

BitTorrent embarks on web browser Project Maelstrom

December 11 2014, by Nancy Owano



On a mission to make the Internet more open, a BitTorrent browser, "Project Maelstrom," is in invite-only alpha. The BitTorrent blog on Wednesday posted "an invite-only Alpha to help build the distributed web." This is to be a browser designed to power a way for web content to be published, accessed and consumed. BitTorrent, the company based in San Francisco, carries a forceful mission statement, "to build a better Internet. To work with people, industries and nations to create better ways to move information. Better ways for creators to make money. New ways for fans to engage, on their terms. Ways to sustain the stuff we share. The Internet promised us this much. And we promise to make good on it."

As for Project Maelstrom, Chief Executive Officer Eric Klinker blogged, "If we are successful, we believe this project has the potential to help address some of the most vexing problems facing the Internet today. How can we keep the Internet open? How can we keep access to the Internet neutral? How can we better ensure our private data is not misused by large companies? How can we help the Internet scale efficiently for [content](#)?"

The browser uses peer-to-peer [technology](#) and hands control over to users, not just large corporations, said The Next Web on Wednesday. "Distributed technology is perfect for this, as it requires the crowd to work together to host content so no individual or entity can take control of the web," said Owen Williams. According to the BitTorrent blog, the project team has in mind "Truly an Internet powered by people, one that lowers barriers and denies gatekeepers their grip on our future."

Janko Roettgers of Gigaom said that "Project Maelstrom will serve up web pages directly from its users' computers, much in the same way that BitTorrent's file sharing technology distributes files without the need for a central [server](#)."

Nathan Ingraham in The Verge explained how this would work: "In this vision, web publishers could publish, [distribute](#), and update an entire website through the BitTorrent protocol, and others visiting the page would automatically help share the site's content, just as anyone downloading a file over BitTorrent would also start sharing the file with other peers." Ingraham quoted CEO Klinker discussing the value of this move: "There'd be fewer centralized servers to get in the way of you and your data or you and the content you're interested in—certainly less barriers between you publishing content, as well."

The browser initiative hopes to change the way the [web](#) works and bring a more distributed [internet](#) than ever before. Nonetheless, the initiative is

still in an early stage, said Ingraham in The Verge, and there are design issues still to be worked out. He added, "the company is hard at work at building out its set of developer tools—by the time the beta launches sometime next year, BitTorrent will have an SDK-like tool that'll make publishing and sharing content much easier."

More information: blog.bittorrent.com/2014/12/10...ernet-we-build-next/

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