Case Study

The National World War II Museum

Museum Keeps Guests and War Artifacts Safe with Unified Security Platform

America's National World War II Museum Upgrades Video, Access Control, and Intrusion Detection to Streamline Operations and Improve Campus Security

Immersing yourself in a topic is the best way to learn. That is why the National World War II Museum in New Orleans, United States does everything to keep guests enthralled in the experience. Every year, over 700,000 guests tour exhibits, view artifacts, and hear first-hand accounts from war veterans and historians. Behind the scenes of the 6-acre campus, the security team ensures everything goes smoothly. So, during the deep-dive into American history, guests always have a safe and memorable experience.

Finding the right security platform

Since its inauguration in 2000, a lot has changed at the museum. New offices, theaters, and exhibits have been added. As the museum grew, so did its security infrastructure. Different video and access control systems were installed to safeguard historical assets and keep guests happy and safe during tours. Over time, it became a struggle for the museum's IT team to maintain the older, disparate security systems, and upkeeps were getting costly.

As part of the ongoing expansion, the Museum decided to upgrade its security systems. According to Dave Chapper, IT Manager and Network Administrator at The National World War II Museum, "We were ready to move to IP and wanted the flexibility of an open platform. After meeting many security technology vendors, it was a unanimous and clear decision for our team: Genetec Security Center was the solution for us."

Security Center unifies video surveillance, access control, and intrusion detection systems into one solution. For the National World War II Museum, this was a big selling point. "Genetec was the only vendor who told us that we could manage all of our systems from one platform while keeping most existing infrastructure," continued Chapper. The Museum worked closely with Siemens, a local security system integrator with reputable service, to deploy the unified platform.

Reaping the cost savings of unified security

From exhibits and gift shops to offices and restaurants, the security team can now see everything happening on the museum campus. Operators monitor over 270 cameras, 100 doors, and intrusion system alarms around the clock from the Security Center platform.

Summary

Client name: The National WWII Museum

Organization size: 300 employees

Products: Security Center, Omnicast™, Synergis

Industry: Stadiums and Open Spaces

Location: New Orleans, Louisiana, United States

Partners: Siemens, Axis Communications, BCDVideo

"Security Center helps our security team take immediate and decisive action," said Chapper. "Not only has our team become more efficient, but we've also seen a significant cost reduction by going from many systems to one unified platform."

Working with one vendor is also easier and more cost-effective. Instead of the team having to learn how to use three new systems, they only needed training on one platform. The museum also didn't need to purchase many different maintenance agreements—support was covered by Genetec.

The ability to re-use existing security hardware and infrastructure also led to big savings. For example, the museum kept existing door readers using the Synergis™ Cloud Link which is an intelligent IP controller that supports non-proprietary access control hardware.

Staying one step ahead to keep guests safe

For the museum, visitor safety is a big part of customer service. Guests freely browse displays and exhibits at their leisure. In case someone tries to access a personnel-only area, the security team will receive an alarm with associated video. Using Plan Manager, the intuitive map interface of Security Center, they quickly respond by dispatching staff to assist.

The museum's operations team remotely checks in on the museum campus using the Security Center Mobile App. Key staff can quickly pull up video to spot any crowd congestion or disturbances, and dispatch help as needed.

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During the tour, visitors to the museum are invited to hop aboard the latest attraction, the PT-305. It's a fully-refurbished PT (patrol torpedo) war vessel that is known as "The Ride of a Lifetime". While guests enjoy their immersive experience, the crew monitors video from six Axis Communications cameras onboard the boat to carefully steer the ship and make sure passengers stay safe.

"It's for insurance, liability, and security," says Chapper. "If there is an injury or another issue above or below deck, the cameras will capture it. Video is recorded locally on BCDVideo servers and transferred back to the museum servers as soon as the ship docks. That way, the security team can retrieve video for investigations."

Connecting with the community

Incidents are rare at the museum; but if something happens, the team is ready. In one case, a thief was identified when a guest reported a missing wallet. Operators were quickly able to find the video, and send it over to the local law enforcement. The museum also shared the suspect's photo with other local businesses, working with the community to create a safer neighborhood.

Even when nothing happens, there's always a balance between security and accessibility. All staff, volunteers, and contractors are assigned access to various buildings and use access cards to get to where they need to go. The team created cardholder groups in

Security Center to speed up enrollment and it's all integrated with Microsoft Active Directory, so the information in both systems is always up-to-date.

Planning for continued expansion

The museum continues to expand its footprint. With two new buildings under construction, the team feels confident knowing they can easily grow and evolve their security system.

"We want our guests to focus on having an informative experience, not their personal security. That's why Security Center has been the ideal solution for our museum. We have better control over our environment, so we're able to ensure the best guest experience by keeping everyone —and every piece of history— safe," concluded Chapper.

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