Bram Cohen
Biography of an influential software engineer

The latest season of HBO's Game Of Thrones was pirated over 1 billion times. 9.12% of these views were from torrents. That's almost a hundred million torrents for a single season of a tv show. Torrenting has allowed myself and countless others to download music, movies, tv shows, games and even tools used to help with college assignments by 'sharing' the files with strangers on the internet. The concept of torrenting was created in 2001 by Bram Cohen.

Bram was born in New York City in 1975. He claims he learned BASIC at the age of 5 using his family's Timex Sinclair computer. Bram's early interest in computers can be accredited to his father who was a computer scientist and teacher. Bram attended University at Buffalo, New York but dropped out to work for several dot com companies in the late 1990s. The last company he worked in this period was MojoNation, which allowed people to break up confidential files into encrypted packages and distribute them to other computers running the same software. If you wanted to download a copy of the original file, you would have to download it simultaneously from many computers. Bram recognised that the concept was perfect for a file sharing program.

Bram left MojoNation in April 2001 to work on BitTorrent. He released the first later that year on July 2nd. It wasn't until 2004 that the company BitTorrent Inc. was co-founded by Bram, his brother Ross and business partner Ashwin Navin.

You could be easily forgiven if you assumed that the man behind BitTorrent is an advocate for piracy. BitTorrent is not a piracy tool. It is a technology used for increasing the speed of sharing large files over the internet. BitTorrent does not host any illegal files that can be downloaded, however,

it does enable others use the technology to share their files. The BitTorrent company has never been sued by any company for copyright infringement. In fact, it actually has been in active discussion with the Motion Picture Association Of America and Recording Industry Association Of America since 2005, ironically, to reduce the impact of torrenting in their respective industries.

BitTorrent has been called the 'most important file sharing technology ever invented' and I agree fully with this claim. It revolutionised how data is shared around the world and in my own opinion, is responsible for enabling people who could not afford expensive tools such as
photoshop the ability to use the software which could have possibly led them into careers as graphic designers who then could afford to pay for the software when they became professional. It could be considered as an extended trial run for software.

Bram has recently started a new company called Chia Network that will launch a cryptocurrency.
A bitcoin transaction wastes as much electricity as it takes to power an American home for a week. Bram's cryptocurrency will be based on proofs of time and storage instead of Bitcoin's proofs of work to combat the bitcoin miners with cheapest access to electricity exerting outsized influence. In a market that is quickly becoming saturated with over 1172 different cryptocurrencies, it will be interesting to see if Bram's coin can have the same influence on the world as his file sharing technology BitTorrent has.

Ref
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