

# How do I return two different Views from the same Action in ASP.NET MVC?

Asked 9 years, 5 months ago   Active 7 years, 2 months ago   Viewed 5k times

I have two views which will both use the same Controller method:

0

```
//WebServiceController.cs

//The actual method is about 40 lines of code. Truncated for readability.
public ActionResult Index()
{
    object i = new List<WebServiceMethod>();
    i = svcService.populateList("Programs");

    return View(i);
}
```

The first view is an HTML page that displays the data in a pretty table output:

```
<% // Index.aspx %>

<table>
<tbody>
<% foreach (var item in Model) { %>

<tr>
    <td>
        <% if (Convert.ToInt32(item.numberRequests) > 0)
        {%>
            <%= Html.ActionLink("Details", "Details", new { programNumber =
item.programNumber })%>
        <%} %>
    </td>
    <td>
        <%= Html.Encode(item.programNumber) %>
    </td>
</tr>

<% } %>
</tbody>
</table>
```

The second view is a quick'n'dirty conversion to JSON so that I can do magical AJAX tricks with the data:

```
<%  
    // AjaxGetServiceData.aspx  
  
    // Convert web service response object into JSON for AJAX.  
    var jss = new System.Web.Script.Serialization.JavaScriptSerializer();  
    Response.Write(jss.Serialize(Model));  
  
%>
```

I'd created a duplicate of the `Index()` method and called it `AjaxGetServiceData()`, but that defeats the purpose of MVC.

### Resolution:

I didn't ask my question very well, as evidenced by a 5-10 minute discussion I just had with a coworker about this very topic. He kept asking me the same question that many users on this page asked me: "How does the controller know which view to return?" I responded, "That's what I'm trying to figure out." I was trying to get the method to return a different view (or Json output) when AJAX was the requester. A string argument in the method was my solution.

This is what I ended up using to get my desired effect:

```
public ActionResult Index(string isJSON = "no")  
{  
    /// ...ALL the code from before...  
  
    if (isJSON == "yes")  
    {  
        return Json(i, JsonRequestBehavior.AllowGet);  
    }  
    else  
    {  
        return View(i);  
    }  
}
```

Then, when I want the JSON version, in my AJAX request I specify the URL as `/MyController/Index/?isJSON=yes`

When I want my pretty table view, I just use `/MyController/`

c#

ajax

asp.net-mvc

edited Mar 31 '13 at 11:22



tereško

54.8k ● 22 ● 88 ● 142

asked Jan 13 '11 at 17:36



Jake

4,299 ● 2 ● 28 ● 44

Are you trying to **combine** these two code fragments into a single HTML page? – [Jeff Sternal](#) Jan 13 '11 at 17:40

- 1 Is there any particular reason your view is generating JSON from the model, rather than your controller? It seems to me like you should be using `return Json(i);` for the JSON output. – [Nathan Taylor](#) Jan 13 '11 at 17:42

No; The AJAX view is used for a whole different area of the site. – [Jake](#) Jan 13 '11 at 17:43

I don't think this is possible :( – [SharePoint Newbie](#) Jan 13 '11 at 17:44

How does the controller know which view to return? – [Jeff Sternal](#) Jan 13 '11 at 17:45

### 3 Answers

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```
public ActionResult Index()
{
    object i = new List<WebServiceMethod>();
    i = svcService.populateList("Programs");

    if (someCondition)
        return View(i);
    else
        return View("AjaxGetServiceData", i); // or whatever you called your view.aspx
}
```

edited Jan 13 '11 at 18:18

answered Jan 13 '11 at 17:40



hunter

56.3k ● 15 ● 105 ● 107

I don't know what the `someCondition` would be. – [Jake](#) Jan 13 '11 at 17:54

- 1 What's the point of instantiating `i` and immediately freeing it by assigning `svcService.populateList()` to it, thus removing any reference to the newly created `List<WebServiceMethod>()`? – [3Dave](#) Jan 13 '11 at 18:06

@Jake ? If you don't then how can you expect anyone else to? @David, don't get your panties in a bunch, I added the model – [hunter](#) Jan 13 '11 at 18:19

@David I guess I truncated too much of the code. The `populateList` line is in a `try`. When `catch` hits, `i` gets populated with an error message.  
– [Jake](#) Jan 13 '11 at 18:33

It sounds like you have two different purposes in which case I think you are going the right way when you talk about different controller methods.

2

Sure, reuse code inside each controller method but if you want a different result, use a different method and keep the controller methods simple.

answered Jan 13 '11 at 18:14



[Chris Simpson](#)

7,236 ● 7 ● 41 ● 64

*"...I was trying to get the method to return a different view (or Json output) when AJAX was the requester..."*

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```
public ActionResult Index()
{
    object i = new List<WebServiceMethod>();
    i = svcService.populateList("Programs");

    if (Request.IsAjaxRequest == "True")
    {
        return Json(i, JsonRequestBehavior.AllowGet);
    }
    else
    {
        return View(i)
    }
}
```

answered Apr 30 '12 at 5:40



[flip](#)

829 ● 6 ● 22