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ARTS, PARKS, HEALTH & AGING

MOTION

There was a recent incident in which an individual was seen viewing pornographic material at a public computer at the City's Chinatown Library. The computer being used was in plain view of the circulation desk where several adults and children were able to see graphic images as they checked out and returned library books. Although library staff has since moved the computer to an area where the screen images cannot be seen by the patrons, the issue of viewing pornography on library computers remains.

The City's library computers are unfiltered, and the consensus in the library industry is that filters are either under- or over-filtering material. Therefore, if under-filtered, pornographic images may still be able to be found. And if over-filtered, non-pornographic websites may be blocked, and library patrons may not be able to research as effectively.

According to the Library Department, because the First Amendment gives the public certain rights, the Department cannot prohibit patrons from viewing pornography. Normally, if a complaint is made, Library staff will notify the viewer of the complaint and more often than not, the viewer either moves to a more private computer or exits the website and/or facility. There are times when the viewer chooses to do neither and continues to view pornographic material. Library staff cannot prohibit this.

The exceptions to this protocol are when a person is viewing illegal (child) pornography or a person viewing the pornography tries to engage other patrons while doing so. In these instances, LAPD may be called and/or the viewer may be told to exit the Library. However, as long as they are viewing legal pornography and keeping it to themselves, it is not prohibited. These actions affect all library patrons, but, more significantly, it leaves children vulnerable to viewing offensive images which can affect them for years to come.

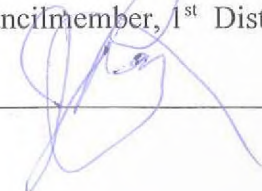
I THEREFORE MOVE that the Library Department be instructed and the City Attorney's Office be requested to investigate the Chinatown Library incident and report to Council with the City's legal options to address the viewing of pornography on public computers at the City's neighborhood libraries while being cognizant of the First Amendment rights of all citizens.

PRESENTED BY



ED P. REYES
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SECONDED BY



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