

Remember Real Player? Now it wants to help you ID actors

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If you remember being online in the late 1990s, then you recall when playing a video in those pre-YouTube days, you had to choose between Real Player or the competing Windows Media Player.

Cut to today, and Real, which has been relatively quiet over the last decade, is back with what it says is its latest [video](#) viewing innovation: a facial recognition tool that can identify well-known people who appear in a video.

This time around, the tool is via an [extension](#) for the Chrome browser, and a new updated media player, Real 20/20. The extension is available for Windows and Apple computers, but the player is Windows only.

The extension, "StarSearch by Real," identifies celebrities streaming on YouTube and Netflix.

Who needs this, when clips are already clearly defined with names and cast?

Browser extensions have become popular as an alternative to running apps, and having the software on at all times, mostly dealing with e-commerce. One of the most popular, Honey, was recently sold to PayPal for \$4 billion.

Glaser put the features into a chrome extension instead of an external player, because he knew it would be an easier sell for consumers to try. "Our goal is not to fight City Hall," he says.

"They click on because someone is in it, but how do they find other

videos with them as well?" asks Dan Rayburn, an analyst with Frost & Sullivan. "On YouTube, if you watch a clip that may feature your favorite actor in it, but when you're done with the clip, they may not give me other suggestions to watch that actor or others in the clip in other videos. What Star Search is saying, if you want to find a specific person, here's a way to easily find it."

Beyond the extension, Real's new RealPlayer 20/20 offers the [facial recognition](#) and the ability to download YouTube videos. It also provides media management, a way for people to organize their home videos. The player is free, and available only to Windows consumers.

How will Real make money from the new product? By bringing attention to other Real properties, like Napster, the music subscription service that used to be known as Rhapsody, or Real's gaming services.

"If we make it really popular, it will become a [media](#) platform," and attractive to advertisers, he says.

Rayburn says Glaser deserves credit for being a pioneer in the distribution of audio and video on the Internet.

"He was a great innovator," he says. "How many other companies can you look at from 25 years ago that changed their business strategy and has the same CEO? You've got to give him credit for what he's accomplished."

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