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January 22, 2013

Professor Hal Abelson
Class of 1922 Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Building 32-386
Cambridge, MA 02139

Dear Professor Abelson:

Since fall 2010, MIT has been involved in events arising from actions taken by Aaron Swartz to access JSTOR through the MIT computer network. I have asked you, and you have graciously agreed, to review MIT's involvement.

The purpose of this review is to describe MIT's actions and to learn from them. Your review should (1) describe MIT's actions and decisions during the period beginning when MIT first became aware of unusual JSTOR-related activity on its network by a then-unidentified person, until the death of Aaron Swartz on January 11, 2013, (2) review the context of these decisions and the options that MIT considered, and (3) identify the issues that warrant further analysis in order to learn from these events.

I trust that the MIT community, including those involved in these events, always acts with high professional integrity and a strong sense of responsibility to MIT. However, MIT tries continuously to improve and to meet its highest aspirations. It is in that spirit that I ask you to help MIT learn from these events.

Time is of the essence. Presently, many in the MIT community do not know what to make of the news reports on this matter. Out of respect for the value of analysis and reflection, MIT will wait for your report before making comment on the events that you will be examining. I urge you to conduct your review as rapidly as you can do so responsibly. I will be responsible for sharing your report with the MIT community and the public.

On behalf of MIT, I thank you in advance for the objectivity, analytic skill, and high sense of responsibility that you will bring to this task.

Sincerely,

L. Rafael Reif
President

LRR/em