Pepper the Robot is working at the Smithsonian for free

SoftBank's Pepper the humanoid robot has held a variety of odd jobs over the past few years, but a gig at the Smithsonian may be its most prestigious yet. Starting today, visitors can interact with Pepper at six Smithsonian locations to inquire more museum information, play games, or ask it to pose for a selfie. It even has its own security badge.

Unlike a few other commercial locations, the Smithsonian didn't actually buy Pepper robots for the museum. SoftBank donated 25 humanoid units as part of an experimental program to attract people to "under-attended galleries," which the company believes can help boost visitors' engagement with artwork and help give docents an interactive tool for educating their tour groups. SoftBank says more Pepper robots will be deployed in additional Smithsonian locations over the summer, because nothing says a summer job in the city like unpaid work.

The last time a robot made headlines in DC, it threw itself in a water fountain shortly after starting its job as a security guard, so hopefully Pepper survives the stress of working in the nation's capital. Pepper's track record for being good at its job *and* being likeable is a little mixed; earlier this year, it was fired from a supermarket job for "incompetence" after it confused and freaked out customers instead of providing useful shopping information. In 2015, a drunk man kicked Pepper over after he found its attitude displeasing.

What can I say – the service industry is tough, Pepper! Maybe you'll something worthwhile after putting the Smithsonian on your resume.

https://www.theverge.com/tldr/2018/4/24/17277350/softbank-pepper-the-robot-smithsonian-museum