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API Marketplace vs API Gateway: What's the Difference?

(<https://blog.apilayer.com/author/sidra24arif/>) By Sidra Arif (<https://blog.apilayer.com/author/sidra24arif/>) - October 18, 2023



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API Marketplace VS API Gateway: What's the Difference?

APIs are truly a product of the 21st century. Their popularity is soaring day by day, with more and more APIs being developed and used by organizations and developers worldwide. However, as the use of APIs is increasing, API developers and consumers need to understand various common associated terms, such as an API key, API endpoint, API directory, API marketplace, and API gateway. This article will discuss two common API-related concepts that are becoming increasingly popular: API marketplace and API gateway. We'll also explore the difference between these two.

Let's first briefly discuss the concept of an API, including internal and public APIs. (<https://apilayer.com/>)



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What is an API?

An API (Application Programming Interface) is like a middleman between two software apps or systems, enabling them to interact, communicate, and exchange data. It allows an application to access data or functionality of another application.

Today, there are numerous APIs for [various purposes](https://blog.apilayer.com/importance-of-api-integration-to-improve-user-experience-on-your-website/) (<https://blog.apilayer.com/importance-of-api-integration-to-improve-user-experience-on-your-website/>). Developers and organizations integrate public APIs into their apps to build efficient apps faster. For instance, developers use a [weather API](https://weatherstack.com/) (<https://weatherstack.com/>) to retrieve accurate current, future, and historical weather data for their weather app without having to collect it from various databases independently. Similarly, many developers utilize the [Facebook Graph API](https://developers.facebook.com/docs/graph-api/) (<https://developers.facebook.com/docs/graph-api/>) to access specific data and functionality from the Facebook platform.

There are also internal APIs that are only used by a specific organization to facilitate collaboration and data sharing. For example, Amazon uses a number of internal APIs through which their team exposes their data and functionality to other internal teams.

What is an API Marketplace?



An API marketplace is a digital platform where various API providers can list and sell their APIs, given the APIs meet the required standards of the particular marketplace. Hence, it enables API providers to publicize and monetize their APIs. It also helps API sellers manage their APIs more efficiently.

An API marketplace can also be considered a one-stop shop for API consumers where they can find a range of APIs in one place.

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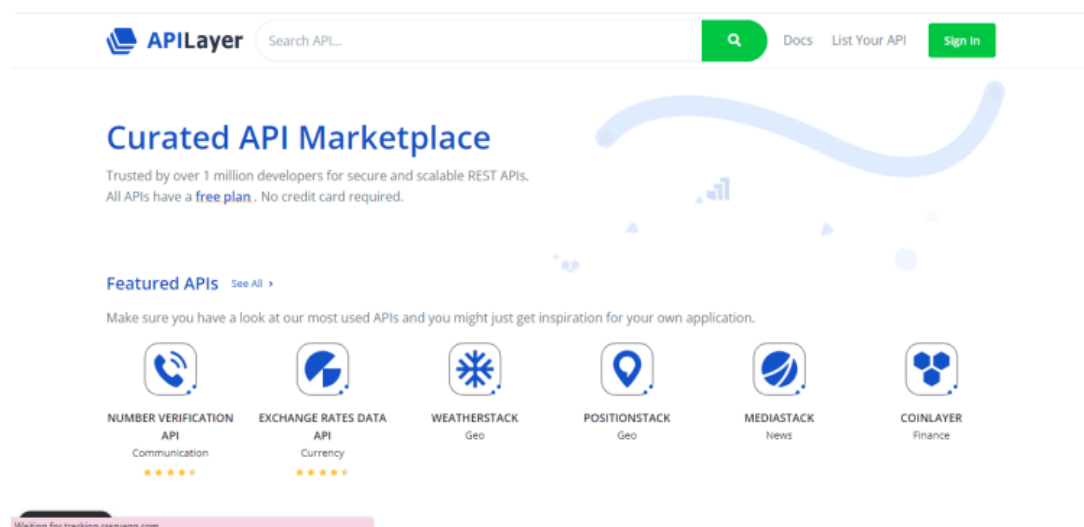
For instance, a marketplace can have weather, geo (<https://ipstack.com/>), finance, currency (<https://fixer.io/>), web scraping (<https://zenscrape.com/>), and text processing (<https://apilayer.com/marketplace/category/text-processing>) APIs.

API marketplaces are similar to e-commerce marketplaces (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_marketplace). Take, for example, Amazon marketplace (<https://www.amazon.com/Marketplace/s?k=Marketplace>), where sellers provide different parts of the world list and sell different types of products. And consumers worldwide can find thousands of products in one place.

An API marketplace is made up of various components, such as API portals (<https://blog.apilayer.com/api-portal-introduction-usage-and-security-tips/>), including a provider portal and an API portal for developers. An API developer portal allows API consumers to track API usage, API call consumption, billing, etc.

Also Read: [5 types of API marketplaces](https://blog.apilayer.com/the-5-types-of-api-marketplaces/) (<https://blog.apilayer.com/the-5-types-of-api-marketplaces/>).

API Marketplace Example



An example of one of the best API marketplaces is the [APILayer marketplace](https://apilayer.com/) (<https://apilayer.com/>), which consists of a range of highly efficient and secure APIs. To give you a better understanding of the characteristics of API marketplaces, we've listed the key features of the APILayer marketplace below:

- Since thousands of API consumers trust the marketplace due to its reputation for providing highly secure and efficient APIs, it gives API providers access to a global audience.
- The marketplace currently has 90+ APIs in various categories, such as scraping, geo, finance, weather, etc. Thus, API consumers can find a range of high-quality APIs in one place.
- Different types of public APIs in various categories are accepted in the marketplace as long as they meet the marketplace's quality and other standards. For example, APILayer only accepts APIs with detailed documentation with sample codes, response codes, etc., to make the integration easy for developers. Moreover, APIs should be highly secure and scalable to process millions of requests without compromising performance.
- APILayer serves as a proxy for the published APIs.
- Sellers can decide the pricing of their subscription plans with APILayer.
- The marketplace manages crucial processes on behalf of the API providers, such as customer acquisition, key management, memberships, rate limits, and payment collection processes.
- Compared to other popular marketplaces, APILayer charges only 15% of revenue.
- All APIs on the APILayer marketplace come with a free plan, allowing consumers to try and test the features of an API before they subscribe to the paid plan.

Try some of the most popular APIs from APILayer Marketplace:

- [Locate and identify your website visitors by IP Address using ipstack API](https://ipstack.com/) (<https://ipstack.com/>)

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- [Real-Time & Historical World Weather Data API \(https://weatherstack.com/\)](https://weatherstack.com/)
- [Foreign exchange rates \(forex\) and currency conversion JSON API \(https://fixer.io/\)](https://fixer.io/)

What is an API Gateway?

An API gateway is essentially an API management tool that is located in front of an API, server, or a collection of microservices to facilitate API calls or user requests and data delivery. It basically acts as a middleman between the client and a group of backend services in a microservices architecture.

In essence, here is how an API gateway works:

- The gateway takes the client's request.
- It sends the request to a backend service or multiple backend services.
- Next, it collects the required data.
- Finally, the data is delivered as a complete package to the client that initiated the request.

API gateways usually handle the following common tasks associated with the use of an API:

- User authentication and authorization
- Rate limiting
- Traffic routing and management
- API access security management
- Performance Analytics

Examples of API Gateway

Examples of API gateways include Kong, MuleSoft, Apigee, Tyk, and Mashery. There are also cloud-based solutions, such as AWS API Gateway and Azure API Management.

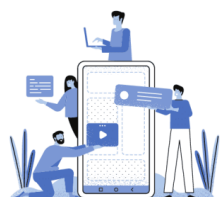
What is the Difference Between API Marketplace and API Gateway?

API marketplace and API gateway are two different API-related concepts with different purposes. API marketplaces are platforms that allow API developers worldwide to publish APIs and distribute and monetize them. They also enable API consumers to discover a range of APIs in one place. On the other hand, an API gateway is an API management tool that coordinates how API calls and requests are processed and how the data is sent to the client app.

Moreover, a public API marketplace is used to manage APIs from several providers. However, an API gateway is usually utilized to manage APIs from a single provider. Additionally, an API marketplace can be used by both API providers and API consumers, whereas an API gateway is a tool designed mainly for API developers.

Learn the difference between [API directories and API marketplaces \(https://blog.apilayer.com/api-marketplace-vs-api-directory/\)](https://blog.apilayer.com/api-marketplace-vs-api-directory/).

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Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

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What is the difference between an API and an API gateway?

An API refers to a software intermediary that enables two applications to interact and talk to each other. An API gateway is used as an entry point for users' requests to a given API.

Is API gateway a web server?

It is an independent proxy server that manages routing, security, user authentication, etc., for a given API.

What are the benefits of API marketplaces?

API marketplace is a platform that enables an API provider to list and sell API/APIs and also supports API management. Popular API marketplaces also offer various other benefits, such as access to a global audience and monetization.

List your APIs on the [APILayer marketplace](https://apilayer.com/provider) and share [them with a global audience today!](https://apilayer.com/provider) <https://apilayer.com/provider>

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