Our plans for PeerTube v3: progressive fundraising, live streaming coming next fall

Today, we are publishing the roadmap for the next six months of PeerTube’s development. With your help, we want to continue improving on this software that allows individuals, structures and collectives to emancipate from YouTube’s chokehold and regain power over how their videos are hosted.

Just like all the other information regarding PeerTube, this article is directly published in both French and English so that you can share it beyond the language barrier, and so that French speakers are not the only ones promoting, supporting and funding software that has been translated into 16 languages, and is used all around the world.

Creating the world after with PeerTube

From YouTube channels to Facebook lives, as well as Amazon-Twitch, Instagram, Snapchat and Tiktok videos, the web giants’ tools are made with the same political ideology in mind: surveillance capitalism. Their goal is simple: get your attention in to study your behaviors, file them and improve their targeted advertising. Their method is effective: offering as much software comfort and immediate gratification as possible, in order to make you abandon your control over your tool, so that they can invade and fill your available human brain time.

As such, these tools are perfectly adapted for people who have no issue with a society based on over-consumption, and who trust multi-billionaire companies (and therefore the
« market ») to decide what will or will not be shown on our screens (like with Tiktok, which moderates the videos and accounts of users they deem too ugly, fat or poor).

At Framasoft, we’re on the other side, the one that wants to see a contribution-based society arise.

Connected even when isolated. Illustration CC-By-SA association LILA

The pandemic we are currently going through has been a good opportunity for us to question what we are doing and what we want to do : we thought about our role in this vaunted « world after ». More than ever, we believe that our place is close to those people who make efforts and contribute to a more human, more resilient and more respectful society. And we believe that PeerTube is a tool that can be of use to the people who defend this vision of society.

Because it is free and federated, and as such efforts have to be made to share power and responsibilities, because it democratizes online video hosting, because it empowers
academies and allows previously marginalized communities to show themselves and exist… We are convinced that PeerTube is a tool that we must strengthen so that it can even better serve those who participate in this contribution society.

QueerMotion is a French-speaking PeerTube instance hosted by and for queer creators.

The « Roadmap » shows up on JoinPeertube.org

We just released a roadmap describing our intentions for the next six months of PeerTube’s development, which will lead to its third version, a « v3 ». These six months will be split between 4 steps, and each step will focus on a specific part of PeerTube. The idea behind this v3 really is to strengthen
what’s already there, based on the feedback we got from instance hosters, video creators and viewers.

We are aware that searching for videos on a PeerTube instance can be frustrating for viewers who just want to get access to content without having to wonder who’s federated with who. For the first step of this roadmap, we will create a globalized video index to make it easier to search for content throughout the whole federation. This index will be made so that it can be easily reproduced and configured so that anyone can offer their own index, with its own eligibility rules. We hope to see indexes with no adult content, others with only content from instances dedicated to videogames, and so on.
If each version of PeerTube has brought its share of moderation tools, we are aware that those features are essential for the teams that administer instances, manage their federation bubble and moderate the content hosted there. For the 2nd step of development, we will dedicate a month to developing and improving moderation tools. From reports monitoring to fighting spam, without forgetting moderation history: our list is already quite full and we will prioritize it depending on the feedback we got.
During the third step of the roadmap, we want to improve on the **ergonomy and display of Peertube’s video playlists**. The goal is to allow video creators to more easily embed playlists into their websites as well as their social media threads.

In addition, we want to make it easier to contribute to Peertube’s code. To this end, we will **improve the plugins system** that allows for the addition of new features to Peertube without having to access the code itself. We want to create a video annotation tool by ourselves. This will allow us to better understand how to facilitate and highlight the work made by those who contribute to Peertube by creating plugins.

**PeerTube v3 : going live !**

The 4th and final step of this roadmap will be dedicated to the development of a new, highly anticipated feature: **live peer-to-peer video streaming**. We ran some tests, we know that this is a big undertaking, but we are confident that we can do it.
But be careful, with a single full-time developer on this project, we will not program the « twitch-killer » that’s as fun as « insta lives » in just two months. If you were expecting live chat modules, funny animated gifs when Karen42 makes a donation or hearts and thumbs ups popping up all over your screen, you’re going to be very disappointed!

It is now a matter of laying the foundations for live peer-to-peer streaming. By using the « HLS » video player implemented in PeerTube version 1.3, we believe we can have live streaming with one minute of difference (or 30 seconds in optimal cases) between the video creator and the viewers. In return for this slight delay, the stream load will be able to be shared between all the devices that will be displaying the stream.

As such, this first implementation of PeerTube live streaming will be minimalist, and will probably require some effort (such as using the free software OBS to capture your audio and video streams). Nevertheless, this would be the beginning of a revolutionary tool : no need for Amazon-Twitch’s huge datacenters to stream live videos to a large amount of people, peer-to-peer will let us democratize live stream hosting!
On top of those 4 steps of development, all throughout those six months, we intend to do in-depth work regarding PeerTube’s user experience. We have chosen not to announce anything specific on this subject, to let those who will work on these matters all the freedom they need to improve PeerTube in the way they deem the most relevant.

Progressive fundraising for no-condition development

Before the pandemic, we considered starting a crowdfunding to get the € 60,000 we need for those 6 months of work dedicated to PeerTube v3. Today, as France is getting out of quarantine and as we can barely fathom the awful human and material consequences this crisis will have for many people, this does not seem appropriate to us.

However, PeerTube v3 seems even more important to us when we imagine a world where we might need to stay at home, broadcast live classes and conferences remotely, or stream an event live. We feel like we need to develop it, that we have to. Imposing a condition stating « if we do not get our 60,000€, then there will not be a v3 » here, would be a lie, marketing manipulation : this is not the kind of relation we want to maintain with you.
Sepia, PeerTube’s mascot, as they’re watching a « Can a digital tool be apolitical? » debate video (allegory) CC-By David Revoy, re-framed by us.

Nevertheless, we will still need to find those 60,000€. Here at Framasoft, we commit to developing PeerTube v3, even if we need to take money from the donations made to the association to support all the projects we undertake, and therefore from our 2020 budget.

At the same time, we have placed a donation button dedicated to the PeerTube project on the roadmap’s page, as well as a bar indicating where we are regarding the funds for this project. This is far less exciting than the stretch goals and the countdown of traditional crowdfundings, where people are incited to donate before a deadline, so that they do not forget and move on to something else...

Yet this is also much closer to our reality: we will make improvements, because we believe that this tool is a necessary one. This is why we are willing to take the risk to put a bad strain on our 2020 budget. We know that we can trust you to contribute to funding PeerTube if you share our enthusiasm and if you have the means for it.
Study CC-By David Revoy. We thank him dearly for illustrating this roadmap.
Click to find the final original drawings.

Get further away from marketing, get closer to you

Off we go towards six months of development. On the Framablog, we will share our progress on the various steps of development as well as the finances when we will publish PeerTube’s v3, planned for November 2020. Until then, if you want to follow each step of the development, you can subscribe to the PeerTube newsletter (sent in French and in English), whose information is archived on the news page on JoinPeertube.org, and relayed by JoinPeertube’s Mastodon and Twitter accounts.

« Another » world cannot be built using surveillance
Making it easier to access content, sharing power and responsibilities, opening up to contributions, generalizing live broadcasting thanks to peer-to-peer… PeerTube’s v3 aims to consolidate it as an alternative to Google-Youtube and Facebook-Live that is more and more convivial.

A case of force majeure has encouraged us to go even further away from traditional marketing ploys regarding fundraising: in concrete terms, our 2020 budget is in your hands. More than ever, we will need your help to actively follow and share this roadmap, make it known around you and outside of the French-speaking world.

In the end, we have decided to believe in PeerTube and to believe in you.

To go further

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