

MIT

< Back to front page

Text size  

MIT

Activists, web companies plan NSA surveillance protest in honor of Aaron Swartz

Posted by Matt Rocheleau January 13, 2014 03:51 PM

2 3 0 0


Comments ()

E-mail story

Print story

Share  Facebook  Twitter  Pinterest  Share  Share

Connect with us

 Follow @YourCampusMIT < 267 followers

 Republish this story

ADVERTISEMENT

Campus News

- Babson
- Bentley
- Berklee
- Boston College
- Boston University
- Brandeis
- Emerson
- Harvard
- MIT
- Northeastern
- Simmons
- Suffolk
- Tufts
- UMass Boston
- Wellesley

Recent blog posts

- Emerson College to open \$85m Hollywood campus on March 8
- Activists, web companies plan NSA surveillance protest in honor of Aaron Swartz
- Younger voters slip away from Obama amid health care missteps, spying disclosures, gridlock
- HarvardX to launch 14 new, returning online offerings through spring 2014
- Northeastern creates new bioengineering department

ADVERTISEMENT

By Matt Rocheleau, Boston.com Staff

Activist groups and some prominent online companies plan to hold an international, day-long, mostly-web-based protest of the National Security Agency's surveillance programs next month in memory of the late Internet activist Aaron Swartz.

Swartz, 26, took his own life a year ago 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 fellow Internet activists, while some blamed his death on MIT and prosecutors. Numerous memorials, rallies and hackathons have been held in Swartz honor, including protests calling for more humane prosecution of federal computer laws.

On Feb. 11, several groups – including web companies Mozilla and BoingBoing; Reddit, a social site Swartz helped create; and Demand Progress, a web activist group he helped found – will lead an anti-NSA surveillance protest to be called "The Day We Fight Back."

Get Updates

 My Yahoo

 RSS Feed

- [Learn about RSS](#)

The coalition of protesters plan to call and email lawmakers and will post banners on their websites encouraging others to do the same. The group will also ask web users to create and post anti-surveillance memes, messages, websites or other online tools and to change their social media avatars to include photos and text supporting the campaign.

The group announced the planned protest on Jan. 10, the eve of the anniversary of Swartz' death.

"Today the greatest threat to a free Internet, and broader free society, is the National Security Agency's mass spying regime," David Segal, executive director of Demand Progress said in a statement. "If Aaron were alive he'd be on the front lines, fighting back against these practices that undermine our ability to engage with each other as genuinely free human beings."

Swartz helped lead a movement that eventually defeated – for the time being, at least – the Stop Online Piracy Act, a US bill that aimed to make it easier for law enforcement to fight copyright infringement on the Internet.

Next month's protest will also honor and celebrate that accomplishment, organizers said.

Other groups that will participate in the day of action include: Access, DuckDuckGo, the Electronic Frontier Foundation, Fight for the Future, Free Press, The Other 98%, and ThoughtWorks.

Meanwhile, filmmaker Brian Knappenberger whose [crowdfunded documentary](#) about Swartz "The Internet's Own Boy" is scheduled to premiere at the Sundance Film Festival next week, released a [new trailer](#) in conjunction with the announcement about next month's protest.

"Aaron's story is more powerful and important now than ever," said a statement from Knappenberger. "Telling the story of SOPA for the film reminded me how dynamic that effort was – new tools were marshaled to change the political landscape in ways that seemed to perfectly modernize democratic government. We need to keep that creativity, drive and ability for people to tell their own story alive. We are going to need it to address the failings of the surveillance state."

Also, members the hacktivist group Anonymous [said](#) it changed a page on MIT's website over the weekend to feature an announcement about the plans for the Feb. 11 protest.

And, in separate interviews published this month, Swartz' father, [Robert Swartz](#), and well-known MIT professor [Noam Chomsky](#) faulted MIT for playing a role in Swartz' death.

For more information and updates about the planned protest, visit [TheDayWeFightBack.org](#).

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

2 3 0 0

Share Facebook Twitter Pinterest Share Share

Comments ()
E-mail story
Print story

PREVIOUS STORY [Younger voters slip away from Obama amid health care missteps, spying disclosures, gridlock](#)

FRONT PAGE

NEXT STORY [Emerson College to open \\$85m Hollywood campus on March 8](#)

RELATED CONTENT

Sponsored Content by Taboola



14 Benefits Most Seniors Didn't Know They Had

Newsmax



If You Ever Want to Retire Look at This Chart

Money Morning



You Haven't Lived Until You Visit These 10 All-Inclusive Resorts

TripCurator



One of the Most Classic SNL Sketches of All Time

Yahoo Screen



5 Foods You Should Never Eat Again

My Diet



Jenny McCarthy Bares All

Ora.TV

FROM THE WEB

5 Major Signs if Your Parents Will Get Alzheimer's in Their Brain (NewsmaxHealth)

Little Known Way to Pay Off Mortgage (Weekly Financial Solutions)

Millennials are Drinking so Much Wine They're Changing How it's Sold (Parade)

4 Places You Should Avoid Using Your Credit Card (Bankrate)

Check Out the Surprising Car that Mark Zuckerberg Drives (Wall St. Cheat Sheet)

FROM BOSTON.COM AND PARTNER

Woman on flight from Florida becomes ill and is pronounced dead at Logan Airport (Boston.com)

Pierce Brosnan's daughter dies of ovarian cancer (Boston.com)

Student killed and 3 hurt in high school fight (Boston.com)

Married couple, infant twin sons found dead in Arlington (Boston.com)

Broncos' Wes Welker plans comeback route to Foxborough (Boston.com)

Promoted Content by Taboola



Loading comments...

[Home](#) | [Today's Globe](#) | [News](#) | [Business](#) | [Sports](#) | [Lifestyle](#) | [A&E](#) | [Things to Do](#) | [Travel](#) | [Cars](#) | [Jobs](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Local Search](#)

[CONTACT BOSTON.COM](#) | [Help](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Work here](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | [Your Ad Choices](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Newsletters](#) | [Mobile](#) | [RSS feeds](#) | [Sitemap](#)

[CONTACT THE BOSTON GLOBE](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Manage your subscription](#) | [Advertise](#) | [Boston Globe Insiders](#) | [The Boston Globe Gallery](#) | © 2014 Boston Globe Media Partners, LLC