

## Download a file from NodeJS Server using Express

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How can I download a file that is in my server to my machine accessing a page in a nodeJS server?

I'm using the ExpressJS and I've been trying this:

```
app.get('/download', function(req, res){  
  
  var file = fs.readFileSync(__dirname + '/upload-folder/dramaticpenguin.MOV',  
    'binary');  
  
  res.setHeader('Content-Length', file.length);  
  res.write(file, 'binary');  
  res.end();  
});
```

But I can't get the file name and the file type ( or extension ). Can anyone help me with that?

[javascript](#)[node.js](#)[file](#)[express](#)[download](#)

edited Nov 10 '17 at 7:20



[KARTHIKEYAN.A](#)

3,897 3 32 48

asked Sep 2 '11 at 20:18



[Thiago Miranda de Oliveira](#)

1,560 4 14 23

- 
- 7 Just FYI. For using in production, you are better off using node.js behind nginx, and make nginx handle static content. Apparently, it is much better suited for handling that. – [Munim](#) Apr 9 '13 at 8:14

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- 3 The un-votes prove that there is no

that. This question most certainly isn't one though. It matches the guidelines :) – [Assimilator](#) Sep 8 '16 at 2:08

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Possible duplicate of [How to download a file with Node.js \(without using third-party libraries\)?](#) – [Rinsha CP](#) May 23 at 11:42

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The question you point out is different, here OP want to return a file to a client while this other question is about how to download a file using your server Node as a client (e.g a file from a 3rd party). At lesast that's what I understood. – [Eric Burel](#) Jun 7 at 19:11

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## 6 Answers

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### Update

Express [has a helper](#) for this to make life easier.

```
app.get('/download', function(req,
  var file = __dirname + '/upload-
  res.download(file); // Set dispo:
});
```

### Old Answer

As far as your browser is concerned, the file's name is just 'download', so you need to give it more info by using another HTTP header.

```
res.setHeader('Content-disposition
```

You may also want to send a mime-type such as this:

```
res.setHeader('Content-type', 'vid
```

If you want something more in-depth, here ya go.

```
var path = require('path');
var mime = require('mime');
var fs = require('fs');

app.get('/download', function(req,

  var file = __dirname + '/upload-

  var filename = path.basename(file)
  var mimetype = mime.lookup(file)

  res.setHeader('Content-dispositi
```

You can set the header value to whatever you like. In this case, I am using a mime-type library - [node-mime](#), to check what the mime-type of the file is.

Another important thing to note here is that I have changed your code to use a readStream. This is a much better way to do things because using any method with 'Sync' in the name is frowned upon because node is meant to be asynchronous.

edited Oct 23 '17 at 0:40



[holographix](#)

1,506 2 21 38

answered Sep 2 '11 at 20:27



[loganfsmyth](#)

95.4k 16 201 173

- 
- 1 Thanks.. Is there a way to get this information from the fs.readFileSync? I'm using a static file in this example but I'll use this download api for any files, passing the name of it. – [Thiago Miranda de Oliveira](#) Sep 2 '11 at 20:33

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No Problem! Glad to help. – [loganfsmyth](#) Sep 2 '11 at 23:31

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- 2 @Erich.  
[expressjs.com/api.html#res.download](#) – [loganfsmyth](#) Mar 18 '13 at 22:57

- 
- 1 @RJ. If you have a question, create a new one, don't leave a comment. – [loganfsmyth](#) Apr 25 '13 at 14:34

- 
- 7 Express 4.x uses `.set()` instead of `.setHeader()` btw – [Dana Woodman](#) Mar 17 '16 at 19:37
- 

## Use [res.download\(\)](#)

It transfers the file at path as an “attachment”. For instance:

```
var filePath = "/my/file/path/  
param  
var fileName = "report.pdf"; //  
  
res.download(filePath, fileName  
});
```

- Read more about [res.download\(\)](#)

answered Jul 24 '16 at 12:40



[Jossef Harush](#)

14.2k 4 51 67

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What if the data was coming in from a HTTP request instead of a file and we had to let users download the file in a streaming way? – [summerNight](#) Sep 20 '17 at 15:37

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@summerNight - well, that is a different case than the question specified. search for nodejs proxy file download response for best practice – [Jossef Harush](#) Sep 20 '17 at 17:13

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For static files like pdfs, Word docs, etc. just use Express's static function in your config:

```
// Express config  
var app = express().configure(function()  
  this.use('/public', express.sta  
});
```

And then just put all your files inside that 'public' folder, for example:

```
/public/docs/my_word_doc.docx
```

And then a regular old link will allow the user to download it:

```
<a href="/public/docs/my_word_doc.d
```

answered Oct 24 '14 at 16:47



[jordanb](#)

877 11 7

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That works well for assets (although a dedicated serving proxy like nginx is recommended). But for anything that requires secured access, the accepted method is better. Generally speaking for docs and files containing information, I wouldn't recommend

access the files – [MalcolmOcean](#) Dec 11 '15 at 16:07

```
1 e.g. this.use('/topsecret',
  mGetLoggedInUser,
  mEnsureAccess,
  express.static('topsecret'))
...and then each request goes through
mEnsureAccess. Of course, that
means you'll need to be able to figure
out a user's access level just based
on the url of the secure document, or
whatever. – MalcolmOcean Dec 11 '15
at 16:09
```

In Express 4.x, there is an  
attachment() method to Response :

```
res.attachment();
// Content-Disposition: attachment

res.attachment('path/to/logo.png')
// Content-Disposition: attachment
// Content-Type: image/png
```

answered Jun 24 '16 at 10:15



[Benoit Blanchon](#)

7,084 2 38 44

```
'use strict';

var express = require('express');
var fs = require('fs');
var compress = require('compression');
var bodyParser = require('body-parser');

var app = express();
app.set('port', 9999);
app.use(bodyParser.json({ limit: '10mb' }));
app.use(compress());

app.use(function (req, res, next) {
  req.setTimeout(3600000);
  res.header('Access-Control-Allow-Origin', '*');
  res.header('Access-Control-Allow-Headers', 'Origin, X-Requested-With, Content-Type, Accept, ' + Object.keys(req.header).join(' '));
  if (req.method === 'OPTIONS') {
    res.write(':)');
    res.end();
  } else next();
});

function readApp(req, res) {
  var file = req.originalUrl == "/"
    ? filePath = "/home/sony/Documents/stackoverflow.com"
    : fs.existsSync(filePath, function(exists) {
      if (exists) {
        res.writeHead(200, {
          "Content-Type": "application/javascript",
          "Content-Disposition": "inline"
        });
        fs.readFile(filePath, function(err, data) {
          if (err) res.status(500).send(err);
          res.end(data);
        });
      } else {
        res.status(404).send('File not found');
      }
    });
}
```

```

}

app.get('/read-android', function(req, res) {
  var u = {"originalUrl": req.originalUrl};
  readApp(u, res);
});

app.get('/read-ios', function(req, res) {
  var u = {"originalUrl": req.originalUrl};
  readApp(u, res);
});

var server = app.listen(app.get('port'), function() {
  console.log('Express server listening on port ' + app.get('port'));
});

```

answered Apr 14 '17 at 18:47



[KARTHIKEYAN.A](#)

3,897 3 32 48

Here's how I do it:

1. create file
2. send file to client
3. remove file

Code:

```

let fs = require('fs');
let path = require('path');

let myController = (req, res) => {
  let filename = 'myFile.ext';
  let absPath = path.join(__dirname, filename);
  let relPath = path.join('./my_files', filename);

  fs.writeFile(relPath, 'File content', (err) => {
    if (err) {
      console.log(err);
    }
    res.download(absPath, (err) => {
      if (err) {
        console.log(err);
      }
      fs.unlink(relPath, (err) => {
        if (err) {
          console.log(err);
        }
        console.log('FILE [' + filename + '] removed');
      });
    });
  });
};

```

answered Sep 25 '17 at 20:14



[Vedran](#)

487 6 23

Thank you for your interest in this question. Because it has attracted low-quality or spam answers that had to be removed, posting an answer now requires 10 [reputation](#) on this site (the [association bonus does not count](#)).

Would you like to answer one of these [unanswered questions](#) instead?