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[SearchTogether Plug-In for IE7 - Collaborative Search Prototype](#)

From Microsoft Research



Search

At the intersection between search (but not limited at Live Search) and Windows Live Messenger, SearchTogether is designed to make searching the web no longer an individual task. Developed as a plug-in for Internet Explorer 7, SearchTogether's functionality enables groups of users to perform searches and to share results via common query sessions. This is where Windows Live Messenger comes in. All the people in the friends list of a user of the instant messaging client can be invited to collaborate through [SearchTogether](#). (via [ActiveWin](#))"SearchTogether is part of a larger project about collaborative search. We've done surveys and interviews to learn more about situations in which people are collaborating on Web search, what types of tasks drive them to do this, and what their current practices are," revealed Meredith Ringel Morris, the Microsoft researcher leading the project. Microsoft Research's Adaptive Systems and Interaction is the group responsible for developing the SearchTogether project. What Microsoft is essentially aiming to do with the IE7 plug-in is to deliver a new search interface which can handle multiple users simultaneously, albeit not on the same machine. "We've been developing and testing prototypes for a bunch of those scenarios, and SearchTogether is for the scenario we call remote collaboration, where each participant has access to a computer," Morris added. All that end users will need is [Internet Explorer 7](#), a Windows Live ID and a group of friends in [Windows Live Messenger](#), and they are all set to go with the plug-in. SearchTogether is not focused exclusively on Live Search, also offering the possibility for users to enter queries in Google or Yahoo, and to perform standard, split and even multi-engine searches. "You could imagine a group of three people," Morris explained, "and two of us are online at the same time. We have a chat, an IM, about the task, and later, the third person logs in. It's nice that the chat transcript is preserved along with the search results, because when the third person logs in, he or she can catch up on what discussions other people in the group already have had. The third person comes up to speed and keeps working."Microsoft SearchTogether Beta is available for download [here](#).