

AARON SWARTZ



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1. Biography

2. Activism

3. Trial

4. Legacy



OUTLINE



INTRODUCTION

- co-founder of Reddit
- American computer programmer, entrepreneur, and internet "hacktivist"
- defining a "hacktivist"



EARLY LIFE

- born in Illinois (1986)
- early exposure to tech
- first website created at 13 (theinfo.org)
- by 14, working group authoring RSS web syndication specification
- Stanford

ENTREPRENEURSHIP

- founder of "Infogami"

- 2005, started Reddit code

- by 2016, Reddit was booming

- passionate about civic awareness + activism



WATCHDOG.net



WATCHDOG

- goal to improve transparency and provide a platform for mobilisation
- launched in 2008
- "a hub, connecting citizens, activists, organisations, and politicians"
- today, contributed to and maintained by over a million activists

- originally, a task force of activists
- aimed at stopping two Congress bills (CISPA, SOPA)
- today, over two million members
- lobbying and promotion of civil liberties
- in 2010, requested Freedom of Information Act about the treatment of Chelsea Manning (prior to elections)



**DEMAND
PROGRESS**

**DEMAND
PROGRESS**

ACTIVISM

- his view on activism
- put forward the idea of cooperation between movements and groups of professionals
- flexible and tactical conception of activism
- responded to well by SOPA/CISPA protesters



ARREST

- downloaded a large number of JSTOR files (cca. 3,5 million)
- caught on camera
- arrested and charged in 2011
- rejected 6-month settlement sentence in favour of going to trial



TRIAL

- 13-count indictment
(wire fraud, computer fraud etc.)
- highly criticised prosecution
- "very fragile - in enormous pain"
- strip searches, solitary confinement,
threat of conviction





DEATH AND RESPONSE

- death by suicide at 26
- Internet lit up
- Sir Tim Berners-Lee: *"We are one down. We have lost a child."*
- anonymous attack on State Department (*"Aaron, this is for you."*)
- Rep. Zoe Lofgren, Sen Ron Wyden: "Aaron's Law"



LEGACY

- hackatons, gatherings, furthering of activism
- research on pancreatic cancer; thanks to access
- influence on digital culture

THANK YOU!

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