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## 3Crowd Comes Out Of Stealth, Reveals Its Plan To Disrupt The CDN Market

by **Jason Kincaid** on February 2, 2010

**3Crowd**, the new startup from BitGravity co-founder Barrett Lyon, is ready for its close-up. Until now little was known about the company, other than that its **backers** include Jay Adelson, Kevin Rose, Storm Ventures, and Greenwich Technology Associates. Now the company is talking: 3Crowd is looking to change the way people use content delivery networks, with a goal of making it both cheaper and easier to use these CDNs by making them part of a unified 'cloud'. At least, that's the first thing 3Crowd is hoping to do — the company's future goals are even more ambitious.

3Crowd's first product is setting out to help users manage their content across multiple CDNs at the same time, using rule sets to determine which CDNs should be tapped depending on variables like the user's location and which content they're accessing. The product also looks to make it easy to actually deploy your content to these CDNs — you have to create the account with the CDN, but 3Crowd can then walk you through a wizard to get things going. Lyon says that this changes the process from one that would typically require a programmer to one that's managed through a clickable wizard.

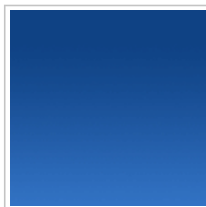
So what's the benefit from being able to easily spread your content across multiple CDNs? For one, you aren't dealing with a single point of failure. But the rules-based platform also gives you more flexibility as to how you'd like to distribute your content. If you found a CDN based in the United States that was cheaper than the alternatives, you could use that while still maintaining your content on a premium CDN serving users abroad. You could also set up the system to have a secondary CDN kick in if your traffic hit a certain threshold. The system also makes it easy to jump between CDNs — find a better deal on one, and you can jump to it with fewer headaches than you would have had otherwise.

As the co-founder of the CDN BitGravity, Lyon obviously has experience in this area. He says that one of the issues with content delivery networks is that they can become prohibitively expensive for successful sites. He explains that as your site grows, CDNs may be able to help you quickly serve your content to all of your new fans, but there's a good chance your income isn't scaling as quickly as your CDN costs are. 3Crowd ultimately hopes to make it much cheaper to achieve massive distribution.

There are still plenty of unknowns, though. 3Crowd is still in private beta and will remain so for the next few weeks, and Lyon didn't want to get into the service's pricing (he says it will be "very affordable"). Lyon also promises that there's much more to 3Crowd's vision, though he wouldn't get into the details yet.

My hunch is that the company will eventually look to make switching between CDNs a near real-time affair — imagine being able to dynamically swap between CDNs based on which one is cheapest at a given moment (this would be especially powerful if you could target CDNs during traffic drop-offs, when bandwidth might be cheaper, though that assumes the CDNs will cooperate).

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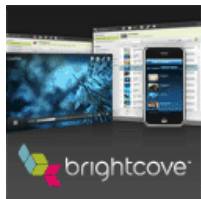
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