

Whats a JS library?

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There are a billion webpages, and many of them are interactive in some way - in fact, many of them are interactive in the same ways. How many websites have you seen that use a slideshow? I've seen hundreds, myself!

For example, here's one from [National Geographic](#):

125 years of National Geographic: Stunning photography since 1888



Jou Jou, captive chimpanzee reaches out it's hand to Dr. Jane Goodall in Brazzaville Zoo, Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, 1990. (Michael Nichols/ National Geographic)

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Here's one from [BBC](#):



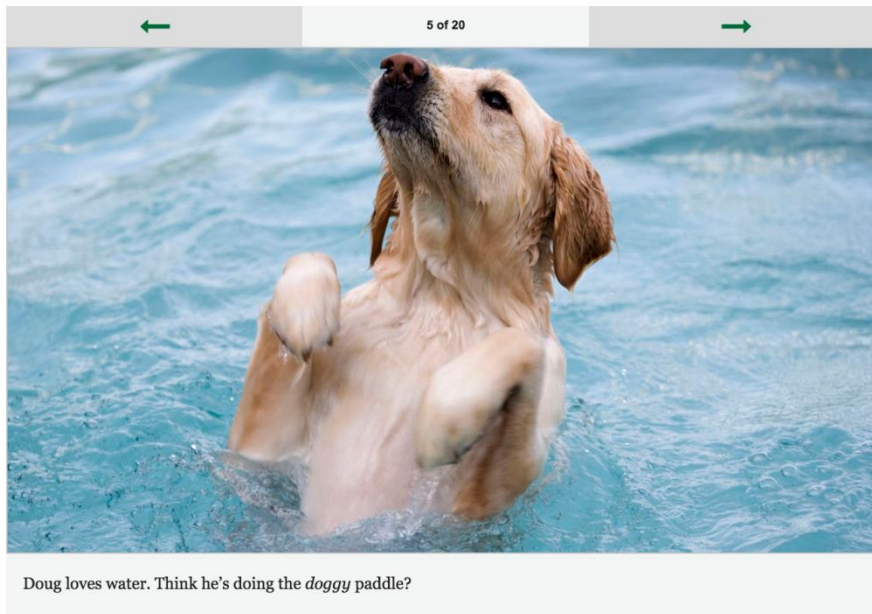
Purple Emperor: Your pictures of the butterfly that feeds on rotting flesh

It might be one of the most elusive butterflies in Britain, but enthusiasts Rupert Perkins and his daughter Phoebe are a few of the lucky ones who have spotted and snapped the rare Purple Emperor butterfly. This photo was taken by them in Fermyn Wood, Northamptonshire, in 2014.

RUPERT PERKINS

One more, from [The Onion](#):

6 Dogs Who Know How To Have Fun



Now, it's possible that every one of those web developers wrote their own JavaScript code to make a slideshow, but a lot of them probably re-used the same code. As programmers, we should re-use existing code when we can, so that we don't waste our time writing code that another programmer has already written.

In JavaScript, the way we do that is by using a **library**. A library is a JavaScript file that contains a bunch of functions, and those functions accomplish some useful task for your webpage.

How do we know what functions we can use? We could look at the JavaScript file, if it's short, or better, we could look at the **documentation**. Most libraries have documentation with a list of available functions or a real-world example.

For example, here's a snippet of the [documentation for Galleria](#), a popular JS library for making slideshows:

Slideshow

.play(interval)

```
returns Galleria
```

Starts the automatic slideshow and sets the interval length in milliseconds. If no interval is given, default (5000 = 5 seconds) is used.

.pause()

```
returns Galleria
```

Stops the slideshow and resets the interval.

.playToggle()

```
returns Galleria
```

Stops the slideshow if currently playing, otherwise it start the slideshow.

.setPlaytime(milliseconds)

```
returns Galleria
```

Sets the interval of the autoplay slideshow at run-time.

When a programmer creates a JS library and puts it out into the world, they're purposefully deciding to share it with the world - so that often means they put in the effort to come up with great documentation and examples. Perhaps one day you will decide to create a library of some functionality that you find really useful and share it with the world.

But first, how do you actually use a library? I'll show you that next!