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HARVARD, MIT

In Aaron Swartz' memory, hackathons to be held across globe, including at MIT, next month

Posted by Matt Rocheleau October 21, 2013 12:31 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Town Correspondent

In memory of the late Internet activist Aaron Swartz, hackathons will be held simultaneously at the MIT Media Lab and at venues in several other major cities across the globe during the second weekend in November.

Swartz, 26, hanged himself in January, as he faced years in prison for federal felony computer charges. Those charges were filed about two years before his death, when MIT police arrested him – he was a fellow at Harvard at the time – for breaking into a closet at the school where he used a laptop to download millions of academic journal articles.

His death shocked and saddened many Internet activists, while some blamed his death on MIT and prosecutors. Numerous virtual- and real-world memorials, rallies and hackathons have been held in Swartz honor, including protests calling for more humane prosecution of federal computer laws.

The set of synchronized hackathons scheduled for Nov. 8 to 10 is being organized online at www.aaronswartzhackathon.org.

Along with the Media Lab, hackathon events will be held that weekend in San Francisco, Seattle, Chicago and Berlin, Germany. It will be a follow-up to a set of hackathon events held in honor of Swartz just weeks after his death.

“Half a year later, we still feel an immense shock and loss, and after many conversations with people who attended one of the initial events, still think that we need to be there for each other and focus on the things that are important,” the website says.

The event is “inspired by the work he did and the people he touched” and “will bring together the varied communities that Aaron touched to figure out how the important problems of the world connect, and to share the load of working on those problems,” the site says.

Matt Rocheleau can be reached at mjrochele@gmail.com. Looking for more coverage of area colleges and universities? Go to our [Your Campus pages](#).

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