

WORLD-CLASS SECURITY

Museum upgrades system to protect rare, valuable art

By Mary Wilbur

Dallas, Texas, considers itself a world-class city. Whatever the qualifications, the arts district in the city is certainly world class, and, therefore, the security must also meet high-caliber specifications.

The Dallas Museum of Art is located in the heart of one of the largest urban arts districts in the world. It houses a collection of more than 24,000 works of art from around the world and plays host to at least 600,000 visitors. Inside the facility, there are a variety of interactive displays and traveling collections of priceless art, spanning all ages of time.

CAMERAS IN PLACE

The museum has about 175 Vicon cameras in place, including some 60 PTZ cameras; about half are fixed-dome. Keith Walker, owner and general manager of Security 101 in Dallas, served as the integrator and said all the head-end equipment was replaced but existing cameras remained.

“Some of the cameras are IP-based, but many are still analog,” said Lance Childers, DMA’s director of security. “We are updating as we can. These cameras feed into two servers, both on our backup power system.”

As the museum security department upgrades its system to a network-based system, the main thought is to provide a video management platform with a proven track record of reliability and performance in a key high-security environment. To Childers, the security department within the museum is considered a separate entity, and each of the departments within the facility is set up as a client. For the security department within the museum, the goals for the new installation are a more user-friendly system for the officers, an enhanced ability to isolate and record incidents, and increased capacity and options for configuring monitors. They also know that with the integration of IP video, they will experience a great improvement in the quality of the video recordings.

“There are two primary objectives that we hold fast to, including providing an educational opportunity for our guests,” Childers said. “The other is preservation of the art itself.

“The art is very fragile. In training, I often compare the canvas that paintings are on to a washcloth or dishtowel, a year old or 10 years old. Some of our canvasses are 100 to 200 years old, or more.

“Our choice to help run the cameras, both IP-based and analog, was to go with Salient Systems CompleteView. They offered us a hybrid capability and approach to transitioning from analog to IP camera technology, which allows us to be protected as we upgrade and expand our video security system.

“By upgrading to CompleteView, we have been able to integrate



video and access control platforms and provide features such as video verification of access control events and alarms.”

Security 101 got involved via a telemarketing campaign last year, which brought the company to the attention of Childers. “We felt we were in a good position with product and support, and that’s what led us to pursue the security upgrade.”

TOO MUCH LOVE

Most people who visit the art museum do not do so with the intent of doing harm to the art, but inadvertently sometimes things happen.

“In their enthusiasm, for example, sometimes they get too close,” Childers said. “Either they will reach to touch it, or even close examination of it could result in moisture from their breath getting on the art. We ask the guests to enjoy the art from further back, rather than up so close, possibly causing damage to the art.”

That’s where CompleteView comes into play—protecting the patron and the art, and also providing security to the museum and an enjoyable experience for today’s visitors and future visitors.

“When protecting such valuable assets, immediate notification of events becomes important,” said Brian Carle, product manager at Salient Systems. “The Alarm Client and Pop Up Monitor provide real-time alerts of motion or alarm activity. Audio alarms can accompany live video of the events, ensuring guards will not overlook incidents on critical cameras.”

As integrators know, no installation is without its challenges, and the integration at DMA is no exception.

“Our first challenge was that the existing system had to remain functional during the upgrade process, given the security needs of the museum,” Walker said. “Then we had to be flexible enough with the installation to be able to respond to unexpected challenges and the need for quick substitutions of equipment in a few areas.”

BACK TO BUSINESS

DMA is truly world-renowned when it comes to art. Security at the museum has taken a front row, and it’s all managed by a video management system that has enough power and traction to stay on top of all security applications. The venue’s security helps create a world-class experience for visitors but also for staff, who are now able to do their respective jobs with peace of mind. 📺

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