

# Aaron Swartz: His Life, Work, and Legacy

## Honoring Aaron Swartz Day

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# Introduction

- Aaron Swartz was an influential programmer, entrepreneur, and digital rights activist.
- Known for his contributions to internet freedom and open access.



## Early Life and Prodigy Status

- Born: November 8, 1986, Chicago, Illinois.
- At age 14, co-authored RSS 1.0, a web format for content distribution.



# Key Technical Contributions

- **Creative Commons:** Developed frameworks for sharing creative works.
- **Reddit:** Co-founded one of the internet's most popular news sites.
- **Markdown:** Contributed to the creation of this digital publishing format.
- **web.py:** Created a lightweight web framework.

# Activism and Advocacy

- **Watchdog.net:** Created to promote political transparency.
- **Demand Progress:** Fought against internet censorship, including SOPA/PIPA.
- Played a central role in mobilizing millions to protect internet freedom.

# Open Access Movement

- **Guerilla Open Access Manifesto:** Called for open access to research.
- Downloaded millions of JSTOR articles to make knowledge public.
- Faced severe legal consequences, highlighting restrictive academic publishing.

# Legacy

- **Open Access Impact:** Inspired the movement for accessible academic research.
- **Digital Rights Activism:** Continues to influence digital rights advocates.
- **Posthumous Recognition:** Inducted into the Internet Hall of Fame in 2013.



# Aaron Swartz Day

- Purpose: Aaron Swartz Day is an annual event dedicated to celebrating Aaron's life, his contributions to technology and activism, and his enduring legacy.
- Origins: Founded in 2013 by Aaron's supporters and friends, the day brings people together to discuss open access, digital rights, and activism.
- Activities: Events include talks, hackathons, and workshops focused on issues Aaron cared about:
  - Internet freedom and transparency
  - Open access to information
  - Digital rights and privacy



# Summary

- Aaron Swartz's work is a reminder of the importance of a free and open internet.
- Let's continue advocating for transparency, accountability, and access to information.
- Together, we can keep Aaron's vision for the internet alive.