PeerTube v5: the result of 5 years’ handcrafting

Late 2017, we announced our desire to create a free, decentralised and federated alternative to YouTube.

Five years later, we are releasing PeerTube v5, a tool used by hundreds of thousands people on a thousand interconnected platforms to share over 850,000 videos.

« Collectivise Internet / Convivialise Internet »
Our new 3-year roadmap is funded by your donations.

You will find a short presentation of this roadmap on our Support Framasoft website.

➡️ Read all blogposts of this campaign (oct. – déc. 2022, mostly in French)

Illustration CC BY David Revoy
Five years of shaping PeerTube by hand

For the past 5 years, our only developer dedicated to PeerTube (and to other tasks in Framasoft) has released one new major version per year:

- PeerTube v1 (Oct. 2018) allows you to create a video platform with federation, peer-to-peer streaming, redundancy, search tools and multilingual interface.
- PeerTube v2 (Nov 2019) brings notifications, playlists and plugins.
- PeerTube v3 (Jan. 2021) adds federated search, live and peer-to-peer streaming.
- PeerTube v4 (Dec. 2021) allows to customise each platform’s homepage, to sort and filter displayed videos, and to manage them more easily.

Throughout these years, this developer has taken care to improve moderation and federation tools, the video player, the interface, the code and the accessibility and also to fix bugs while answering community questions and needs.

PeerTube ecosytem

PeerTube is an artisanal work, in the noble sense of the word. It is a handcrafted tool that now serves a large alternative ecosystem for online video.

- SepiaSearch, a Search Engine of PeerTube content
- Communication tools:
  - a support forum
  - a newsletter (also published on JoinPeerTube)
  - a Twitter account
  - a Mastodon account
  - a monitoring on reddit
- 2 crowdfundings to avoid PeerTube to be only financed by donations from French speaking people
- Let’s Improve PeerTube, a website to suggest or vote for ideas or improvements

Once again, we would like to remind you that our small non-profit creates and
maintains all this with only one developer on the project, helped by:

- **Framasoft employees and volunteers** for communication, strategy, administration;
- **PeerTube community** which regularly contributes to code, plugins, translations, suggestions, sharing and donations (thanks and lots of datalove to you <3);
- **Service providers** in specialized areas (UX or UI design, accessibility, creation of mobile applications, etc.).

However PeerTube is only one of dozens of projects we maintain at Framasoft, even though it is one of the largest.

Like every thing we do, **PeerTube is mainly funded by your donations** (and donations from foundations like NLnet).

Support PeerTube by donating to Framasoft

**A year of work to make PeerTube easier to use**

Since the beginning of 2022, we have been working on PeerTube to make it easier and easier to use for videomakers and their communities.

In February, version 4.1 brings several expected improvements: of the interface, of the video player on mobile devices, of the plugin system, of the search filters or of the instance customization.

In June, version 4.2 introduces two major new features: the Studio, for light video editing directly from PeerTube; and replay publication for « Twitch-like » live streams. Other new features include detailed video statistics, latency management for live streaming and subtitle editing directly from the interface.

In September, with version 4.3, you can now automate video import from a YouTube (or Vimeo) channel. We have also completely reworked the interface for creating a PeerTube account and improved the live streams display on external website.
PeerTube Studio

PeerTube v5: improving and securing to empower yourself better

It’s now December 2022, and **PeerTube v5 is now available**! This version enhances security in several ways.

The file system has been redesigned to **secure internal and private videos**. This was a fairly complex work that lays a basis for some much asked future features.

Another very emancipating technical improvement is the **possibility of storing live streams in the cloud**, with « object storage » system. This means that PeerTube platforms hosted on a server with limited disk storage and bandwidth are no longer limited in their ability to offer live streams.

It is now possible to **use two-factor authentication** to connect to a PeerTube platform. We use the OTP (One Time Password) method which allows, via an external application, to generate a unique code to validate the connection to its account.
This new version also comes with a lot of **bug fixes and improvements**. For example, we have added more possibilities to the API, so that PeerTube contributors can develop even more powerful plugins.

Also, the PeerTube interface has received many changes. For example, in the **My Videos** menu now displays channels, and a mention of the playlist in which a video has been added to.

Finally, we have now a **detailed OpenTelemetry documentation** (feature released in version 4.2) which brings advanced statistics and observability.

**Support, intern, technical challenges and questions on our horizon**

Right now, we only have a clear vision for the near future of PeerTube.
This year again, we have supported John Livingston’s work on **PeerTube Live Chat plugin**, and we can announce that the easy plugin set-up is coming very soon!

In early 2023, we plan to work on a rather technical but very exciting feature, which should **reduce the servers’ load** and thus to lower the power needed to create a PeerTube platform: we’ll tell you more as soon as we’ve made progress.

Also in 2023, we will **welcome a developer intern**. We want more and more people to become familiar with PeerTube core code. We want to experiment with temporarily expanding the team working on it.
Finally, the day after this article is published, we will answer all your questions on reddit. Join us on December 14th at 4pm (CEST) on r/opensource for an AMA (Ask Me Anything) about PeerTube and Framasoft!

Support PeerTube by donating to Framasoft

Share your ideas for PeerTube v6!

These few points aside... we have no idea what the PeerTube roadmap will be in 2023. We need you to help us define it!

Please go to Let’s Improve PeerTube and publish your ideas (and vote for the ones you’re excited about). We want to know what the PeerTube community needs and wants, especially the « non-geek » audience who doesn’t care about words like « server » or « instance » and just want to watch and share videos.

More than 90 ideas have been already published on Let’s improve Peertube

In early 2023, we will go through the most popular suggestions and select those
that fit our vision for PeerTube and our development capabilities, in order to build the PeerTube v6 roadmap.

So it’s up to you to tell us what future you want for PeerTube!

An international tool...

This year, we were lucky enough to have two development contracts that helped us to fund some of our work on PeerTube.

The French Ministry of Education funded the Studio (a tool for editing videos) to be implemented on its platform apps.education.fr (a free-libre service platform provided by the Ministry to all teachers and staff).

Howlround, a Boston-based open platform for theatremakers worldwide, funded detailed video and live stats, but also replay feature for permanent lives.

Finally, we received an exceptional grant from the Dutch foundation NLnet to work on PeerTube v5.

...funded by French-speaking donations

Put together, these amounts represent a small half of our annual budget dedicated to PeerTube (which we estimate at 70 000 €). The other part comes from Framasoft’s budget, i.e. from the donations that our non profit receives from its mainly French-speaking community. To us, it seems almost unfair that it is mainly French speakers who finance a tool that has a truly international scope...

But here’s the thing: we’re already not very good at « selling ourselves », promoting our work and getting donations, so if we have to do international marketing, we’re not out of the woods!

We don’t have a marketing department: we only have you.

So we need your help. Spread the word about our donation campaign around you, especially outside the French-speaking world.

Do not hesitate to share the address support.joinpeertube.org around you, on
your PeerTube platforms, in your communities that benefit from this alternative.

At the time of publishing, we are still missing 115 000 € to finance our yearly budget and make everything we want to do in 2023 happen.

If you can (especially in these hard times) and if you want to, thanks for supporting our non-profit and our actions.

[Support Framasoft]