



# The Boy Who Could Change the World: The Writings of Aaron Swartz

By Aaron Swartz

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**The Boy Who Could Change the World: The Writings of Aaron Swartz** By Aaron Swartz

In his too-short life, Aaron Swartz reshaped the Internet, questioned our assumptions about intellectual property, and touched all of us in ways that we may not even realize. His tragic suicide in 2013 at the age of twenty-six after being aggressively prosecuted for copyright infringement shocked the nation and the world.

Here for the first time in print is revealed the quintessential Aaron Swartz: besides being a technical genius and a passionate activist, he was also an insightful, compelling, and cutting essayist. With a technical understanding of the Internet and of intellectual property law surpassing that of many seasoned professionals, he wrote thoughtfully and humorously about intellectual property, copyright, and the architecture of the Internet. He wrote as well about unexpected topics such as pop culture, politics both electoral and idealistic, dieting, and lifehacking. Including three in-depth and previously unpublished essays about education, governance, and cities, *The Boy Who Could Change the World* contains the life's work of one of the most original minds of our time.

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### Editorial Review

Review

#### **Praise for *The Boy Who Could Change the World*:**

"The book's curated tour of Swartz's legacy reads less like a posthumous time capsule and more like the record of one mind thinking, beautifully, against itself."

—*The Nation*

"[A] remarkably substantial collection of writings given the terrible brevity of Swartz's intellectually daring life, from his geeky ardor for code to his collaborative, web-driven dreams of saving the world."

—*Booklist* (starred review)

[“A]n elegiac project about a young man who had a good heart, unlimited potential, and wanted to help people.”

—*The New Republic*

"For me, reading this book was a revelatory experience."

—Chelsea Manning

"Reading some of these essays is like peeking at the secret history of the modern Internet and having the curtain pulled back in the political arena."

—*Publishers Weekly*

"An important record of forward-looking thought cut short."

—*Kirkus*

#### **Praise for Aaron Swartz:**

"What a bittersweet exhilaration you feel re-reading Swartz's impossibly brilliant, capacious writings all in one place. This volume makes clear what those of us who knew Aaron already grasped: when we lost Aaron, we lost one of the most exciting minds of our time."

—Chris Hayes

"He was brilliant and funny. A kid genius...Aaron was not just, or even primarily, a computer geek. His defining feature was a constant struggle for what he believed was right."

—Lawrence Lessig

"Aaron had an unbeatable combination of political insight, technical skill, and intelligence about people and issues. I think he could have revolutionized American (and worldwide) politics. His legacy may still yet do so."

—Cory Doctorow

"I always found it genuinely inspiring to watch Swartz exude [his] courage and commitment at such a young age."

—Glenn Greenwald

"We've lost a fighter. We've lost somebody who put huge energy into righting wrongs."

—Sir Tim Berners-Lee, Inventor of the World Wide Web

#### About the Author

Aaron Swartz (1986-2013) was involved in the development of RSS, Creative Commons, web.py, and Reddit. He helped launch the Progressive Change Campaign Committee in 2009 and founded the online group Demand Progress. He is survived by his parents and two brothers, who live in Chicago.

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##### **Phillip Patten:**

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