	Religion
Energy and Environment	Science
Government Reform	Substance Abuse and Recovery
Health	Transportation
Housing and Homelessness	Welfare and Public Assistance
Human Rights and Civil Liberties	Women

Parameter: organization
optional

Accepts one organization name. If you do not include the organization parameter in your request you will receive all resources available regardless of which organization published the resources.

Tip: search for your organization's name on IssueLab to obtain the exact name we have in our database.

To request resources in JSON format from a single publishing organization, simply include the organization name in your request:

http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/**organization/Foundation Center**

Parameter: pub_date and pub_date_end
optional

Use the pub_date and pub_date_end parameters together to request resources published on an exact date or in a particular date range.

The pub_date and pub_date_end parameters accept a date formatted like so: YYYY-MM-DD. Be sure to include two digits for months and days -- January through September require a leading zero (01 for January, 02 for February...). Days 1-9 also require a leading zero (01, 02...).

Examples

"Fetch resources in XML format published in 2012."

http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/pub_date/2012-01-01/pub_date_end/2012-12-31

"Fetch resources in JSON format published in June 2011."
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/pub_date/2011-06-01/pub_date_end/2011-06-30

"Fetch resources in XML format published on June 5, 2010."
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/pub_date/2010-06-05/pub_date_end/2010-06-05

Parameter: add_date and add_date_end
optional

Use the add_date and add_date_end parameters together to request resources added to IssueLab on an exact date or in a particular date range.

The add_date and add_date_end parameters accept a date formatted like so: YYYY-MM-DD. Be sure to include two digits for months and days -- January through September require a leading zero (01 for January, 02 for February...). Days 1-9 also require a leading zero.

Examples

"Fetch resources in XML format added to IssueLab in 2012"
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/add_date/2012-01-01/add_date_end/2012-12-31

"Fetch resources in JSON format added to IssueLab in June 2011"
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/jsonl/add_date/2011-06-01/add_date_end/2011-06-30

"Fetch resources in XML format added to IssueLab on June 15, 2010"
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/add_date/2010-06-15/add_date_end//2010-06-15

Parameter: modified_date and modified_date_end
optional

Use the modified_date and modified_date_end parameters together to request resources last modified on an exact date or in a particular date range.

The modified_date and modified_date_end parameters accept a date formatted like so: YYYY-MM-DD. Be sure to include two digits for months and days -- January through September require a leading zero (01 for January, 02 for February...). Days 1-9 also require a leading zero.

Examples

"Fetch resources in XML format modified in 2012"
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/modified_date/2012-01-01/modified_date_end/2012-12-31

"Fetch resources in JSON format modified in June 2011"
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/jsonl/modified_date/2011-06-01/modified_date_end/2011-06-30

"Fetch resources in XML format modified on June 15, 2010"

http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your
key/format/xml/modified_date/2010-06-15/modified_date_end//2010-06-15

Parameter: number and page_num
optional

By default, the API returns up to 1,000 results. To retrieve more than 1,000 results use a combination of the "number" and "page_num" parameters.

The "number" parameter limits the number of results you receive. Accepts a number (eg., 1 or 23 or 900). This parameter can be used without also including the "page_num" parameter. The maximum request accepted is 1,000.

The "page_num" parameter can be used to paginate results and is the only way that you can retrieve more than 1,000 results. Use the "page_num" and "number" parameters together to create the equivalent of an offset in MySQL. The "page_num" parameter must be used in conjunction with the "number" parameter.

Remember to use only digits and do not include punctuation (eg., a comma) when using either parameter.

Examples

Fetch 3 records in XML format:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/number/3

Fetch 2,000 records in XML format added to IssueLab since September 1, 2012

> Call 1: http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your
> key/format/xml/add_date/2012-09-01/page_num/1/number/1000

> Call 2: http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your
> key/format/xml/add_date/2012-09-01/page_num/2/number/1000

Parameter: sort
optional

The "sort" parameter lets you sort your result set in ascending (sort_asc) or descending (sort_desc) order based on the publication date (pub_date), date added to IssueLab (add_date), or title (title).

Note: Sorting in ascending order will provide results sorted by date with the earliest date first, and results sorted by title in A-to-Z order. Sorting in descending order will provide results sorted by date with the most recent date first, and results sorted by title in Z-to-A order.

Examples

Fetch records in JSON format sorted by title in ascending order:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/sort_asc/title

Fetch records in XML format sorted by publication date in descending order:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/sort_desc/pub_date

Fetch records in XML format sorted by date added to IssueLab in ascending order:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/sort_asc/add_date

Parameter: keyword

optional

The "keyword" parameter lets you request results based on a keyword or phrase, or on multiple keywords and phrases. Quotations around a phrase are not necessary -- whatever you supply will be treated as an exact-phrase to match against.

Examples

Fetch all records in JSON format that include the keyword "teenagers":
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/keyword/teenagers

Fetch records in XML format that include the phrases "charter schools" and "small schools":
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/keyword/charter schools AND small schools

Fetch records in XML format that include the keywords/phrases "renewable energy" or "alternative energy" or "photovaltaics" and are categorized under "Community and Economic Development":
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/keyword/renewable energy OR alternative energy OR photovaltaics/issues/Community and Economic Development

Fetch records in JSON format that include the phrase "restorative justice" and are categorized under "Nonprofits and Philanthropy":
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/keyword/restorative justice/issues/Nonprofits and Philanthropy

Parameter: coverage and coverage_strict

optional

The "coverage" and "coverage_strict" parameters let you request results based on a geographic area. Either parameter accepts one geographic area per query.

Important: you must use the pipe - | - character to separate the parts of your geographic location. For example, to query on the country of Mexico use: North America | Mexico. The geographic metadata returned will be formatted with a forward slash in place of the pipe, eg., North America / Mexico.

Use "coverage_strict" to request resources indexed under a specific geographic area. For example, if you want all resources indexed under the geographic location California -- meaning the resources returned in your result set are indexed at the state-level:

http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/coverage_strict/North America | United States (Western) | California

The result set returned with this query will include resources indexed with the exact term "North America-United States (Western) California".

Continuing with this example, if you would like to broaden the result set for California so that you receive

not only resources indexed on the state-level, but also resources indexed on the county, city, and neighborhood levels, use "coverage":

http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/coverage/North America | United States (Western) | California

The result set returned with this query will include resources indexed under North America-United States (Western) California and also, for example,

- North America / United States (Western) / California (San Fernando Valley)
- North America / United States (Western) / California / Alameda County
- North America / United States (Western) / California-Alameda County / Oakland (San Antonio)

Examples

Fetch all records in JSON format that are indexed under "Africa" (returning continent-level):
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/coverage_strict/Africa

Fetch all records in JSON format that are indexed under "Africa" including the continent, regions, countries, cities:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/coverage/Africa

Parameter: pubtype and not_pubtype
optional

The pubtype and not_pubtype parameters let you request results based on inclusion or exclusion of a publication type or types. You can request multiple pubtypes in either parameter. You can also use pubtype and not_pubtype in the same query.

Examples

Fetch all records in JSON format that are not indexed under the "Annual Report" pubtype:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/json/not_pubtype/Annual Report

Fetch records in XML format that are indexed under the "Report/Whitepaper" and "Dataset" pubtypes:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/pubtype/Whitepaper AND Dataset

Fetch records in XML format that are indexed under the "Report/Whitepaper" or "Issue/Policy Brief" or "CaseStudy" pubtypes, but not indexed under the "Annual Report" pubtype:
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/your key/format/xml/not_pubtype/Annual Report/pubtype/Whitepaper OR Policy Brief OR Casestudy

Available pubtypes

Annual Report	Interactive Resource
Article	Policy Brief (*for Issue/Policy Brief*)

Audio	Legislative Document
Book	Research Review (*for Literature/Research Review*)
CaseStudy	MovingImage
Conference Report	Presentation (*for Presentation/Slides*)
Dataset	Whitepaper (*for Report/Whitepaper*)
Evaluation	Survey
FactSheet	Toolkit
Infographic (*for Infographic/StillImage*)	

Parameter: ein_any, ein_gm, and ein_org
optional

You can query the API by employee identification number (EIN) which will let you request results based on the EIN number of a publishing organization (the organization that created and owns a resource) or a grantmaker (the organization that funded creation of a resource). There are three parameters available:

- ein_any: use this parameter to request results regardless of whether the EIN you are interested in belongs to a publishing organization or a grantmaker.

- ein_gm: use this parameter to request results that were funded by an organization that the EIN you are interested in belongs to.

- ein_org: use this parameter to request results that were published by the organization that the EIN you are interested in belongs to.

Note: You cannot look up EINs through IssueLab's API. You need to have the EIN you'd like to query on available before attempting to use this parameter.

Examples

"Fetch everything available in XML format that was funded by a grantmaker with EIN # 123456789."
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/XXX/format/xml/ein_gm/123456789

"Fetch everything available in XML format that was published by an organization with EIN # 123456789."
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/XXX/format/xml/ein_org/123456789

"Fetch everything available in XML format that was either funded by a grantmaker with EIN # 123456789 or published by an organization with EIN # 123456789."
http://data.issuelab.org/fetch/key/XXX/format/xml/ein_any/123456789

Returned Data

This table provides info on all the data points we collect. Note that not every resource includes all of these data points. At a minimum the data points that appear in **bold type** will be included for every result.

author	Any person(s) listed as an author of the resource
cover_graphic	A PNG image of the resource cover page (1200px wide)
cover_graphic_small	A smaller version PNG image of the resource cover page (285px wide)
date_added	The date the resource was added to IssueLab. Format YYYY-MM-DD
date_modified	The date the resource was last modified on IssueLab. Format YYYY-MM-DD
description	A brief summary/abstract of the resource. XML data delivered as character data (CDATA).
funders	Any funding entity that contributed to the creation of the resource
geo_coverages	The geographic areas the resource considers
identifier	IssueLab's unique identifier (text string; eg.: title_of_this_report)
issuelab_id	IssueLab's unique numeric identifier for this resource
issues	The issue area(s) that the resource is categorized under. Up to three issue areas can be applied to any resource (controlled list)
issuelab_url	A link to the resource based on its IssueLab unique identifier
key_finding	Any discrete key findings that are attached to the resource
lang_code	The 3-character code for the language in which the resource was authored/published (controlled list)
language	The language in which the resource was authored/published (controlled list)
permalink	A link to the resource based on its IssueLab unique numeric identifier
publication_date	The date the resource was published. Format YYYY-MM-DD
publishers	Any entity listed as the publisher of the resource
pubtypes	The document type(s) applied to the resource (conrolled list)
rights	The copyright notice carried by the resource
score	If the keyword parameter is included in an API request, "score" will reflect the relevance score of each returned result. Higher scores reflect greater relevance

title	The title of the resource

Example Output

The XML and JSON output examples below may not contain all of the data points we collect. For instance, there is no "author" data for these example records because no authors were attached to the example resource. Please refer to the "Returned Data" table above for a complete list of the data you can anticipate in your result set.

XML Example

```xml
<xml>
  <resources>
    <resource>
      <title>Meet the Nexus: How are Food, Water and Energy Connected</title>
      <publishers>
        <publisher>Grace Communications Foundation</publisher>
      </publishers>
      <languages>
        <language>English</language>
      </languages>
      <lang_codes>
         <lang_code>eng</lang_code>
      </lang_codes>
      <issuelab_id>17294</issuelab_id>
      <issues>
        <issue>Agriculture and Food</issue>
        <issue>Energy and Environment</issue>
      </issues>
      <identifier>meet_the_nexus_how_are_food_water_and_energy_connected</identifier>
      <issuelab_url>http://issuelab.org/resources/meet_the_nexus_how_are_food_water_and_energy_
connected</issuelab_url>
      <permalink>http://issuelab.org/permalink/resource/17294</permalink>
      <cover_graphic>https://www.issuelab.org/resources/17294/pdf_cover.png</cover_graphic>
      <score>0.037796203</score>
      <date_added>2014-02-07</date_added>
      <date_modified>2014-02-07</date_modified>
      <publication_date>2014-02-04</publication_date>
      <rights>Copyright 2014 Grace Communications Foundation.</rights>
      <description><![CDATA[<p>This guide shows you how everyday food, water and energy
        decisions have a profound effect on each other. The guide suggests nine simple
        choices that you can make to use food, water and energy more sustainably in your
        daily life -- and save some money too!</p>]]></description>
      <geo_coverages>
        <geo_coverage>North America-United States</geo_coverage>
      </geo_coverages>
      <funders>
        <funder>Grace Communications Foundation</funder>
      </funders>
      <cover_graphic_small>
                    https://www.issuelab.org/resources/17294/pdf_cover_285.png
      </cover_graphic_small>
    </resource>
  </resources>
```

```
</xml>
```

JSON Example

```
{
  "resources":[
    {
      "title":"Meet the Nexus: How are Food, Water and Energy Connected",
      "publishers":["Grace Communications Foundation"],
      "languages":["English"],
      "lang_codes":["eng"],
      "issuelab_id":"17294",
      "issues":["Agriculture and Food","Energy and Environment"],
      "identifier":"meet_the_nexus_how_are_food_water_and_energy_connected",
      "issuelab_url":"http:\/\/issuelab.org\/resources\/meet_the_nexus_how_are_food_water_and_e
      nergy_connected",
      "permalink":"http:\/\/issuelab.org\/permalink\/resource/17294",
      "cover_graphic":"https://www.issuelab.org/resources/17294/pdf_cover.png",
      "score":"0.037796203",
      "rights":"Copyright 2014 Grace Communications Foundation",
      "date_added":"2014-02-07",
      "date_modified":"2014-02-07",
      "publication_date":"2014-02-04",
      "description":"<p>This guide shows you how everyday food, water and energy decisions have
          a profound effect on each other. The guide suggests nine simple choices that you can
          make to use food, water and energy more sustainably in your daily life -- and save
          some money too!</p>",
      "geo_coverages":["North America-United States"],
      "funders":["Grace Communications Foundation"]
      "cover_graphic_small":"https://www.issuelab.org/resources/17294/pdf_cover_285.png",
    }
  ]
}
```