

How can i implement the NULL Object Design Pattern in a generic form?

Ask Question

Is there a way to implement the null object design pattern in a generic form so that i don't need to implement it for every buisness object.

For me, there are two high level classes you'll need for every business class. One for a single record and another for a list. So i think there should be a way to implement the NULL Object design pattern at a high level and not have to implement it for every class.

Is there a way and how please?

[c#](#) [.net](#) [design-patterns](#) [null-object-pattern](#)

edited Jul 5 '12 at 7:41



[abatishchev](#)

66.7k 66 251 383

asked Mar 26 '10 at 11:40



[Tebo](#)

6,296 10 40 59

2 Answers

In my understanding, the NULL-class does not have to be implemented for every class you have, but rather for every interface you have. In that case, you could surely write some method that generates an empty standard-implementation for any given interface using reflection. However, the desired behavior of a NULL-object may have special cases for certain interfaces, in which case a generic solution would fail.

For instance, you could have an interface that implements `Comparable`. In some cases, you may want the NULL-object to be equal to all other objects, and in other cases, you want it to be smaller than all other objects.

EDIT: The `Comparable` was just an example. The point is, that I do not think it is smart to have a generic NULL-class implementation. You use the NULL-class, so your program can work without having to handle the special cases of `NULL` return values. If you have a default implementation, then you would most certainly have to check for special cases again, and the whole point of the pattern would be missed.

edited Mar 26 '10 at 12:04

answered Mar 26 '10 at 11:46



[Björn Pollex](#)

54.5k 19 149 238

Thank. I would have to learn about the IComparable Interface. Can you help me with a tip? – [Tebo](#) Mar 26 '10 at 12:00

Edited to answer your comment. – [Björn Pollex](#) Mar 26 '10 at 12:05

What if each class that inherits from this generic NULL Object Interface from the inheritance tree deal with their null cases with itself, instead of having a different class to handle the nulls. – [Tebo](#) Mar 26 '10 at 12:18

As discussed already before [here an SO](#), the implementation of a NULL object is domain-dependent, so I don't think there is a general answer to your question. Perhaps you will find a more-or-less generic solution to your kind of business objects. If you provide some examples what you have in mind, you will probably get some better answers.

edited May 23 '17 at 12:11



Community ♦

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answered Mar 26 '10 at 12:06



[Doc Brown](#)

16.5k 6 39 74
