

Library gets slick new ways to search

\$470,000 cost of software pays a price in privacy

By MARK HEDIN

IN THE BRAVE NEW WORLD of digital media, where “it’s all secrecy and no privacy,” as the Rolling Stones once presciently wrote, the Library Commission voted unanimously on Jan. 15 to amend its longstanding privacy policy to conform to the needs of a foreign technology firm that is outfitting the library’s computerized catalog with the geegaws of social media.

The policy change clears the way to implement an enhanced catalog system that will speed searches at a cost to the library of almost \$500,000 over the next three years.

Peter Warfield of the San Francisco Library Users Association, standing alone in dissent at that meeting, pleaded with the commissioners to reject the proposed revisions to its privacy policy and the BiblioCommons software.

“The basic problem is, it’s a wolf in sheep’s clothing,” said Warfield, a constant thorn in the commissioners’ side. “They are into data mining. Do not approve these changes!”

BiblioCommons is a Toronto firm that began as a nonprofit youth literacy program. In 2008, its research into catalog enhancements as a way to

further engage users attracted Canadian library interest and support for the development of its product.

Now installed in 200 public libraries in four countries with more than 4 million registered users, its software provides a platform for social media-type activities — such as rating, reviewing and commenting on library materials and conversing, sharing lists and suggestions — something many readers have grown accustomed to on sites such as goodreads.com and amazon.com.

Laura Lent, the library’s chief of collections and technical services, told *The Extra* that without amending the privacy policy, “we wouldn’t be able to incorporate sharing.”

Users can continue to use the library’s Classic Catalog and be unaffected by the changed privacy policy, Lent said, but to register with BiblioCommons users must provide their name, birth date, an email address and a user name.

Furthermore, comments, ratings, chats and other social-media-type activity that BiblioCommons enables, a.k.a. “Shared Content,” would, first of all, be shared across BiblioCommons’ 4.6-million-user platform and be subject to repurposing.

The city’s contract with BiblioCommons says that’s as far as it goes. Section 4.03 of Appendix C states: “BiblioCommons will not make any commercial use of Shared Content which is attributable to an identifiable individual except in connection with the development, maintenance and provision of BiblioCommons’ products and services.”

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PUBLISHED BY THE SAN FRANCISCO STUDY CENTER

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No longer easy for public to get

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CENTRAL CITY

EXTRA!

SAN FRANCISCO

SELF-PORTRAITS



COURTESY OF SFUSD

Four Tenderloin Community School kindergartners hit the jackpot with art created last year. Clockwise from top right, self-portraits by Xuong Chi, Nelly Pacheco, Fatima Ali and an unnamed student are being used in all materials for the SFUSD’s 2015 Arts Festival.

TL kids’ art in museum

Painting lessons also teach them about selves, life

By MARJORIE BEGGS

IF YOU WERE a kindergartner whose painting was reproduced on thousands of posters plastered all over San Francisco, you — and your family — would have to be enormously thrilled. And then there’s making that art.

“I’m guessing what it means to the students is fun,” says Tenderloin Community School teacher Barbara Sizelove. “They get to paint, look closely but still exercise as much creativity as possible and, as kindergartners, get to explore their very favorite subject — themselves.”

Last year, Sizelove had her 16 students paint self-portraits to submit to the S.F. Unified School District’s 2015 arts festival.

All will be displayed at the annual, nine-day megacelebration of K-12 student creativity, Feb. 28 through March 8 at the Asian Art Museum. The event features visual artwork by 2,000 students, live musical and dance performances by 65 school and community groups, screenings of films and videos, poetry read-

ings and hands-on art activities.

Sizelove, the Tenderloin school’s arts coordinator and a San Francisco Art Institute-educated artist who works in printing media such as large-format linocuts with monoprint overlays, was delighted when festival organizers chose four of her students’ joyful portraits to grace the festival’s posters, event invitations and program covers.

“This is a project that I do every year for the festival,” she says. “I get to bring students a deeper understanding of art and what it’s like to make art over a period of time like a real artist.”

“(Over six weeks) they get involved in decision-making about color, shape, background, foreground. In some cases, they literally go from drawing stick figures to painting a symmetrical human figure.”

She begins by having the five-and-six-year-olds look at self-portraits, representational to expressionistic, so they see there’s no one way to portray oneself. Using mirrors, they draw themselves with pencils, Sharpies and crayons, filling the page.

Painting begins with learning to use acrylics and big brushes on an 8x10 canvas board for the background, and a week later, they transfer their drawing to the board. Moving to a medium brush, they begin filling in the face, but without details. In the next sessions, they use a very small brush for features, add patterns and perhaps change the background

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