The Role of Communication in Museum Security Operations

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Background

The Smithsonian Office of Protection Services is a unit within the Smithsonian museum and research complex dedicated to ensuring the safety and security of visitors, staff, and collections. As a Communications intern in the Office of Protection Services, I researched the role that communication plays in the spread of information within the unit and across the Smithsonian system security operations.

Methodology

I visited Smithsonian museums and administrative departments across the Washington, D.C. area to observe their security communications operations. I analyzed the efficiency of different communication practices implemented to disseminate information among Smithsonian security personnel and between security personnel and patrons. I explored internal communication further by creating and distributing multimedia content as a way to provide Smithsonian staff with information about internal affairs.

References and Acknowledgements

- Smithsonian Institution Office of Protection Services
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Results

Museum security operations require a variety of communication platforms to ensure that relevant personnel can access information vital in maintaining safety. A combination of intercoms, radio systems, mass notification systems, and emergency voice systems allow information to be spread quickly among security officers and museum personnel. The dissemination of internal affairs information and perspective reports allows for departments across the Smithsonian system to make informed decisions regarding security operations.

Conclusion

- Museum security operations rely on a variety of digital communications technologies that connect security personnel across departments and the Smithsonian System.
- Communication between personnel and departments across the Smithsonian system forms the basis for the organization's security operations.