

A Memorial Resolution Honoring Aaron Swartz

Whereas the American Library Association (ALA) and the broader community of those who support open access to published materials lost a valued colleague on January 11, 2013, with the tragic death of 26-year-old Aaron Swartz;

Whereas Aaron Swartz was a tireless and outspoken advocate of intellectual freedom and the rights of individuals to freely access information;

Whereas he was a team member of Creative Commons, a group that simplifies access to free copyright licenses for authors;

Whereas Aaron Swartz founded the organization Demand Progress, which campaigned against the "Stop Online Piracy Act" (SOPA) and the Protect IP Act, thus contributing to the failure of the legislation;

Whereas the international library community lost a leader who was the chief architect of Open Library.org – an online project that fostered collaboration with librarians and intended to "...build the world's greatest library, then put it up on the Internet free for all to use..." according to Swartz in a 2007 announcement of the project;

Whereas Aaron Swartz was a member of a group that co-authored RSS 1.0 (also known as Really Simple Syndication) – a widely used Internet-based tool that enables publishers and users the ability to syndicate and/or manage digital data from multiple source points;

Whereas he helped to create Reddit, Inc – a social news and entertainment site which holds the distinction of being the first social media site to be used by a sitting United States President (President Barack Obama) to engage with voters in a live online question and answer session;

Whereas Aaron Swartz was dedicated to the exploration and understanding of ethics, political action, and how to apply knowledge to improving people's lives, as demonstrated by his 2010-2011 tenure as a fellow at the Harvard University Edmond J. Safra Center for Ethics ;

Whereas Aaron Swartz was loved and respected by his family, friends, co-workers, and many individuals, both in the United States and around the world; and

Whereas his true legacy lies in the profound effect that he had on countless individuals and institutions to engage in critical conversations regarding the importance of open access and the dissolving of internet censorship; now therefore, be it

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Resolved, that the American Library Association (ALA) on behalf of its members;

1. recognizes the significant contributions of Aaron Swartz over the course of his distinguished career and mourns his death;
2. expresses its sincere sympathy to his family, loved ones, and colleagues throughout the country, and his many friends and admirers both within and outside of the library community; and
3. encourages libraries and librarians to remain vigilant in protecting and extending the public domain, and to promoting and developing new means of providing access to and openly disseminating information.

Adopted by the Council of the American Library Association
Tuesday, January 29, 2013
In Seattle, Washington



Keith Michael Fiels
ALA Executive Director and Secretary of the ALA Council