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Insecurity Measures

THE HULT CENTER AND TWO OTHER EUGENE MUSIC VENUES USE SCANNERS FROM A COMPANY UNDER FIRE FOR LETTING WEAPONS SLIP BY IN SCHOOLS

By Emma J Nelson

In October, Eugene's Hult Center for the Performing Arts leased AI-powered security scanners for \$170,000 a year to "ensure a secure environment." However, the Massachusetts corporation that created the magnetometers, Evolv Technology, is now under investigation by the Federal Trade Commission for allegedly misrepresenting its product's capabilities.

Internet Protocol Video Market, a research group that analyzes security and surveillance technology, found in December 2022 that Evolv had paid the National Center for Spectator Sports Safety and Security, a government-funded academic center, an estimated \$20,000 to doctor the results on its product testing.

When asked if he was aware of the FTC's investigation or IPVM's report before leasing the devices on Aug. 30, Hult Center General Manager Jeff Weinkauf said he wasn't.

"In our research, we noted that Evolv was widely used by facilities doing similar work and came highly recommended by those groups," Weinkauf says. "One of the most attractive elements was that the system could support ingress of large crowds in a short time which met our goal of limiting impact on our attendees."

According to Weinkauf, he was able to see how Evolv operates at the Cuthbert Amphitheater. Both the Cuthbert and the McDonald Theatre also use Evolv magnetometers.

IPVM found in its Dec. 6, 2022, report that NCS4 allowed Evolv "to set evaluation criteria, extensively redline the final released

report and cover up testing failures in its weapons detection system used in schools, museums, theme parks, stadiums and other venues across the U.S."

According to a May article in *The Intercept*, the Utica School District in New York installed Evolv Technology scanners in 13 schools. School authorities noted that the magnetometers, which the district spent \$4 million on, have allowed knives and a police officer's revolver through without flagging them. One student was able to carry a knife past the scanners on Oct. 31, 2022, and stabbed a fellow student.

Although there was no one incident that inspired the use of the security scanners at the Hult Center, Weinkauf says, "Having a plan that is just based around hope and the goodwill of people in our area is not enough."

Weinkauf says he worries about large gathering spaces such as performing arts centers being considered "softer targets," and he hopes that recent security upgrades can mitigate this danger.

"People place a lot of trust in us when they come here," Weinkauf says. "We just want to make sure that we're as safe as possible, that we're doing our due diligence to provide a safe place for everyone."

When something is flagged by the magnetometers, the patron is asked to visit the resolution table where they can be manually checked for weapons or prohibited paraphernalia. Thus far, Weinkauf says, the Evolv scanners have stopped off-duty police officers carrying firearms and some people with forgotten pocket knives. Weinkauf says that the Hult Center team is able to limit wait time at the resolution table to under a minute, especially when the system flags a false positive.

"Evolv was never presented to us as a single solution to all of our screening needs," Weinkauf says. "Additionally, we use Evolv in a multi-layered approach and do not rely solely on its technology to secure our facility."

In addition to installing Evolv scanners, the Hult Center has also upgraded from its previous 12 security cameras to more than 40 HD cameras placed internally and externally, Weinkauf says.

"The posture is not 'We're watching you,'" he says. "It's more 'We want to provide a space where people can feel completely welcome and as safe as possible, within reason, to come and have great experiences.'"

Weinkauf says that, as of now, he and the Hult Center are comfortable with the use of Evolv.

"I would absolutely be looking into any of those allegations," he says. "We would do our due diligence and follow up." ■

HAPPENING PEOPLE

By Paul Neevel

Riley Derrick

"I've always been the class clown," Riley Derrick says. "The people I modeled were David Letterman and Bill Murray. I stayed up late in middle school to see them." A seventh-generation Oregonian whose ancestors arrived by covered wagon, Derrick was a bat boy for the Eugene Emeralds while in middle school, and his first paid job, at age 15, was in Farrell's Ice Cream Parlour. After graduation from Churchill High School, he found a job at the local Costco Wholesale Warehouse. "I've worked there for 23 years," he recounts. "I started out at the gas station, then moved through electronics and the photo lab. I did printing in the photo lab and wound up talking with people about weddings and funerals. The most rewarding part of the work was trying to help people." He went on to supervise the Costco front end, where the registers are, and he writes the schedule for all the front end employees. "I'm a fan of David McCullough," Derrick says. "He's the author of *John Adams* and *Truman*. I went to hear him speak, and he talked about how important it is to share what you love. It's become a mantra to me." In 2019, Derrick began to assemble art installations in his personal staff locker, a small 9x12-inch box among many others on the wall of a long hallway from the registers to the restrooms. "I started putting pictures in it, photos of my dad, toys from my childhood, stuff that made me happy," he notes. "When I showed it to people, they flipped out. Now I leave it open, even when I'm not there. I've done around 10 different lockers: always a Christmas locker, sometimes a Halloween locker. My original childhood locker remains up five or six months at a time." Over the years, Derrick has designed and built a lot of office decor, front yard decor and kids bedroom decor. In the photograph, he shows off one of his creative endeavors, a cutout of Punxsutawney Phil, constructed for a Groundhog Day party. "I love Groundhog Day," he explains, "and I wanted to share that with my family and friends."

