

LinkedIn Development Manager's Guide

A non-technical guide to understanding
the LinkedIn Development Platform

by

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Overview

The LinkedIn Development Platform allows external applications and websites to programmatically access LinkedIn data and use it in order to enhance their own applications. Once a user authorizes your application or website to access his account, you will be able to perform the functionality below.

This guide is intended to give an insight on what can be achieved using the LinkedIn Development Platform, from a non-technical perspective.

Terminology

In this rest of the document, the following terms are used:

- **Authenticated User** refers to the user who has allowed your application to access his LinkedIn data. This would be anyone with a LinkedIn account including you and your development team.
- **1st Degree connection** refers to the users who are directly connected to the authenticated user. (e.g. friends)
- **2nd Degree connection** refers to friends of friends
- **3rd Degree connection** refers to friends of friends of friends, or people who belong to the same group as the authenticated user.

LinkedIn Guidelines: The main points

LinkedIn has very strict guidelines when it comes to using their content. LinkedIn is a business network which contains very sensitive data. Therefore, LinkedIn tries its best in order to protect their user's data, and make sure it doesn't fall in the hands of spammers or data harvesting companies. You might notice that there are strict restrictions when it comes to grabbing and using data, but it's really there in order to help users keep control of their own data.

Therefore, knowing what you're unable to do will greatly help you steer your application in the right direction.

Displaying and Using Content

1. Only display a user's data to themselves. In other words, if you have two authenticated users, you may not show user A the data for user B. **Example:** Showing user A's news feed items to user B goes against the LinkedIn Development Guidelines)
2. Do not use LinkedIn data inside advertisements. Although this is common sense, this restriction is there in order to make sure you're not making money out of your user's data. **Example:** You cannot show an advertisement on Google Adwords which contains content from an

authenticated user's profile.

3. Do not use the LinkedIn Development Program if your application contains or promotes adult content, gambling, smoking or alcohol. **Example:** You cannot users to register on your gambling website with their LinkedIn IDs
4. Do not share LinkedIn data with third parties. **Example:** You are not allowed to gather statistics about people who granted your application access to their LinkedIn account, and send that statistics to a company which analyzes user behavior on the internet.
5. Do not offer LinkedIn data as part of search results pulling data from multiple sources, as part of a combined search. **Example:** You cannot use the LinkedIn API to offer your customers a search engine application which returns a user's combined profile data from Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, unless you display the results individually. Users should be able to immediately notice which results came from LinkedIn, and which didn't.
6. Do not combine data your application programmatically obtained with LinkedIn data obtained from another source. **Example:** You are not allowed to match data obtained by your application with data manually collected by your assistant from the LinkedIn website.

Data Storage

1. Each LinkedIn profile has a unique ID associated with it. Do not store LinkedIn profiles data, except for the ID associated with the profile. In other words, do not store name, email, jobs, recommendations... One exception can be made to store profile data for the authenticated user, but you must ask their permission first.
2. Only cache data retrieved via LinkedIn API for 24 hours for performance requirements.
3. Delete the authenticated user's data whenever a user terminates his account with you.

For more details and a technical discussion visit:

<http://developer.linkedin.com/documents/linkedin-apis-terms-use>

Functionality Overview

Profile Functionality

This functionality allows you to:

- Retrieve full profile data for the authenticated user.

Use Case: While working on PitchBrite (<http://pitchbrite.com/>), we created a system where users were required to register on the website using their LinkedIn account. No other registration method was allowed. People using the website were expected to have a LinkedIn account.

Connections Functionality

This functionality allows you to:

- Retrieve the user's first-degree connections profile data. You are unable to get neither 2nd degree connections nor 3rd degree connections. For first-degree connections, you are only allowed to fetch the basic profile fields. Check the following link for a detailed list of fields: <https://developer.linkedin.com/documents/profile-fields#profile>

Use Case: A certain website might want to retrieve the full list of the user's connections in order to determine who else of his connections is already registered on the website, and give them the chance to interact on that website.

People Search Function

This function allows you to use the LinkedIn search functionality inside your application. This is very similar to what you can do on the LinkedIn advanced search page:

<http://www.linkedin.com/search?trk=advsrch>

Use Case: While working on Accountants Compete website (<http://accountantscompete.com>), we created a search algorithm which recommends accountants a user should work with, based on several factors such as skills, location...

Groups Functionality

This functionality allows you to:

- Retrieve a LinkedIn group's information (Name, description, number of posts, category...)
- List of groups a member belongs to
- List of groups a member has requested to join
- Retrieve group settings for an authenticated user

Use Case: A news portal, such as CNN.com, might ask you to give them access to your LinkedIn account, in order to show them relevant stories.

Companies Functionality

This functionality allows you to:

- Retrieve a company's profile details
- Retrieve company updates posted on LinkedIn
- Search for companies on LinkedIn
- Follow a company
- Retrieve a list of companies followed on LinkedIn
- Retrieve a company's list of products and services
- Retrieve recommendations for a specific product of service.

Use Case: A website which offers data about companies (e.g. <http://crunchbase.com>) could develop a feature which offers suggestions to follow companies on LinkedIn based on company profile pages you have viewed on their website.

Jobs Functionality

The following section is related to jobs on LinkedIn: <http://www.linkedin.com/job/home>

This functionality allows you to:

- Retrieve a job's details
- Retrieve a list of bookmarked jobs
- Retrieve a list of job suggestions
- Search for jobs on LinkedIn
- Post, Edit, Renew and Close a job. (Only available for select partners as of April 1. , 2013. More Info: <http://developer.linkedin.com/documents/job-posting>)

Use Case: A careers website might display relevant jobs from LinkedIn on their website, based on what their website user is looking for.

Sharing Functionality

This functionality allows you to:

- Post updates to LinkedIn on behalf of the authenticated user
- Retrieve data shared on LinkedIn
- Retrieve the authenticated user's updates, or one of his 1st degree connections updates.
- Retrieve likes and comments for each updates
- Like or comment on a certain update

Use Case: Sendible (<http://sendible.com>) uses this functionality in order to allow its users to send updates to multiple social networks at once, including LinkedIn.

Communication Functionality

This functionality allows you to:

- Invite people to connect on LinkedIn from inside your application
- Send a private message to one or more LinkedIn users

Use Case: A business-oriented community website might offer suggestions to connect via LinkedIn for authenticated users who have similar profiles on the community page.

Ads Functionality

This functionality allows you to:

- Post/Edit/End an advertising campaign on LinkedIn
- Retrieve campaign statistics
- Retrieve statistics for a specific advertisement

This program is available to selected partners, you will need to contact LinkedIn in order to be granted access to this program. More info here: <http://developer.linkedin.com/ads>

Use Case: A marketing agency might want to integrate LinkedIn advertising campaigns with its proprietary advertising platform.

Technical Limits

The LinkedIn Development Platform has limits on the number of times your application can perform a certain action. These limits are in place in order to keep the LinkedIn servers running smoothly, as well as make it harder for spammers to access LinkedIn Data. While this information is a bit technical, as a manager, you should be aware of it.

Here are the main points you should be aware of:

- The Limits are reset every midnight GMT. All counters are reset every midnight GMT
- There are two types of limits you should be aware of:
 - **Application Limit:** The number of times your application can perform a certain action.
Example: As of April 1, 2013, an application is allowed to post 5,000 network updates on behalf of all its authenticated users before the limits reset.
 - **User Limit:** The number of times an authenticated user can perform a certain action.
Example: As of April 1, 2013, an application can post up to 25 network updates per user before the limits reset.
- If we use the above data, 200 authenticated users can post 25 updates per day before the limits are application reached.
- Technical information about rate limits: <https://developer.linkedin.com/documents/throttle-limits>

For suggestions or feedback, do not hesitate to contact me

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