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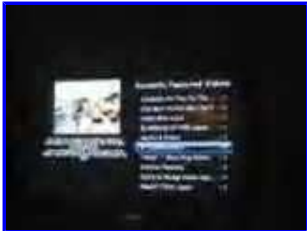
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Written by [Janko Roettgers](#)

Posted Tuesday, May 22, 2007 at 2:17 PM PT

Tribler Combines YouTube, BitTorrent, and Last.fm

Ever wondered why the downloads charts of your average Torrent tracker site are so remarkably similar to box office and DVD sales? Sure, everyone likes Spidey. But the truth is that it's awfully hard to find niche content on P2P networks.



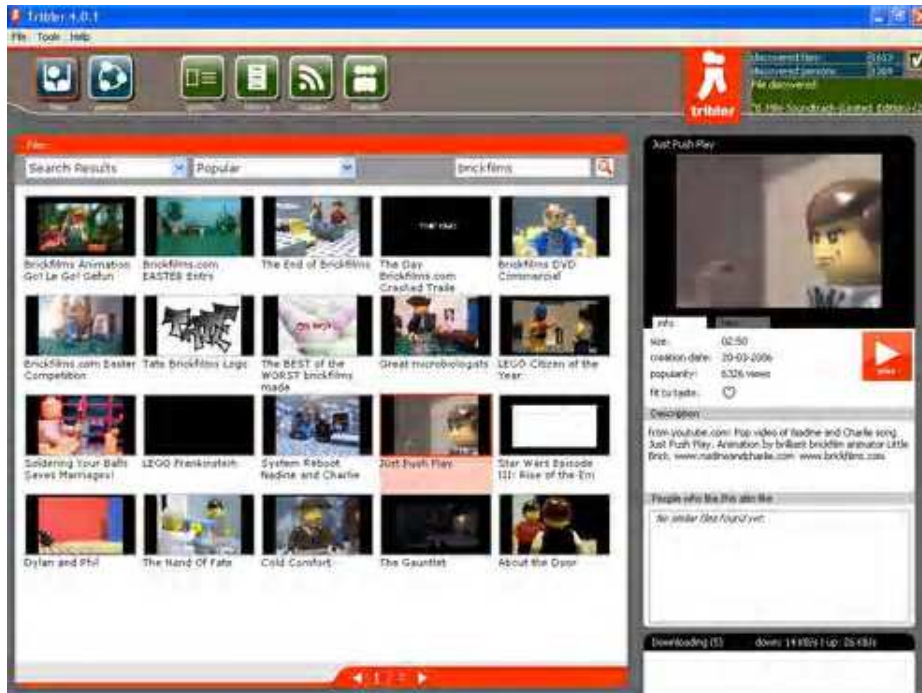
The Dutch BitTorrent client [Tribler](#) aims to solve this problem with Last.fm-style personalization. Tribler suggests new media based on your downloading history. Version 4.0 of the client got released this week. It combines collaborative filters with YouTube browsing — features that have caught the eye of European public broadcasters.

Tribler is a joint research project of the [Delft University of Technology](#) and the [VU](#) University Amsterdam. It's part of a multi-year research program called I-Share that is exploring “sharing mechanisms in virtual

communities.” I-Share received a whopping 6 million Euros (about \$8 million) in funding by the Dutch government. Right now 20 scientists are working on Tribler alone.

So what is all this money spent on? Tribler is essentially a BitTorrent client that can be used for generic Torrent downloads. At the same time, it uses P2P to discover other clients and exchange metadata about downloaded files.

Tribler makes use of this data to generate recommendations, pretty much the same way Last.fm does. You downloaded the same movie as two other people? There’s a good chance that you’ll also like other downloads these folks have in common. The longer a client is connected, the more files and users it is able to discover, and your recommendations get better with every download as well.



The new version of Tribler also incorporates YouTube. Users can search for YouTube clips and watch them with an integrated video viewer. There’s no real connection between YouTube and the social BitTorrent experience yet. So why integrate YouTube in the first place? Tribler team member Freek Zindel gave me this answer:

“With Tribler we want to enable our users to share and interact with content from any source. In the near future we plan to open the Peer to Peer transport layer to content that was previously only available from central servers. This would bring a new level of redundancy, availability and scalability to user generated content.”

A P2P infrastructure for user-generated content that also helps with content discovery? That combination has caught the interest of multiple European broadcasters. Tribler is currently gearing up for a test that is going to involve the video on demand services of [Netherlands Public Broadcasting](#). The team is also in talks with other European public television networks.

Of course Tribler faces the same problems as every other P2P outlet with deals like this. The reality of file sharing isn’t always pretty — or even legal, for that matter. Tribler 4.0 still discovers tons of DVD rips, alongside with porn, warez and TV shows. But it does recommend a fair amount of long tail content, including some Creative Commons-licensed downloads. Zindel doesn’t seem to be too concerned about these issues, saying Tribler’s status as a non-profit organization frees it from “chasing profits.”

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4. Hi Om,

Excellent article, I will try out this client. You might also want to check out <http://divinityMetrics.com> who are the providers of “Torrent’s Box Office Charts” to major music companies, Hollywood studios and television companies.

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