

# Airport Security on the Ground and in the Air

## Security Management at William P. Hobby Airport, Houston

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The Houston Airport System (HAS) is the fourth-largest airport system in the United States and the sixth-largest in the world. The HAS, a Department of Aviation within the city of Houston, brings air service to Houston's population of more than 5.5 million. The Houston Airport System manages three facilities; George Bush Intercontinental Airport, William P. Hobby Airport, and Ellington Airport.

William P. Hobby Airport is Houston's second major commercial aviation facility, owned and operated by the City of Houston. Presently, Hobby Airport is served by five scheduled airlines and is the 6th largest hub airport for Southwest Airlines. Hobby Airport's terminal complex has undergone a multi-million dollar capital improvement expansion program designed to upgrade its facilities to meet today's standards and future growth needs.

The Airport Communications Center (ACC) and Emergency Operations Center (EOC) within the airport are responsible for the overall security of the airport. Their responsibilities range from managing emergency communications to routine airport communications. In the event of an emergency, the ACC is chartered with calling in the proper emergency vehicles and personnel to coordinate a rescue effort.

Activu recently spoke with John Gallo, the Airport Operations Supervisor at William P. Hobby Airport, to understand how the Activu solution allows the HAS to monitor and manage the entire airport.

*"We value most, the fact that we can collaborate, view and share content amongst team members. And because our solution is IP-based, we can easily view any source connected to the network. This gives us incredible flexibility." John . Gallo, Airport Operations Supervisor, William P. Hobby Airport*

### **How are you utilizing the capabilities of the Activu solution deployed at the William P. Hobby Airport?**

We use the Activu visualization and collaboration solution to monitor critical information at the airport. We have an Airport Communications Center and inside that center, we manage customer calls, emergency calls, security monitoring, maintenance— whatever is required to seamlessly operate the airport. We are currently going through a major airport remodeling and during this remodeling, we wanted to deploy a system that would integrate with our security cameras, monitor information from TV, local news/weather, the Internet, network applications and allow us to put that information on a common display in case there was an emergency at the airport.

**Are you using the system to monitor air or ground security?**

We use the system to monitor both ground and air security. We use the system to monitor air and ground security as well as on-airport emergency operations. This allows us to use the onsite cameras to assess the incident within the emergency operations center and direct personnel and emergency equipment as needed.

**What type of solution were you using before you deployed Activu?**

We had a very basic solution consisting of Pelco cameras which basically had a joystick. They were connected to outdated, 13" TV monitors. To view a camera, you had to know which camera you wanted to view, type in the camera number that you wanted to view and get the information from there. You could only view one camera at a time and we only did this on an emergency basis. Now, we can monitor the whole airport, looking at as many cameras as we want to at one time.

**Do you have Activu solutions deployed at multiple locations?**

Yes. We have three main locations within the airport that have Activu solutions installed: The Airport Communications Center (ACC), the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and the Duty Supervisor Office.

**Do you collaborate between the locations?**

Yes. The rooms were designed so that if there was an emergency, we have break away walls that come down to make the ACC and EOC one large room to share information back and forth. So for example, we'd do this if there was a major aircraft accident. The last time we used that set up was on Christmas Eve. On that day, the airport had a major power outage so we had to activate the EOC on one of the busiest travel days of the year, from about 4am to 10am. During this time there were a lot of flight cancellations which we had to monitor and customer expectations. So it was pretty rough. That was the first real test of that room and the system. We also recently installed a Samsung Smart Board in the EOC which we can use Activu to pull up as well. That has really helped us as well since we can manipulate and move data from there as well.

**How has the Activu solution made your job easier?**

The solution is a lot more user friendly. With our old system, we were only able to put a single source of data on our screen at one time. Now we can put multiple sources of information on the wall, including briefing updates so everyone is aware of our current status, TV channels, and Internet content. Internet content is important because we also monitor information going out to the public so we monitor Internet sites about what's being said on the web about certain incidents in case we need to counter act inaccurate information.

**What is the value of your new technology?**

We value most, the fact that we can collaborate, view and share content amongst team members. And because our solution is IP-based, we can easily view any source connected to the network. This gives us incredible flexibility.

**Do you have proprietary applications integrated into the Activu solution as well?**

Yes. We have our security camera system which is integrated into Activu so that we can monitor all of our security cameras.

**If there's an emergency, your team is chartered with managing the incident?**

Yes. We are the airport operations department in charge of the airfield and integrity of the runways and taxiways. We're in charge of emergencies that happen at the airport as well as taking care of routine maintenance.

**Are you integrated with the TSA at the airport?**

We operate in a joint partnership with TSA. The TSA has specific rules and regulations by which they conduct their department and teams

**Did the Activu training prepare you well for using our solution and was it easy to use?**

Our system was in the process of being installed while we were being trained. So there wasn't a lot of hands-on training. However, the Activu trainer did a good job in explaining the features and functions of Activu, providing detailed manuals on how to operate the software features. The software is very user friendly so we didn't have to spend a lot of time training our people who use it on a daily basis. The training prepared us, as managers, to train our own staff. We also have an IT person dedicated to supporting the Activu system.

**How has your team benefited from using the Activu solution?**

We have benefited from the capability of having different types of information sources on a single screen, for example, TV, airfield map with closures, video cameras. The fact that we can put multiple sources of data at one time is what Activu has helped us achieve.

**About the Houston Airport System (HAS)**

HAS is the fourth-largest airport system in the United States and the sixth-largest in the world. The Houston Airport System, a Department of Aviation within the city of Houston, brings air service to Houston's population of more than 5.5 million. The Houston Airport System manages three facilities; George Bush Intercontinental Airport, William P. Hobby Airport, and Ellington Airport. The three-airport system served more than 48.5 million passengers in 2009, including more than 7.8 million international travelers.

Together our airports form one of North America's largest public airport systems and position Houston as the international passenger and cargo gateway to the south central United States and a primary gateway to Latin America.

### **About Activu**

Activu Corporation is an Information Technology and Services company delivering true end-to-end network solutions for mission-critical command and control environments. With a team of dedicated engineers, Activu has the unique ability to design, build, deploy and support full turnkey, net-centric, software-based visualization systems from desktops to data walls, to help organizations improve collaborative information sharing and decision making. For more information visit [www.activu.com](http://www.activu.com)