

On Persistence and My Digital Legacy (Bus Factor)

2016

2 min read • 484 words



My life primarily revolves around creating things—digital things—for others to consume. This content is an embodiment of who I am, and is of great value to me (and hopefully others).

All of my work, including this post, is made available via services which could disappear at any moment, disable my account, lose my content, or become unable to charge my debit card.

Bus Factor: 1

None of these scenarios are really an issue if I am available to respond—but, what would happen if I am not? This could happen for any number of reasons, including the most unfortunate but inevitable one, and it could potentially happen at any moment, without any warning.

The reality of this possibility really set in when I [unexpectedly spent two weeks in the hospital](#) last year, without any warning, and was unable to work for a few months afterwards.

[@kennethreitz](#) Looking forward to your new language, Python for Humans™.

— Aaron Swartz (@aaronsw) [May 8, 2012](#)

`<\/platform.twitter.com\/widgets.js>` The only other person I know of that seemed to have an active interest in this concept is my late friend [Aaron Swartz](#). He wrote a blog post titled [If I get hit by a truck...](#) in 2003, where he provided instructions on where to find his content if he was to no longer be available. Unfortunately, he took his own life in 2013—a tragic loss for all. However, all of his digital contributions to the world were not lost, and I'm sure that forethought and documentation contributed to this persistence.

The [bus factor](#) of most of my digital creations is exactly one: an appropriate and expected number. There are exceptions for mission-critical projects, like [Requests](#) (3).

So, this is my version of that blog post.

This concept of posthumous digital legacy is something that I've been exploring for a long time. I started a [few projects](#) in 2012 to experiment with the problem space, but kept hitting sustainability and UX roadblocks when it came to hosting other's content. At the end of the day, I realized that I don't believe many people actually care about this problem—so, I decided to simply solve it for myself.

My Digital Blackbox

But alas, for the rare but inevitable event that I either cease breath, or somehow become entirely unavailable for reasons beyond my control, I have created a [digital blackbox](#)—a portable archive of my digital content, hopefully hosted forever on archive.org. No matter what happens to me, ideally, my world should be enabled to live on forever, in some form or another.

The archive contains lossless archives of: kennethreitz.org essays, all published photography, music productions, and tweets. GitHub repositories (via git-bundles) and 500px (photography portfolio) may be added in the future.

I plan to update and re-issue this archive a few times a year.

So, when the worst does inevitably come to pass, you know where to find me :)

Much Love,
Kenneth Reitz

Generated from kennethreitz.org • 2025